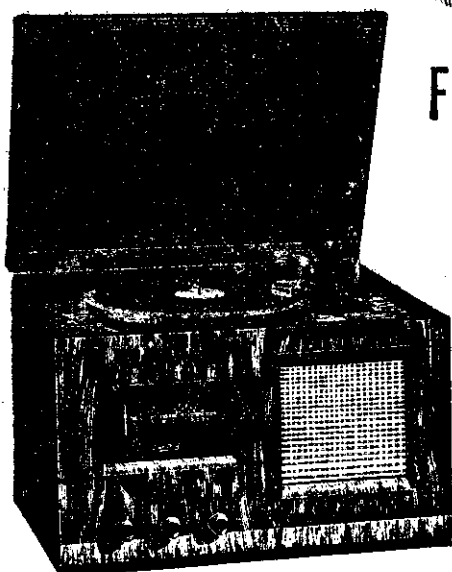


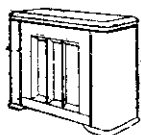
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Radio Review

LOUD AND CLEAR

ALTHOUGH in general I do not like a blaring radio there are times when I can thoroughly enjoy it very loud, because the vitality of the work is able to use the volume. Approaching my modest house one nor'-west Sunday morning I heard the singing from the gate, swelling and soaring with a great controlled voluptuousness. It was in one way incredible that such splendour and magnificence should be flowing out into the small sitting room without forcing the walls out to the dimension of the song itself. For a time existence was grander that it had been and even after the singing stopped the world shrank only slowly back to its accustomed size, and then not without once again reminding me of what imagination means to life. The song which I burst upon in the middle was Handel's "Largo," the singer Kirsten Flagstad, and the orchestra was conducted by Warwick Braithwaite in 32B's interesting session *Styled for Sunday*.

North of the Border

AMONG the many discussion panels I have listened to from time to time "How Different are the Scots?" ranks high. Not only were the members of the panel well informed, but they delivered themselves with a minimum of "er's" and "well-er-I-think's." So far as an actual definition of the Scot was concerned, what emerged was problematical and even more so as summed up by Wynford Vaughan Thomas, who set the near contradictions side by side, e.g., the "hard-headedness of the Scot" and his love of poetry. The discussion raised many interesting sidelights: the fact that while the Highlander is thought to be poetic, the border is the country of ballads; that while the cultivation of Gaelic may seem parochial, the English who learn only one language and expect everybody to speak it are more in error; and the fact that more Gaelic is spoken in Canada than in Scotland. In a word it was the kind of panel one learns much from, and not simply about Scotland. And as a friend remarked, thinking of the temperamental incompatibility between the two races, "It was a touch of genius to put a Welshman in the chair."

—Westcliff

Poem with Music

IN the case of new music or verse, what is worth hearing is worth immediate repetition, and in this and other respects, the programme of Alistair Campbell's *Elegy* (heard from 1YC) was something of a model. The programme opened with a helpful introduction by John Summers, and the sequence of poems was read by William Austin with great sympathy and skill. Douglas Lilburn's setting was also rendered clearly and feelingly by Gerald Christeller and Frederick Page; and this was repeated a couple of nights later, giving the listener an excellent opportunity to become

acquainted with the whole work. Not that the *Elegy* is "difficult" poetry: it also invites musical setting; and Mr. Lilburn has accomplished this with such complete understanding that one can no longer imagine the verse and the music standing apart. The poetry itself was already something that grew on acquaintance; the setting, on second hearing, left a complete acceptance of its sadness, its resolution and its wild and sombre landscape.

Magic from Haydn

I SUPPOSE that, in one week's listening, a large space is taken up by recorded music which, being familiar, can be heard not critically, but for pleasure. In a week when the 1YC programmes were rich in such things, it was a pleasure to hear Strauss's *Domestic Symphony*, that work for which (as Neville Cardus puts it) he "put on his carpet slippers and velvet jacket," and which the same critic finds "curiously underrated." On Friday night we had Antill's rowdy and enlivening *Corroboree*; and later, Vaughan Williams's *Sixth Symphony*, with its climax of cold, massive, lunar beauty. But most delightful—and new, to me—was Haydn's *Eight Little Pieces for Mechanical Clocks*. These evoked an enchanted world of mechanical puppets, in which jewelled nightingales piped for the emperor, wooden cuckoos fluted, painted Tyrolean dancers clodhopped, carved grenadiers filed stiffly past, and toy merry-go-rounds turned *la ronde* in miniature. How pleasant it would be to set one's watch by these piping voices, or awaken to hear them chirping away drowsily in the dark.

—M.K.J.

Full and Rich

I THINK I enjoyed Edward VII even more than Victoria in the current series *Throne and People* from 2YA. The radio biographies of Victoria have been many, those of Edward few, so that in this programme we are given more of the Throne and less of the People. Norman Shelley's Edward VII comes over full and rich—the realist, the bon viveur; the Peacemaker, the sportsman, all co-existing in a character that emerges as a kind of Merrie Monarch, gone right. Unfortunately, the end of the programme was marred by the ecclesiastical tone adopted by the narrator, Nicholas Hannen, which he doubtless thought appropriate to the theme of sunset glow. But it seemed strangely out of keeping with the robustness of the earlier part.

Theatre People

THE Women's Session from 2YA on May 5 turned out to be a perfectly integrated programme—half an hour solidly devoted to Theatre. *The Listener* had prepared us for the two major items, Beatrice Ashton's monthly talk on plays and players, and John Casson's fourth talk in the series *A Professional View of the Theatre*. Sandwiched between them was the surprise item, an interview on their home ground with members of the New Zealand Players, notably Raymond Boyce, the designer, and Mrs. Marchant, the wardrobe mistress. Its revelation of the meticulous search for accuracy in costume detail and design (whalebone for Elizabethan corsets, steel for Victorian) was something of a shock to me. Anyway, it left me suitably

N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 22, 1953.