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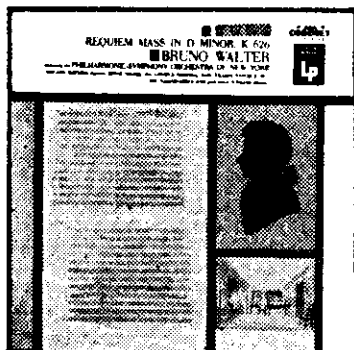
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# Open Microphone

STILL only in her early 20's, the young Wellington pianist Lola Johnson was eight, she tells us, when she first broadcast, in Aunt Molly's *Children's Session*, from 2YA. "I had then been

### SHE STARTED AT FIVE

learning the piano for three years, since I started with my mother when I was five, and a year later Jocelyn Walker became my teacher," she says. "I broadcast several times in the *Children's Session*, but I was 16 when I began to broadcast in the evenings."

By that time Miss Johnson, set on a musical career, had left school to give all her time to study. Her teacher was L. D. Austin. In 1952 she completed her L.R.S.M., and was awarded a Government bursary for overseas study. Before leaving New Zealand she did a series of broadcasts from studios around the country.

"I'd decided to study in Australia as my father was ill, but I was away only a few weeks when he became so much worse that I had to return," she explains. "Since he died I have done part-time work and taken a few pupils. But I don't want to become too involved in teaching, so I'm limiting my activities there. Even so, it's very hard to fit in as much playing as I would like to do." Miss Johnson still wants to go overseas for further study, but her plans for this, she says, are less important than her plans for her marriage to Laurence Lancaster.

Lola Johnson recently made two recordings for one of the big recording companies—a 10-inch L.P. of shorter pieces for the piano, and a 45 r.p.m. disc of Chopin's "Revolutionary" Etude and F Sharp Major Impromptu, the Schumann-Liszt "Spring Night" and Caprice, by Sibelius. Two recent recitals were at Canterbury University College at the invitation of Dr Vernon Griffiths, and at Masterton for the Masterton Music Society. "I was rather nervous about the Masterton recital, for I had the impression there was not much interest in music there," she says. "So I was delighted to find a more than capacity audience that was very enthusiastic."

## NEWS OF BROADCASTERS ON AND OFF THE RECORD

I've since heard that there had been some talk of selling the piano, but that this has now stopped."

Miss Johnson has been working lately on some programmes for broadcasting. The first of these, on the work of Carl Czerny, the Austrian piano teacher, and the composers he influenced, will be heard from 2YA on Sunday, July 28, and August 4; and in September Miss Johnson will broadcast on the 50th anniversary of the death of Greig.



Spencer Digby photograph  
**LOLA JOHNSON**  
Hardly enough time for playing

many short stories, including one which went into the Oxford collection and was highly rated by the *Sydney Bulletin* and *The Times Literary Supplement*, and he expects to have a collection brought out in England soon.

### VIRTUOSO

As a playwright he has won a number of awards and will be especially well remembered from the newspaper controversy about *The Bonds of Love*. One of two full-length plays he finished not long ago is now being produced by the New Zealand Players. Composition is another of his interests. An operetta, *The Licensed Victualler*, won its section of the British Drama League Festival in Wellington two years ago, and since then has been produced up and down the country. As a producer he has gained considerable experience with first performances of his own plays, and his production of Menotti's opera *The Medium* for the New Zealand Opera Company was highly praised. Unity Theatre patrons will remember Bruce Mason the actor as Flamenio in *The White Devil* a few years ago, and he was Gregers Werle in *The Wild Duck*, which Unity took to the Auckland Festival in 1953. He is also a pianist of talent, who played all the incidental music for the New Zealand Players' production of *Dandy Dick*. All this might seem enough to most people, but Mr Mason has also ranged widely as a critic and hopes to bring out a collection of criticism soon. He is married, with three children, and his wife is a doctor in practice in Wellington. In office hours he is Public Relations Officer for the New Zealand Forest Service.



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