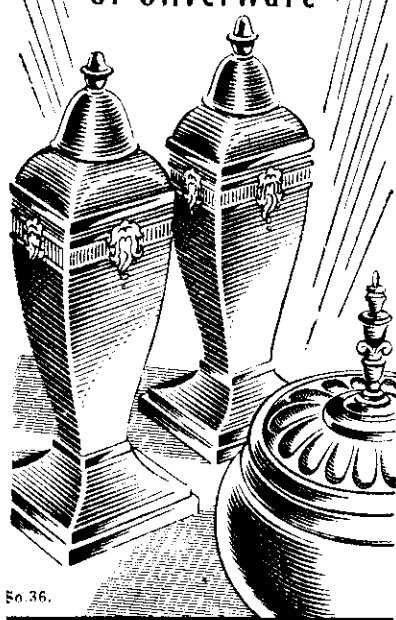


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No. 36.

AS you see by this photograph Margaret Mouchmore, one of the youngest of Melbourne's leading radio actresses, will be easy on the lens of the television camera when it gets to her



part of the world. Now playing in a serial, *The Deceiver* (4ZB, on Monday nights), she has enjoyed a remark-

Open Microphone

able rise to prominence in Australian broadcasting. It is only about four years since her first audition, and now her talents are often sought by both National and Commercial Australian producers. Margaret Mouchmore graduated from Melbourne University with a B.A. degree, majoring in English and Philosophy. For two years she was secretary of the University Dramatic Club, and a leading player in one of Melbourne's well-known theatrical groups. As a change from radio she occasionally makes a stage appearance. Recently she played Elizabeth Bennett in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

of dance music will remember that a smaller group, the Laurie Lewis Quartet, received very warm applause at the 1952 Wellington Jazz Concert.

ESME STEPHENS, the Auckland vocalist whose recording with the guitars of Buddy Kaine of the song "Between Two Trees," won such popularity in *The New Zealand Hit Parade* last year, is now back at 12B Radio Theatre after having an addition to the family—a daughter.



ESME STEPHENS

In private life Esme is Mrs. Dale Alderton, and her husband is the well-known Auckland band leader. She is currently singing with Pem Sheppard's Dance Band.

Sweet, Bell-like and British

READERS of *The Listener* have been asking Who, When, Where and How is Anna Russell. To the last two questions the answer is "Nicely, thank you," for the latest news of Miss R. is her embarkation on a series of coast-to-coast concert engagements in the U.S., performances at the Brevard Music Festival, with the New Orleans and Cincinnati Symphonies, and further recitals in the New York City Town Hall. To the first query the reply is that Anna Russell is an English soprano whose superb satire has brought a re-

newal of an almost lost form of art; to the second it is that she will be heard again from at least two NZBS stations this month—2YA, Monday, July 20, at 3.15 p.m., and 2YD, Tuesday, July 21, at 8.55 p.m.

When readers were recently confronted with the programme item, *Anna Russell Sings*—Advice on Song Selections for Concert Singers, including the following arias and art songs: Schlumpf, Ah Lover! (from *The Prince of Philadelphia*), Je n'ai pas la plume de ma Tante—they settled down to something which Owen Jensen had described in *The Listener* as "a bit of a handful." They were delighted, shocked or amused, as their mood and the artist's took them.

Born in London, the first girl child in several generations of an Indian Army career family, Anna was "incarcerated," as she puts it, in a girls' school, presented at Court, and proved a "dismal failure" in social life. On

leaving the Royal Academy of Music she started to carve out a career as a singer and pianist. One of her early engagements was to sing at a gala concert during the Coronation of the late King George VI. Miss Russell says that she used her "sweet, bell-like British soprano" in an extensive radio series, and did some "excruciating" opera and operetta touring. She has confessed that she would go home and laugh at herself as well as "cringe at the gestures and actions perpetrated and permitted on the stage."



Anna Russell went to North America and during the war she gave, for soldier entertainment and fund-raising, "take-offs" of serious recitals. Some critics have called her voice "astonishing" and "unbelievable," even "unearthly." Miss Russell's favourite among the adjectives hurled at her is "unearthly." Vocally she stops at nothing. She likes to seize on Teutonic music drama and wring its emotional contents until she leaves the composition and the audience limp. Miss Russell, who writes her own material, text and music, went to New York almost unknown, was auditioned, and persuaded to appear in a Town Hall recital. Next morning the "diva's" name was in headlines in all the Press concert reports. The recording we have heard so far was made at one of Miss Russell's actual seances at the Town Hall in New York. As one of her critics has said, "she leavens the high tension of the times with pleasant laughter and good cheer."

An Aching Back

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"A VERY pleasant broadcast" was one of the comments received by telephone at 2ZB the other day after Elsie Lloyd had interviewed a temporary visitor to New Zealand. The visitor, as I found out later, was once a clerk in the Lands and Deeds Office, serving in Christchurch, Napier and Wellington. His hobby was amateur acting, which he followed in each centre, and before joining the Armed Forces he had some professional stage experience in Australia.

THAT'S A CLEVER GIRL