

The Week's RECORDS

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

IF the recently-introduced record player does anything, it will probably bring about a new crop of gramophone groups, clubs, circles, or societies. And if this happens it will have served an additional good purpose, because there is nothing like sharing one another's aesthetic experiences to get a "kick" out of life.

The lone fireside listener is all right in his way, but there's a good deal to be said for an exchange of ideas on music, artists, composers, and the technical aspects of recording and reproduction. We all can learn from one another. Here's a case in point.

A choirmaster was talking to his boys in Wellington recently, and more jokingly than seriously he suggested that they should have a shot at composing. "Get an idea or two down on paper," he urged, "and it will surprise you what nice tunes come, somehow shape themselves in your thoughts, and soon begin to appear in the form of notes either on or between the lines."

At the end of the practice a boy of twelve gave the choirmaster himself a surprise. He asked that he might be allowed to show his vocal instructor a piece he was already working at, and to the amazement of the choirmaster, it turned out to be for a string quartet—can you beat that?

Helps Listening

THE formation of listening-cum-gramophone groups is going to enhance the enjoyment of radio listening and gramophone record playing immensely—and the advent of the new record player will widen the scope for membership.

Chamber music, grand opera, orchestral classics, and lieder are all of permanent interest. They can be listened to in the ordinary way by a listening group, and after the broadcast, any particular recorded work, if owned by a member, can be played over through the same radio set, by means of a record player.

In the latter case any special parts can be played and replayed, studied and analysed. Groups meeting in one another's homes for social and cultural purposes will also bring to light unexpected recorded gems that are in the other fellow's collection.

The real bond between gramophone owners and radio listeners remains to be finally forged, and it looks as if the pick-up and turntable were the things which would bring gramophone and listener together in mutual association.

While it is true that most of us have radios, there are more "hearers" than "listeners." They that have ears to hear let them not merely "hear" but "listen." A gramophone group is one step towards becoming a better "listener"—the personnel of the group will determine the extent of its usefulness.

But as it costs next to nothing to try out the group idea, why not make a start in your town or suburb. It will give you some surprises—it may prove a boon and a blessing.

THE Christchurch branch of the St. John Ambulance Association is persisting in its search for information regarding the installations of radio in ambulance wagons. Advice from Sydney last week was that two-way radio was working very efficiently there, with no difficulty found in carrying on a two-way conversation between vehicles and headquarters.

WHEN somebody told Mark Twain that a faithful household help had been burned to death over the stove and asked him for a suitable epitaph, he replied, grimly, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." An epitaph along these lines might well be written right now about some of the New Zealand broadcast serials. But, speaking of serials, there are some excellent pieces of humour coming over the air these days. Take the "Bundle" of the NCBS. This is chock-full of neatly-turned Cockney epigrams and altogether amusing. Naturally it does not suit all tastes. But, after all, whoever heard of "Punch" being screamed at in America, or of typical "Dad and Dave" humour going down big in New Zealand? The Cockney is a type apart and, owing to the close association between New Zealand and England, is readily understandable as a broadcast character.

"Black Flame of the Amazon" has ended from the ZB's—ended, in fact, some days back, but nevertheless any amount of listeners who followed the feature are still waiting for the end! The trouble is that seldom has any serial ended more suddenly. It seemed all set to continue for another year or two when—silence! the end had come. Months of thrills and adventure were crudely summarised into a final 10 minutes. All who listened to the serial wanted to know the full ins

and outs of that, but apparently the producers got tired of the whole thing and just wiped it out as quickly as they could without paying any regard to listeners' feelings. Anyway, taken by and large, it was a dud serial.

"Crazy College" is part of 4ZB's new children's session. Its name is apt, for the feature is crazy—without rhyme, reason, or even humour. Poorly constructed, and even more poorly executed, it is an excellent example of what not to give children.

Incidentally, 4ZB's new children's session isn't deserving of any praise as yet, being pretty chaotic, without any suggestion of form or balance. When the children's sessions commenced at 4ZB they received an hour each night except Sunday, when 30 minutes were given. Now the sessions have been cut down to 45 minutes Monday to Friday inclusive, while both Saturday and Sunday nights

have been cut out altogether. Latter two nights more children listen in than any other night.

Ignoring whatever listening value there may be in 4ZB's "Slaps and Claps Session", the feature has undoubtedly proved to have value in other regards. Among the slaps and the claps sent in are odd suggestions many of which have not gone unheeded. Frequently repeated is the request for more flesh-n'-blood, and to fulfil the demands in this connection 4ZB is carrying out a series of trials, involving much work, testing the ability of persons who feel they can entertain over the air. The most promising of these performers will be banded into a party to provide a programme, and it is hoped that the talent unearthed will be available for many occasions. Among suggestions have been many of a competitive nature, and it has been by these suggestions that the several competitions which have been announced of late have been inspired.

Hokitika Aero Club ball drew an attendance of 1000 last week, in spite of pouring rain. Included in the programme was a mannequin parade. Visitors came from all over the West Coast of the South Island. The whole show was broadcast by 3ZB in one of the most ambitious hook-ups yet undertaken by the commercial service. H. T. Lawn, chairman of the ball committee, introduced Mr. C. G. Scrimgeour (Controller of the NCBS) and Harry Bell, station director of 3ZB, who gave short addresses.

When 2YD first started off "Crazy Couplets," I was pleasantly surprised at the high standard of the gagging. Weeks went by, and the standard was maintained. Then "Crazy Couplets" began to slip, and I am afraid I lost interest in it. Apparently the feature has taken a new lease of life, for a session I heard last Monday night was both funny and clever. To explain it briefly, "Crazy Couplets" is half an hour of pleasant fooling, some of it dramatised, some of it in rhyme. This is about typical of the verse:

The butterfly has wings of gold,
The firefly wings of flame;
The little flea has none of these,
But he gets there just the same.

Lately I have not been following the adventures of my sinister old friend, Dr. Fu Manchou, and, tuning in by chance to 2ZB the other night, I was surprised to find that the location of the story had changed to a deserted battlefield somewhere in France, and the theme to a hunt for the formula of a special variety of poison gas. Dr. Fu didn't turn up at all, but doubtless he was brooding evilly somewhere in the background. When the formula of a gas that has the power of petrifying human beings has gone astray, it is only natural to suppose that the Doctor will be somewhere around. The episode ended on a typical note of suspense. Shots, a cry, a gong, and an announcement about a nerve tonic. I shall be at my radio when next that gong strikes, come what may.

Station 3YA, it seems, has become alive to the fact that the children's hour need not necessarily be a session for the spinning of improbable fairy tales. The other night the promoters presented something happily different from the usual run, with a chat about famous old English folk songs, and those of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The announcer mentioned particularly "Widdicombe Fair", which was illustrated

by solo and male chorus. Short chats of this type are of tremendous value to children and worth more than a thousand callings of birthdays.

Station 3YA's garden expert knows just about all there is to know of the earth and things earthy, what to grow, and where and when to grow it. His fan mail for reading and consulting purposes is huge, as is also the pile of specimens sent along to the station for his analysis and advice. A great improvement is noticed, in this speaker's style of presentation.

"Mamma Bloom's Brood," a serial on 2ZB, is rapidly rising to top spot in listeners' minds. This is one serial, appealing as it does to all tastes, which has received no criticism. A human story of an American Jewish family, the trials of the homely old Bloom couple can give New Zealanders a few pointers. The feature is on the air on the first three days of the week at 7.30 p.m.

I FEAR that my suggestion, "give Germany the Irish Free State," would not be practical politics.—Dean Inge.

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At Hokitika Ball.

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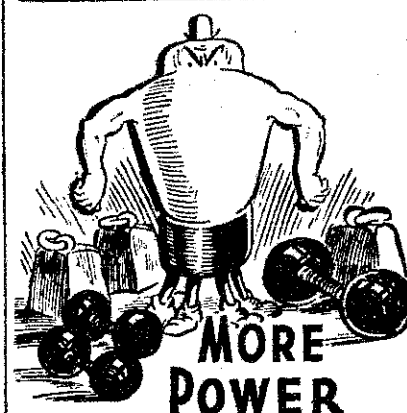
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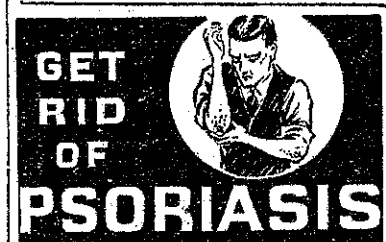
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