



PAUL LESTRE



BARBARA SCOTT

VARIETY STARS

National Stations Present Top New Zealand Talent

BEGINNING on August 19, the National Division of the NZBS is to present on Saturday evenings a series of 17 programmes under the general title of *Variety Round-up*. This is the first time that the National Division has tackled variety on a large scale, and it will give most New Zealand towns a chance to show off their talent. With the exception of Greymouth and Nelson, every New Zealand centre with a radio station is taking part and presenting an individual programme. Auckland and Wellington, being larger than most others, will have two programmes each.

The planning of the series began in May. Each programme is to be a live production—a complete unit with a studio audience taking part; not just a collection of recorded items; and each programme will begin and end with the musical theme "Home Town." As well as music, however, comedy will be provided by such people as Harry Taylor and Vic Viggers; and besides such well-known names as Dorothy McKegg (on this week's cover), Pat McMinn, Wendy Adams, Vincente Major, Patrick Murdoch, the Tumbleweeds and the Bob Bradford Quartet, an endeavour is being made to include new or little-known artists who should prove popular in the future. Newcomers in this category are the Three Deuces—a vocal trio that will be new even to listeners in their home-town of Auckland. Within ten or so days of being broadcast by YA and YZ stations, the *Variety Round-up* programmes will be rebroadcast from the X stations.

There seems every reason to expect that there will be variety between programme and programme, as well as between individual items. Rotorua, for instance, is to have an entirely Maori contribution, Hamilton will include a boys'



IAN MORTON and SHIRLEY MANSON
A husband-and-wife team

choir and have their whole programme recorded in the Waikato Military Camp, while Christchurch has an interlude in the middle which is surrounded by mystery. It is entitled "Presenting the Leaders," but just what sort of leaders, Christchurch has not yet disclosed. It is not known yet whether Dunedin will play the theme tune "Home Town" on the bagpipes—but it looks as if each

centre will have its own characteristic approach to the programme.

The first *Variety Round-up* programme will come from Auckland. With the largest metropolitan population on which to draw for talent, first-class facilities in the Radio Theatre and long experience in live-show entertainment, the Auckland organisers are expected to set a standard which other centres will find hard to beat. As producer Don Patton told *The Listener*, it's not so much a question of finding sufficient artists to give two programmes as to select the best from the long list in his address book. For Auckland probably has more professional variety performers than the other three main centres put together. Not that this makes Mr Patton's task any easier because, as he says, it's the quality of the performance that counts.

There will be no dress rehearsal of the Auckland show and this should make for spontaneity. Most of the artists in the first programme are experienced entertainers with established reputations for their stage, radio and recording work. Sheet anchor of the team will be the Crombie Murdoch Trio who will accompany the Stardusters, Pat McMinn and other well-known artists. But most listeners will be hearing Paul Lestre for the first time. He is a recent arrival from England where he played the violin and saxophone with many leading dance bands. He also played the viola as a member of the Royal Philharmonic and BBC Symphony Orchestras. Then there's Barbara Scott, a jazz pianist from America, who has lately been attracting attention playing in an atmosphere-plus-food restaurant. And there's the Auckland husband-and-wife team Ian Morton and Shirley Manson. Ian is a baritone and Shirley a novelty pianist and each has a solo spot in the first *Round-up*. Shirley is also Ian's accompanist.

The compere of the Auckland programmes will be Rex Sayers.

★ NEW FACES ★

EARTHA KITT of the smouldering voice has come a long way from a South Carolina farm, and one of the stopping places on her route was a Broadway show called *New Faces of 1952*, a revue which as a film and recording has aroused some interest here. On Saturday, August 10, *Theatre of Music* will play some of the songs for this show from the YAs, 3YZ and 4YZ.

This revue is one of a series of *New Faces* which Leonard Sillman has presented on Broadway since 1934. In 1952 the new faces were brought together from places as far apart as Istanbul (Eartha Kitt) and South Africa (Bill Lautner), although only one was not American. This was Robert Clary, a diminutive French singer with a somewhat larger voice. His fellow stars included Alice Ghostley and Virginia de Luce.

It is an intimate revue with sophisticated ideas in the songs and sketches allied to some very attractive tunes—a pretty good setting for Miss Kitt (right), who is rather sophisticated, and attractive enough (as one reviewer put it) to make one feel like an iron filing when the magnet goes past. Since *New Faces* she has become a top-ranking cabaret star whose other activities have included acting in straight drama (*The Valiant* on BBC television and *Mrs Patterson* on Broadway), and writing her autobiography (*Thursday's Child*).

