

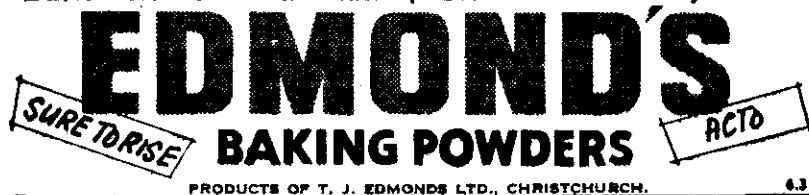
A Message to New Arrivals in New Zealand

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always keep a tin handy
in the house

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MANUFACTURED BY T. J. SMITH & NEPHEW, HULL, ENGLAND. 12A

Radio Review

PRODUCING A PLAY

IF I missed one of Robert Young's 3YA talks on producing a play, the fact that I went to the theatre on that night may to some degree atone for my negligence. The talks deserved the close attention I tried to give them, especially since one's interest is apt to narrow itself down to the psychology of acting rather than visualising the various things which either support or detract from the original power of interpretation. Mr. Young ranged right through all the producer's problems from that of choosing a play to suit his group to seeing that rehearsals do not drag on past the hour when the lonely spouse wonders when the other partner will be home. Perhaps there was an unobserved trap, not for Mr. Young, but for his listeners, when he stressed the producer's need to suit the play to his available personnel. This, in fact, sometimes leads amateur producers to cast people as themselves, more or less, thus achieving a temporary success but not inculcating the humility and sense of the emotional range of acting which in the long run must help the actor to improve his technique.

Folk Songs

MOST of us probably assume that we can place the work of art immediately, but generally speaking we are led by an informed minority whose ear or mind selects the fresh and original and discards the borrowed form. We may have liked Western songs but never have thought of them as the "folk songs of the Prairie," and Burl Ives is largely responsible for increasing our appreciation of melodies whose potential subtlety we would never have noticed. It is partly a matter, then, of having these things brought to our attention by someone whom we respect. Most of us no doubt like the Calypsos, but the fact that the BBC has given us a session of Caribbean Folk Songs sung by Cy Grant, and broadcast over 3YA, gives them a new interest. The strange but entirely modern thing about the wording of these melodies is the conjunction of simple pidgin English with tri-syllabic words

that radio and advertising so quickly spread. Words like "rectify" and "consumption" are ingeniously joggled into place in the simple rhythms, and, because they are at once odd and yet are the direct expression of the mind of the people, they give the songs their freshness.

—Westcliff

Company of Poets

THE current rehearing of *Time for Verse* (from 1YC) confirms the impression that the last programme is also the best. Beginning with the famous passage from Keats about the poet to whom "the miseries of the world are miseries and will not let him rest," it went on to give us Blake's "Holy Thursday," a passage from Wordsworth's *Prelude*, Clare's "Soldier" and Wilfred Owen's "Miners." It was a programme which held together as a whole, and in which at the same time the value of each individual poem was brought out. The passage describing Wordsworth's meeting with the old soldier begging on the road was a remarkable demonstration of the Wordsworthian virtues. There is hardly a line or a word in it that is not utterly commonplace and plain. Yet the whole effect is of sympathy for human beings raised to a kind of sublimity. It was partly the conjunction that brought out similar qualities in the Owen poem, in which the miner and the soldier merge together as types of suffering humanity. These two were magnificently read by Carleton Hobbs, making up for his recent reading of Elizabethan lyrics, well-selected but tame. One's only regret was not to hear him read "Strange Meeting," which is surely Owen's masterpiece.

Smoker's Tremors

SMOKING (from 1YC) was one of those handy, pocket-size Nesta Pain productions about topical subjects. It sketched in the usual reasons (or excuses?) for smoking—"it's me nerves"—"helps me to concentrate"—"I know it's bad for me, but . . ."—"you have to be sociable." It's nice to know that smoking has a sedative action on the brain, and increases the sugar content of the blood. But just as we are being lulled into a sense of false security, here comes the invaluable and inevitable Dr. X and his colleague, the Scots specialist, to give us the low-down. Does smoking cause smoker's cough, smoker's heart, smoker's tremor? Apparently not; anyhow, here's

"I KNOW WHAT I THINK . . ."

THE VOICE FROM ELLIS' ISLAND

WELL, this is it; we've heard the Hedda Hopper of the microphone. Anna Russell has left a trail of red faces and tingling ears round the world, tilting at the musically pretentious, wickedly parodying every style of singing from Wagnerian music-drama to folk song. After a distinguished career as leading soprano of the Ellis Island Opera Company she knows her music, inside out as it were, and gets away with murder in burlesque. Nothing escapes her shafts, some heavy, some light, and at times she scores heavily. Take this one: "For the tone-deaf singer contemporary music is the thing . . . the further off key she sings the more contemporary it sounds." No one escapes; Dinah Shore and Isobel Baillie are on the same end of the lash as Lily Pons and Joan Hammond in a series of riotous sketches. Aw, what the heck, to quote Madame Russell. This is the best thing since Alec Templeton.

—D.J.C.M.

(Readers are invited to submit comments, not more than 200 words in length, on radio programmes. A fee of one guinea will be paid after publication. Contributions should be headed "Radio Review." Unsuccessful entries cannot be returned.)