

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS, ON AND OFF THE RECORD,

By *Swarf*

Mozart's Mass in C Minor by the BBC Choir and Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham, and the singing of the Metro-



N.P.S. photograph

DORA DRAKE

To sing with the orchestra

politan Opera star, Kirsten Flagstad, in Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* at Covent Garden. "Why she gave up," said Miss Drake, "I just don't know." At her Dunedin appearance with the National Orchestra Dora Drake will sing "Breeze of the Night" from Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, and "Say No More That I Am Cruel," from *Don Giovanni*. On June 13 she will appear again with the National Orchestra at Auckland, taking the soprano roles in a special operatic programme arranged as part of Auckland's Music Festival. During June she will be heard in studio broadcasts from National stations in the four main centres.

★

NORA SANDERSON, one of the group of New Zealand writers whose stories are being told in the Christchurch radio series, *Slightly Out of True*, is a farmer's daughter. She is also the wife of a Methodist minister who retired recently because of throat trouble, and who is now working in Christchurch as a furniture salesman. Women's magazines have published many of her contributions; she has written one book, and made a recording of a children's story for a well-known gramophone company. *Slightly Out of True* is broadcast in 3YA's Women Session every Thursday afternoon, and repeated by 3YC the same evening. Nora Sanderson's story, called "Next, Please!" will be heard on June 11.

★

WHEN he was a pupil at the Southland Boys' High School, John Thompson started to learn singing. He got on very well. On Coronation Day he will be among the members of the Coronation Choir in Westminster Abbey. John is the only son of Superintendent R. Thompson, Superintendent of Police for the Wellington District.

While on the staff of Rongotai Boys' College John Thompson was awarded a bursary by the New Zealand Government to further his singing studies. That was two years ago.

CORONATION SINGERS

Wellington theatre-goers will remember him for his part as the male lead in *The Vagabond King* in 1950. He also sang in programmes called *Musical Miniatures*, with Alex Lindsay's Orchestra and Fanny McDonald's Strings, which were broadcast by 2YA, and he gave many solo recitals. Early in 1951 he made a tour of southern radio stations when his recitals included modern art songs by Benjamin Britten and other British composers,



Speaker High John Thompson

will be interested to hear that after study at the English School of Opera, his voice was developed into a robust tenor. Another Wellington singer who will be in the Coronation Choir is Jean Curtis, contralto, who has often been heard from 2YA.

excerpts from Mozart operas, songs by Richard Strauss, Grieg, Vaughan Williams, Roger Quilter, and early Italian songs by Pergolesi and Monteverdi. Listeners who knew Thompson as a baritone

FAREWELL TO AUCKLAND'S KNAVES

AUCKLAND'S clever entertainers *The Knaves* will make their farewell appearance at 1YA on Thursday, May 28, at 8.5 p.m. Two members have found their business affairs taking up more and more time. Their secretary, Buster Mowbray, said last week: "We thought it best to wind up while *The Knaves* are at the peak of their popularity. There is a feeling that we have reached a standard that amateurs with so many other calls on their time could not hope to maintain indefinitely, and we are signing off before there is any tendency to go down hill." *The Knaves* were formed seven years ago on the suggestion of Lee Humphreys, and gave their first concert as a group in the Radio Theatre at 12B where Bob Bothamley, officer in charge of the NZBS Dance Section, heard them and provided the encouragement they needed to keep together and go ahead. The first group was Phil Maguire, Lee Humphreys, Claude Ker, Clive Arndt, and Buster Mowbray (who was then playing the guitar). In 1949 they toured New Zealand for the NZBS. Arndt retired and Tom Yandall (double bass) joined. Later Dick Hobday teamed up as guitarist and Mowbray stuck to singing. Last year Maguire went to Australia, and is now making a name for himself at 4MK Queensland. Peter Young, a 1YA announcer, became a *Knave*, while Bob Ewing took on the double bass. *The Knaves* have sung in almost every

major show in Auckland, and have given two concerts in the Auckland prison. They work on a system of everybody contributing ideas and all problems are solved by discussion among themselves. All their radio scripts have been written by Wally Ransom, who was also their compère. They usually work to a plan of four songs per programme, each aimed at a different section of the audience. Once they have selected a song for their specialty—a funny number—they pull it to bits, juggle with it, and re-assemble it with all sorts of additions and startling results. Usually the piece chosen is one that has been worked to death in its original form. *The Knaves* used to carry with them box loads of sound effects, including cowbells, tins of nails, whistles and hammers; but lately they've been relying on mouth effects. Gunshots, bird noises, train and boat whistles are all done with the mouth, although an empty beer bottle often comes in handy. The group began making recordings for commercial use in 1951, and they have cut 16 discs intended for New Zealand consumption. Reports of success abroad have come from England, the U.S.A., and Australia, and once they heard they had topped the hit parade in Pakistan. *The Knaves* have no idea how the recordings found their way overseas. One of their best hits with a local colour touch was:

"I'm goin' to ride the T.A.B. Trail
Because they've locked up my bookie
in Mount Eden Jail . . ."



THE KNAVES: DICK HOBDAY, WALLY RANSOM, CLAUDE KER, BUSTER MOWBRAY, LEE HUMPHREYS, PETER YOUNG and BOB EWING

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AGAIN WITH YOU"

"ISLE OF INNESFREE"

"I WENT TO
YOUR WEDDING"

"KEEP IT A SECRET"

"HIGH NOON"
"HIGH NOON"

"RED'S BOOGIE"

"I LEAVE MY HEART IN
AN ENGLISH GARDEN"

"LOVE'S ROUNDABOUT"

"AUF WIEDERSEH'N
SWEETHEART"

"BECAUSE YOU'RE MINE"

"BLUE TANGO" "I'M YOURS"

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