

Broadcast of "The Merry Wives"

Successful Relay by 2YA and Rebroadcast by 3YA

LAST Friday evening an historical broadcast was performed by 2YA, Wellington, and 3YA, Christchurch, when two scenes from Shakespeare's famous comedy, "The Merry Wives of Windsor," were relayed from the Grand Opera House, Wellington, where the play was being performed by the Allan Wilkie Shakespearean Company.

The relay was most capably accomplished by 2YA, and rebroadcast by 3YA. This was the first occasion in New Zealand on which a Shakespearean performance by a professional company was put on the air. The transmission by 2YA and the rebroadcast by 3YA was strikingly successful, every word by the performers coming through with extraordinary clearness, thanks to the elaborate precautions by the technicians of 2YA and 3YA.

A LARGE and appreciative audience was present at the Grand Opera House, Wellington, to witness the performance of "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

The only visible indication that the players were about to be heard by a vast radio audience of over 80,000 people was the unobtrusive presence on the stage of two varnished cedar boxes placed close to the footlights on the floor of the stage between the lights and the performers. These two boxes were each placed about 15 feet from the end of

the footlights, and being right on the floor of the stage could scarcely be noticed. These boxes comprised the latest type of condenser microphones, noted for the freedom from any hissing noise which is characteristic of the older type of double-button carbon microphones.

A special telephone line from the side of the stage to the studio of 2YA, Wellington, afforded instantaneous communication with the switch-board room at the studio. The microphone lines and telephone line were very exhaustively tested during the afternoon, and only when the technicians were satisfied that the maximum results were assured were the tests concluded.

Nothing was left to chance in connection with the technical department of the relay, but the station director had also to rely on the human element. Strangely enough, the latter failed him, for, by some oversight, the relay was switched off before the third scene which had been announced to be broadcast.

This was a most unfortunate contretemps, as the two scenes which had been put on the air were incomplete without the famous "buck-basket" scene. It was like a story without a finish.

During the enactment of the delightful "letter-reading" scene by Misses Ford and Page (Miss Hunter-Watts and Miss Lorna Forbes), which was the first to be relayed, Mr. Allan Wilkie himself listened in by means of a pair of headphones connected with the relay lines. He expressed himself as well pleased with the effect. In the next scene to be broadcast—that of the Garter Inn—Mr. Wilkie took a prominent part in the role of Sir John Falstaff, with Mr. Alexander Marsh, the distinguished English actor, appearing as "Master Brook," the disguised husband of Mistress Ford.

The dialogue was crisp and clear by radio, and Sir John Falstaff's inimitable laugh and the uproarious merriment of the audience were reproduced with unerring fidelity. During the brief wait before the mirth-provoking "buck-basket scene" the relay was suddenly switched off, much to the disappointment of thousands of listeners.

INTERVIEWED after the performance, Mr. Allan Wilkie expressed his pleasure with the completely satisfactory report which had already come to hand regarding the broadcast. He remarked, "It is my regret that I was unable to have my radio audience of 80,000 people in the theatre here to-night."

The Shakespearean programme on Sunday evening from the studio of 2YA, Wellington, and again relayed by 3YA, Christchurch, was a brilliant success. Mr. Allan Wilkie gave an effective address on "Some Popular Fallacies concerning Shakespeare," and trenchantly dealt with certain erroneous conclusions expressed in newspaper critiques.

The supplementary items included vocal and instrumental Shakespearean items by members of Mr. Wilkie's company and others, with appropriate gramophone records interspersed.

Remarkable Discoveries by German Professor

Radio Waves Reflected from Moon Sphere

WHAT has been described as one of the most interesting discoveries since that of the Heaviside Layer, has recently been made and part-examined by the eminent German scientist, Professor Carl Stormer.

Professor Stormer had been informed by Engineer Jorgen Hals of Bygdo that he had picked up echoes of radio signals broadcasted from the well-known Philips radio station, PCJ. First came the usual echo caused by the waves which travel round the earth, and return within 1-7 of a second. Three seconds later, a period long enough for radio waves to travel over half a million miles, another echo was audible, though weaker than the first.

The second echo must have been caused by the reflection of the waves from the outside universe—from regions beyond the sphere of the moon.

THE Professor was greatly impressed by this remarkable discovery, and requested that signals should be sent out at five-second intervals from PCJ, so that he could investigate the phenomenon.

This was done, but without the expected results. Later, during his sojourn in Holland, Professor Stormer visited the Philips station, and it was agreed to continue the experiments, this time with twenty-second intervals. Again, results were negative, but after several more attempts, during which the experiments were almost abandoned, success came at a time considered most favourable.

It had been resolved to release three successive shocks in certain tone heights, and a remarkable succession of echoes were recovered from 3 to 17 seconds after the signals were first picked up. In this instance, the signals were so loud that there was no

shadow of doubt as to their identity as echoes.

The professor wired PCJ at once, telling of the success, and received the reply that the echoes had also been heard in Holland. Later than this, signals were not heard by Professor Stormer, and although Engineer Hals advised that he had picked up echoes again by the time the professor arrived, they had disappeared on account of atmospheric disturbances.

Professor Stormer marked the discovery as a very rare phenomenon, and the experiments are to be carried on.

THE scientific explanation was given as due to rays of the North Light, and the fact that there are certain parts of the universe which are impenetrable to electricity, and others that will admit it. The region at which it becomes impenetrable fluctuates to a great extent, thus explaining the varying times at which the echoes were audible. The influence of the North Light is an admitted fact, for with a strong North Light is sometimes happens that communication over long distances is cut off. Further details of the explanation are deeply scientific, and too lengthy to do justice here.

If the echo really exists, it would be exceedingly interesting to continue with the experiments. The study of the movements of North Light rays within the universe is of the utmost importance. The tropics will probably offer the best conditions for such research. The lecture greatly stirred the interest of a large scientific audience, it being one of the most remarkable heard. Professor Bjerkens congratulated Professor Stormer, and expressed his hope that he might succeed in entirely clearing up the phenomenon.

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1YA Musical Committee

A MEETING of the 1YA Musical and Dramatic Committee was held at the studio, 1YA, Auckland, on Friday, the 8th of February, at 8 p.m. Present: Mr. Karl Atkinson (in chair), Auckland Gramophone Society; Mr. L. E. Lambert, Bohemian Orchestra; Mr. C. B. Plummer, Auckland Choral Society; Mr. F. McCallum, Little Theatre Society; Mr. V. Trask, Athenian Club; Mr. G. T. Lee, Aeolian Orchestra; Mr. J. W. Shaw, Workers' Educational Association; Mr. J. F. Montague, Auckland Comedy Players; Mr. S. J. Hayden, Station Director at 1YA; Mr. D. Wrathall, Programme Organiser at 1YA.

A letter was received from the Radio Broadcasting Co. advising that the one-act play competition was now under way and that entries received up to the present time were very promising.

The question of a "Maori Night" was discussed at considerable length following on an outline of the special Maori pageant which was held at 2YA last year.

It was finally decided to recommend to the Company that a sub-committee should visit Ngaruawahia for the purposes of interviewing Princess Te Puia and endeavouring to arrange for the Ngaruawahia Maoris to present a complete programme.

The committee further decided to hold a "Topsy Turvy" programme in which artists would contribute items outside their usual sphere.

The question of the 1YA Choir was fully considered, as was the report from the Company's Musical Director on this subject. The committee was of the opinion that sixteen voices would be preferable to the double quartet and resolved to obtain the Company's opinion further with regard to the number of voices.

The committee decided to meet again on the 8th of March at 8 p.m.

IN order to make listening-in to foreign broadcasting meaningful, the B.B.C. in conjunction with their official organ, "World Radio," has undertaken regular courses in several of the languages of Europe.