

RADIO REVIEW

The Snappiest Thing in Broadcast Criticism

CHRISTMAS at Broadcasting House seems to have exceeded all previous years in the number of cards sent and received by the staff. The most original one I noticed was in the Variety Department, where Harry Tate's greeting had place of honour. It took the form of a newspaper "bill" printed red on a white background like this:—

Xmas 1933-4-5-6-7-8-9-40-1-2-3-etc.
Best Wishes From
Harry
T
S

That was all! Simple and effective, isn't it? Just like him!

HENRY'S XMAS MAIL

Poor Henry Hall! Maybe his article in "Radio Revue" had a little to do with his mail; anyhow, he has easily the record bag by far. When I called on him after Christmas he was still opening things—cards and letters from all parts of the world! I should imagine that he has received the biggest post of any man in the world—his office is piled high. He and his manager, George Hodges, are literally wading about helplessly under an avalanche of envelopes.

ONE TO TEST YOU!

I know you like puzzles. Work this one out! It concerns Mr Alfred Reynolds, the well-known composer and conductor, famous for his own work in collaboration with Mr A. P. Herbert. When he was a young man Alfred Reynolds went abroad for experience as an actor, and one day he found himself a British member of a Germany company playing the part of a Dutchman in a piece by an Austrian author in that part of Russia which has since become annexed to Poland!

YOUR QUESTION

Alfred Reynolds is, of course, British. Here one should ask, "What was the driver's name?" But no, this is an actual fact—just one of those curious happenings of life. Reynolds—like Walford Hyden—is a fine linguist, and has many languages at his

command. "Beau Brummel," the new show by B. C. Hilliam (Flotsam), has Reynolds as its musical director—so it's quite a radio theatre—the Savile.

MOSTLY PERSONAL

by
LONG WAVE

YOU CAN BE READY FOR THESE

By the way, in case anybody asks you about the Christmas Day programme, here are a few tit-bits for you to settle family queries or arguments.

The name of the little girl who spoke from the Birmingham Hospital is Daisy Billany—and she is an orphan. Grand, wasn't she?

The speaker at Bredon was the vicar, and the melody of "See, Amid the Winter's Snow" was taken up by the village team of hand bell ringers.

The company of Devonshire folk came from the village of Ashburton, on the River Dart.

The old Welsh hymn was "Peraidd Ganodd Ser y Bore."

The Bedwas Mine relay required sixteen special rehearsals for accurate timing by stop watch, and the name of the miner who spoke was Idrif Richards.

The engineer-in-charge at Rugby is a Scotsman. Couldn't you hear it? And his name is Mr Struthers.

Principal keeper on the St Mary Lighthouse, Whitley Bay, is a Kentish man called Le Gallais.

Across-the-world rehearsals were held prior to Christmas Day.

The three men in control at Broadcasting House during the transmission were Val Gielgud, Laurence Gilliam and D. H. Munro.

WAIT AND SEE!

It sounds rather a curious title for the author to chose, for Val Gielgud is associated with the most up-to-date ideas in production. Imagine my sur-

prise to discover that his new play bears the simple heading of "I May Be Old-Fashioned." Well, we shall see!

THIS LAD ARTY ASH

Arty Ash, who scored a success as Sinbad in the B.B.C. pantomime, is a very experienced comedian. I last saw him playing at the Gaiety Theatre in the Stanley Lupino-Laddie Cliff days. He has a rich, expansive face, rather like Sydney Howard, and uses his voice, hands and ginger hair with amusing effect. His bosom pal is Leslie Sarony, with whom he has worked for many years in theatres and concert parties.

MASCHWITZ ON TOUR

Eric Maschwitz has made a flying tour of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Manchester over the holidays, seeing two shows a day, and returned to town with more new ideas—so look out for them!

ABROAD

One member of the B.B.C. staff believes in getting as far away as possible for Christmas. You'll find the Scottish programme director in Poland—and he's still there for New Year.

WELL DONE. GIRLS

Elsie and Doris Waters have just been paid a great honour. They return to the Holborn Empire to star there this week after an absence of only four weeks! Surely a record for two girls on their first variety contract. To-day they are the outstanding act in radio-variety—and all on their own material!

CHRIS. STONE'S GREETINGS

Christopher Stone's card came to me in the shape of two circles (spectacles), eyes, and a pipe-in-mouth outlined on white below his own handwriting—a typical Stone touch!

TEAMED UP

I have just received news of a new all-star trio which is to commence operations on variety and cinema circuits. You know them all very well as soloists. They are George Baker, Olive Groves and Peggy Cochrane.

JOHN MACDONNEL TELLS OF SOME OF

Life's Little Accompaniments!

An Australian Who Has
Made Good

By JEAN MELVILLE
(The B.B.C. Pianist)

My Most Terrifying
Experience

IT is practically impossible to have a private chat with the famous B.B.C. pianist and accompanist between the hours of ten a.m. and six p.m.! She is always on duty.

Rehearsals, auditions, more auditions, still more rehearsals—every day in the week—including Saturdays.

And so I considered myself extremely fortunate when she swept me off to her flat a few nights ago, and for an hour before dinner she turned back many pages in her exciting life, and bade me "write it down for her."

I did so gladly. I looked at the photographs of all the stars round the walls, and at the many souvenirs of her brilliant musical career.

"Well, it is quite a co-incidence, John, that you should be the first to hear my little story, for, after all, you were the man who gave me my first chance at Savoy Hill. I do hope I have lived up to your expectations."

There is no argument about it—Jean has become a B.B.C. monument.

"Now, look—I'm five feet seven, oval face—golden hair and blue-grey eyes. Look again at this picture of me as a baby! They called me 'Topsy' actually—yes, really! What? Topsy Melville? No—I'll give you a shock now—my name isn't Melville. No—I was baptised EADITH SULLIVAN."

Well, that, I thought, explained the musical qualifications, for Eadith Sullivan, I discovered, belonged to the same family as the famous Sir Arthur Sullivan.

"My parents were of Irish birth and settled in Australia years ago. There were nine of us, four boys and five girls—Charles, Arthur, Herbert and Leon; Calaretta, Stella, May, Emmeline and myself.

Father and Mother Musicians

"Mother inherited a good voice and sang well, while father—played the violin more than well—but only as an amateur.

"We lived in the country outside Sydney, and when I was nearly five, my sister Emmeline's music teacher said to mother one day, 'If you would allow me to use your house and piano to teach another pupil who lives miles away, I, in return, am quite prepared to teach 'Topsy' until such times as she is ready for higher tuition.' I was thrilled, and started at once.

"Apparently I did well, and collected all sorts of honours and things, but the great day in my life out there was when I won the 'Emmeline Woolley' Scholarship. She was an Australian literary and musical giant, who left a considerable sum to endow a scholarship for which girls of under twenty-one of New South Wales competed every three years in an open pianoforte examination, the winner being granted full instruction at the Royal Academy or Royal College in London.

"In 1910 Kathleen Parnell won it—she is now in America, where she is very successful—and went to the Academy; in 1913 Peggy Chisholm was first—she is the sister of Lena who broadcast the other night; and in 1916 came my luck and the Academy.

"I said 'Goodbye' to Sydney and I have not been back since. London has become my home and I love it. I arrived in London on St Valentine's Day in 1917—a happy omen I hoped—and spent three years at the Academy, where I took violin and singing in addition to my piano classes.

"Passing from there, I joined the Femina Quartette for a time, and subsequently played with Herman Darewski in what I think was the first wireless stage revue, 'Listening-In'—during the run of which we broadcast from Marconi House in the early days.

"How did I get to the Vaudeville Theatre?

Well, I was heard by Mr de Bear's business manager, and he took me to see A. de B. I was offered and accepted the post of accompanist, and stayed with him at the Vaudeville until the day came when you took us all over to Savoy Hill for a special programme called 'For The Love of Mike'—remember?"

Yes, I certainly do—it was Archie's first broadcast show.

"And not long afterwards, you sent for me and prevailed on me to come to Savoy Hill as accompanist—and I've been with the B.B.C. ever since.

"Actually the first 'experience' I had was playing a soldier in your August the Fourth programme in 1926—so I must have started as an actor or an impersonator instead of as a pianist—strange?"

"I was given a twelve months' contract for songs at the piano, but this was later merged into an all-in contract with the Variety department."

Why I Changed My Name

I asked her about changing her name.

"Yes, I thought it better to take a professional name when I finished at the Academy, and that's how I came to you as "Jean Melville."

"I suppose I have played for every star of note who has broadcast—look at all these marvellous pictures I've got! And the bigger the artiste, the more attention they pay to their accompanist. Probably they realise the value of adequate rehearsal—it always tells in the long run.

"Auditions? yes—at the moment Mr Brewer and Mr Sharman are hearing plenty, and I really couldn't tell you how many we hear in a year. I must have played for thousands since 1926!"



Miss Jean Melville.

"I have seen stars flop, I have seen the most unlikely-looking people go over with a bang. Sometimes they come to a test without any music whatever, and I have to improvise something; sometimes it is only a 'top-line' scribbled in pencil on the back of an old envelope; sometimes the music is old enough for the notes to be impossible to read; sometimes it is torn or frayed or borrowed for the occasion. My heart has gone out to them in their anxious moments.

"What is the most terrifying time I've had? Well, it wasn't his fault, but I should say the night Leonard Henry lost his music during a variety programme. It was terrible! The poor man was also comper, and when a previous act had finished, they took their music from my piano, but, unknown to anyone, including myself, folded up Leonard's music inside theirs, and had left the studio and the building when the loss was discovered! Panic!!

"Leonard only had a few seconds in which to rush me to the door and hum a hoarse whispering note or two into my ear. I did my best—somehow we got through it—and to the consternation of all present in the studio, as the red light went out, Leonard rushed to the piano, threw his arms round my neck, and kissed me. Poor chap—he little knew the relief it caused me to see that programme over!"

That was a Corker!

"Days after the missing music was returned, not knowing that it had nearly caused heart failure to two of us. I shall never forget it!"

"I've done some funny stunts from time to time. Remember the Surprise Item in which a man sang in Liverpool, a girl played a 'cello in Manchester, and I accompanied them in London? OOH! That was a corker! All three together with head-phones on, and miles away from each other. I went through agonies, but it went over all right, I believe!"

"I'm very happy in the Variety department—they are all grand to work with—and to them I owe my engagement to Van Denys.

"He and I and Bobby Alderson, Clarice Mayne's accompanist, were suddenly sent for to do a three piano act on an Empire broadcast to Canada early one morning.

"I met Van Denys for the first time at the mike and—well, there you are! Bobby still teases me about Empire Broadcasting—but being an Australian I should worry.

"Here are some pictures of our old house outside Sydney, and there's the latest black and white of Broadcasting House. What a difference, eh?"

"And they've heard me out there on their sets— isn't it grand?"

"Now, come on, we'll have to hurry—because John Sharman wants me back at St George's Hall before nine for a special run through with the orchestra. Must get that balance right, y'know!"

Jean is very proud of her flat, and she has two passions—cooking and interior decoration. She loves dogs. In fact, she'd like to be surrounded by them, but she has only one, a two-year-old Cocker spaniel, Bunty Bella.

And I accompanied the accompanist back to her piano stool at the St George's Hall. That's it, I thought—balance! It sums up Jean (Eadith Sullivan) Melville completely. She is a very balanced person in every way—courteous to artistes, big or small, and all the officials adore her for it.

Painstaking, certainly—I've watched her alone through a glass-fronted studio trying for a whole hour to get those two sensitive hands of hers to "get it perfect." Conscientious to a degree. Courteous to all. A grand musician. A perfect accompanist. Australia, we are proud of our Jean—and your Eadith!

MY CHOICE OF

A DANCE BAND'S TUNES

Leave the Classics
Alone

Give Them Tunes
They Whistle

By
Jack Payne



Jack Payne in Action.

WHAT type of music is most popular with the public?

A hard question to answer! Still, four years of broadcasting taught me one thing—that listeners generally are out for entertainment pure and simple.

Except during the late evening broadcasts, devotees of dancing and dance music are in the minority. The great mass of wireless enthusiasts are apparently non-dancers, who prefer simple, tuneful melodies that can be followed and enjoyed by everyone.

Chiefly to please this type of listener, I once tried the experiment of playing such popular classics as Ravel's exciting "Bolero," the dainty "Entrance of Little Fauns," of Pierre, and that universal favourite, Liszt's "Liebstraume."

While many people enjoyed these items, others wrote complaining that dance bands had no business to "play about" with classical music.

As I made it a principle never to "jazz" the classics by transcribing them for use as rhythmic numbers, I failed to see the point of this argument.

Personally, I love good music—I often spend a busman's holiday at a symphony concert—and on the rare occasions when I do play classical tunes, I play them exactly as the composer intended. Indeed, our shortened version of "Bolero" was actually arranged and approved by Ravel himself.

that matter, insist on playing "arrangements" of piano pieces, like Rachmaninoff's Prelude, not to mention transcriptions of organ works by Handel and Bach.

Indeed, a comparison between current concert, recitals, and dance band programmes shows that the average dance band concentrates far more exclusively on its own legitimate repertoire than does any other section of the musical community.

On the other hand, certain dance band conductors think nothing of shamelessly jazzing and distorting the classics.

These gentlemen are fond of defending their methods by suggesting that they teach appreciation of great music to people who might never hear it otherwise.

But listeners who enjoy snippets of Wagner and Liszt served up in dance programmes do not flock to concert halls as a result. They merely acquire a totally false impression of what good music really is.

Surely there is enough dance and light music to please everybody without poaching on classical preserves and hurting the feelings of serious music lovers whose tastes have at least as much claim to consideration as anyone else's.

Our job, as I see it, is primarily to give people melody; good, yet simple tunes that they can hum and whistle at work and play. Tunes that catch the ear of the musician and plain man, dancer and fireside listener alike, bringing sunshine into cheerless lives and added gaiety to happy ones.

"The greatest happiness of the greatest number" is the ideal for which I shall continue to work.

Why I Stopped the
"Liebstraume"

And if I have given up playing the "Liebstraume," it is only because I felt that it was an error of taste for a dance orchestra to perform a piece that was never intended for any instrument but the piano.

At the same time, it seems a trifle unfair that, although an outcry is raised immediately a dance band touches the classics, no one seems to object when light orchestras, and heavy ones, too, for

ALL ABOUT

THE EIGHT STEP SISTERS

THE Eight Step Sisters are probably one of the greatest novelty turns heard over the radio.

It was no easy task finding a party of girls who could "get across" the air successfully.

Edith Maude, the Step Sister leader, readily confesses it is a real ordeal, tap-dancing in front of a "mike."

Mrs Rodney Hudson, who has trained the Eight Step Sisters, was called in as an adviser by the B.B.C., after Langham House had decided that tap-dancing acts would strengthen the variety hour.

Listeners are divided in their opinions as to the entertainment value of this dancing act, and the girls themselves have no misgivings that the slightest "miss" spoils their show.

The Eight Step Sisters are all Londoners.

"Microphone Personality"

When the B.B.C. idea was launched, the West End theatres were searched for the eight girls who could best combine together as a radio dancing act.

They returned to Mrs Rodney Hudson for fresh training in "microphone personality."

They were first heard and seen together as one turn in the big radio show at Olympia.

They still take regular daily tuition, and during one of these sessions Edith Maude chatted with "Radio Review."

"Some of my friends think it is a gay time for us, but they're well off the mark.

"Sitting in a B.B.C. waiting-room, doing a spot of knitting, or 'nursing' a bag of sweets, is not good fun, and minutes seem like hours.

"Even the studio floor is what we call 'soft,' and in our dancing acts we need to use far more physical energy to get the taps past the mike.

"Dancing and singing in an empty room, with only a mike to be seen, is vastly different from the jolly and helpful atmosphere of a crowded theatre.

"Still, I'm not saying that we'd sooner go back to the theatre; but all the same, it is a welcome change when we are engaged as a special ballet turn to entertain guests at private dances."

They Have Real Rhythm

The Eight Step Sisters—Jean Gilbert, Laurie Larrard, Edith Maude, Marjorie Orme, Patricia Pope, Eileen Roulston, Queenie Scott, and Ida Sinclair—were selected because their physical build matched, and ensured there would be real rhythm in their tap-dancing.

It was a "new angle" on broadcasting when a complete turn had to get across its personality "through it's feet," and even when appearing in a programme before a St George's Hall audience, the Step Sisters get very little help towards making their own broadcast a success.

They are a good-looking, vivacious, happy-go-lucky bunch of lassies, keen on their new radio entertainment, and that means a good deal to the listener.

The Crooners Want
You to Write to Them!

LES ALLEN, PHYLLIS ROBINS,
EVE BECKE, HARRY BENTLEY,
PEGGY DELL, DAN DONOVON,
NORMAN PHILLIPS and THE
CURS.

Tell the crooners what you think of their latest numbers, or anything you think would improve their performance. They'll be delighted to hear from you. If you wish a reply, please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope, and the crooner will personally reply.

Put the name of the crooner to whom you are writing at the top left-hand corner, and address you letter:—

c/o "RADIO REVIEW,"

"TOPICAL TIMES,"

12 FETTER LANE,

FLEET STREET,

LONDON, E.C.4.

The B.B.C. Must Look Ahead

IN twelve months' time Christmas will be here. The chiefs of all departments of the B.B.C. should be looking ahead to that time and thinking and planning. I know there were great schemes set agoing for the Christmas which has just passed, but the fulfilment flopped. Christmas will become the Grand Radio Day, and the officials have got to break their restraint to rise to the occasion.

THERE was a lack of spontaneity about "Christmas in the British Isles." I could never get away from the feeling that a London guide was taking us by the hand, and when he got to Wales and down the coal mine, and into Lancashire, the guide was in a foreign atmosphere. The home parties were dressed up and unnatural. There was, however, one which did impress me. That was the visit to the Western Highlanders. The voices there came over in languid and poetic tones. There was something haunting about them.

THERE was too much officialdom about the Greetings Round the Empire. Every speaker said almost the same words, and it became monotonous. These previous Christmas broadcasts stirred our imagination, and made us realise the wonder and unity of Empire. This year was stamped with the red tape which strangles, and this is the danger we have got to watch. That is

WHERE PROGRAMMES ARE REVIEWED

THE HOTTEST THING IN

REX KING CRITIC

AND so Mr S. P. B. Mais, the Modern Columbus, has finished his trip, and will soon be home again. His talks developed into geographical and historical lectures, with somewhat flattering descriptions of everything he saw. We could have got almost everything he said in guide books. He was well treated everywhere, and had a jolly time. He trod on nobody's toes. Maybe it was lack of time, but what Mr Mais really thought of the conditions and the people we do not know. America was passing through a financial and industrial revolution which may yet seriously affect us. One thing we

to Paris to carry out a solo engagement. The other saw him off in a super-flyer at Croydon. He arrived back in his Chelsea flat an hour later, and found this telegram from Paris—"You are a fine sort of pal! Why don't you write?"

IF ever you should see the name of Reginald Arkell down for a talk, stay in and listen to him. It doesn't matter if you are interested in his subject. He's the kind of fellow who, if he talked about tombstones, would make you want to get one all to yourself. And he'd make you feel so jolly with it. The other night he talked about "Tea Trays and Toboggans," and after a run on the home snow, he slid us off to Switzerland and told us all about it. When skating he noticed that the pretty girls fell down oftener than the plain girls. The plain girls got tired of picking themselves up! He was brave enough to call skiing "skeeing," and that shows there's no snobbery about him. When you go in for this form of mountaineering, you must get sticking-plaster on your nose. Then you are a hero. All of which, I hope, shows you that Reginald Arkell is both a humanist and a humorist.



Nick and Maria, First-Timers—and Good!

why I must speak against it. The truth is the scientific side of radio is outstripping human capabilities. The organisers of the items must have more imagination, and use it without fear.

know from these broadcasts—Niagara is still falling!

Radio and Pantomime

NEW wine in old bottles never did work. Our new medium of radio will not accept the old-time entertainment. Take "Sindbad," that pantomime so successful in 1906. It was tried on the air in 1933, and a brilliant cast could not get it over. Wynne Ajello, Bertha Wilmott, Carleton Hobbs, Dennis O'Neil, are all stars who have delighted me at one time or another, and I listened to them in "Sindbad," trying so hard to give us the "hip-bip-burrah" spirit. It refused to come. Well let's hope another lesson has been learned!

THE man who announced the French rail disaster did a magnificent piece of work. He got the right note into his voice, and the choice of words was excellent. He was able to express the sympathies of this country Well Done, Sir! to France, and I am sure there was not one listener who did not feel just what the announcer expressed so simply, and yet with so much dignity.

Billy Baker, Soubrette

ANOTHER radio star is born. I hope you heard her magic voice. It belonged to Billy Baker, a soubrette. Three songs she sang, every one different, and every one handled differently. There was "Morning," delivered with beautiful diction and finishing with a perfect top-note. It was something to remember. If only we could see the ordinary morning as Miss Baker got it over, we would also start the day in great fettle. Then there was "The Happy Old Woman In The Shoe." We got the fantastic touch. There was a lilt and a trip and a ripple. It made you happy. Her third song was a romantic one, "I'll Be Happy Making You Glad." There was something refreshing about her wanting to give us all the sunshine in her heart. I want to hear your voice soon again, Billy!

WELL, this is a speedy age, especially amongst the hot-cha-cha dance merchants. I'm told this is a true story. Two dance band pals were parting for the first time in years. One was going

Real Old Times

"THE Kentucky Minstrels" make an ideal variety radio show—that is if they are produced as Harry S. Pepper produces them. In this show there really was a crack banjo team, who got melody out of their strings. There were cross-talk comedians who really had cause to get cross with each other. There were corner-men who kept us in touch with the rest of the troupe. The modern compere is a sickly cousin to the corner-men. If the compere could get just as little of the abandonment of these nigger minstrels, we'd begin to believe he was part of the works. And there was that old friend, the stump speech.

WHEN talking about this show to the lads of the village, I discovered that they had never heard of a stump speech. I explained that it was simply a man talking a lot of nonsense very seriously through his hat. It brings the laughs, because the speaker is too solemn to laugh. I know a few comedians who might take a pointer there. The plantation meddles and the jokes and the songs made a real honest-to-goodness radio entertainment.

IF The Three Janes had been given just a little more scope in "Blank Hotel," which was another Radiovaria, they would have made the show an ear-joy. These three musical bright sparks shone like a duchess's tiara, but we only heard them at the beginning and they came no more. Their arrangements of "I Want To Ring Bells" was slick and pleasing. You couldn't listen to them without wanting to make a glad noise, too! But why, oh, why, did the producer not bring them back in the middle or near the end? It

RADIO'S KEENEST CRITIC

IN BROADCASTING

G'S RADIO CISM

WITHOUT
FEAR OR
FAVOUR

would have given the necessary balance to the "too-much talk."

WITH a caste which included Tommy Handley, Claude Hulbert and Euid Trevor, Horace Kenney and Leonard Henry, one expected moments of good fun. Forget the dull patches and the end, which sounded like a dull thud. Tommy Handley was in top form when giving the up-to-date panto, entitled "Cinderella, The Girl who 'got off' at the Palais!" An ugly sister's name was Umbrella, because, during a storm, "she went up in the air." Tommy must be in fine condition, otherwise he could not have kept up such a non-stop rattle of words for so long. I liked Claude Hulbert and Euid Trevor in their cross-talk proposal mix-up, with the hotel guest butting in. **Horace Kenney must be our**



Sutherland Felce, a rising star.

drollest radio comedian. He got a look-in during his "unlucky table" episode, but I'd like someone to build up a turn specially suited for him. He has got a distinctive radio voice.

TO the many listeners who go to bed before the dance music is aired, the reading is the last thing they hear. Now these listeners deserve to be sent away with a cheerful sound. What do they get? **Poems read in a voice like the crack o' doom.** Night after night these doleful voices come. Even if the subject of the poem or reading is joyful and uplifting, we get a voice sorrowful and depressing. **Can nothing be done to alter this?**

This is a season of the year when many of us are called upon to make a toast or propose a vote of thanks. **Here's a toast which**

you might like to use for people with colds— "Here's looking ACHOO!"

BEFORE I listened-in to J. L. Hodson, the reporter who told about interviewing all manner of people, here are some of the things I did not know:—Alcock and Brown, the Britishers who flew the Atlantic long before Lindberg, drank cocoa during their flight, and not beer, as was everywhere stated. H. G. Wells will talk to you for two hours, and then ask you to forget everything he has said. Oliver Baldwin always carries a New Testament in his pocket. Walter Lindrum will drink cup of tea after cup of tea when talking to you. Evelyn Laye received a letter from a nineteen-year-old boy asking her to adopt him!

One Up For Henry

One of the most impressive items I have listened to recently was broadcast by the **Dance Band of St Dunstan's**. The band was directed by Henry Hall, who has coached and helped the blind musicians in every way. All the players learn time and music by ear. They played "Without That Certain Thing"; they gave us sweet melody and spirited trumpet play, and when the vocalist sang you could hear every word. I hope lots of our professional bandsmen were listening. They would pick up a few hints, and they would note the sincerity of the playing.

A WARNING is due to some of our comedians. The B.B.C. is giving them a little more liberty these days. There is a danger of the fun-merchants overstepping the mark—if not of decency, at least of good taste. **Look Out, You The performers have got Comedians. To remember that their voices are going into the homes, and families are gathered there.** Some of the stories coming over are not the kind suitable for the family party. No names, no pack-drill this time, but I hope all concerned will watch their steps.

Hal Swain's Boys

WE do not hear much of Hal Swain and his Dance Band, but what we do get of him is enjoyable. There are points about this outfit which are different. For one thing, Hal is very polite. After he announces his tunes he says, "Thank you." That gets you into receptive mood. **Then those who shrivel up at the sound of a crooner will delight in his straight vocalist.** I found the voice a bit strained. I take it that Hal is his own vocalist. Anyhow he said, "Now, folks, I'm going to sing a song," and away he went in a good tenor voice with "My Song Goes Round The World." Personally, I'm all for crooning over the air. The sax solo was a fine bit of work, and I liked the sax again in "Trouble In Paradise." I

found you good entertainment, Hal, and the cheering in the dance hall showed you can rouse your visible audience to great enthusiasm.

Can You Spot Them?

THE B.B.C. are out to make ear detectives of us. [On January 8 they will give us a new type of broadcast. For fifteen minutes voices will be heard of a number of well-known broadcasters. They will not necessarily be heard in the type of performance in which they have made their names. The game is for us to try to identify the voices. The names will be announced at the end of the item. Will the announcer who has charge of this mystery kindly see that he does not gallop over the names? Give us a chance to grasp the names and fit them to the voices which we have heard.

HERE are items I've just picked up about American Radio. They give you an idea of how they are entertained over there. What a Soviet Commissioner says to his wife and what she says to him was made available to all who listened on the N.B.C. network. Maxim Litvinoff, Russian Commissioner of Foreign Affairs, speaking from the White House, chatted via trans-



Reginald King, of orchestral fame.

Atlantic 'phone with his Missus in far-off Moscow. No—There was nothing in the conversation about Lenin, Marx or the proletariat—just an ordinary every day exchange between a husband and a wife about health, the weather and the kiddies!

THE sky's the limit in U.S.A., and that was apparent when Lieut. Settle and Major Fordnay short-waved a stratosphere broadcast from upper reaches of the atmosphere. At 3.50 p.m. Settle's voice floated down from a height of 58,000 feet. At 4.20 p.m. he said their instruments showed 63,000 feet, an unofficial world's record. At 5.5 p.m. Settle reported he was falling down rapidly and that a re-check of his instrument showed 59,000 feet as the best mark.

THESE changing tastes! Symphonic hours are rapidly growing popular in America. Two years ago they were regarded as highbrow stuff. Now the fans cry for 'em. I can see Bing Crosby's "Last Round-Up" getting the k'o, and the howling fans yelping for "Symphony No. 4 in A Minor

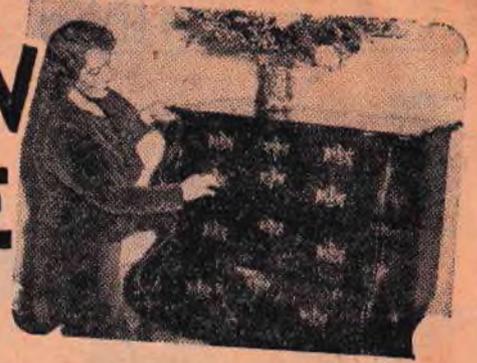
You've Said It!



Lovely blooms to be arranged.

A DAY IN MY LIFE

BY
IVY ST.HELIER



A handsome example of Ivy's antiques.

WHAT'S the time? Eight o'clock, is it? M'm, must have overslept! 'Course, I would do this to-day. Busy time in front of me, too.

Oh, well, nice morning anyhow. Better get on with it. Good thing I don't have much of a breakfast. A glass of orange juice, and that won't keep me long. Ring for my mail and go through a few letters while I'm dressing.

M'm—usual sort of postbag. So-and-so takes the trouble to tell me my broadcast last night was terrible! What's-her-name tells me I was never in better voice! Thank goodness, the two opinions cancel out!

This young fellow up in Bradford sends me another half-dozen lyrics. Hopes I'll be able to use them. Maybe; one or two of his last batch were quite promising.

Got to read them all in any case. **Never know when you're going to find a winner.**

This one looks bright and handsome. I might write a good tune to fit that. Let's see—rum-tum-ti-tum—yes. Get downstairs to the piano, quickly, before the idea gets away again.

Funny, but once an idea goes it never seems to come back. Sit for hours some days labouring away and wracking my brains to get half a dozen notes into correct order. No sort of tune comes out of them, and I have to give up.

Another day and I've got a complete tune on paper and ready for broadcasting in an hour.

Still, it's much more satisfying to write your own material. Somehow you always sing songs with more feeling—more gusto—when you've made them yourself.

Some days I can sit—hello, what's this? Oh, chrysanthemums—great big white ones! Some kind friend has remembered how much I love these flowers and sent me a huge bunch of them. Think they'd look well over here, on this old oak chest.

My Old Furniture

Always think flowers look best on old furniture—but then, old furniture is one of my fads. Motor a thousand miles to pick up a piece of real old stuff. Often have done. It's the one thing I'm extravagant about.

Oh, well, back to the grindstone! Got to get a new tune for to-night's broadcast.

Was that a clock striking? Great Scot, half-past twelve already! Got a call at the film studios at one thirty, and there are musical agents to see before that. Must rush.

Good thing I don't need any lunch. Ought to have it, I suppose, but—well, perhaps I'll have a snack later on the set.

Ring for my car. Drive myself because I not only like doing so, but I'll get there quicker! Work on the set—how I hate this "make-up"—and these are lights! Thank goodness it's a light day and I can get off for a cup of tea!

Good China tea, nice and hot. I don't mind missing all my other meals, but I'd insist on my cup of tea if there were a couple of earthquakes in progress.

Now what? Oh, yes, recording. Off to the gramophone studios to sing and play for about an hour. Getting myself converted into twelve-inch discs—always seems rather funny!

Home again. Seems odd, somehow. Something wrong? Oh, yes, I've actually got an hour to spare. Nothing to do.

Well, in that case, switch on the wireless. Symphony concert. Delicious! Rather listen to this than anything else. Wish I was there.

I'm Always Scared at the Mike

An hour's pure delight—and now on to the studios for my broadcast. Horribly nervous—always am. Being such a tiny person, I always feel as if the mike is looking down on me. Not fair at all—why do they always put me in a studio with half a dozen people all about seven feet high? At least, they seem seven feet to me. Wish I could slink quietly away and hide somewhere.

Pull yourself together! After all, the people

who're listening in can't see your misery. Sing—play.

That's over. Now what? Oh, yes, promised I'd drop in and see that new show—ought to be good. Love going to a new show. Any kind of show, so long as it's well played.

Busman's holiday—but even the busman enjoys having a ride sometimes without having to watch the traffic lights. Talking of lights—pressmen coming to-morrow to take pictures of me at the flat. What an ordeal it's going to be—

Yes, thoroughly enjoyed the show but very tired. Can't think why—wasn't such a busy day after all—far more to do to-morrow. Must remember to wake early in the morning. Nearly midnight, is it? Oh, well, must have a read before I turn in.

Love reading historical lives. Couple of chapters—think that's all for the time being—too sleepy to read any more.

G'night!

Rex King's Replies to Readers

Wants To Get In Touch With Bing Crosby.

Dear Rex,—Could you tell me through "Radio Review" where I could apply for an autographed photograph of Bing Crosby?—"S. W." (Bolton).

Rex King says—Bing Crosby, c/o Brunswick Corporation, 1776 Broadway, New York City, U.S.A.

A Billy Mayerl Fan.

Dear Rex,—How can I obtain Billy Mayerl's autograph?—"A. S." (Dundee).

Rex King says—Write Billy Mayerl at 1/2 George Street, Hanover Square London, W.1.

Henry Hall's Announcer.

Dear Rex,—Can you tell us if Henry Hall announces his numbers himself, or are they announced by some other member of the B.B.C. Dance Band?—"Three Dance Band Fans."

Rex King says—Mr George Hodges, Henry Hall's manager, makes the announcements.

A Fox-Kunz Query.

Dear Mr King,—Would you let me know who the vocalist was in Roy Fox's band who sang "Without That Certain Thing"? Also do you know if Charlie Kunz has made any gramophone records of his pianoforte solos?—"T. F. Holmes."

Rex King replies—(1) Peggy Dell. (2) No, but expecting to record in the near future.

Who Sang That Vocal?

Dear Rex,—To settle an argument, could you please tell me the name of the vocalist who sang the slow fox-trot entitled "Trouble In Paradise," with Roy Fox's band?

Who is considered the better crooner—Al Bowlly or Bing Crosby?

As to the order of merit of the dance bands who broadcast regularly, I consider Roy Fox to be an easy first, with Lew Stone second, while Henry Hall, I'm sorry to say, would be the one after the last.—"Crazy Rhythm" (Derby).

Rex King says—(1) Denny Dennis. (2) Take your choice. Both have a rare fan following.

A Marie Lloyd Song.

Dear Mr King,—Could you let me know what song of Marie Lloyd's was sung in the programme of the Old Alhambra songs? Could you get me a photograph of Lew Stone and his band?

Rex King says—(1) "Wink The Other Eye." (2) Suggest you write Lew Stone, c/o Cafe Anglais, Leicester Square, W.C.2.

A Bert Ralton Memory.

Dear Mr King,—Whilst listening recently to Roy Fox and his band, I was struck by an old memory of the late Bert Ralton. Roy Fox was playing a tune called "Allah's Holiday," and I wonder if any of you "Review" readers remember Mr Ralton's rendering of this tune many years ago, when he conducted the original Havana band. He also played it as a solo on his soprano sax.

I may be wrong, but I think that there has been nobody up to the present day who has equalled his playing on the saxophone.—"E. Wise" (E.1).

Rex King says—Yes, he was a fine player.

This Dance Band Business.

Dear Sir,—I should like to voice my opinion on the dance bands.

I think it would be more satisfactory if the Harro Knights and Billy Merrin and his Commanders were allowed to come before the mike for one and a half hours at a time, the same as other bands.

They play dance music as it should be played, and I think we should hear more of them—"T.T. Reader" (West Bronnwich).

Rex King replies—Billy certainly sets the district on fire!

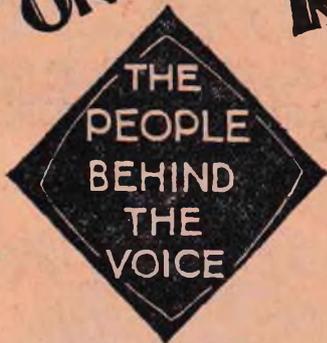
The Last Round Up.

Dear Rex,—A friend and I have had an argument about "The Last Round Up." My friend says they sing "Get along, little donkey." I say it is not donkey, but doggie. Will you please settle this for us?—"Eddie" (Yorks).

Rex King says—You're correct—"Get along, little dogie."

PITHY — PERSONAL — PERT

WHO'S WHO ON THE RADIO ROW



RUDY STARITA, the most accomplished and quickest-fingered of any xylophone artiste on the air to-day, is Italian born, but his parents emigrated to "God's Own Country" when he was two years old.

A dozen years later you might have seen Rudy in an American printing works, white-aproned, and smeared with ink. He had a real enthusiasm for printing, but in his spare time he rattled the drums.

One day his barber overheard him playing when he was passing Rudy's house. Next time the amateur drummer went for a haircut, he was asked if he earned much at it. Rudy explained that it was only a hobby, and then the barber suggested that he should come along and earn his first professional fee by playing at a relation's wedding reception. That put Rudy on the path to stardom.

He decided to concentrate on the xylophone, and after playing with several bands in the States, he came to England to join Jack Hylton's band.

He is married to Renee Dawes, who danced into popularity in some of the Hippodrome musical shows.

ALICE MOXON.

Alice Moxon nearly always broadcasts with Stuart Robertson, for the simple reason that she is Mrs Stuart Robertson. She is a true Yorkshire lass, and appeared in concerts in Bradford when she was only five years old.

In spite of her natural aptitude for singing, her parents thought that she would be more suited to the teaching profession, and as she herself liked the idea, she was actually trained for this.

Soon after she had taken all the trouble to qualify, the old love of the concert platform returned, and she gave up her scholastic career and went in wholeheartedly for singing.

Before her first broadcast in 1925 she had become a well-known operatic star, and appeared at Covent Garden.



Rudy Starita.

LESLIE BRIDGEWATER.

Years ago a little boy in Halesowen, Worcestershire, was given a toy bugle as a Christmas present. His name was **Leslie Bridgewater**, who broadcasts with his famous quintet, and from that time he dates the beginning of his musical career.

Next Christmas he demanded a cornet—and he got it!

At the age of nine he began to study seriously at the Birmingham School of Music, and while he was still in his teens he was a well-known professional musician.

One of the best stories he tells is of the occasion just after the war, when he was asked to play at a concert in the North of England.

Finding that he had forgotten a certain manuscript, he wired his brother, "Bring Greig," which was the familiar name for the Greig Concerto. His brother arrived post haste with supplies of bacon, butter, cheese and bread!

The reason was that an unusually dumb Post Office clerk had transformed the telegram into "Bring grub!"

DORIS ARNOLD.

One of the most scintillating of radio pianists is **Doris Arnold**, the fair-haired little lady who invariably appears in Harry Pepper's shows.

Strange as it may seem, the B.B.C. engaged her without any idea of her musical capabilities! She was a typist in the engineering branch, and one day she heard that a pianist had failed to turn up for the Children's Hour. That was her chance. She timorously suggested that she could deputise, did so, and was promptly transferred to the Programme Section.

Apart from music, her passion is dressmaking, and she designs and makes nearly all her own clothes.

She is also very fond of the country, and if her engagements permitted it, she says she would live right out in the country with plenty of animals to look after.

SONGS THAT APPEAL

by

Frank Colman, New Crooner Discovery

THE merest chance first gave me a start in my career as a professional vocalist.

For seven years I was apprenticed in the electrical industry, but, quite frankly, those seven years were wasted.

It is an old saying, that one sings when happy. I often used to "warble" while at work.

Now one of my workmates was a most enthusiastic member of a London choir. One day, to my utter surprise, he invited me to go along and try an evening's rehearsal as one of that choir!

I was completely taken aback. I had never thought of myself as anything but an engineer. I had never stopped to think whether or not I was interested in music.

Well, my friend persuaded me to go, and the choir persuaded me to sign on as a soprano voice.

That was when I was twenty. Everybody, of course, expected my voice to break. That was some years ago—they are still waiting!

Then I found myself receiving offers of professional engagements. Eventually I was courageous enough to throw up the engineering job.

I felt pleased, and looked around for an opportunity to please others.

I was happy and I wanted to sing.

That is how I came to give concerts to the unfortunate men and women at various London institutions.

I have spent many pleasant periods looking up the real old-fashioned and homely songs. My first experience had taught me that the old folk had no interest in the modern song which lacks a sentimental message.

I quite seriously say, that these audiences give one more appreciation and encouragement than any other group of people before whom I have appeared.

"Just A Song At Twilight" and "Annie Laurie" were two of my favourite selections, especially on those occasions when a few friends joined me to make up an amateur concert party.

I could always rely on the old folks coming in on the first word of the chorus. They would have made any conductor of community singing look up with envy!

At times, I was sorry to see the old people so affected at hearing the favourite words of their youth, but I never doubted it helped them pass a weary hour.

"Darling Mabel" often was chosen at the request of the old folks themselves. It often puzzles me why this should be such a favourite, but it was a consistent "request number."

"The Old Kent Road" always is regarded as being a boisterous song, but you've never heard it effectively sung unless you've been along to an old folks' concert in a public institution.

THE MAN WHO WIELDS THE COMMODORE BATON

When you listen to the Commodore Grand Orchestra, which has become such a firm favourite with listeners, try to picture Joseph Muscant, its conductor.

Tall, dark, with handsome head and small moustache, he is young enough and good-looking enough to make feminine hearts flutter from Land's End to John o' Groats.

Joseph was born in Russia some 33 years ago, and his father taught him the rudiments of violin playing while he was still a child.

In England he had to do something to help the family fortunes, so at the age of fourteen, when most boys are still playing football in school playgrounds, young Joseph was conducting an orchestra of 20 players on the variety halls.

He has since appeared before Royalty and conducted a symphony orchestra of 110 performers. He is one of the oldest broadcasters, for he has been on the air for over ten years.

The Trumpeter Who 'Phoned From Berlin For A Job With Hylton!

WHO SENT BILLY COTTON THE BARREL OF BEER?

—AND WHAT'S MORE HE GOT IT!

WHAT A CROONER'S FAN MAIL REVEALED

JACK HYLTON was in his London office one morning recently when the telephone exchange asked him to "stand by," as a call was coming through from Berlin. He didn't think very much about it, and just took it for granted that it was some business matter concerning his European tour, but a real bombshell was in store for him.

"I'M GEORGE SWIFT."

"You're through," came the usual call, and then, "Hello! Is that Mr Hylton? My name is George Swift—I'm a trumpet player, and for the last three years I've been playing over here, but I'm fed up with it, and want to get back to England. Any chance of a job in your band, Mr Hylton?"

STILL HE STUCK IT.

Jack was speechless for a little while. When all is said and done, although nearly every dance band musician wants to join Jack Hylton's band, and Jack has applications by the hundred, he doesn't expect phone calls from Berlin from aspiring youngsters. "Three minutes!" called the operator. "Six minutes!" and so on; but George Swift stuck like glue to the telephone until he made his proposition fully clear to the English King of Jazz.



Alec Templeton, Hylton's magnificent blind pianist.

It was a booklet describing somebody's course on slinming! "What's this mean?" he thought.

Hylton Went Dizzy

"O K!" SAID JACK.

It was this—he was convinced that he would be engaged if an audition could be arranged, and was prepared to leave for England there and then, at his own expense, if Jack would give him the O K. What was one to do? "All right," said Jack. "If you feel that way about it, come over right now. If you are as good as you think you are, I will engage you and pay your fare; but if you're not—well, it's your own funeral."

FIXED!

George Swift duly appeared at Jack's office, unpacked his trumpet, and did his stuff. And how he did it! Hylton was knocked dizzy. Swift was sensational—uncanny. That's all there is to it. Within a few minutes his fare was refunded, and his signature on a Hylton contract.

LUGGAGE AS WELL.

"I'd like you to start right away," said J. H. "Thanks, Mr Hylton, I knew this would happen, so I brought all my luggage back from the Continent." "Yes?" replied Jack. "Well, some of it is going back there, because we start a European tour in a few days." There is no doubt that Billy Tennent will look well after George Swift, because they're both natives of North Shields—or, in their own dialect, "Geordies."

GIVING THE BOYS A BREAK.

Our broadcasting band leaders are telling the world a bit more about the boys than they did previously. You know what I mean—"The vocalist in the last number was So-and-so," or "That sax solo in the second chorus was played by What's-his-name," and all that sort of thing.

HE GOT HIS LETTERS!

Well, one brilliant member of a very famous broadcasting band had a mention "over the mike" the other night. He had just done a vocal—a darned good one, too, and really deserved mentioning. Furthermore, it was perfectly natural for him to think that a few letters of appreciation might arrive a couple of days later. Letters did arrive—hundreds of them—and with a fast-beating heart he opened number one.

door and two hefty men in leather aprons proceeded to roll an enormous barrel of beer up the garden path—on the end of it was a card, "Wishing Bill a very Merry Christmas—from some of his pals."

NOW WHICH IS IT?

Billy is still laughing about it. I can't make up my mind whether his hilarity is due to the joke or its contents—or rather, former contents! On Christmas Day he received a parcel containing half a dozen tankards, but no mention of the donor. A coincidence?

FIRST TIME HERE SUCCESSES.

It's a pity that the "First Time Here" broadcasts are coming to an end. My reason for saying that is because this is the one spot where bands, apart from, say, the ten best, get a chance. In one year we could hear fifty-two bands which would otherwise remain unknown. Most of those which have played in this session have put over a very good show—Joe Less, Darc Lee, The Barnstormers, Lou Praeger, &c., and more recently Tommy Kinsman.

Tommy Kinsman's Band

TOMMY KNOWS THE PLACES.

Tommy's band is only small, but none the less good. He is one of the old timers himself, and has been leading bands in the West End and the provinces since jazz—I hate the word, but it seems to be the only one—came into existence. He knows every recording studio in London, and was once a big attraction at Ciro's, the Ritz, and many more important places.

WARNED OFF!

I remember him having a very exciting time a few years ago when his band was engaged to play on a houseboat in Dublin. It was during the time when things were rather hot in Ireland—I'm not speaking musically—and Tommy was 'phoned up and "warned off." He had to be extremely discreet to get away safely. At that time English people were not considered friends of the Irish.

THIS LAD BERT COOPER.

However, to get back to the band, I fail to see why we shouldn't have more of such bands as Tommy Kinsman's. His vocalist, Bert Cooper, would be a credit to any dance band, however famous, although Tommy did find him singing in various gig bands. You may be interested to know that Tommy Kinsman, like nearly every other band leader I know, does not go to bed when he gets home at 3 a.m., but tunes in his short-wave set and listens in to America.

COME, COME, NOW!

Try another—a price list, "Silk stockings, from manufacturer to buyer direct." Envelope after envelope was opened—circulars about pills, secrets of success, how to make hair appear on bald heads, furniture, coal, and heaven knows what else. Yes, it's obvious who worked the joke, isn't it? But how thoroughly it was done!

WHAT A "FUN" MAIL!

The boys got together and answered every advert in every paper from a nearby news-agent's, making sure, of course, to sign the letters or coupons — (I nearly told you!) I wish I could, but it's more than my life's worth.

BILLY COTTON'S LITTLE JOKES.

It is impossible to talk about or think about practical jokes without Billy Cotton's name coming to mind. Billy is the professional Crown Prince of Practical Jokers; but two or three of his pals had one on him at Christmas. At least, I think it's a joke, but maybe it was dead earnest—use your own judgment. Billy's home is in what people call "a very smart neighbourhood," and I can just imagine the horror and disgust which was felt by his neighbours the day before Christmas, when a really terribly ugly brewer's dray pulled up at the



Will You Drop Rex King a Line?

He'll be pleased to have your views on all programme matters. A letter from you will be appreciated.

Here's the address:—

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