

Amateur theatrical people in New Zealand who have had need of pluck must have been heartened if they heard the recorded talk of Miss Lydia Sydney from 2YA recently, when she told

**SOFA COVERS
WERE
GOOD WEAR.**

how she founded the New Age Theatre in London with nothing much more than £25, her needle and thread and a lot of determination. She made the costumes for her players from old cast-off clothes of her friends, and even furniture covers that had graced a sofa or a chesterfield shone again for a time on the stage while the actors wore them as rich costumes. "My theatre," she said, "began to make headway after four or five slow, heart-breaking years."



When the National Broadcasting Commission of America made the discovery that Shakespeare was radio "box-office," they got John Barrymore to make them six Shakespearean recordings. Station 2ZB

**SHAKESPEARE
TAKES
THE AIR AGAIN**

presented one of these, a sixty-minute broadcast of "The Taming of the Shrew" on a recent Sunday evening, and is trying to get the other five. Barrymore, distinguished actor, in recording the plays, worked on the assumption that the author of these plays was more modern by twentieth century standards than any living playwright, and that there was nothing to be afraid of, really. "It is, I suppose, the

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differences of timbre are ruled out. Admit that . . . and still the organ is the most versatile, the most impressive, the most magnificent of all instruments."

The fiddler wiped his brow and the strummer clenched his fists.

"What about your third qualification," demanded the violinist in a strangled voice. "What would an organist give for the privilege of tucking his instrument under his chin and making it talk? My key-thumping friend here would give his eye teeth for the power to do what I can do—change the quality and quantity of a tone even after it has begun to sound. The violin may not have circus-variety, but it at least manages to keep out of the way and let the music imagined and the music performed be one. In directness of expression my instrument leaves the piano a bad second and the organ nowhere at all. Who can protect what his heart feels over a hundred feet of cable and through the most complicated mechanisms?"

There was something in what the fiddler said. While I was thinking the neglected pianist piped up.

"I wonder," he said, "if you fellows aren't overlooking something. The violin whacks my instrument in directness of expression and the organ can shout or whisper. But I wonder if it's really not better to score two seconds in a hand contest, rather than just one first?"

Just then there was that long, long pause for the eight o'clock chimes. . .

What did the argument prove?

Nothing at all, except that such discussions are foolish. The problem itself is a fundamentally insoluble one.

ghastly accumulations of critics throughout the years that have got between Shakespeare and the people—because, without doubt, it was 'the people' for whom he wrote. How it would intrigue him if he could have known that to-day his works are being broadcast for the people by commercial radio!



One night recently 3YA put on a programme that was possibly delightful to thousands. True, the musical portion was good and the lighter parts were—well, a bit light. But I was awaiting

**GILLIE POTTER
WAS
VERY LATE.**

the appearance of Gillie Potter, to my mind the finest radio comedian to-day. The "Record" had featured brother Potter as appearing in the Music, Mirth, and Melody section. With a number of friends—at a suburban gathering—I waited while Sandy Powell put over some atrociously inane stuff, Tauber did his best with poor songs, and Wurlitzers made me impatient. "Let's go," I said. "Must be up early in the morning." Potter, the inimitable, came on toward 11 p.m. I was told about it next morning. To keep the "best for the last" may be all very well, but listeners do get fed up sometimes with waiting.



Though the voice was not ideal for broadcasting, the facts were excellent in the talk by geologist G. D. Osborne, of Sydney University, on "Off The Track in Western Ireland," from

**HE PAINTED
A
VIVID SCENE.**

station 2YA last week. He built up a vivid picture, detail by careful detail, of the people on the Island of Achill, where the land is so poor that the men have to go to England in the summer to earn enough to keep them going on Achill in the winter. I had a pleasant sense of actually being on the spot in that island of stern mountains and bare moorlands and could almost see the donkeys, pigs, geese and fowls; the women in their full red skirts and blue blouses; the old women in shawls; the young ones carrying 80lb. loads of peat in baskets on their backs for a couple of miles. And if you have ever tried to lift a 56lb. butter box, you will know just what a feat that is. "I must hurry along," said Dr. Osborne in his talk and that seemed the one weakness. I would have liked the pace of his talk to have been a little more leisurely.



Listening to the "In Town To-night" session of 2ZB for the first time the other evening, I must say I was taken with the material presented and the manner of presenting it. There were

**THEY WERE IN
TOWN
THAT NIGHT.**

three speakers—one an Australian aircraft man who could tell listeners all about Clouston's Comet, in the designing of which he seemed to have had a hand; another an English visitor who had come to New Zealand to assist the movement of the Girls' Life Brigade; the third an au-

onymous man whose life had been wrapped up in spider webs; and fourth an aviator who had served with the Chinese and Spanish air forces in their wars. I liked the oddity of the spider-web man's talk the best. He was an expert in fixing strands of the web inside telescopes and range-finding instruments in the Great War. He was just the sort of man that Dickens would have liked to meet.



If Bryan O'Brian's children's hour from 2ZB on Sunday was a fair sample, the "Commercials" are on a win with their new "juvenile" policy (referred to in this issue). The session was one of the most interesting I have heard from any station. It contained variety and definite educational value, yet it dealt with things in which children themselves are keenly interested. The chatter about lions and tigers was of sufficiently good quality to hold my keenest attention (and I'm no swaddling!), and I was delighted with the announcer's handling of the explanation of "Danse Chinois" from the "Nutcracker" Suite. Here's an idea, surely, which can be developed. Why not some colourful and simple selection from the great composers every night? Children, thank Heaven, have no anti-highbrow complex. They will enjoy the explanation and enjoy the music. Mufflers off to applaud the 2ZB children's hour! Great stuff, Mr. Controller!

**HANDCLAPS
WITH
MUFFLER**

On the subject of the "Commercials," those Sunday afternoon sessions definitely are looking up. On the same afternoon that I enjoyed my half-hour with the lions and tigers, I heard an excellent talk for women by Mrs. J. A. Lee. Hers is an excellent radio voice, and she possesses the knack of speaking naturally and lucidly. Only one thing annoyed me—as I am almost always annoyed by radio-talkers—the lack of a forceful and memorable conclusion. A talk is a talk, but nonetheless, I think that the tenets of oratory must, to a certain extent, be observed. Every talk should have its peroration and its exordium, in modified form, if it is to be fully effective.

**TALKERS
AND
ENDINGS**

Music for the old folks was another excellent session—chiefly because the music chosen was good—a trifle oversweet perhaps—but nevertheless good in spite of that.



A word to the wise: Commercial stations be careful of the use of "nigger" records. One came from 3ZB last week—a poor imitation of the "Two Black Crows," which

**A WORD
TO
THE WISE**

would lose 10 listeners for every one it gained. New Zealanders are conservative people—even in sickly sentiment. Al Jolson had his day 'way back in the 'twenties.