

Rowena Jackson Returns

IT is three years since Rowena Jackson (right) last visited New Zealand. She came here as a rising soloist from the Sadler's Wells Ballet to perform at the Auckland Festival. The intervening years have confirmed the high promise she then showed, and she returns to her homeland with an established reputation as a star of Royal Ballet. On this visit Miss Jackson is again partnered by a fellow New Zealander, Bryan Ashbridge, who has also achieved eminence at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

During her Auckland season Miss Jackson was as busy as any visiting artist is ever likely to be for, in addition to rehearsing and presenting with her company two programmes in a week, she had many private engagements with relatives and friends. She did, however, have time to be interviewed by Cherry Raymond at 1YA, and there she spoke of her early life in Invercargill and Auckland, and of the highlights in her career. The recordings from the interview have been compiled by Miss Raymond as a *Portrait from Life*, and this biographical programme will be broadcast by all YA and YZ stations on Wednesday, July 17, in the Women's Sessions at 11.0 a.m.

Rowena Jackson is quite unspoiled by her phenomenal success. To a Sydney columnist she cheerfully admitted that her favourite meal was still New Zealand roast lamb and mint sauce, with a milk pudding to follow, and that it was on such food that she was brought up. Even in London Miss Jackson enjoys New Zealand-style cooking in the flat she shares with her mother. There, too, when she has the time to spare from her dancing, she pursues her only hobby—painting in oils.

From the time that she won a Royal Academy of Dancing scholarship in 1941, Rowena Jackson was determined to become a ballerina. Even at the age of 12, when Anton Dolin saw her dance, she had marked out for herself the career she would follow. But for the intervention of the Second World War she would have travelled to London to study. But it was not until 1946 that she joined the Sadler's Wells School and began her advanced training. In 1947 Miss Jackson and Bryan Ashbridge won the Adeline Genée Gold Medal Competition and in the same year she became a member of the Sadler's Wells *corps de ballet* at the Royal Opera House. In subsequent years she toured with the ballet the United States, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Sweden, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal and Holland.

In speaking of her rapid rise as a soloist Miss Jackson told Cherry Raymond that it was Frederick Ashton who noticed her ability. One of the other girls in the *corps de ballet*, having heard she could do 150 *touffés en tournant* without a break, challenged her to repeat the feat. And it was while doing this that Mr Ashton joined the spectators and discovered her technical skill. In *Les Patineurs* her dancing was noticed for the first time. Then, in the finest traditions of the theatre, the prima ballerina fell sick, Miss Jackson relates, and when the young dancer from New Zealand took her place at one minute's notice, it brought the house down. Since 1953, when she danced the dual part of *Odette-Odile* in *Swan Lake*, Rowena Jackson has danced as a ballerina.

Following her New Zealand tour Miss Jackson will begin a five-month tour of the United States, and in the latter part of next year she hopes to accompany the Royal Ballet on its visit to Russia.



Talks on Papua

PAPUA, one of the most rugged and difficult colonial territories in the Commonwealth, was recently visited by Bruce Broadhead, rural broadcasts officer at 1YA. Now returned to New Zealand after a year's travel in the South Pacific and Australia, Bruce has recorded four talks about the geography of Papua, its people and their customs, its agriculture and administration. The talks are to be broadcast by all YA and YZ stations on Thursdays at 9.15 p.m., starting on July 18.

In two months Bruce Broadhead covered a great deal of ground in Papua, travelling by aircraft, patrol launch, canoe and on foot. What he found most interesting was the diversity of the native people which poses many problems for the administrators. The villagers have virtually no common bond between them, and some 500 languages or dialects are spoken. Among the people almost every stage of human development is represented—from the stone age onwards.

Although the Australian Government is developing the territory as quickly as possible, political advancement depends on the Papuans' standard of education and, Bruce Broadhead says, this standard is still very low.

LEFT: An Australian administrator discusses the problems of Papuan villagers in the Kokoda district

N.Z. LISTENER, JULY 12, 1957.