



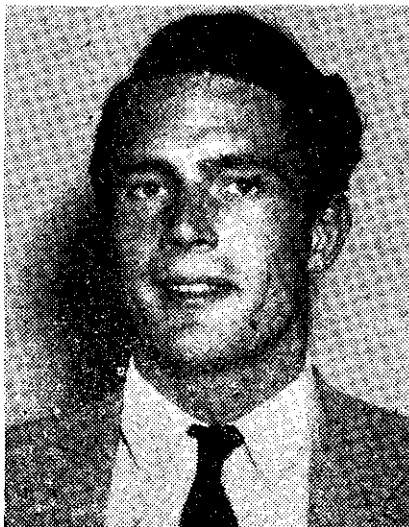
★ THREE of the overseas players who will be heard in the NZBS production of "Johnson Over Jordan"—From left, John Meillon, Diana Perryman, Patrick Horgan ★

Priestley's "Everyman"

LEADING roles in *Johnson Over Jordan*, the play to be heard over the YCs next week, starting from 1YC and 3YC on Tuesday, May 21, are taken by members of the cast of *The Reluctant Debutante*, which recently toured New Zealand. John Meillon plays Robert Johnson, "an ordinary middle-class citizen," Diana Perryman is his wife Jill, and Patrick Horgan is the Guide who is Death. Jessica Noad and John D'Arcy have smaller parts. Johnson's children Freda and Richard are played by Wendy Gibb and Alan Jervis. Bernard Beeby produced the play, and others taking part are Linda Hastings, Nora Slaney, Jessie Weddell, Davina Whitehouse, William Austin, Michael Cotterill, Stuart James, David Kohn, Roy Leywood, David Littin, Patrick Smyth, and Derek Whittaker.

The play, by J. B. Priestley, was first produced in London in 1939. Priestley began planning it 16 months earlier when he was travelling about the United States on a lecture tour. Shortly before, he had written *Time and the Conways*, and *I Have Been Here Before*, and he had been thinking a great deal about time theory. ("We don't know what Time is," says Morrison in the last act of *Johnson*, "let alone how it shall be divided for us.") In *Rain Upon Gadshill*, Priestley has described how in the long train journeys he had brooded over a play he meant to write. "A play in which an apparent phantasmagoria would, if all went well, be given a deep and very moving significance. Odd lines and fragments of scenes would drift into my mind as I sat huddled in my Pullman chair, with Ohio and Indiana, Missouri and Illinois pulling their burnt plains and sullen hills past the window."

The play became *Johnson Over Jordan*, "a modern Morality play," descendant of the medieval family of verse drama based on abstractions. *Everyman* is perhaps the best-known of this group. When *Everyman* is summoned by Death, all his worldly attributes, to



whom he turns in his distress, leave him and only Good Deeds will go with him.

Johnson is *Everyman* after death. The play opens as the funeral service is being held at his home. During the service we are switched to Johnson himself, who is in the intermediate state of "Bardo," which Tibetans believe is the state soon after death, when the dead man does not realise the fact. While there he is examined by various officials who mercilessly expose all his faults, the worst side of every man. On the second day, while his family are still despondent, Johnson finds himself at the bar in a night-club, where the people who knew him at his worst come to act in a nightmare which ends with Johnson knowing that he has put himself in Hell, and deservedly. At that stage the Guide comes again and sends Johnson on, to the Inn at the End of the World. Johnson arrives on the third day after his death, and there he finds all the people he had liked and who had been his friends. He relives some of the happy events in his life, and then, no longer troubled, he must leave.

"On the air," wrote J. C. Trewin in the *Radio Times* of the BBC production, "the scene will have its familiar impact. The final moments take the imagination. Johnson, leaving the inn, stands briefly against the vast arch of space, the blue vault with its single star, and then walks from our sight into the unknown. My colleague, Harold Hobson, has called this one of the most moving things in his theatrical experience. Whatever we may feel of the play's earlier devices, the last act must move the toughest cynics."

AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE N.Z. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

HOME ACCIDENTS...

... kill and injure more children than disease. They can be reduced by PARENT AWARENESS of home hazards, and *positive* action by parents.

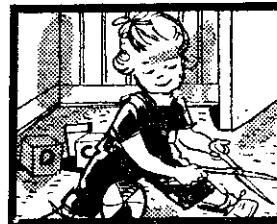
Three ways to cut down the toll

- 1 *Make* your home free from risks. Check your house for safety right from the more obvious safeguards (like using fire and heater guards) to less obvious precautions like filling the bath with cold water first.
- 2 *Know* what a child does at various stages of his growth.
- 3 *Teach* your child the dangers when he's old enough to understand.



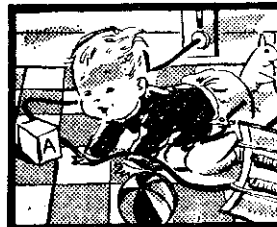
BABY

Baby can easily suffocate in his cot or pram. There is a safe way to tuck him in. Your Plunket, District or Public Health Nurse will show you. She'll also advise how to act if he should choke on food or small objects.



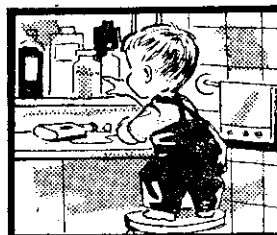
THE "POPPED-DOWN" BABY

The "popped-down" baby puts everything into his mouth. Don't leave pins, matches, buttons or any oddments within his reach. Discard toys with sharp edges.



THE CRAWLER

The crawler clutches hanging flexes and tablecloths, feels and tries everything. Instal a kettle-guard. Make pot-cupboards safe for his rummaging by clearing out sharp utensils and cleaning fluids.



UP OFF ALL-FOURS

Up off all-fours he's the Great Explorer. Nothing is safe from his curiosity or climbing. Lock up pills and poisons. Guard stairs and windows lest he fall.

Ask your District Health Office for a Check-your-home-for-safety list.