

a song in the *Annie Get Your Gun* style, "Got to Put the Shoes on Willy," with echoes of the plantation, "Your Feet's Too Big," and a jazzed up derivative "Get Your Boots Laced Papa." Longer sessions including perhaps more than one idea would give variety to the lighter side of radio entertainment.

Behind the Curtain

(ONE of the greatest difficulties encountered by the individual in his search for the truth regarding international affairs is to know whom to trust. What, for example, is the truth concerning life behind the Iron Curtain? Of course, there are people with strong views who assert that everything written against the Soviet Union is malicious propaganda and others who think every favourable review is a cover to evil doings. Personally, I listen with greatest attention to those who bring me a balanced verdict, or, to be more precise, who present their verdict in a balanced fashion. In regard to the latter, scarcely anything I have so far read or listened to carried quite the conviction of R. A. Close's *Friends Behind the Curtain*, a BBC talk broadcast from 3YC. A member of the British Council in Prague, Mr. Close quietly explained the impediments to the fulfilment of his task. True, the picture he drew of the surreptitious meetings he had to make with his friends must be balanced against a hypothetical Czech cultural ambassador in England or New Zealand. However, I do not think such a man would meet quite the feeling of domestic restraint which hangs like a pall over daily life in Prague.

—Westcliff

A Changing Pattern

MANY of us have come to take the *ZB Book Reviews* for granted. Over a long period they have undoubtedly proved their value, and it would be hard to imagine Sunday evenings without them. Yet any pattern, however good, can become stale in time; a change is salutary, if only to make us realise how good the normal approach is. Recent developments in the *ZB Book Reviews* seem to me to have been for the better. Having only one chairman for the month does give greater continuity and a kind of personality to each cluster; also we hear fewer trashy novels discussed than in earlier days. But the greatest advance, I feel, has been in the grouping together, to make up a single session, of books of the same or related kinds. A team of University teachers reviewing works of semi-academic interest, a set of experts dealing with some war books, a group of works on music and poetry, a haversack of travel books—these have made up programmes heard recently. The combination of such a system with the usual "mixed bag" brings the session closer to the atmosphere of a library and takes it further away from the book-seller's remainder bin.

Creative Artist

THE services broadcasting can render to New Zealand writing are indicated by the recent first publication of important poems on the radio and the commissioning of occasional verse. A further

avenue was opened up by a 1YC talk from Frank Sargeson on writing a novel. This admirable session showed that Mr. Sargeson is prepared to give to a radio script the same kind of attention he gives to his short stories. His avoidance of literary jargon, and his simplicity of statement made for easy listening; I received the same deceptive impression of effortlessness as his writing gives. Despite the inevitable "I," there was no direct or implied egotism here; although Mr. Sargeson spoke of his own problems and development, the effect was to lead us to a general consideration of the nature of the creative artist. This is, I think, the most direct presentation Mr. Sargeson has yet made of his writing "philosophy." It was not unprovocative; his analogy between a child making mud-pies and the absorbed artist suggested to me conclusions other than the ones he drew from it. But it was an absorbing, and very human, talk. I hope we hear more like it; yet I doubt whether we have many writers who would have as much to say as lucidly as Frank Sargeson.

Pilate's Dilemma

THE BBC adaptation of Dixon and Morrah's *Caesar's Friend* (1YC) is, dramatically, the best Good Friday play I have heard since the relevant episode of Dorothy Sayers's *The Man Born To Be King*. Curiously enough, although, so far as memory serves, *Caesar's Friend* antedates the Sayers play by several years, there is much in it which recalls her much-discussed treatment of Biblical material. The easy colloquial language, which gave added point to rather than detracted from the power of the story, the analysis of Judas's motives, the weight given to the politics of Jesus's condemnation, the



piercing through the accepted stereotypes of Pilate and Caiaphas to the human qualities of each—all this strongly reminded me of the justly-celebrated cycle. There is, of course, a difference in emphasis; in *Caesar's Friend*, despite the reverent treatment of the religious implications, we are left thinking of Pilate's cruel dilemma, with sympathy for him, rather than of the larger meaning of the Crucifixion. Michael Horden as Pilate and Ralph Truman as Caiaphas gave resounding performances; I enjoyed especially Caiaphas's nice line in irony. And this Pilate was both more probable and more complex than Anatole France's forgetful Procurator.

—J.C.R.

POETRY and poetry reading have been much on the air in Otago lately. Listeners have heard from 4YC a discussion on the reading of poetry, and from the same station at 8.0 p.m. on Saturday, May 10, works of the grand master himself—a selection of Shakespeare's sonnets—will be broadcast. The reader will be John V. Trevor, lecturer in drama at the University of Otago, and the programme, the first of four, has been arranged and will be introduced by Charles Brasch, editor of *Landfall*.

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