

SOPRANO AT THE MIKE

*Technical Faults and
Prejudice Hung "For
Men Only" on the
Microphone: These
Women Ignored It*

Special to the Record

by

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NOT many years ago it seemed as if radio was going to hang up the sign, "For Men Only"—permanently. The technical imperfections of broadcasting did strange things to women's voices.

To this day there are listeners who dial-twiddle when a soprano comes on the air, and there is still a widespread prejudice against women announcers.

Improved voice reproduction and the careful selection and training of voices are, however, beginning to give women their chance in a radio career. Thanks to radio drama, listeners are beginning to know and like feminine voices on the air, and the New Zealand Commercial stations—and to a smaller extent the National stations—now have sessions regularly conducted by women.

Still, the selection and training of a good female radio voice is still an extremely tricky business.

Not long ago an Australian paper asked its readers to indicate whether or not they liked the voices of women announcers heard on the air in Australia. The consensus of opinion was that a good woman announcer was just as good as a man, but that she must be taken in much smaller doses. A bad woman announcer was infinitely more tedious than the worst man.

There the matter lies to-day. It will probably be many, many years before listeners will tolerate stock announcements from women. However well modulated and vital the voice, an hour or so seems the limit of time that a woman can stay at the "mike."

It follows naturally that there are few enough staff jobs in radio for women—the women who have them have also the satisfaction of knowing they possess a gift well above the ordinary.

HERE are a few details about the women who, in spite of disadvantages, have created a niche for themselves in New Zealand radio. Distinct from those who conduct special sessions under contract, they are actually members of the announcing division of the National Commercial Broadcasting Service.

Station 3ZB's "Gracie" (Miss Grace Green) was the first woman to



GRACIE GREEN.

... Tops at Christchurch.

broadcast on shortwave in the Southern Hemisphere. Commencing with the B stations in the earliest days of New Zealand radio, she gained an influential block of listeners in record time. Intensely vital, she has helped to make 3ZB's Children's Hour one of the best from any station.

MISS JOYCE HAMER, of 4ZB, widely experienced in amateur dramatics. She appeared in the productions of the Otago University Dramatic Society and the Dunedin Operatic Society. Holder of an L.T.C.L. in elocution, Miss Hamer is one of those versatile New Zealanders who, apart from topping most classes at school, has represented Otago at tennis, is a New Zealand University hockey blue and the holder of several heavily-endorsed certificates for prowess at swimming. Joyce announces the early morning recite session.



JILL.

... Once sang Marguerite.

STATION 1ZB's "Gran" (Mrs. T. E.

Donne) has built for herself one of the largest blocks of listeners held by any commercial radio announcer. She has the distinction of broadcasting from all ZB stations, and is probably the only woman radio announcer in the world to have had a pipe band march composed in her honour—which incidentally, is now being played by the band of the famous Argyle and Sutherlands Regiment.

MARINA (Mrs. Jocelyn Parr), who spent most of the Great War in England with the Red Cross, is remembered by New Zealand (Cont. on p. 41.)