

Songs of ALL TIME

IN THE WAKE OF THE WEEK'S ... BROADCASTS...

THAT quotation by Fletcher of Saltoun, "Let me make the ballads of a people, and I care not who make the laws," has a peculiar aptness when one thinks of "Danny Boy." In its original title, before it had F. E. Weatherly's moving poem to lend it added charm, it was called "Irish Tune from County Derry," being still better known as the "London-derry Air."

The tune is first found in print in George Petrie's collection of Irish folk songs, published in 1855, and the composer is unknown. The melody was given to Petrie by Miss Jane Ross, of Limavady, who, with her sister, made a practice of taking down tunes from the peasants who came to that town on market day.

Doubtless it was known, loved, and sung by the family of a former Prime Minister of New Zealand, William Ferguson Massey. It was in the pretty little market town of Limavady, in the valley of the Roe, that he was born. In that old homestead, near the church, this fine old tune may have been whistled, hummed and sung by all.

In 1912, a sister-in-law of F. E. Weatherly, the famous writer of lyrics for popular songs, sent him the music of "The Londonderry Air," the music and even the name of which he had never heard until then. The sister-in-law sent the tune from America, and this family interest in Weatherly's work in song-writing led to the birth of one of the most famous songs of the century.

"Danny Boy"

It appears that two years previously he had written a song called "Danny Boy," which, by lucky chance, only required a few alterations to make it fit the beautiful melody that had been sent him. The song was published by Boosey's, and in that arrangement and in many others, notably those by Percy Grainger, the tune has winged its way round the world.

"The Londonderry Air" was heard and noted down at Limavady, which is twelve miles west of the historic city of Londonderry itself. Thanks to an Irish enthusiast, an English song-writer and an Australian composer, it is now known and heard all over the globe.

The first lines known to have been set to this tune were by the poet Alfred Percival Graves, who wrote two sets of words for it, viz: "Would I were Erin's Apple Blossom," and "Emer's Farewell." The tune figures in Stanford's first "Irish Rhapsody." It was once described by Sir Hubert Parry as "the most beautiful tune in the world," and it aroused the enthusiastic acclaim of Harry Plunket Greene, one of Ireland's finest singers.

Among all the 3000 songs F. E. Weatherly left us, there is none which is more loved than the one whose opening lines are:—

Oh, Danny Boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling,
From glen to glen, and down the mountain-side,
The summer's gone, and all the roses falling,
It's you, it's you must go and I must bid.

This song, with its lover's promise, has an unending appeal and may, with its deathless tune, well be called one of the songs of all time.

2YA listeners will hear "Danny Boy" sung by Heather Kinnaird, contralto, on Wednesday, March

PALM for the most interesting radio talk of the week undoubtedly goes to Dr. F. A. Maguire, of Australia, for his 'popular' talk on cancer. The talk, which was part of the cancer congress, was broadcast by 2YA, and was specifically directed to the layman, but I imagine even doctors must have been intensely interested. The subject was treated in a straightforward, commonsense manner, and probably cleared up many doubts in listeners' minds regarding this most dreaded disease. Two points Dr. Maguire emphasised are worth re-emphasising. Cancer in its early stages is curable. Cancer in its early stages is painless. A fine, constructive, well-delivered speech, and worth every minute 2YA gave it. The introductory remarks by Sir James Elliott and the Hon. Peter Fraser, Minister of Health, contained much more of interest and value than introductory remarks usually do.

LECTURE ON CANCER

An interesting personality was introduced to 42B listeners the other day by Don Donaldson, in a microphone interview with "Skipper" Francis. "Skipper"—every one calls him that—seems to have had a remarkable career. He holds two world championships for swimming, one of them dating back to 1912 when he swam the Bristol Channel—a distance of 15 miles—in spite of physical handicap. This swim was the subject of one of the first moving pictures ever taken, and "Skipper" Francis toured many countries with the film, describing his experiences. During the early days of the war he raised nearly £500,000 for war charities in Australia and New Zealand. He has written several songs, including "Australia Will Be There," which sold more than 1,000,000 copies. In the course of his wanderings he has visited over a score of countries.

The curtain has rung down on "The Japanese Houseboy" from 4YA. It seems hard to believe it after so many centuries—well years, at any rate. Knowing that the end was in sight I listened to the few concluding instalments, and found myself moderately entertained. There was some good humour introduced from time to time, and although I had not previously listened to the feature for about two years, I can appreciate why so many people—and there were many despite what one hears—listened regularly. Quite a number of things seemed to be developing in these recent instalments, and I found myself wondering how the last presentation was going to cope with everything. It didn't. Half a dozen matters were left "in the air," and actually the serial didn't end at all. Seems as if the NBS just got fed up with it, and let it drop—like that. It seems a little hard on those who have followed the Hon. Archie's adventures for so long.

EXPLOITS OF "SKIPPER"

EXIT OF THE HOUSEBOY

STUDIO PLAY FROM 4YA

Common saying is that a "real artist" never comes to New Zealand until his English and Continental audiences are sick of him. That's wrong. Some excellent artists are brightening the early months of the New Year in Christchurch, and to some financial purpose, too. Close on each other's heels, flesh-and-blood shows are making the old Theatre Royal look young again, while the anticipatory buzz of excitement before the curtain rises is echoing welcome on the theatre's sophisticated walls. Right after the Frank Neil show has come Nicola, master of magic, and, when the famous man with the tall silk hat and the rabbits has moved on, the Russian Ballet will draw its thousands. With theatrical Christchurch, it's either a feast or a famine. We want more feasts.

FEAST OR FAMINE

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SWINGING A CLASSIC



BROADCAST FROM BACKSTAGE

CARTOONIST'S impression of Josef Kaartinen, Finnish saxophonist, who will shortly be touring New Zealand under engagement to the NBS.

Funny thing, this fan-mail business. Since he has been in Christchurch and singing hill-billy songs for 32B, Tex Morton has accumulated a fan-mail that would make Nordica, Jenny Lind, Caruso and a few more late and present stars look anaemic. Myself, I did not write to Tex. He told me the other night, through my radio set, to "take a l'il look at mahself and wrote home to mooooooother"—in other words to reflect on my past and go into retrospect about what I could do for that "gran' l'il ole loidy." I was unmoved. Tex certainly has a marvellous radio style. Thousands seem to adore it.

TEX MORTON HAS MANY FANS

The presentation of a studio play from NBS stations is becoming too much of a rarity. Why the service has practically cut them out in favour of recorded plays is hard to understand, for the public undoubtedly prefers the flesh and blood talent. No one I met a sailor in Christchurch the other day. "What's all this learn-to-swim business?" he asked. I assured him that he had only to listen to a radio station, for instance 3YA. He made the amazing statement that half the men in his part of the ship, then at Lyttelton, could not swim a stroke. He next organised a party for tuition and, while the tars cannot yet be said to have taken to the water like ducks, they can make a passable effort.

PRACTICAL VALUE OF RADIO

HIGHER SALARIES!

A Distinct Aid to women over 40

During the forties, Nature takes a greater toll of a woman's reserves of health. The system during these years needs to be toned up to meet the extra demands. The medical profession has found that "J.D.K.Z." Gin, with hot water and lemon, taken regularly, is a distinct aid in promoting fitness in middle age. "J.D.K.Z." relieves the kidneys, purifies the blood, stimulates the system, allays irritation and despondency. An excellent tonic at any time, "J.D.K.Z." is doubly valuable to every man and woman throughout the forties.

Look for the White Heart L a b e l in flasks, pint and quart bottles at all Hotels and Bottle Stores throughout the Dominion. "Good whichever way you look at it."

J.D.K.Z. GENUINE Holland GIN

Heard a scandalous version of John Peel the other night from 2YD during a "Rhapsodies in Rhythm" session. It was by Lew Stone and his band, if I remember rightly, and Mr. Stone and his merry men swung that fine old hunting tune until John Peel himself must have been revolving rapidly in his grave. The words were as authentic as the rhythm:

JOHN PEEL SET TO SWING

*D'ye ken John Peel with his nose so red
That he got from drinking his port in bed...*

The ditty also included a new version of the manner in which the famous huntsman met his end:

*He drank a glass of what he thought was hock;
'Twas only water and he died of shock.*

Time certainly does march on.

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HIGHER SALARIES!



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