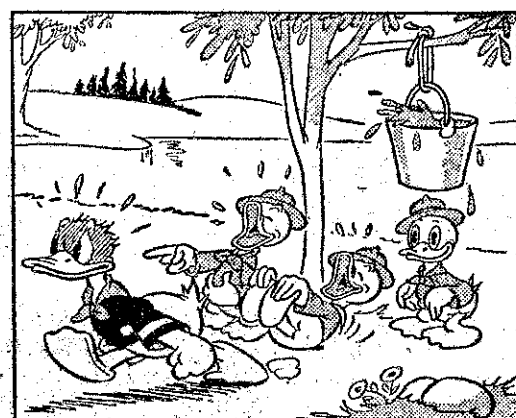
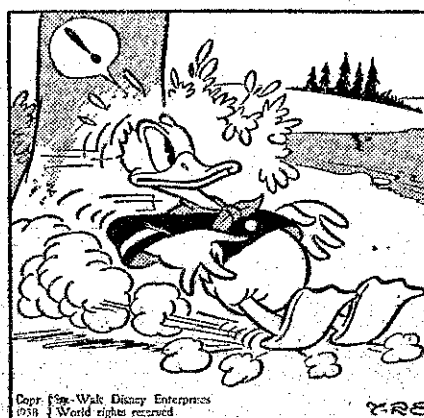
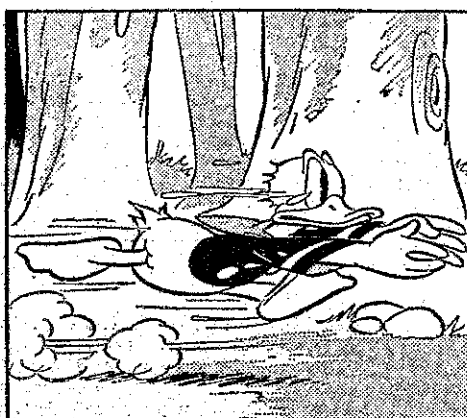


DONALD DUCK

by Walt Disney



CHOSE MICROPHONE, NOT CASSOCK

Tenor From Christchurch Steadily Heading On To Singing Success

CHRISTCHURCH tenor just back from a radio visit to Australia, Thomas E. West, might have been a lay-clerk, but now he broadcasts opera.

A lay-clerk is a paid adult male singer in an Anglican Church choir, cassocked and surpliced, often the possessor of a fine voice, which he developed out of his experience as a boy, very likely in that same choir.

Thomas West told the "Record" that while he was at the St. Albans School, Christchurch, somebody suggested to his mother that he should enter the Christchurch Cathedral, famous for its grounding in music and its choral services.

Mother, however, had other ideas. If the boy's voice was good enough, at the age of eight, to take its place among the cathedral choristers, she said, it would be better to preserve it until he came to man's estate, and then develop it. And so, when Thomas E. West was 19, his voice had gained adult timbre and he went in for serious training.

His mother (herself a well-known singer in Dunedin in her younger days) urged her son to make a career out of singing—not as easy as it sounds nowadays.

Says Thomas E. quite frankly: "It was due entirely to my mother's help that I have achieved anything like a voice fit for broadcasting."

Just a year after he had been hard at it, 3YA gave him an engagement. He got microphone fright and swore he would never broadcast again.

In those days 3YA studios were heavily curtained to absorb all sound. Result was he couldn't hear

his own voice and doubted whether he was going across at all. He later heard, to his amazement, that this, his first broadcast, was a success.

It was nearly the same at his second appearance. He went along with a mixed group of songs, including "La Donna e Mobile." In this number he became so rattled that he forgot the Italian words, made up his own jargon of Naples as he went along. Nobody was the wiser.

Then Thomas E. gained confidence and very soon he found him-



THOMAS E. WEST
Sensed extreme danger.

self singing with Gil Dech and the 3YA Orchestra. "I can never speak too highly of Mr. Dech's kindness and support," he says.

In 1934 Thomas West formed, for 3YA, the "Domino Duo," and in 1935 the "Mayfair Ensemble."

Short time ago he applied for a tour with the ABC. They said there would not be a chance for some time, but if he intended to visit the Commonwealth they would give him engagements in any State he cared to visit—after an audition.

And so he made two records in Dunedin, sent them to the commission, and was booked for several appearances. There is a possibility that he will make a complete tour of Commonwealth stations in the latter part of 1939.

Thomas West took lessons from Percy Kahn, pianist to Tauber, and this is what Kahn said of him: "He has the most beautiful voice I have heard in Australia. Given the opportunity, he will make a name for himself in the world of music."

(Continued in Column 3.)

Dunedin Society's Fate Was In The Balance

FATE of the Dunedin Orchestral Society trembled on the brink prior to a concert recently given in the home town. Time was when the society's performances were near-gala events, but times change. Radio and "canned music" told their tale. The society fell on less happy days.

Rangiora School Sets Smart Example

PROGRESSIVE Rangiora, 20-odd miles from Christchurch, has decided to go in for a complete radio equipment. The other evening the school committee decided to make inquiries about types of sets available and the servicing of them. Committee is also considering the installing of telephones for communication between classrooms.

Concert given a week or two ago was more or less to be a deciding factor—whether the shutters should go up, or not. Perhaps both public and players were equally aware of this grim shadow of "The End."

Public rolled along in large numbers, and the orchestra, rejuvenated and revitalised to a surprising degree, gave one of the best concerts ever given.

Conductor was that sound musician Dr. T. Vernon Griffiths, and he made the most of the material at his command.

Society's future now seems safe; at last the clouds have temporarily lifted.

(Continued from Column 2.)

Like most artists, Thomas E. gets a "hunch" now and then. He had one watching midget car racing at the Penrith speedway.

On the day of the Penrith tragedy, news of which was cabled to New Zealand, he was sitting with a friend in what turned out to be the fatal area.

"I felt a curious urge to get away from the place, and told my companion. He was reluctant to move, but agreed when I convinced him that I was sincere in my uncanny feeling of danger. We moved away. A quarter of an hour later the very people who took our places were killed."

Mr. West has come back to his homeland for a few months, to begin a series of broadcasts for the NBS at 3YA on January 2. Series will conclude at Wellington on January 29.

How "Messiah" Was First Sung At An Inn

Famous Handel Lost His Temper

FIRST public performance of Handel's "Messiah," favourite Christmas oratorio in New Zealand, was given in Dublin; first private performance in an English inn.

En route to Dublin to direct the memorable first performance, Handel was detained at Chester for several days by contrary winds.

Handel seized the opportunity to try over some of the choruses with local church-singers.

One of the local singers who was invited to help was a house-painter named Janson, who "had a good voice, and was one of the best musicians in the Chester Cathedral Choir." Exactly at the appointed hour, Handel met the singers in his apartments at the "Golden Falcon," but, sad to say, on trying over the chorus, "And With His Stripes We Are Healed," Handel was roused to grotesque fury by Mr. Janson's inability to read his part at sight.

The composer became purple with anger and abused the poor painter by swearing at him in four or five different languages.

He shouted at him: "You Scheun-drel! Titi you not tell be dat you could sing at soite?" "Yes, sir," replied Janson, "so I can, but not at first sight!" Handel's rage vanished as quickly as it appeared. He burst out laughing and called the rehearsal off.

So excerpts from the immortal oratorio were sung (even if imperfectly) for the first time anywhere, and the little room at the old "Golden Falcon" became the scene of a highly important musical event.

This old inn with its decorated timbered front still stands as it did on that memorable day in November, 1741, and there may not be many in Chester itself who know that its old rafters once rang to a scratch rehearsal of choruses from the noblest oratorio ever composed.

1YA listeners heard a recorded performance of Handel's "Messiah" on the afternoon of Christmas Day, performed by the BBC Choir, Soloists and Orchestra, under Sir Thomas Beecham.

2ZB Is First Station To Broadcast Softball

NO outdoor sport has ever leaped to popularity in New Zealand as suddenly as baseball has. Two years ago there were only one or two scattered teams playing the game in a few of the main centres. This summer literally thousands are playing it, and baseball has become a serious rival to cricket as a summer pastime.

The game as played in New Zealand is strictly an adaptation of true baseball, and is known as softball. In every other respect, however, the game conforms to the game which has so many thousands of followers in America.

Centre in which softball has secured its strongest hold is Wellington, where nearly 50 teams play the game every Saturday in organised competition, and first radio station in New Zealand to cater for followers of the game with regular commentaries is 2ZB, which broadcasts these every Saturday.

The description is done by W. H. Wilson, an executive of the Wellington Softball Association, who was one of those responsible for introducing softball to New Zealand.

Mr. Wilson knows his softball backwards, and gives listeners an excellent idea of the spectacular nature of the game.

Listeners Like Adaptations Of Classics

STATION 2ZB received convincing proof the other Sunday night of the interest listeners take in serialised adaptations of the classics.

The final episode of Charles Dickens's "Tale of Two Cities" was being played when a power failure cut off the sets of a large number of listeners in the Wellington south area. It was only a few minutes before the station was inundated with requests that the episode be replayed, and replayed it was the following night.

At Palmerston North, 2ZA had an even more remarkable experience. When the station commenced a radio adaptation of Alexandre Dumas's famous novel, "Count of Monte Cristo," the principal local lending libraries had only two copies each of the book.

Demand for "The Count of Monte Cristo" increased so much, however, that they were compelled to buy up to six copies each, and at the present time one library estimates that its copies of the book are reserved and will be in circulation until 1940.

Similarly, when "Mutiny of the Bounty" was being broadcast from 2ZB, Wellington bookshops experienced an unprecedented demand for Nordhoff and Hall's book.

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