

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS,  
ON AND OFF THE RECORD,

By *Swarf*

there been no revolution in Russia he would not have become a virtuoso. The revolution caused an upheaval in the affairs of his family and, like many



VLADIMIR HOROWITZ  
"I will not be bought"

others, his people were quickly reduced from comfort to want. The young man realised that he had power to help them, and when he was 18 started his career as a pianist. Twenty-five years ago he made his American debut and soon became the main support of his family. For about five years after this his objective was to make his success substantial and lasting. His engagement fee trebled, and it kept rising. Soon he knew he had reached the top and then he began to listen to himself more closely than ever before. He read, studied paintings, and listened to other musicians. Rachmaninoff, whose music he had studied as a boy in Kiev, became his friend. In 1933 Horowitz played Beethoven's Emperor Concerto with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under the leadership of Toscanini, and in that December he married the conductor's daughter, Wanda.

It is reported that Horowitz has declined to appear on certain commercially sponsored radio programmes because he did not feel that their standards were high enough. "I want to be paid, but I will not be bought," he says. He knows as much about the business side of a concert pianist's life as his manager does. But he imposes limits on his earnings by accepting no more than 35 engagements a year. By doing this he feels that he can keep himself fresh and his performances spontaneous. Each day's work starts with half an hour of five-finger exercises—not the set types we suffered as children—but exercises of his own invention, for he believes that every finger must be its own master. Then he is likely to work for an hour or two on a composition that will be on his programmes. If it

gives him trouble he does not go over it again and again. He lays it aside for another day.

"I suppose," says Horowitz, "that all pianists good enough to play in public possess just about the same competence, and that is usually 95 per cent of the job. The crucial five per cent that sets you apart is personality. And if you have the wisdom to study and the luck to grow, perhaps you can achieve a personality quotient of 10 per cent. The higher the percentage of that element, the more you can project, and the greater is the magnetism of your art."

In observance of his 25 years before the American public Horowitz played with the Philharmonic early this year. The work was the Tchaikovsky B Flat Minor Concerto—the same as he had played in Carnegie Hall under Sir Thomas Beecham in 1928. On the later occasion he was contributing his services for the benefit of the Philharmonic Orchestra's pension fund. "And more important," said Howard Taubman, music editor of the *New York Times*, writing about the event, "he sought, with devout eagerness, to serve the audience and the highest artistic standards." ★

"(O)NE of the people in the *What's My Line?* radio team sounds as if she cannot be much more than a girl," writes R.J.C. (Richmond, Christchurch). "Is this so, and would you please print something about her."

BABY VOICE with photograph if possible? You're right, R.J.C. The owner of the baby voice is 20-years-old Margot Holden who, young as she is, puts some shrewd questions to the contestants and lips her way into many a good scoring posi-



MARGOT HOLDEN  
"Windmill Girl"

tion. The rest of the dossier is that she was born in Mexborough, Yorkshire, and educated at Pontefract, where her family lives. On leaving school she joined a touring show and later became a part of a conjuror's act. In 1948 she graduated to membership of the famous Windmill Girls and appeared with them in a number of television programmes. Margot Holden was elected "Windmill Girl of the Year" for 1951. Her colleagues in *What's My Line?* (the four ZB stations and 2ZA on Thursdays at 9.0 p.m.) are Elizabeth Allan, Jerry Desmonde and Richard Attenborough, with Bernard Braden as quiz-master.

SPECIALIST IN RADIO THRILLERS

"[T]HERE is one thing in radio thrillers about which I feel very strongly," says Martyn C. Webster (below), who has been a BBC drama producer, specialising in crime plays and thriller serials for more than 25 years: "They must be acted with complete sincerity to hold the attention of listeners." Webster was fascinated by things theatrical from his early youth. He recalls how family hat boxes used to disappear only to reappear as scenery in his most cherished possession—a model theatre. As the years progressed the lure of the stage grew stronger than ever and at 18, against the wishes and advice of everyone, he became an actor, "and I have never regretted it." In 1939 most booksellers in England were having a boom in detective stories, and he had an idea that radio ought to have its own detective. There had been many radio plays about Sherlock Holmes, Lord Peter Wimsey, and dozens of other sleuths from famous novels, but no one had created an original radio detective. He gave the idea to the programme planners, who were not very enthusiastic, but quite willing to experiment.

He then got in touch with Francis Durbridge, and for several weeks they discussed the problem of creating a character who would have the intelligence of Holmes, the whimsy of Wimsey and yet an individual character of his own. And so "Paul Temple," whose exploits have been enjoyed by thousands of New Zealand listeners, was evolved. "It's a fascinating job being a radio producer," says Webster. "All these years of it—and, as they say in the old music-hall song, 'It don't seem a day too much.'"



BBC photograph

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