

DRAMA

Shaw & Sherriff

SHAW'S treatment of the brief encounter between the Serpent of old Nile and the greatest Roman General of them all will be heard next week when the YCs broadcast the NZBS production of *Caesar and Cleopatra* on Friday, November 13.

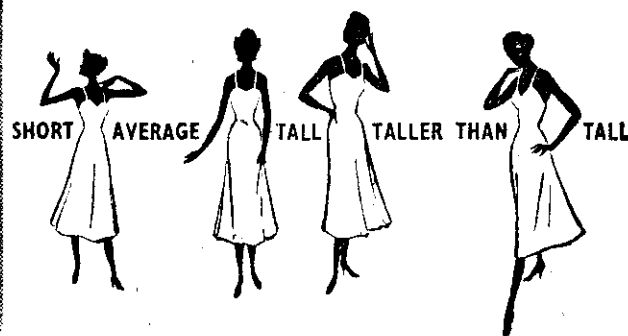
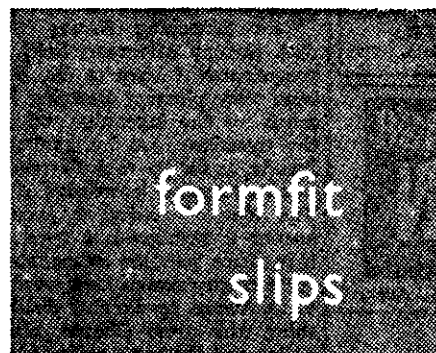
When Shaw used characters already alive in Shakespeare he was careful in a preface to explain that he was not trying to improve on the Elizabethan, only that historians since his day had seen Caesar in a new light, and Shaw wanted to present the new man. His figure is no traditionally chivalrous statesman-commander. "The really interesting question is whether I am right in assuming that the way to produce an impression of greatness is by exhibiting a man, not as mortifying his nature by doing his duty . . . but as simply doing what he wants to do," Shaw said in a note to the play.

This Caesar has no illusions whatsoever. His decisions are dictated by self-interest, but a self-interest which takes into account other people's emotions and reactions and cold-bloodedly calculates how to use them to best advantage. What Shaw describes as "originality" thus gives Caesar an "air of frankness, generosity and magnanimity by enabling him to estimate the value of truth, money or success in any particular instance quite independently of convention or moral generalisation." But Caesar has also been created human, with a very dramatic sense of the ridiculous and desire for adventure that make his attempt to subdue Egypt and teach his very feminine captive-Queen a little of his statecraft a fine comedy as well as an exposition of Shavian ideas.

In this production by William Austin, Joanna Derrill takes the part of the Queen growing wise, while her husband, Antony Groser, is tutoring Caesar. Brigid Lenihan is heard as the Queen's nurse, Ftatateeta.

Two plays produced in Auckland by Earle Rowell will also be heard in the coming week's programmes. A Dakota aircraft in flight between Hong Kong and Tokyo is the setting of *The Night My Number Came Up*, which was adapted for broadcasting by Gilbert Thomas from the screen play by R. C. Sherriff. There is ample scope for strong characterisation as the plot reveals the reactions of the passengers and crew to a dream dreamt by a naval officer. He has foretold disaster for the flight and tension builds, as mile by mile, the sequence of the dream comes true. The play will be broadcast in Sunday Showcase, from all ZBs at 9.15 p.m. on November 15. Leading roles are taken by Laurence Hepworth, C. A. Hexter Stabbins, Earle Rowell, Rae Pritchard, Athol Coats, Alan Carlisle, John Thomson and Peter Morgan.

Christmas Tour, by Philip Levene, is about a stage company and its actor-manager, who are touring the Midlands with Dickens's *Christmas Carol*. The actor-manager who plays the part of Scrooge is in fact a remarkably Scrooge-like character, who finds that the moral of the story has an application to his own way of life. The cast includes Antony Groser, Marie Stuttard, Athol Coats, Edward Petherbridge, Louise Harris, Molly Donald, Antony Thomson, Eddie Hegan and Yvonne Lawley. *Christmas Tour* will be broadcast by 1XN and 2YA on Wednesday, November 11.



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