

OLIVER CROMWELL

to be broadcast from 2YA

On Tuesday, January 12, the famous historical drama, "Oliver Cromwell," by John Drinkwater, one of the greatest contemporary poets and dramatists, will be presented from 2YA by Victor Lloyd and his company. Those who listen will hear history as it was made.

"OLIVER CROMWELL," a play in eight scenes, is one of the most ambitious productions yet performed over the air in New Zealand. Because of the difficulty of effectively portraying the numerous and varied scenes, the play is rarely performed on the stage. When produced before the microphone, however, this difficulty of course does not exist—the listener's imagination supplying the appropriate setting, and supplying it perhaps more effectively than could be done on the stage.

"Oliver Cromwell" is not only very entertaining from the dramatic point of view, but it is also highly educative, because it dramatises a turning-point in the history not only of England, but of the whole world. It marked the beginning of democracy.

In the play, Oliver Cromwell is revealed not as the uneducated country bumpkin many people think he was, but as a close friend of some of the greatest poets and dramatists England has ever known—Shakespeare, Milton, Herrick.

Special attention is being paid to the provision of incidental music characteristic of the period of the play, and for this purpose recordings of selections played on the spinet, flute, and other musical instruments of the Stuart period have been secured.

The scene opens in Cromwell's house in Ely, about the year 1639. Cromwell's mother, an old lady of about eighty years, and his wife Elizabeth are heard discussing Oliver. The former is rather condemnatory of his championing of the people against the unjust rule of the King, but his wife defends him. In this she is upheld by her daughter Bridget, who spiritedly maintains that her father's militant attitude, especially with regard to the unjust seizure of the commons by the aristocracy, is more than justified.

Her grandmother, however, with the caution of old age, counsels silence. "I want them to be brave in peace—that's the way you think at eighty," she remarks, referring to her son and his closest friends, John Hampden and Henry Ireton. Nevertheless, she realises that perhaps her age has made her too cautious—"not that what Oliver's brain is better than mine. But we have to sit still and watch." And she does so, consoling herself with reading and criticising the efforts of the poets of the day.

Shortly after, Hampden and Ireton arrive and, soon after them, Cromwell himself. A discussion on the proposed seizure of the commons ensues, and they all reiterate their intention of protesting strongly against such an injustice.

Two of the Lord of Bedford's agents appear, and ask for admission. They tell Cromwell that it is rumoured he will oppose the proclamation to be made the

following day. On receiving his assurance that he will, they endeavour to persuade him otherwise, but are met with an unyielding refusal. "I know that these rights are the people's, above any earl or king whatsoever. The King is to defend our rights, not to destroy them."

The next scene, laid in the House of Commons, Westminster, is acknowledged as one of the finest historical play scenes ever conceived.

It is past midnight, and the House is lighted with candles. Cromwell, Hampden, and Ireton are among those sitting. A discussion on the Remonstrance, which objects to the over-ruling of the rights of the people, is in progress, and becomes very heated. Several members protest that the upholding of the Remonstrance would be tantamount to the passing of a vote of no confidence in the King, but Hampden, anxious to avoid as much trouble as possible, denies this. Cromwell, however, in a stirring speech, avers that it is so, and that the King was responsible for all the injustice under which the people were suffering. "And this land is bruised, I tell you, by such infamies. . . . The King is part of the State, but we have a King who has sought to put the State to his private use. . . . I say it again, this that is now to be put to you is a vote of want of confidence in the King. I would it were so more expressly," and Cromwell sits amid an angry tumult.

Dramatis Personae

Mrs. Cromwell, Olive's mother..Elsie Lloyd
Elizabeth Cromwell, his wife..Susie Painter
Bridget Cromwell, his daughter

Marjorie Murray

John Hampden E. R. Render
Henry Ireton H. A. Painter
Oliver Cromwell Victor Lloyd
Amos Tanner L. D. Webster
King Charles I L. A. Couchman
Neal, secretary to Charles Owen Pritchard



Oliver Cromwell.

AMID great excitement the question is put to the House, and the "Yeas" have it by a narrow margin. On the further question whether or no the Declaration shall be printed and distributed throughout the land, the tumult becomes such that the Speaker leaves the House, and the session breaks up in disorder. . . . *

Cromwell's house once more—a year later. Mrs. Cromwell is sitting by the fire, and Bridget (*Concluded on page 8.*)