



If you go on the air once a week with about 30 children in an ordinary suburban classroom you are sure to run up against occasional unrehearsed "incidents," but to Keith Newson they seem just part of a week's work. Explaining to us that this year the Thursday singing class in Broad-

RADIO CLASS casts to Schools is heard from a classroom at Heaton Intermediate School, Christchurch, instead of from a studio at 3YA, he recalled one or two of the incidents that had threatened to upset the broadcasts. "During one broadcast," he said, "I was playing the piano accompaniment while the class was singing, when the wooden panel on the piano between the pedals and the keyboard fell out on to my legs." Mr Newson went on playing while the technician removed the panel. Another day when the usual notice saying that the broadcast was on hadn't been hung on the door, it suddenly opened with a creak which was heard over the air, and a boy walked in. "He stopped short, gazed around bewildered at the microphones, technicians and radio class, and just stood there," said Mr Newson. "While I went on playing with my right hand, I waved him away with my left and made faces at him to go out. At last he did, with more creaking of the door."

Mr Newson said that the Headmaster at Heaton Intermediate, Mr W. Grant, had cheerfully agreed to the slight disorganisation of the school routine which inevitably occurs when a broadcast is on. For instance, on broadcast days the electrically-controlled hooter which takes the place of a school bell at Heaton Street cannot be sounded as it would go on the air. Nevertheless, Mr Newson feels it is a good thing for listening teachers and children that the broadcasts come from a schoolroom. "The children in the radio class are

as lively as any other boys and girls before and after the broadcasts," he said, "but while we are on the air they are quiet and most attentive. Most of the children play instruments as well as sing. More than 90,000 children throughout New Zealand use the singing lesson broadcasts, and I must say it's very sobering to realise that so many people are depending on the lessons. It's certainly a big class to teach—the biggest I've ever had!—but the class and I enjoy it."

Keith Newson is not, of course, a newcomer to Broadcasts to Schools, for in recent years he has shared "Rhythm for Juniors" with Jean Hay. His wider broadcasting experience goes back 30 years or more to his boyhood, when as a violinist he joined his brothers, pianist Noel and cellist Geoffrey, in one of the first instrumental trios to broadcast from 3YA. "The 'firsts,'" he recalls, "were photographed for 3YA's album of artists which eventually became so dated that it was known as the Rogues' Gallery." Noel Newson was, of course, one of New Zealand's finest pianists when he died in 1944. Geoffrey Newson, now of NZBS Head Office Programmes, is a well-known double-bass player in the Capital.

A student of the violin when he was seven, and later of the piano, Keith Newson went to school in Christchurch and later to the Teachers' College there and to Canterbury University College, where he graduated B.A. and Mus.Bac. His teachers have included Dr Vernon Griffiths and Ernest Jenner, whom he succeeded three years ago as Lecturer in Music at Christchurch Teachers' College. Mr Newson has studied and taught in Europe and England and last year was chosen to represent the Education Department at a Unesco seminar on music in education at Melbourne. His musical activities in Christchurch



KEITH NEWSON and, above, Mr Newson conducting the radio class at Heaton Intermediate School

as conductor, performer and lecturer have been extremely varied, and throughout his working life he has taken a keen interest in music in schools. He has been an orchestral player for 25 years and a choral singer for 20 years. A recent musical occasion that Christchurch people will remember well was the open-air concert by Christchurch choirs and the Municipal Band which he conducted in Hagley Park in February as part of the Floral Festival.

Mr Newson likes to relax over a good detective story. As for gardening, he admitted he was almost as good at dodging it as his brother Geoffrey, who once said that one of his interests was "avoiding anything to do with gardening all the year round." "However," Keith Newson admitted, "I have to do a certain amount to keep my section in order."

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