

the urgent need for improving the film taste of children and developing their discriminatory faculties; but those present were warned that if the cinema at present constituted a challenge to the teaching of English and other subjects, the coming of television would offer an infinitely greater one. When Dr. Margaret Mead told *The Listener* that television amounted to bringing movies into the home, she added that it was bad only to the extent that the things on it were bad. But may not the very form of the new medium give rise to a problem of profound social portent? For whereas, in adjusting itself to radio's invasion of the home, the human organism seems to have developed a kind of defence-mechanism which enables many people to listen without actually hearing, and so to continue other activities during broadcasts ("music while you work," and all that), it is doubtful if our organ of sight can be so conditioned that we shall be able to see without looking.



THE NOSE

Whatever impact television may have on films, it will not put Jimmy Durante's nose out of joint. Appearing for the first time in TV recently, he proved as popular there with viewers as he is on the screen

Purcell's "Fairy Queen"

WHEN Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was presented at the time of the Restoration, Samuel Pepys described it as "the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life." This may have been the general opinion, for when the play was put on the stage in 1692 it was in an "improved" form. Shakespeare's words had been curtailed or turned into doggerel, and each act ended with a largely irrelevant but spectacular entertainment, with music by Henry Purcell. This "opera," *The Fairy Queen*, was really a play with a series of masques. It was a great success, and when it was revived in the following year Purcell provided some additional songs. After his death in 1695 the score was lost and not found till 1903. Concert performances were given in the years following its rediscovery. Then in 1921 *The Fairy Queen* was again produced on the stage—for the first time since the 17th Century. It has been produced several times since, in England and on the Continent. One of the most memorable of its presentations in England was at Covent Garden in 1946, when it was adapted by the late Constant Lambert. Last February this version was broadcast in the BBC Third Programme, and in a shortened form it is now to be heard by New Zealand listeners. Those taking part are Joan Alexander and Ena Mitchell (sopranos), Nancy Evans (mezzo-soprano), Janet Fraser (contralto), René Soames (tenor) and Trevor Anthony (bass), with Boris Ord (harp-

sichord), the BBC Chorus, and the Philharmonia Orchestra under Constant Lambert.

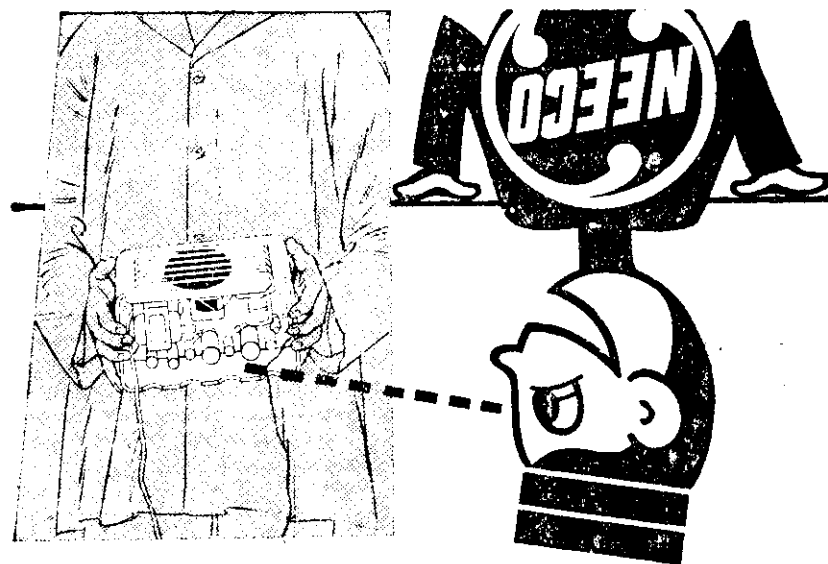
Harold Rutland has said that "the purely dramatic element is largely absent in Purcell's share in the work; the masques, which alone call for music, are essentially either decorative or spectacular. Yet limited though it is in emotional range, *The Fairy Queen*, with its captivating tunes and harmonic originality, has a freshness and charm that Purcell never surpassed."

Station 4YC will broadcast *The Fairy Queen* at 7.0 p.m. on Sunday, December 23, and listeners will hear it later from other stations.



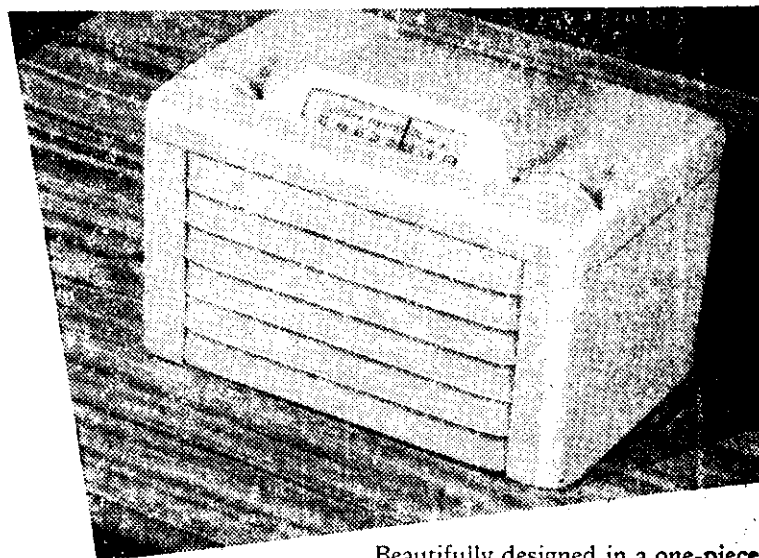
CONSTANT LAMBERT

N.Z. LISTENER, DECEMBER 14, 1951.



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