Dial 1179
The 3KZ Story

R. R. Walker

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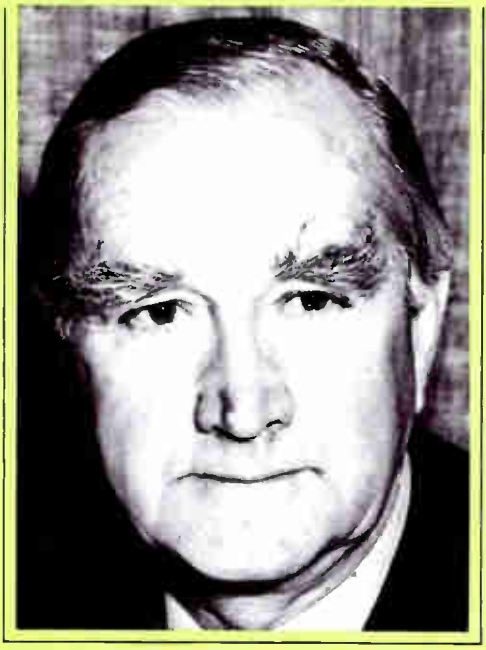
Norman Banks, Eddie Balmer, Uncle Doug, Jack Davey, Nicky, 'Joan', Terry Dear, Don Joyce and Jack Dyer... these are just some of the great names that have been part of the 3KZ Story.

This book is the history of that radio station, and its substantial role in broadcasting in Australia. It covers the programmes, personalities and promotions, and the contemporary events that have made radio such a big part of the lives of most Australians. It is full of marvellous stories and anecdotes that come from the tension and excitement of being on the air.

For those who can remember, and for others too young, but who would like to know, this book tells a colourful tale about the past and present sounds of Melbourne radio and offers a glimpse of what is to come in the future.



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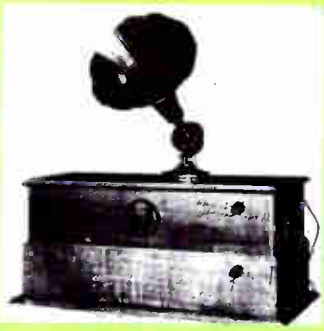

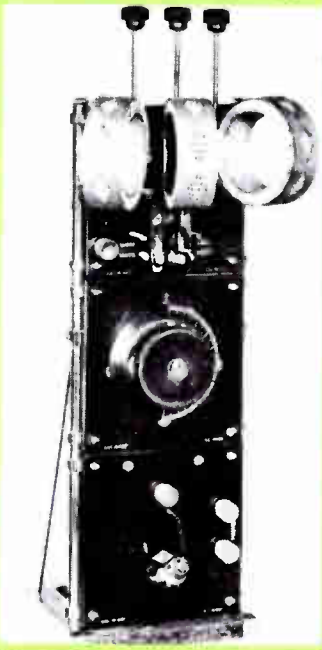

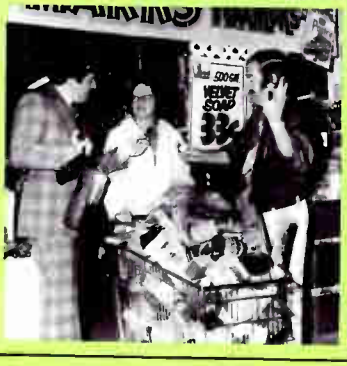
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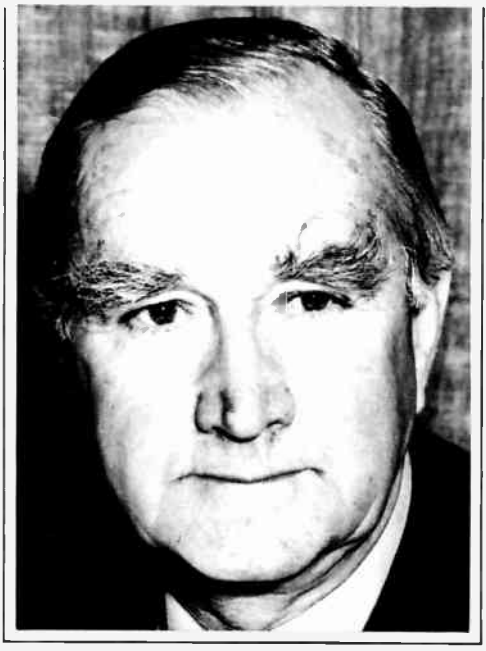

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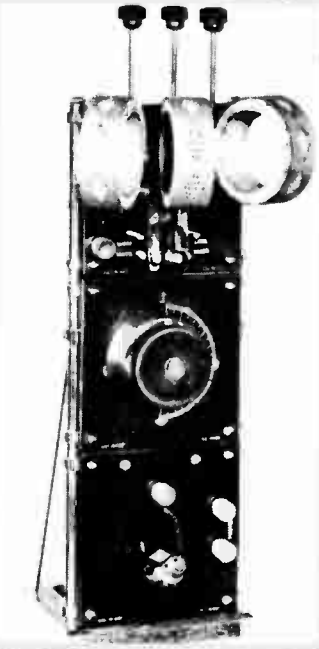


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By the same author

Communicators
People, Practices, Philosophies in
Australian Advertising, Media, Marketing

The Magic Spark
The story of the first fifty years of Radio in
Australia

Soft Soap, Hard Sell
In Adland Australia

Writing for Radio

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Acknowledgements

It should be noted that in commissioning this book the Directors of 3KZ Radio Pty Ltd agreed to give the writer free rein in what he wrote and how he wrote it. Inevitably other stations and other interests form part of the background against which the 3KZ story is told. Old colleagues, former station personalities, acquaintances and correspondents, all contributed to source material. Their memories of past events, many of them from half a century back, often differ in detail, sometimes substance. Authors, organisations and publications are also drawn upon, among them: The *Listener-In*, *Radio Times*, *Radioprogram*, *Broadcasting Business*, *B & T Weekly*, *AdNews*, the *Age*, the *Herald*, the *Sun*, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, the Australian Broadcasting Control Board, the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters, *The Timetables of History* (Thames & Hudson), George Patterson, *Captain Blood* by Jack Dyer (Stanley Paul), *Boots and All* by Lou Richards (Stanley Paul), the Radio Marketing Bureau, the Industrial Printing and Publicity Company, AWA, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Weevils in the Flour* by Wendy Lowenstein (Hyland House), Wireless Weekly, McNair Surveys, the Anderson Analysis, and *An Eyewitness History of Australia* by Harry Gordon (Rigby). As well the publisher and author would like to thank MCA Music Australia Pty Ltd for permission to reproduce some of the lyrics from 'She Had to Go and Lose It at the Astor' and Chappell & Co. for permission to reproduce 'Bluebird of Happiness'.

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1 In the Beginning

Comparison, it is said, provides the only proper measure of value. But it can be deceptive. Consider the surface indicators of the year 1930. Beer was one shilling a bottle; a meat pie was threepence; stamps were twopence each; a newspaper, a penny-halfpenny; cigarettes, sixpence a packet; a top-quality Gibsonia men's tweed suit, sixty-three shillings; milk delivered, threepence a pint; Coles' new store in Bourke Street had hundreds of items for sale with 'nothing over two-and-six'; rental on a small house, one pound a week; reasonable 'full board', twenty-two and six a week; and a De Soto Sports Roadster, over three hundred pounds.

A worker's paradise? The ultimate Eden of which men dreamed? Melbourne, no less. But contemporary costs, attractive as they seem now, hid a deep and growing malaise. The Stock Exchange crash in the United States the previous year had triggered off shock world reaction. Factories closed down, money tightened up, unemployment exploded and strikes broke out. In Australia, three crippling industrial disputes in the the timber and coal industries and on the wharves, proved long and costly to workers seeking a better deal. By December 1930 unemployment exceeded 23 per cent, and rising. It was all so sudden, so shattering. You could go broke literally overnight.

In October 1929, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, that 'fine flower of transplanted English civilisation' not only lost government but his own seat of Flinders. Frank Anstey, Labor stalwart, said of him: 'Nothing was permitted to ruffle the calm of his superiority. No insult could draw from him the slightest protest, only a stare of curiosity such as an entomologist might give a bug.' Mr Bruce expressed 'deep disappointment' at his rejection. It is worth recalling, however, that before he became a Minister of the Crown he drew no Parliamentary salary because he thought his own income was adequate for his needs.

'Imperturbable,' said his supporters. 'Imperious,' said his critics. Whichever, the Honourable James Scullin took Labor to power at a time of rapidly gathering crises. Wool prices had fallen dramatically; wheat followed. Gold reserves were drained; farmers were leaving their properties; and an Anti-Starvation Crusade started up. The trade unions called for a state of national emergency, plus government control of natural resources, wage increases and a forty-hour week. Instead, Sir Otto Niemeyer, enlisted for advice from the Bank of England, recommended cuts in wages, social services and pensions.

Shelters for the unemployed were opened at the Jolimont Railway Yards and Broadmeadows Army Camp. Evictions for nonpayment of rents became common. 'Susso' (basic sustenance) and food queues told the story of mounting travail. Nobody was really prepared for it all. The banks chopped credit. Wrote one finance man of the day in words reminiscent of recent times: 'The first steps in finding the road back to prosperity necessitate drastic curtailment of all uneconomic government expenditure and far-reaching reductions in all costs of services and administration'.

Sir Isaac Isaacs became Governor-General, the first Australian to be appointed; Amy Johnson, in a second-hand de Havilland Moth, winged her way from England 'after nineteen days of peril and anxiety'; Bradman scored a record 334 at Headingley; talking pictures were the talk of the town; there were revolutions in Argentina and Brazil; Noel Coward's *Private Lives* was the big stage hit in London; Marlene Dietrich was wowing them in the film *Blue Angel;* the planet Pluto was discovered; France started to build

the Maginot Line; Max Schmeling was world heavyweight boxing champion; Phar Lap won the Melbourne Cup; Collingwood were Premiers; and Mickey Mouse took over from where Australia's own Felix the Cat left off in the world of animated cartoons. The most popular songs of the day were 'Georgia on my Mind', 'I Got Rhythm', 'Three Little Words', 'Walkin' my Baby back Home', 'Body and Soul' and 'Time on my Hands' — a prophetic guide of things to come. All of them, curiously, still familiar today and getting occasional airplay. Such was the more eventful side of life in those straitened times. In 1930, radio was starting to emerge from what could only be described as a disturbed childhood. But its enthusiasms, cheerful sounds, at least provided a counterpoint to economic gloom.

The Government had made rather a botch of the whole business. Regular broadcasting in Melbourne started in January 1924, when the Associated Radio Company (hence 3AR) took to the air from premises in A'Beckett Street. There was a long opening speech from the Chief Secretary (Dr Stanley Argyle), followed by a concert 'clearly heard in the suburbs', as the press next day was to report. Sets were sealed to the station's frequency and that was the only one you could get. For this, there was a 'subscription' of three guineas payable to the Postmaster-General's Department.The 'sealed' system was abandoned later that year and new licences were issued to operators: 'A' class, financed by listeners' fees of one pound fifteen shillings a year, and 'B' class, which had to rely on advertising. You could take your pick of whatever stations your set could receive. 3AR became an A-class station followed by 3LO (after 2LO in London) in September, operated by the Broadcasting Company of Australia. 3UZ was the first B-class station on air, opening 25 March 1925. But there was not really a clear-cut distinction between A and B-class, for the A-class stations, if they wished, could also accept limited advertising (one hour in each twelve, confined to periods not exceeding five minutes).

There was not much advertising around then and anyway, neither 3AR nor 3LO were all that interested. 3UZ found the going very hard, and on more than one occasion in the succeeding

two or three years was tempted to turn it in. The *Listener-In*, a weekly wireless journal, describing the Australian radio scene generally, said: 'The conducting of a radio broadcasting station by the ordinary means of advertising has, except for a few isolated cases, failed'. It suggested that unless licensees had access to a tax on each valve and crystal, stations had no future.

By 1927 the situation was so confused, and the way ahead so uncertain, that a Royal Commission was set up to chart a course for the future. It was an inconclusive affair. The Commission dealt largely with technicalities and recommended, mainly, that licence fees should be pooled to finance the extension of broadcasting to country areas. The A-class operators did not see it as their function to do that and protested strongly. And so the next year, 1928, the Government was forced to change course again. A decision was reached to establish a national broadcasting service; as well, it was decided to buy out existing A-class licences (of which there were then eight) and to establish another class of licence, C-class, which would provide programmes for large advertisers to sponsor.

In the event no C-class licences were ever issued. Programmes for the A-stations went out to tender and for the next three years, the Australian Broadcasting Company (the major shareholders being Greater Union Theatres, Fullers Theatres and Albert and Sons, the Sydney music people) was to provide something like thirty thousand hours of programming each year to what was eventually to become the Australian Broadcasting Commission — set up by new charter in 1932. The A and B classifications slowly disappeared as 'national' and 'commercial' took over.

There were three of the latter in Melbourne at the end of 1930 (3UZ, 3DB and 3KZ), each subject to the wilful caprices of a Federal Minister who could literally order a programme off the air, ban a recording he did not like, close down a station if something was said by a speaker that went against his grain, and arbitrarily suspend a broadcast schedule if it conflicted with an important government announcement on another station. Such occurrences were by no means rare.

By today's standards, radio sets were not cheap, up to ninety pounds even, for a six-valve super hetrodyne receiver capable of

picking up broadcasts from all over Australia, down to two or three pounds for a crystal set. Instead of knobs to select the station and control volume, a crystal set had a 'cat's whisker' (a thin strand of copper, steel or fuse wire) which probed a small lump of crystal until it had fossicked out a receptive contact. You listened by headphones. With both types of set there were wires everywhere. 'Wireless' seemed a singularly inappropriate word for this maze of leads and cords.

When Radiola introduced a single-valve set at fifteen guineas, they advertised its 'absolute simplicity . . . merely turn a knob or dial'. Then Astor, in response to an appeal from the Prime Minister (Mr Scullin) for a still cheaper set, came out with its new Baby Electric at eleven pounds fifteen shillings. The Ediswan set cut the price even further — ten guineas. Then Vealls offered a set at eight pounds fifteen shillings — the only catch was you just got the parts; you had to put it together yourself.

Some 320 000 homes throughout the land had sets. At least that was the number of licences officially issued; there were undoubtedly many thousands more without licences. The fee for a licence was then one pound four shillings a year. The B-class stations got none of this; they had to rely on advertising. Thus the setting when 3KZ poked its antenna on to the Melbourne scene.

2 Early Days

Before television took off in 1956, a licence to operate a station was described as a 'licence to print money'. Eager hands stretched out for rich rewards. Radio, on the other hand, offered no such bonanza to pioneers. Rather, it was seen as licence to lose money. Few advertisers were prepared to invest funds in 'a passing fad', as newspapers of the day were prone to call it.

Between 1924 and 1930 it is doubtful if any of the thirteen commercial stations in Australia did little better than break even. Indeed, three closed down. The Government, in truth, seemed prepared to hand out a licence to anyone willing to take the risk and who appeared reasonably competent to sustain a service. Labor interests in Victoria were to chance their arm.

Thus it was that on 28 May 1926, an application went to the Postmaster-General's Department (then located in Melbourne) requesting that a licence be granted to a company to be formed called The Industrial Printing and Publicity Company, an offshoot of an already established organisation associated with the Melbourne Trades Hall Council. A property was acquired in Victoria Street, Carlton, that would enable, as the application stated, a 'suitable' musical organisation to be developed for radio purposes,

and which would allow for proper research to be undertaken so that 'the best possible transmission' could be ensured.

The application was apparently sent as a result of an assurance given on 2 January 1926 by the Postmaster-General's Department that, following receipt of a formal application, a licence would be granted. But it would seem that somebody had either spoken out of turn, misunderstood the purpose of the 'assurance', jumped the gun or reneged on a promise. For the licence was not granted until four years later.

The story is confused but it would not be beyond the bounds of possibility that there was political intervention from above. It seems likely that the then Nationalist Government — not taking too kindly to the idea of a Labor-oriented station going on air in Melbourne — staged a long-delaying action. Apart from anguished correspondence, nothing happened, in effect, for three years.

In May 1929, Maurice Duffy, secretary of the applicant company, wrote to the Postmaster-General's Department: 'I am desired to request that you grant my company a Class-B broadcasting licence in order that the arrangements already made might be completed and the erection of the station immediately undertaken'.

The company had an authorised capital of 50 000 pounds of which 10 900 pounds was paid up. Unions associated with the Trades Hall Council held 5519 of the one-pound shares; the ALP, 1000; and The Printing and Publishing Co-Operative Society, 10 000. There were eleven Directors, each with one share, including the future Prime Minister (Mr Scullin). A proposed schedule ran: 12 noon to 2 p.m. music, lunch-hour talks; 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. music, news items, talks on domestic welfare, health, social topics; 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. music, children's hour, news items, general topics; 7 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. music, including choir and orchestral, recitations, monologues, short plays, market reports, weather reports, talks on agriculture, dairying, horticulture, stock-breeding, education, languages, social service, science, history, industry, economics. 'Also, as opportunity offers, descriptions of athletic events such as football, cricket, sports generally.'

Maybe it was this awesome conversational catalogue that was the stumbling block. So much talk might confound the most

wordy politician. Suffice to say that this letter did finger the bureaucracy, or the Government, for extraordinary evasiveness, for it went on to say: 'this application was first made on 28 May 1926 over the signature of Mr J. F. Chapple and a reply was received 3 June 1926 which reads, *inter alia,* "the Department is prepared to grant a Class-B broadcast licence in accordance with the particulars set out in your application of 28 May, subject to receipt of the necessary fee and duplicate copies of the circuit diagram".' (This, the technical conformation of the station.) There is small doubt that the company was being given the runaround, for again, little was to happen for another six months.

By early 1930, it was clear that both the Labor party and the unions set high store by a radio licence to advance democracy's cause, as they saw it. In a letter to Federal Parliamentarians, J. F. Chapple, a union leader and Director, was to point out in March of that year that a licence was necessary so that the 'good works of our Labor governments be made known to the people per medium of the selective propaganda on the air; there is no need to press the point that radio propaganda is essential to the promulgation of democratic views and that the progress of our party is wrapped up in the venture'.

A three-year licence was, at long last, granted from 27 May 1930 and the start date set down for 17 November; operating power 200 watts, frequency 1350 kilocycles. An attempt was made to change this frequency, but it was unsuccessful.

Preparing for the great day was not without traumas. In August the Police Department, under the direction of Mr Thomas Blamey, complained that a transmission mast of the height and power contemplated would seriously interfere with police wireless messages. He requested the Government to withhold an operating licence. The wrangle was sorted out by a suitable 'shielding' arrangement. Then, a fortnight before the great day, Melbourne was lashed by a violent storm. The mast was caught up in the turmoil, down it came, and all the work reduced to nought. A fresh start was made and a new mast erected at a cost of 300 pounds. The commencement date was put back to 29 November but five days before that it was announced there would be a further delay.

Although tests were said to be satisfactory, inability to get certain parts — by-pass and grid-seed condensors, in particular — forced postponement. 'The Manager (E. L. Dahlberg) and the Engineer-in-Charge (a Mr Aldridge) were not satisfied with the performance.'

You would scarcely say KZ came on air with a roll of drums and a fanfare of trumpets. But on Sunday night, 12 December 1930, all was more or less in order, even though the station could still not operate on full power. The unions, too, were not carried away by the splendour of it all. Early records state, despondently, that 'Mr McNamara and the Secretary were the only representatives of the company present, notwithstanding that invitations had been issued to all shareholding unions in the company'. Thus it was no ballyhoo and bravura affair. 3KZ crept rather than burst on the scene with a modest programme of Recorded Music which did not start until 9.45 p.m. Little notice was taken of this new 'voice from the void' — a few lines in the trade press and that was about it. Not an auspicious beginning by any measure.

By the following Tuesday, however, things were looking brighter. Indeed, that was to be the station slogan: The Brighter Broadcasting Service. Much grander entertainment followed: 5.30 p.m. The Airzone Session; 6.00 Dinner Music; 7.25: Station Announcements; 8.00: Music; 9.00: Australian Session. Later that week programming was extended to 10.30 p.m. even though considerable technical difficulties were still being experienced. The last half-hour was Dance Music. By Christmas, most of the problems in the control room had been overcome and a start was being made at 9.30 in the morning with what must have been a real ripper of a show: The Flytox Session, followed by The Byzan and Tussor Tea Session. Then, half an hour from Madame Pompadour's Studio — music and talk. The 'madame' was the first of many hair-stylists who found radio good for business. The station then closed down to reopen at 5.30 p.m.

But there were signs of the initiative which was to make KZ one of the most innovative operators and pioneers of spectacular outside broadcasts. There was a special New Year's Eve relay from Daylesford comprising 'vocal items, instrumental numbers, talks and community singing' to celebrate a town fete. Reg Stoneham,

one of the big names in entertainment of those times, sang a specially composed song, 'Daylesford', accompanied by 'massed bands'. It was quite a feather in the cap of the newcomer. Stoneham wrote bits and pieces for the station for quite a while.

Oddly, television was being talked about even that far back. There was an American report that a radio station was using its transmitter for television 'sequels' [*sic*], up to sixty-line scanning at twenty pictures per second. 'Voice transmission and television may be synchronised — that is, one channel may be used for picture and another for voice, both being put on the air together.'

There were some awful warnings about the wireless. Tapping the airwaves, wrote one doomsayer, was akin to eavesdropping on the voices of heaven and God would punish those who succumbed to this device of the devil. Indeed, when lightning occasionally struck some of the outside aerials, this was seen as a sign of disapproval from on high. To still such fears Philips came on the market with an Aerial Cop, a gadget to 'arrest' lightning — price, seven and six.

In April 1931 Fred Tupper joined KZ 'to describe the main bout at the Fitzroy Stadium each Friday night and to announce the last-minute racing news'. Arthur Mathers, a young journalist, also came on staff as a junior announcer and sporting commentator. Their stays were brief. Tupper left to join 3AW when it started in 1932 and Mather was to achieve distinction in England and elsewhere. One unprophetic note: 'The likelihood of the establishment of any television stations in Australia is very doubtful'.

Peter Dawson, the famous Australian baritone, was to help counter fears by some of his fellow performers that radio would cut into audiences for concerts and theatrical performances. 'Nonsense,' he said, 'once they hear an artist singing over the air it will stimulate a great desire in listeners to see him in the flesh. It is the greatest creation in the world's history. It brings joy and happiness to people everywhere. Musical appreciation has been stimulated; it has improved singers. Good diction, formerly rare, is now an absolute essential.'

Transmission quality improved considerably. As well, 'artists were being instructed how to use their voices properly, how to

The first stars of 3KZ. From left to right: 'Eddie' Balmer, Dorothy Bush, Norman Banks, Naomi Melwit and Lloyd Lamble.

'Joan' (Naomi Melwit) looks adoringly at the young short-back-and-sides Norman Banks.

The distinctive voice of 'Terry' Dear, pictured here with Charles Hawthorne circa *1933, was heard on KZ in the mid-1930s.*

Norman Banks at St Aidans Seminary, Ballarat in 1923 (second from left in back row).

Norman Banks preparing to record Hymns of Prayer and Praise, a programme that echoed the reverential tone of his seminary days.

Norman Banks, in seaman's cap, climbing the rope ladder of an incoming liner to record interviews with passengers for Voice of the Voyager.

stand in front of the microphone and lean backwards and forwards so as to modulate the sound'. The Radio Doctor was big on the scene — not to cure bodily ills, but to help listeners with problems with their radio sets.

Actuality broadcasts started to take on. There was an underwater broadcast from a deep-sea diver; races, wrestling, football, cricket; a description of a yacht race, full of the colour that was to distinguish a new breed of radio 'reporters' as they came to grips with the new medium. Listeners were to hear such graphic prose as: 'I am hanging on the side of the cabin like a fly . . . Huge green seas are crashing on the deck above me'. A true bill, too, because a great wave swept over the *Oimara* and submerged both the operator and his equipment. The broadcast went 'dead'; the broadcaster survived.

But the big leap forward came with the simulated descriptions on 3DB of the Test match at Lords. 'Every move, every stroke of the bat, every ball sent down' were covered by continuous cables, reconstructed minutes later in the studio with the faked sound effects of bat on ball, intermittent clapping and the crowd's roar when a wicket fell. Sales of sets boomed and 3KZ benefitted from it, too. One newspaper at Christmas was waxing lyrical: 'In holiday camps all over Australia wireless sets are frequently seen, especially in the evening when that nothing-to-do feeling produces a little restlessness. Groups of happy people dancing on the beaches to the music supplied by the portable set serve to remind us of one of the remarkable ages in which we are living.' Masts — some of wood, some of metal — leapt to forty feet high, and became status symbols in the suburbs. Even if it meant going short on other household items, you just had to have a wireless.

3 Emerging Stars

There is nothing new in the theory that it is great names who make history. And while broadcasting is only one part of communications, some of the names of the early KZ hands are linked irresistibly to the story of Melbourne radio

The very first were two men, Bill Hill and Alex Smith, about whom little is known today. Hill apparently did the morning session and Smith came on later in the day. They were joined by Fred Tupper and Arthur Mathers, while Station Manager, Lou Dahlberg, also made brief microphone appearances, mainly of a sporting nature. But first of the emerging 'stars' was a woman. For while Norman Banks became the big name on KZ's roster, he was, in fact, preceded by Naomi Melwit: the 'Joan' of the team of 'Norm and Joan', who were to establish new dimensions of informality, some would say, daring, in those tremulous times. She joined KZ in May 1931.

A former secretary to a State Parliamentarian she, literally, had to be talked into accepting a job as Melbourne's first lady 'announcer' by 'Uncle' Alec Isaacson: theatre man, bon viveur, boulevardier, Don Juan and Assistant Manager of the station. Any lass or lady who entered the leathered luxury of his ancient, even then,

Renault Roadster (the 'Yellow Peril') might expect to be presented with flowers, a box of chocolates and an interesting proposition. Unhappily for Uncle Alec, Joan succumbed only once to an invitation to be driven to a ball; she neglected to mention that she would be bringing along an escort, a Lloyd Lamble. Despite this, her career prospered.

'It was', Joan recalls, 'really ragtime radio. There was little advice or preparation, you were on your own and you just invented things as you went along. I remember when I first started in the children's session. I thought the kiddies would be interested in the stories of A. A. Milne. So I read them long extracts between records. Uncle Alec, unknown to me, was listening outside and, when I had finished, he told me that the station could be in real trouble because Milne's works were copyright. However, nothing happened — except that Uncle Alec said he would like to marry me. He used to leave bunches of orchids on the doorstep of my flat — to no avail.' Dasher though he was — flowered buttonhole, grey Fedora, velvet waistcoat with watch chain and half-Hunter — 'Uncle' was more than a generation older.

Part of Joan's job before she became one of the station personalities was to go to Christies, the music store in Little Collins Street, pick out records she wanted for her programme, lug them back to the studios in the Trades Hall and enter them in the log so that proper records were kept for royalty payments to the Australian Performing Rights Association. 'Not only that', says Joan, 'but being a woman's-only type programme, it was up to me to see the client, discuss the broadcast, go to the KZ offices in Elizabeth Street to write the script, or continuity as it was called, and then go up to the studio in the Trades Hall to do it. I was a jack or jill-of-all-trades. Hard work, but you became very versatile.

'After that it was my regular job to write and conduct the children's session and, when that was finished, wait for the start of the evening session to do some of the commercials with Norman Banks. Most days, I worked from early afternoon to, sometimes, midnight, seven nights a week for five pounds a week. There was no Actor's Equity and I'm sorry to say we were exploited.'

And what of those commercials? Norm and Joan were to revolutionise selling techniques, much as Graham Kennedy has done in later times — masters and mistress of the *ad lib*. Although there were usually continuities supplied by KZ's own writing department, this venturesome duo used them merely as a frame of reference and acted out cameos of improvisation that, mostly, pleased the clients, but often displeased the management. Norman, late at night when Joan had gone, did some terrible things to one firm with the alarming name of Redapple and Cocking.

But one manufacturer of bath-heaters had reason to thank them for a remarkable boost to business. Long before being well-tubbed and loaded with powder or deodorant became a *sine qua non* of social success, it was not unusual for the toiling masses to set aside Friday night as family bath night. So Little Hero chip and kerosene heaters launched an advertising campaign on KZ. Copy was straightforward, uniformly dull and it was never changed. After months of saying exactly the same thing each Friday night, the terrible twins cut loose. They introduced buckets of water, sound effects, screams, giggles, gurgles and somewhat suggestive dialogue to imply that they were splashing around together, naked, in the studio. 'My little hero,' Joan might whisper with passionate theatricality. 'I am not little,' Banks might protest. And so on, in similar vein, sometimes up to five minutes without break. The sponsor was paying for one minute, so he did not mind. There were cries of horror and letters of protest. 'Keep it up,' enthused the client. They did, and Little Hero became one of the big heroes of radio promotion.

They may not have been everybody's cup of tea, however. One critical Apollo Bay listener was to write: 'On Thursday night, 3 December [1931] we were listening to 3KZ. When every record was about half-way through it was interrupted by either Norm or Joan — much to our annoyance. Could not these interruptions wait until the record is finished?' Joan once wrote of herself: 'I have always been a chatterbox . . . At home, most of my time is taken up in the music of words: Maeterlinck, Wilde, Ibsen, Barrie. From my parents, of Russian descent, I inherited a passion for music, especially Russian composers and folk songs.'

Listeners, even friends, believed that Joan and Norm were romantically associated, but there was no truth to it. It was strictly a business relationship and there is more than a suggestion, talking to them fifty years later, that they really did not like each other much. They must have concealed it well.

Joan was with KZ for more than four years and left to get married; the marriage was something of a disaster. She subsequently handled in-store fashion shows, spent a year or so at 3AW, organised dress parades throughout Australia and New Zealand and set up her own business, and showroom, as a fashion agent. Now a slim grey-haired, charming woman in her seventies, Naomi Melwit still has that sparkle that led her to fame in the 1930s. She thinks radio, although vastly changed from her day (for instance, The Woman's Hour as such has gone) is still pretty good. Bert Newton is one of her favourite on-air personalities. No women's libber, she regards some 'women's' radio shows as distasteful manifestations of modern 'sexual' mores.

Being 'representative of an era' is an oft-applied label. It suits Naomi Melwit.

For a man who is legally blind and has a pacemaker helping to maintain his heartbeat, Norman Banks, at rising eighty, is still a very lively character indeed. A lot of people hate him; a lot of people love him. The younger generation (anyone under fifty) would associate him with 3AW. But it was at 3KZ that Banks made his name, a name that was to further both his own ambitions and the station's early fortunes. In a very real sense, he was 3KZ.

Yet radio was not his original choice of career. For nine years he had been studying for the Anglican priesthood, first at a Ballarat seminary and then Ridley College in Melbourne. But as the disciplines of catechism and cloister began to weigh on his ebullient spirits, he found himself becoming increasingly restless. He did not question the basis of his faith or the role of the church in secular life, or his conviction that he would make a good priest. His disenchantment sprang more from the belief that he could not give all that the Church demanded of him. After more than a year of

agonizing, he decided to make the break. 'Such a waste,' said his tutors.

At twenty-four years of age he went to work as a salesman at S. A. Cheney, the Vauxhall distributors. But sales of cars were beginning to drop dramatically and Banks, who had long been interested in public speaking, drama and the creative arts, saw in 'the wireless' an outlet for what he considered his own very considerable imaginative talents. The years spent in study, argument, contemplation and reading, had given him a quick and ready tongue. And what better way to give it full reign than on this emerging medium, where people could hang on his every word from the talking box in the lounge-room, instead of from the pulpit. In a way it was a sublimation of his desire to establish contact with and help others.

3KZ had only just come on air. Their regular announcer Alex Smith, was not all that good. According to Banks, he not only had a tendency to stutter, but his delivery lacked what Banks considered the essential ingredient, the ability to communicate. So the brash ex-novitiate 'fronted-up' as he describes it, for an audition. He must have made a good impression for he was put on 'hold', as they say. Weeks went by and he heard nothing. Banks decided to try 3GL Geelong which had also just started operating. They were impressed, too, and said they would let him know.

But then, in June 1931, he got the message from 3KZ: Start next month, salary four pounds a week. The voice that was to become Mr Radio broached the airwaves on a significant day, internationally, 4 July, American Independence Day. Banks made good use of the association. He paid glib tribute to the land of the silver birch — with apt comments about American 'phonograph' stars — and ad-libbed his way through a programme of music and off-the-cuff opinion. Almost overnight he established himself as one to be 'watched'.

So much so that 3GL made him an offer of six pounds a week. Banks was prepared to accept it and told the Company Secretary, Maurice Duffy, that he was leaving. Duffy upped the ante to eight pounds a week — not a bad start to a commercial career, salary doubled within one month. But Duffy did not like it and snarled:

'I should have put you on a contract right from the beginning, you ungrateful so-and-so'. Maybe that was the reason why, in all Banks' years at KZ, the station only once volunteered to increase his salary. He always had to ask for a raise. He usually got it, much to the chagrin of his colleagues who believed that, despite his value, he was taking all the cream and leaving none of the milk for them. They may just have had a point.

Banks recalls climbing up the steps of the gloomy Trades Hall Council building where the studio and control centre were located, stacking the records at his side, shaking the old-fashioned carbon microphone to prevent the sound becoming 'woofy' and then, on to air. 'Our music library', says Banks, 'consisted almost entirely of Vocalian records which Alec Isaacson had bought as a job lot for about a hundred pounds. Half the discs were unsuitable so there were a lot of repeats. There were, however, other records borrowed from Christies music store in exchange for free plugs.' Largely because everything about the place was so dreary, Bill Hill, part-time announcer, part-time salesman and part-time anything, suggested that the station be called 'The Brighter Broadcasting Service'.

Banks was to initiate and present such programmes as Voice of the Voyager, Voice of the People, Voice of the Business Girl (subsequently Voice of the Shopper), Husbands and Wives, Junior Information, Spelling Bee, Victoree Varieties, Myer Musicale, plus football, tennis, athletics, swimming and other remote broadcasts; and Carols by Candlelight, one of the great continuing success stories of radio, and one which spread around the world.

The Saturday night dance programmes were often riotous affairs. Banks admits to having a nip or two, which was strictly against the rules. Crossing the borders of propriety became a finely balanced art. Banks, although he may be loath to admit it, became a master of double entendre. It was one of his trademarks. Maybe he offset his risque remarks with the high moral tone and earnest human endeavour of his other programmes, like Help Thy Neighbour and Hymns of Prayer and Praise. In the latter it was easy to detect the reverential echoes of earlier days.

He could also truthfully claim that Help Thy Neighbour was

a manifestation of practical Christianity. During the three years or so that it was broadcast, he helped to place more than two thousand people in jobs. One of them — convicted of murder but subsequently released on appeal — was to doubt what well-springs of forgiveness there were among the people at a shoe factory where Banks managed to get him placed. They went on strike, refusing to work on the production floor with him. The owner, a friend of Banks, said 'Okay, we'll make him a foreman'. The other foremen went on strike. The man, disillusioned, moved on only to find much the same reaction, ostracism, at another factory. Banks' wrath, like Jove's thunderbolts, rent the air. And the earth trembled.

Banks preserves fond memories of Voice of the Voyager which commenced in 1937. The regimen was to go down to Prince's Pier, Port Melbourne, Monday mornings, pre-dawn, board the pilot launch to meet incoming liners down the Bay, clamber up the rope ladder and set up microphone and recording equipment in readiness for interviews. 'Although I never slept the night before, worrying about whether I would find anyone interesting to talk to', adds Banks, 'it always worked out all right'. There was one charming English eccentric, by cut and conversation obviously gentry, and whose nose bore signs of long and cordial liaison with the flowing bowl. He lived, permanently, on the SS *Orsova,* finding it cheaper and more rewarding socially, than staying at home. Said Banks: 'I hope you enjoy your stay in Melbourne'. 'Yes,' came the reply. 'I am looking forward to getting there.' 'You are there,' said Banks. 'Good God,' came the astonished response, 'I thought we were in Capetown'.

The Voice of the Business Girl, broadcast direct from Coles in Bourke Street, posed problems even for the self-assured Banks, who had more than an appreciative eye for the ladies. But they overwhelmed him. 'I just couldn't cope with the girls who used to come along. Coles had to build a special sort of chariot to protect me from their clutching hands. And they weren't too fussy about where they clutched.' Husbands and Wives, a soul-baring 'confessional', where wives literally 'potted' on husbands and vice versa, raised not only listeners' eyebrows but the hackles of the Post-

master-General's Department. Participants seemed only too willing to discuss the deficiencies and idiosyncracies of their chosen mates. Banks, theoretically, was in charge of the women at one end of the studio; 'Kay' Dunoon 'husbanding' their partners at the other. It often developed into an outrageous slanging match, no holds barred and few intimacies concealed. 'What's wrong with your husband?' asked Banks one night. 'He's got a big mouth, but that's all. I call him Tiny,' came back the reply. 'What does he call you?' asked Banks. 'Lucy,' was the cheerful riposte. Banks concedes now that it was the 'dirtiest' show on air and wonders why the station let it go on for so long. Probably one of the best snap replies came from a disenchanted husband one night: 'Marriage is the only sport in the world where the one that gets trapped has to get the licence'.

Victoree Varieties, a Friday night show — mainly quick quizzes and singing before a live studio audience — was probably the biggest station sell-out of all time. Applications for tickets, at one stage, ran eighteen months ahead of performance. The sponsor was a food manufacturer who did marvellous business for a while, but then got swallowed up by a competitor.

There is a special place in memory for the Austin Hospital Appeal which started back in 1932 (and has a 3KZ wing to attest to its success) and its later companion, Carols by Candlelight.

Banks travelled wide and far, and often. The World in My Diary popped in and out of programme schedules. It was filled with illustrious names. Bing Crosby was one. Banks confirms what other writers have suggested, that Crosby was a difficult, unpleasant and unlovable man in many ways. But Banks recalls one incident when he was particularly understanding. Banks was recording an interview with Crosby when, after nearly an hour, there was not a word on tape. Banks had pressed the wrong button, or something. 'Never mind,' said Crosby, 'let's do it again'. Crosby's press agent, and others present, had never seen or heard of him being so generous. It says something for Banks, too.

But, in July 1952 the unimaginable happened. Suddenly, there was a 3KZ with no Norman Banks. The break came according to Banks 'with a curse from the management and no golden hand-

shake', because they would not allow him to take time off to attend the Helsinki Olympics. Banks delivered a virtual ultimatum: 'If you won't let me go, I'll resign'. 'Okay', came the surprising reply, 'we accept your resignation'.

There may have been more to it than that, for Banks, conscious of his own value and negotiating strength, had not been backward every year in pressing Syd Morgan, the Managing Director, for more money. There was no great love lost between the two. As well, Banks upset management by raiding the studio grog cupboard occasionally, even though he usually replaced what he had taken. He was blamed, wrongly, on the prize-giving night for the P & A Parade finalists, for having emptied bottles of beer in the sponsors' annexe and filling them with water, to the consternation of the executives from Maples and the near apoplexy of host 'Uncle Alec'. It was Lewis Bennett who had perpetrated this awful deed.

Banks in a rare show of humility confesses to being 'shattered' when Syd Morgan let him go without so much as a 'Let's talk this over'. He recalls: 'Although I was putting on a bold face, I was really frightened of the future. I went over to the London Hotel to steady my nerves, and who should I run into but Bill McLaughlin of the *Listener-In*. He was with another chap I didn't know. Bill said, conversationally, "When are you leaving?". "How the hell did you know," I replied, "It only happened a few minutes ago". Bill laughed and replied "I've got my sources". Then he said "Would you be interested in a job at AW?". "Would I ever," I answered, "anywhere". I didn't know the other chap was Keith Stevens, then 3AW's Sales Manager. He immediately got in touch with his principals and within a matter of days I had signed with the station at about twice the money I was getting from KZ. It was a miracle, running into Bill like that,' says Banks, with some mystical fervour, even now. He was to stay at AW until 1978.

Bill McLaughlin, long-time radio writer and a former Editor of the *Listener-In* confirms the substance of all this, but has a slightly different version. Says Bill: 'Norman and I met on several occasions [in the old Phair's Hotel] to discuss the impasse and he confided all details of the discussions. In the event of 3KZ's refusal to agree, he had made an approach to 3UZ to send back reports

on the Games. This made it clear that he was prepared, if the crunch came, to leave KZ. We agreed that I would have the news first. I advised the Editor of the *Listener-In*, Percy Dunstone, that I expected to have the story on the Tuesday night, in time for the next issue. I spent six hours on the phone that night trying to contact Norman at home, but was continually told that he was not there. Finally I called it a night. Imagine my horror next morning when I saw the *Sun News-Pictorial* poster and front-page story, "Norman Banks Leaves 3KZ". But all was not lost. There had to be a follow-up story. Unknown even to Banks, I had tipped off Keith Stevens of AW several days earlier that Banks could be on the market. On the Wednesday I phoned Keith, and he confirmed that Norman had been signed by 3AW for a five-figure sum. So the *Listener-In* had an exclusive story after all.'

Bill, who coined the phrase 'the Norman Conquest' to describe Banks' ascendancy over his peers, says that 'Banks was arguably the most versatile radio personality in Victoria, with the sharpest and most penetrating brain in the business'. Bill, however, saw a change in later years. 'People came to associate him with the right-wing and he developed a somewhat pontifical image. He was a vastly different person at KZ.'

Banks does not think much of present-day Melbourne commercial radio. He has a high opinion, however, of AW's voluble Derryn Hinch, even though his 'weakness' is that 'he won't listen to anyone else's opinion if it's contrary to his own'. Many people saw Banks in that light, too.

He is a complex man, restless, agile in argument, single-minded and unforgiving; by turn, full of humour, hubris and pet hates, sudden compassionate indulgences and extraordinary generosities. In many senses, he is mid-Victorian in his attitudes: conservative in politics, tolerant of South Africa; strongly dedicated to the Christian work ethic; contemptuous of long hairs, layabouts and sexual 'permissives'; and an interrogative monarchist. 'What would you replace it with?' he asks, rhetorically. While not altogether happy with the suggestion that he is a royalist, a traditionalist and a conservative, he acknowledges that when he went to 3KZ he was a rabid Labor supporter — no longer. But then, as he some-

what naively rationalises his change of heart, 'I have a hunch that a great deal of our political thinking is controlled or guided by our pockets'. But he talks of 'them' rather than 'me' in this context. He confesses to being a great Menzies admirer, but could see his weaknesses, too. When asked what weaknesses, he replied, 'Menzies sometimes lacked the moral strength to answer questions truthfully'.

Lack of real affection aside, it is not without significance that the overwhelming majority of his former colleagues nominated him as 'the greatest radio personality in Melbourne of all time'. Banks when asked whom he would nominate, mentioned none of them. The touch of his sword lighted on Eric Welch of 3DB and Norman McCance of 3LO. Although, as an afterthought, he was inclined to think that John Ford was one of the best announcers in the business. It reinforces the view that in his KZ days, he saw his course as 'me against them'. It would be fair to say that the 'thems' would see it as 'us against him'.

He shrugs off the critics: 'The people who have expressed their love for me and who have indicated their affection and support are the sort of people that I would like to have loving me. Those who have sneered and scoffed, I have looked at and said to myself "I wouldn't want their affection".'

If he were twenty years younger he would 'love' to get back into television (he had run an interview programme on GTV-9 for a couple of years), because it offers greater scope for self expression. He concedes that he is a bit of an egotist in this but sufficiently realistic to maintain a proper balance. A man of, and for, acquired tastes.

Lloyd Lamble, now with an impressive catalogue of international stage, screen, radio and television credits to his name, joined KZ in his teens, late in 1931, after six months at 3DB. Tall, good-looking with blonde hair and rich of voice, he was possibly the first 'live-artist' on the station; for it was his wont to launch into song, accompanying himself on the pianola. He called himself 'the Dreamer'. But his dreams were to be rudely shattered when one day Syd Morgan told him to stop.

'Syd', says Lloyd, 'only liked bright band numbers when he was having his breakfast, although he was fond of Peter Dawson, too'. Lamble, then, was earning thirty shillings a week. 'I paid one pound a week board, fares cost me seven-and-six, leaving me, as my mother used to say "two-and-six a week to fritter away".

'In 1932 KZ pulled the first big radio stunt, a popular footballer competition. It was an enormous success. Haydn Bunton of Fitzroy won it. Something like 70 000 or more entries were received. They were stacked in a window of a city store and attracted great crowds. I went down to be part of the action, and got my first put-down. A woman said "That's Lloyd Lamble — the one with the jammy voice".

'Norman Banks' Saturday night dance programme became a big hit, but the preceding part of the night sounded a bit flat. I suggested Saturday Night Theatre — Wurlitzer organ introduction, newsreel, a half-hour B-feature, a comedy spot, sports and fashion, then the main feature — to take us through to ten when the dance programme started. I wrote, produced and acted in it, but there was no extra money.' Years later, Don Joyce's Radio Cinema — much along the same lines — was to become one of KZ's great successes.

Lamble left KZ in 1934. For a while was a 'crooner' with Ern Pettifer's band at the Palais; then made his first stage appearance as juvenile lead in *Fresh Fields* at the Comedy. He joined 3AW after that as an announcer, with time-out for acting engagements with Williamsons. His first big hit was as the psychopathic killer in *Night Must Fall*. He was to play the lead in *Wild Violets*; appear in many radio serials then coming from the Featuradio studio; become early compere of Time Marches On, the first of the new-documentary type programmes; star in the stage production of *Idiot's Delight*; as well as many appearances in the Lux and Macquarie Radio Theatres.

During the war Lamble was what he called a 'propaganda' producer for the Department of Information. He was a versatile performer and even played straight man for Roy Rene (Mo) in his first venture into radio. It was no great success and Mo thought that put 'paid' to this medium as a vehicle for his rare talents. He

was to be proved wrong when he joined the Colgate Unit, where Lamble was also to be a producer, for a time.

Lamble went to England in the early 1950s and has been there ever since. He ran up a string of successes there, too, and may perhaps best be identified here by his roles in the St Trinian's film series. 'Jammy' voice notwithstanding, he was one of the idols of the listening audience in KZ's formative years.

In 1932-33, KZ programmes were diversifying and new announcers were coming on staff. Among them Norman Edward (Eddie) Balmer, Dorothy Camilla (Betty) Bush and Alexander George (Terry) Dear. Virtually nobody traded under their own name.

Music was still very much the staple diet, but there were also fairly regular outside broadcasts of events such as car racing, football, athletics, boxing from the Fitzroy Stadium, swimming and tennis. On a typical weekday, the programme looked like this:

8.30	HSK Ward's Breakfast Session
9.00	Recorded Music
10.00	Station Announcements, Morning Music
10.20	Davis Brothers Furniture Session
10.50	Cafende and Tandaco Cheese Session
11.15	Smith Street Traders
11.30	Russell's Yeast
12.00	Luncheon Music
1.00	Close Down
1.30	Campbells Car and Radio Session
2.30	Reverend Dr Blackney
3.00	Robur Tea
3.30	Swallow Cook Entertainment
4.30	Close Down
5.30	Children's Session
6.00	Dinner Music, Theatre Tickets
7.00	Old Man Talkie, Evening Music
7.30	Madame Pompadour
8.00	Evening Music
10.00	Station Announcements, Dance Music
11.30	Close Down

Maybe management did not want their 'stars' to get too inflated an idea of their own importance. The programmes were identified by the sponsor, not the announcer.

With added staff and better facilities, the 'Brighter' went to a 7.00 a.m. start with Eddie Balmer, 'Alarm Clock Archie', spreading what one adoring fan was to describe as 'a maximum of cheer, stimulating melodies and a minimum of unwanted talk'. The latter, however, was due largely to the absence of advertisers, rather than concern for the audience.

Perhaps the biggest radio event of 1932 was the hour-long Empire broadcast heard over both the A and B-class stations. The programme literally went round the world with segments emanating from Australia, England, Gibralter, Canada, South Africa, Hong Kong and 'a ship at sea'. There was ritual obeisance to what was still called 'the Mother Country', for the programme began and ended with 'Land of Hope and Glory'.

And, as the sound of things to come, the first relay of a drama series from Sydney: the George Edwards players, who were to become a household name throughout the nation. Always preceded by that impressive drum roll, music and 'The Star Shell has burst, bringing to the microphone George Edwards and his radio players'. The set-piece introduction was to be engraved on memory for almost half a century, as Edwards, with his wife, Nell Sterling and script-writer Maurice Francis, churned out something like 15 000 episodes from comedy (Dad and Dave) to high drama (Notable British Trials).

4 Ups and Downs

Even with stars in your eyes, it was a stiff climb, literally, getting to the top at KZ. Seventy-six steps, most of them wide, worn, concrete and cold — the last ten narrow, wooden and rickety — had to be climbed to the Trades Hall Tower, or the 'attic' as it was sometimes called. It was little more than one big room divided in two — one studio, one control room, each about twenty feet by ten feet — a flat ceiling, not very high at that, and abominably hot in summer. The studio often registered 100 degrees plus — and no fan, because the microphone would pick up background whirr.

And what a microphone. It was an old Reiss type: a marble block from a local monumental mason, hollowed out and fitted with gold-plated electrodes and fine carbon granules which were 'agitated' by sound input. Eddie Balmer recalls: 'You would be talking into this contraption when suddenly it would cut out. The technician on duty would rush in, pick it up and give it an unholy shake because it had all gummed up inside. Then on you would go until it broke down again, which was often.'

The original masts were only 65 feet tall, but they were replaced in 1932 with two reaching upwards for 110 feet. 'Snow' Grace,

The stage setting at the Regent Theatre for a P & A Parade Grand Final. Grand Final night was one of radio's highlights of the year.

Getting the P & A on the road. From left to right: 'Eddie' Balmer, Len Davis, Lewis Bennett, Margot Sheridan and Gabriel Joffe.

Fred Tupper, Norman Banks and 'Eddie' Balmer in early 1932.

'Eddie' Balmer, playing the part of a hobo, in Spur of the Moment, *a 1930 film classic.*

A 1934 send-up of Tarzan of the Apes. Back row: Norman Banks, Charles Hawthorne, 'Joan' Melwit, Reg Stoneham, and 'Eddie' Balmer. Front row: Dick Overden (Tarzan) and Dorothy Bush (Jane).

subsequently Chief Engineer, who joined the station in July 1931, did this without proper authority from the Wireless Branch and had to go through the lengthy rigmarole of lowering the aerial to 65 feet and applying in writing for permission to raise it back to 110 feet. Bureaucracy's writ was thus observed. 'Snow', who died in 1983, also recalled that originally there was no facility for announcers to operate their own microphone switch. This was done by the technician in the transmission room until Snow, himself, built a new control panel at home. The transmitter, then, was under a trap door which opened up to the masts on the roof. Came the Spring rains and water poured on to the equipment, blacking out the station. Four electric hair dryers were borrowed from Madame Pompadour, hair-stylist, early sponsor. They were opened up at full blast to dry out the plant and the station was back on the air within an hour — which only goes to prove that there was more to Madame Pompadour than a hot breath on an Emperor's cheek.

Then, one Saturday night, the 'big leap' downwards. The Trades Hall people allowed KZ to take over the old ballroom on the level below the tower. 'Sheer bliss' was the subsequent verdict of both engineers and announcers, for now there was space for two studios, one big enough to accommodate an audience of up to 100 people, and two control rooms. The whole move was accomplished between the time the station closed down on Saturday night and reopened at 2.00 p.m. Sunday.

Equipment was progressively rebuilt by 'Snow', Stan Thurling, Eric Barwick and later on, Ken Bartlett, long-time KZ engineers. Power was increased to 600 watts by using a modern water-cooled valve. One such, according to Norman Banks, once blew up in his face.

3AW which had come on air in February 1932 to make the fourth commercial station, had an almost instant brush with 3KZ, accusing it of causing interference to AW's signal. It was all sorted out, but there was not much love lost between the two for a while. This was the year of Phar Lap's death, unemployment hit one in three and a former officer of the British Hussars, Captain de Groot, snipped the ribbon to commemorate the opening of the Sydney

Harbour Bridge before Premier Jack Lang could get to it. And in that same year Sir Philip Game did an early 'Kerr' and dismissed the Leader of Government.

Early in 1933 there was a complaint that KZ's signal was causing an 'harmonic' or vibration effect which interrupted Air Force traffic from England, Egypt, India and Asia. The problem was resolved without recourse to arms.

Awful jokes, rhyming verse and doggerel were floating around. 'My word', remarked the boy who was listening to the wireless, 'that announcer's got an awful cough'. 'Quick,' said his mother, 'Switch off, I don't want you to catch it'. Even worse things were happening. Ponder this:

I used to know a little maid
With eyes that were a brownish shade
And lips that were for kisses made.
She's grown up now and rarely thinks
Of days gone by.
And yet,
She and I shared childish jinks
Now she's just a frozen sphinx,
Who shares with me (that little minx)
My Radio Set.

And a cautionary note to those who could ill-afford expensive battery or valve sets:

Over the hills to the poor house
He wends his weary way
He tried to run an eight-valve set
On a humble crystal-set pay.

Listeners were complaining about announcers with 'jammy' voices — mostly on the national stations which were, in truth, overladen with attenuated English accents. Randolph Bedford, a Queensland Labor firebrand, described them as 'sedulous apes' for copying the 'silly affectations of BBC announcers'. Wrote an irate Victorian listener of the 'unfamiliar dialect' being spoken by these men: 'At twenty wan minutes past wan I heard of 125 pints of

rain falling in the Mallee enabling fawmers to stort plowing. Surely we are entitled to hear our own language spoken as educated Australians speak it and to avoid both gross dialectical mistakes and snobbishness.' On the other hand a Caulfield listener singled out a KZ announcer for 'not being able to pronounce the King's English with any semblance of correctness . . . He described the singer as a 'bass' rhyming with 'ass'. This is a fish. I cannot think what is going to happen to radio if this sort of thing continues.' Another listener weighed in with this cutting contribution: 'Why ask us Britishers to put up with the drivel, the wailing, the whining, the grunting nasal piffle that comes out of Melbourne stations'. And to round off the argument, this rhymed roast, mostly directed to poor reception rather than quality:

> Why the howling and the fuss
> 3LO's cut off from us
> 3UZ is more than weak
> 3KZ can faintly squeak
> 3AR's not in the fun
> Or mixed up with t'other one.
> The more you want, the less you get
> Then you start to fume and fret
> Plugging here, plugging there
> 3HA's got all the air.

Thus, stated a critic from Hamilton, obviously suffering from a surfeit of listening to the local station.

The medium seemed to spur all sorts of frustrated 'poets' to verse. The papers were quite pleased to publish it.

> There's a radio fan so erratic
> For sure he has bats in his attic
> When nothing comes in
> But a horrible din
> He sits still and listens to static.

No doubt the ancient counterpart to those early television addicts who were fascinated by test patterns and background music.

5 The Roster Grows

Whereas Banks moved on to other things — another station and another part-time medium — 3KZ was, virtually, Eddie Balmer's whole life. Of all the personalities who passed through those echoing halls, there would be little disagreement to the proposition that Balmer was the second star of the firmament. The span of achievement: junior announcer to General Manager, thirty-three years in all. He was a victim of the Depression when the Vacuum Oil Company sacked him and sixty others in the one bleak day. Fortunately, he had other talents: part-time actor, with appearances on 3LO, 3UZ and 3AR, and on stage, even film. What was possibly the first 'talkie' in Australia, *Spur of the Moment* produced by the late Dick Harwood, saw Balmer playing the role of a hobo.

Community singing was big then, largely because it was the cheapest form of entertainment around. It usually cost nothing to get into the hall and, once inside, you could meet friends, bellow your lungs out and feel all the better for it afterwards.

Balmer formed the Swan Street Traders' Association in Richmond, hired the old Globe Theatre in Church Street, got the shopkeepers to chip in anything from one shilling to ten shillings

a week to bring people to the area, and had about eight pounds a week to mount a show and promote other publicity stunts. It went off like a rocket for there were a lot of poor people around Tigerland. He talked 3KZ into taking a relay for which he paid ten shillings a half-hour, 1.30–2.00 p.m., each Tuesday afternoon. He sold fifty-word announcements to traders at two-and-six a pop and, so as not to disturb the flow of the show, sat behind the curtain and faded out the singing at appropriate intervals. His voice and his enterprise so impressed KZ management that he was offered a job.

In February 1932, he found himself one of the team as Breakfast Announcer. 'Eddie' and 'Betty' (Dorothy Bush) were a duo in the morning shows. She, like Balmer, was big on the amateur stage, and, on air, they improvised other roles for themselves: like 'Phoebe', Betty's meddlesome and talkative sister, and 'Pansy', the studio cow, who was given to noisy ruminations when 'they' were running on with their chatter. Six months later Balmer was put in charge of programmes.

His name is linked to two shows in particular: The Professional and Amateur Parade (the P & A, as it was widely known) and World Famous Tenors. Although Banks was the original P & A compere, it was Balmer who saw it reach full flower. Grand Final night was one of radio's highlights of the year. Seventeen stations — even Sydney — joined the relay to hear artists in the various sections strive for top honours, including a trip to the United States. The programme endured for twenty-seven years, to be eclipsed, however, by World Famous Tenors which lasted for thirty-three years. Balmer scripted and presented it for twenty-one years.

Because of his stage performances (some one hundred in all) Balmer confessed to a tendency to 'over-act'; to 'elocute'. It was only when he was told bluntly to 'be yourself' that his natural personality took over. Wrote one radio critic of the day: 'A true Saxon [whatever that meant] type, Norman Balmer is popular with all sections of the listening public, possessed of plenty of intelligence and an engaging personality'.

His first theatrical appearance was as an elf in *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. There is still something of the pixie in him — or more aptly, Peter Pan. For although he, too, is approaching eighty, he seems to be ageless.

These days, with the ubiquitous transistor carrying the sounds of radio wherever people go, it is not all that easy to identify which station you are listening to. On the small dial, it is a crowded spectrum. Stations seem to fall on top of each other. Many sound alike. In the golden years it was simple. The programmes readily identified the source, as did the distinctive voices of the station announcers.

There was none more distinctive than that of Alexander George Dear, who was christened 'Terry' when he joined KZ in 1933. Prior to that he had, like other young men of the time, turned his hand to many things: printer's devil, rouseabout, selling and, according to Pat Hodgins, working in the Myer bargain basement.

But even at nineteen the voice was deep and sonorous, with a 'burr' of its own that set it apart from others. Indeed, one admirer, in a somewhat complex analogy wrote: 'His voice is something that should be placed in a small glass cabinet for all the wondering public to view. In that voice is quality, power, resonance, which all mingle together to hold your attention and concentration. Yet it does not intrude into the peacefulness of the home.' Some tribute.

Clearly, however, it was not to everyone's taste, especially to Joe Larkin, Manager of 3UZ, where Terry spent two months before settling in at 3KZ. With splendid candour, and a twinkle in his eye, Terry recalls that Joe told him he should forget about a career in broadcasting. 'He said I had the most lugubrious voice in the world.' His father was against Terry taking a job at KZ because of its Labor associations, but capitalist success was to cushion those early doubts.

Although he was to develop a style of his own, Terry lived very much in the shadow of Banks and Balmer. Indeed, although he wrote and presented shows of his own — The Musical Scrapbook in particular was to become one of the top afternoon programmes — Terry was used more as a second string to the station's top two.

He at different times assisted with The P & A Parade, Saturday afternoon football broadcasts and as stand-in for Voice of the Voyager and Voice of the People when Banks was not available. He worked, too, with Dorothy Bush and played 'Stinker' in Laugh with the Staff: the bawdy, boisterous, free-for-all schoolroom skit scripted by Don Joyce. 'But', he says modestly, 'those five years were a significant apprenticeship'. He was indeed to graduate as one of the nation's top comperes.

In 1938 he moved to 3AW, as Chief Announcer and Studio Manager, where he really came into his own as an individual 'great'. When Mal Verco and Ginger (the ventriloquial doll) came to Melbourne, it was Terry, as straight man, who added an extra dimension to this comic show that, literally, grabbed the nation by the ears five nights a week. And then, to Sydney in the 1950s and national stardom. Besides taking over Australia's Amateur Hour, which also ran briefly, but unsuccessfully on television, Terry handled Leave it to the Girls and was compere of the popular Reg Grundy quiz show Concentration for several years.

Like others, Terry laments the passing of many of radio's showcase productions. 'With the advent of television,' he says, 'radio seemed to lose its sense of direction'. A sprightly seventy, handsomely grey, voice intact and now living in the leafy glades of Lindfield with his wife, Phyl, who also worked at KZ for many years, Terry maintains his early links with his hometown. He especially cherishes his membership of the Melbourne Cricket Club, although it is football that interests him most.

As with most others, Terry rates Banks as Number 1 in Melbourne; Eric Welch, 2; Mal Verco, 3.

KZ could have formed its own repertory theatre, such was the number of people on staff who had trod the boards, both amateur and professional. Centre stage would have to be taken by Kenrick Varley Hudson, a talented New Zealander who started his professional life in law but found the call of the footlights too strong to resist. He, like Don Joyce, had been a member of a group of choristers and got his first part in a broadcast play largely because he was a fine, fluting boy soprano. He was one of the unfortunates

whose voice broke in the middle of a performance. Out of the contretemps emerged a rich baritone. Helped perhaps by the distinction he gained at Auckland University 'for oratory and debating', Hudson was not averse to striking a pose and reeling off a stanza or two from Hamlet's soliloquy or some lines of purple prose from the bawdy Ball of Kirriemuir. He arrived in this country in 1932 and played junior leads in the Williamson productions *The Patsy, While Parents Sleep* and *Roadhouse*, among others. Opposite him were such established stars as Dorothy Brunton and Mona Barrie. Occasional roles in broadcast plays on 3LO helped supplement his income but, even so, it was not easy going in those depression days.

He came to 3KZ in 1935 as a relieving announcer at five pounds ten shillings a week. He made such an impression that he was asked to stay on at five pounds a week; that was the custom of the day. Although Kenrick was his first name — later he changed to Kenric — he was 'Tim' to his friends but 'Dick' on air. This, again, was strictly in accord with the customs of the day. Few KZ announcers were known by their given names. 'Dick' filled in on practically every job on the roster and was a useful second-stringer to Banks and Balmer. He used to say that his most important job of the week was to strike the gong at The P & A Parade and thus silence the audience for the judges' awards.

Within a year or so he was put in charge of station production, from the Children's Hour to such prestige shows as Radio Cinema and the various quizzes. He was also feature announcer between 6.30 and 8.30 each night, and for a time was teamed with 'Joan'. On Saturday mornings, he ran his own special show, a combination of music, musings, play readings, poetry and assorted passions. One section was Gropings in the Grotesque, a miscellany of odd, scary and unusual recordings that he put together from material not normally played on most stations.

Hudson stayed with KZ until 1939 when he, too, joined the trek to 3AW where he also took over production. Then followed a stint with the RAAF and back to AW at war's end. But he was to return to his first love a year or so later and build a fresh career

as a freelance radio actor. He was also in demand as a quizmaster, and for some time was compere of Paterson's Family Quiz on KZ in the early 1950s. He was also in charge of the nationwide Commonwealth Loan Quiz which most stations carried, post-war, to help fill depleted treasury coffers.

A lively, engaging character was 'Dick', now no longer with us.

Looming a lot larger now than he did as a slip of a boy when he joined KZ in 1936, is a former member of the Legislative Council, Douglas George Elliot, variously known during his colourful career as Kanga, Uncle Doug, Leather Lungs, Doutta Galla Doug, Loganberry, the Honourable Member for Melbourne Province, Mine Host at the Royal Studley hostelry in Burnley, Trumpet Tongue, the greatest pitchman since Phineas T. Barnum, His Honour (The Mayor of Essendon) and Soft Touch (from many an indigent he has helped). On HSV's World of Sport, he is the 'barrel' to Ron Casey's 'keg', both with sufficient avoidupois to bear solid testimony to a happy relationship with the nut brown ale, fine food and other so-called perils of the flesh.

Fresh from Scotch College, where, among other things, young Elliot (the family name of the Earls of Minto, and rich in historic legends built around that epic poet Beowulf) was a soloist with the school's Glee Club, it was his mother's firm conviction that Douglas (a dweller beside the black water, according to ancient sources) was destined for greatness of some sort or other. He was not to disappoint her for he was a very outgoing boy, quick to exercise his flair for the dramatic. At one stage it seemed that the footlights might claim him for ever. For indeed he was nimble of foot, mind and gesture; a tap dancer, actor, balladeer of piercing voice until it broke and his register plummeted sharply. Even to this day he is apt to burst into a tunnel-toned rendition of 'Ole Man River' whenever the company, or circumstance, so dictate. It is a highly emotional experience. After a short span in the share-broking office of J. B. Were, during which he also made some appearances on the ABC of unknown nature and impact, he joined J. C. Williamson. He came under the notice of Sir John Tait, one

of the early directors of 3AW, and was invited to join the station as a junior announcer.

It was as 'Kanga' on Chatterbox Corner with Nicky and Nancy Lee, that he started to make his mark. Why Kanga? Because he sang bush ballads of the sort that automatically suggested a tag like that. He was also given to ad-libbing anecdotes of such bounding improbability that they lent even more substance to the nickname.

He was the founder and leading light of the All Aboard Club, an organisation of somewhat imprecise charter but whose principal article of faith was wrapped up in the cheery admonition that 'A smile is sunshine in any home'. In those dark days, Douglas George saw it as his mission to spread the gospel of good hope, to stretch out a strong helping hand and to sustain any worthwhile cause.

He injected all these soaring sentiments into the KZ programme he ran called I Leave It to You on Monday to Friday at 2.30 p.m. It was a moving mish-mash of people, events, functions and fantasies, all dedicated to the proposition that life would be a little brighter for everybody if they all pitched in and tried to help others — joining the Club made it easier. It attracted a lot of support out there in radioland and generated a lot of affection towards Uncle Doug, even though he was of such tender years that those who were not all that well disposed towards him, thought of it in much the same context as teaching your Grandma how to suck eggs. But the whips of scorn did not deter him and he went on to build up a substantial audience on KZ. Whenever he appeared on microphone, morning, noon or night, you could be sure that his capacity to adjure and advise would quickly come to the fore — the world's youngest cracker-barrel philosopher.

He worked with Banks for about eighteen months and concedes that late at night they were apt to get a bit 'naughty'. So much so he says that both of them once got the 'sack', temporarily, for taking twenty-five minutes to get through the five minute Sun News Service. 'We just kept breaking up,' he recalls, 'and we had to keep switching in records. It started when I talked about fost and frog. Then there was a news item about some fellow at Heales-

ville falling over the fence into the platypussery, and that set us off again. An item followed about a race meeting which said a Dick Green was the number one rider on grass, and we made something outrageous of that. And to cap it off, there was a story about a Russian flyer at the North Pole called Kokinsky. After that we just couldn't keep going.' And what of Banks? 'No one to match him; best in the business, then or now. He was superb as an interviewer even though he sometimes interviewed himself. Taught me more than all the rest put together.' Elliot left KZ in 1939 to join 3UZ and subsequently the Leyshon, and then the Clemenger, advertising agency.

But he was to reappear on his favourite station as compere of the highly successful Friday night Sports Parade, probably the most talked about show of its type ever. The show included greats of the sporting field, mostly footballers, racing comment with the Man in the Mask, a sports quiz, flashbacks, listener's questions, Max Reddy, plus a full band and such emerging artists as Helen Reddy and Stella Lamond. 'Even Miller's cockatoos and Brown's monkeys,' adds Doug. 'We had everything going for us for seventy-five minutes. We toured the show eight weeks of the year around country towns and raised something like 120 000 pounds for country football alone. Probably twice that for the VFL.'

Sports Parade and 3UZ's Fifty and Over, he regards as the shows he enjoyed doing most. He looks on the late Jack Clemenger as the man who did most for radio; no great advertising man but he had an unerring instinct for promoting the right type of show. 'He was your average listener exemplified. Drove me mad at times and we had some unholy rows. But marvellous shows resulted. Jack brought you back to earth whenever you were getting too arty or a bit ahead of yourself.'

With fifty years of showbiz under his belt now, Douglas Elliot seems indestructible. He is as effervescent as ever and still belting out commercials. He overwhelms a lot of people, but there is no doubting that beneath the front there is a compassionate soul. Many strays who were on their uppers can attest that his 'doing something for people' is more than just words. And what about

that remote connection with Beowulf? 'Funny thing, but I do dabble in poetry,' and he then proceeded to reel off a stanza or two of doggerel for the following Sunday's World of Sport. It sounded better than it read, which is why it is not reproduced here. Let no man under-estimate the many skills of the old Kanga. You might say he is still in there — bounding along.

There is a salon of distinction in Melbourne's Royal Arcade, a house of bright lights and chandeliers, and business home to one of radio's most enduring characters. No longer heard, but remembered with affection, one Billy Bouncer, to wit, Norman Swain, favourite of children of all ages for more than quarter of a century.

He joined KZ back in 1938, fresh from a job as junior clerk in a solicitor's office, to take over the children's programme and subsequently to be heard in the breakfast show and at other times. He was such a jolly, bouncing character that the pseudonym which has followed him through life (he is now seventy-two) came almost automatically. When his long-running children's programme folded as a post-television casualty, he transferred his talents to GTV-9 as host of the Tarax Show. He was associated with the Cairns Memorial Players, but concedes he was no dramatic star, more a character actor with a flair for comedy and a mischievous desire to alter the words of the play when it suited him.

He is, he insists, still a 'big kid' at heart, with a fond regard for the honesty and innocence of all children. Gog and Magog, those two mythological characters cast in bronze as strikers of the clock in the Royal Arcade, often provide him with the chance to weave some of his natural, story-telling magic. Kids gather around that clock to observe the ritual. Billy Bouncer is apt to pop out of his shop and tell them to count the strikes, 'for if the clock strikes thirteen the fairies will come'. Usually someone recognises him, even after all these years, and he is obliged to give yet another impromptu performance.

'No,' he says, 'I never tired of all that kiddie talk,' and no, he never felt the urge to say out loud, or to himself, 'Thank the Lord that's over,' whenever his microphone stint had finished. One AW

announcer, a near contemporary, did give vent to his feelings one late afternoon with an off-the-cuff 'That ought to satisfy the little brats'. There are other stories of similar lapses. But he was 'caught out' in an awkward situation not of his making during the war years. After the sinking of HMAS *Sydney*, all stations were served with warnings that the tragedy must not be mentioned over the air, even though it was published in the papers. The notice, however, was delivered to KZ's studio when the station was closed down. It slid under the carpet and Billy Bouncer did not see it. Blithely he went ahead with the news in the breakfast session and read out the item about the *Sydney* from the *Sun*. 'Breach of security involving comfort to the enemy' was the charge immediately levelled at KZ, and there was quite a fuss, even though the explanation was simple and the incident obviously a mischance. Swain was suspended for a week. 'I think Syd Morgan thought I was a spy,' he recalls with a grin.

Swain recalls, too, how as 'Uncle Norman' in the breakfast session he did a regular spot for Hypol. It was so successful that sales soared beyond all expectation. 'In appreciation they sent me a dozen bottles of the stuff. I think I've still got them. It was mostly cod-liver oil and I couldn't stand the taste of it. However, I must have done some good for lots of mothers thanked me for putting them on to it for their kids. It's a pretty good product, otherwise I wouldn't have put so much work into it.'

Radio today? 'Announcers have got it made. They all seem to have producers and research assistants. We had to do everything ourselves.' But he is a jester at heart. Occasionally customers say to him: 'Aren't you Billy Bouncer?' "No, no," I sometimes reply. "That's my brother, he is in prison." But I say it with a smile and I know they don't believe me. They probably listened to me when they were kids. I'm afraid I'll be Billy Bouncer until the last bounce. But that's a long way off yet.'

A cheerful, very likeable chap is our Billy.

By any count, Alfred Lewis Bennett, OBE was, and still is, an exceptional man: pianist, saxophonist, accountant, dentist, announcer, producer, station manager, industry leader, past Presi-

dent of Rotary, Honorary Life Member of Red Cross, Life Governor of Prince Henry's Hospital and 'General Factotum (Radio)'. He was one of the few men in the business who, if the occasion demanded, could take over the control room, the transmitter, the copy department, the programme department, the sales department, the newsroom, the microphone and even the switchboard. His determination to know enough about everything to keep the station on the air, no matter what, made him an awkward fellow to get around, in the the sense that he knew what each job in the radio spectrum really involved. He could quickly pick the phonies or those who tried to take him for a ride.

He came to KZ in 1939 to take over as Production Manager from Kenrick Hudson. Before that he had been with 4BH in Brisbane, 2UE in Sydney and 2TM Tamworth. His 'taste' for radio, in a way, arose from his distaste for looking into people's mouths after he had graduated in dentistry from Brisbane University. It was music, not molars, that grabbed him most. In the depression years, dentistry was not all that profitable, so LB, as he is widely known, not only hired himself out to dancebands, but filled in at 4BH as 'bridging' improvisor when the turntables packed it in, as they frequently did. There were peculiar technical problems associated with Brisbane's erratic electricity supply. Lewis pounded away until order was restored, and he became quite a drawcard: the anonymous king of the keyboard who maintained the station presence when all else had failed.

When Lewis joined 2UE as an announcer, he came in contact with the late Arthur Carr, the station's Production Manager. Carr was given to dabbling in the 'black arts', that is, in confusing the credulous, bringing in voices from the nether sphere and moving things in the studio by 'invisible' hand. It helped Lewis in shows he was to produce later on. One such, was The Piddington Show with the admirable Sydney Piddington who, as a prisoner of war in Changi, had developed an act involving 'thought transference'. In 1947, Syd and his attractive wife Lesley Pope were mystifying both studio and home audiences with their feats. The *Radio Times* proclaimed: 'Piddington — Telepathist or Magician?'. Echoed the *Listener-In*: 'So far, no one has succeeded in exposing what the

critics feel, but cannot prove, to be a stunt'. And certainly many who came to scoff, remained to be convinced. Ask Lewis Bennett today the simple question: Was it real or rigged?, and he diplomatically replies, 'That's a professional secret'. But given Syd Piddington's phenomenal memory and a sophisticated signalling system, sceptics might be well on the way to unravelling the mystery. Yet when Bennett talks about it, he starts wiggling his feet. Was that, perhaps, one of the clues to it all? The Piddingtons went from success to success, and took London by storm in 1949. 'Thought Transference Act has London Agog' ran one newspaper headline.

Bennett was associated with other KZ programmes, among them The Passing Show which he both produced and presented, weaving a story around songs in different people's lives. Everyone, it seems, has a special melody in their make-up; winkle that out, and up comes romance, adventure, intrigue, passing memory or perhaps shades of a fevered night in the Casbah. Show Boat of the Air, Music for Moderns, Calling Mr Music and Dangerous Living were other Bennett presentations. The last-named had nothing to do with fantasy or fleshpots, rather it was an early attempt to cut down the road toll. He was a straight announcer of excellent voice, indeed the agency which handled Maples showpiece, The P & A Parade, insisted that he do the commercials on the Grand Final night.

Bennett, a disarming, smiling, friendly and gregarious man, always bow-tied and a bit of a dasher in dress, was not averse to playing the game with calculated ruthlessness when it suited him. Randal White, then Manager of 3AW, had cause to remember Bennett capitalising on Banks' transfer. Long before the crisis at KZ blew up, there had been discussions about the possibility of Banks moving to 3UZ, where Bennett had become Manager in 1952 after four years in Adelaide with 5KA. There was little rapport between the two and Bennett was smart enough to realise that two such dominant personalities on the one station would probably lead to inevitable confrontation. They always had been on guarded terms at KZ. But when Bennett heard of Banks' determination to go to the Helsinki Games over any veto from KZ, he made an

arrangement to take a daily bulletin from him. This was before Banks had signed with AW. But rather than dip out gracefully when he heard of the AW coup, Bennett insisted that Banks stick to his agreement and took out confusing ads which ran along the lines of 'Banks on 3UZ'. Embarrassing though it must have been to AW, Banks stuck to his part of the bargain and was heard on UZ during the course of the Games with his daily summaries. But it rankled AW, and relations between White and Bennett were strained for quite a while.

Although Bennett regards Nicky as the best thing that ever happened to UZ, it is not without significance that he still regards Banks as Melbourne's greatest radio personality ever. He ranks Nicky, second and Bert Newton, third. Many might be tempted to put Bennett up there too.

John McMahon, 'the lilting lad from Launceston' although never on staff, made many appearances on KZ during the time he was singing at the Palais with the late, talented Hal Moschetti and his band. Songs from John McMahon was a regular show in 1937–38, with Margot Sheridan at piano. The two went on to make many recorded shows when 'Macka' moved to UZ; among them was a quarter-hour musical series with Eula Parker, We Three, that went national for Cadburys. The lovely Eula later achieved success in England where she now lives. She and her two sisters, Marie and Pat, were to become Australia-wide favourites with their singing act. The Parker Sisters appeared in many KZ programmes, including Women in Uniform, Sports Parade and The Colgate Show.

A Charles Carter was there, briefly, in the breakfast session, as was Basil O'Brien. Indian-born, English-educated Don Moore, with a background in opera and early films (including *Harmony Row* and *Heritage*), joined in the late 1930s and later went to DB. Jim Salmon, Tom Lake and George Lilburne, were others who spanned the late 1930s and 1940s. Smoky Dawson was starting his run to fame to be joined later (in holy matrimony) by Florence Cheers or 'June' who took over the children's programme from 'Auntie Pat' in 1939.

Husbands and Wives, a soul-bearing confessional where wives informed on husbands and vice versa, with 'Kay' Dunoon and Norman Banks in 1939.

The first and biggest football competition for the League's most popular player in 1932 attracted 70 000 entries. 'Eddie' Balmer and Norman Banks are flanked by Mary Duffy and Elva Bourne.

Ken (Dick) Hudson, who was with KZ between 1935 and 1939, all dressed up for The P & A Parade.

Pat (Peter) Corby, blessed with a first-class selling voice, was on the KZ roster in the late 1930s.

Fred Tolley joined KZ as a lad of 13 as a trainee panel operator.

The Kingmaker (Norman Spencer) was also only 13 when he came to KZ as a record boy.

There are other less-remembered, but nonetheless interesting, names on the KZ roster. Stephen McDonald, 'Uncle Mac', was running the children's programmes with Iris Greenham for a time. Uncle Mac, touchy and given to intemperance, seemed an odd bod to be handling such a job, but on air he was all sweetness and light. Other voices from the past were Wee Jock Gormley, who ran a Saturday morning Children's Party for the station, and Uncle Vim with his Friendship Circle.

Then there was Pat (Peter) Corby, Uncle Mac's son-in-law, blessed with a first-class selling voice, a remarkable talent for imitating Norman Banks and a remarkable capacity for crossing swords — and at one stage exchanging shots — with his unloved relation on his wife's side. Pat also liked a jar or two and managed, literally, to talk himself out of a job. He had many warnings. A dram too much one night so blurred his speech that one of his colleagues, in awe, remarked that Pat was the only announcer then extant who managed to get through an entire shift without anybody being able to understand a word he said. He was a likeable, knockabout character without venom or guile.

There was another rumbustious jack-a-dandy with a penchant for port and an eye for the ladies, Richard (Bob) Everard, Irish as they come, free of tongue, irreverent, funny and a born raconteur. His sense of humour, however, landed him in trouble one St Patrick's Day when he deliberately played 'The Battle of the Boyne' sung by Ashmore Burch, a stern English patriot. One of the many lines which could be guaranteed to arouse Erin's ire says: 'So we slew the Irish bastards, and we hit them high and low'. Everard was suspended for a week. He was an actor, writer and ad man. Indeed, for a couple of years, he ran a small advertising agency in Melbourne before going to England. Presumably he paid his way. On one prior occasion he had stowed away on the *Port Napier*, was put off at Albany and walked to Fremantle. He managed, apparently, to get a ship to Singapore where he is said to have made a brief appearance as a boxer. His stay at KZ was short but colourful.

Ron Atholwood was there, too. While melancholy of countenance, constantly depressed by outrageous fortune and convinced

that someone was out to undermine him, Atholwood was blessed with a voice of excellent quality. Perhaps with a slight leavening of humour he might have become one of the most successful announcers ever. Nevertheless, he was a versatile performer for nearly a decade, filling in on many of KZ's top programmes when regular comperes were struck down by illness, or absent on leave.

There were some interesting 'juniors' working in the despatch, library and programming departments who were subsequently to make quite a name for themselves elsewhere. Not the least of them was a dark-haired, young fellow called Norman Spencer, latterly known as the Kingmaker, the Starmaker and the Boss. He was only thirteen when he came to KZ as a 'record boy' in 1936. He showed great enthusiasm and keen interest in every facet of radio. He was a big lad for his age and did not take kindly to any passing 'shots'. It was, perhaps, this 'short-fuse' temperament that led him into error after he had been with 3KZ for only two years.

Pat Corby, as already remarked, had a certain fondness for the waters of the land. This sometimes induced in him a leisurely approach to punctuality and his colleagues often had to fill in for him. He arrived very late one day, somewhat the worse for wear. Although he was only fifteen then, Spencer had a mature voice, a knowledge of microphone techniques and a yen to make it on air. He 'covered' for Pat for an hour. As Spencer tells it, 'Corby staggered into the studio, abused me up hill and down dale, brushed me aside from the turntables and threw me off balance'. Spencer, flaring, picked up some discs, smashed them in a fury and then 'flattened' Corby. As he said, 'I didn't want any thanks but I didn't want to be kicked around for helping out'.

Corby, resentful, and possibly a bit sore, reported Spencer to Syd Morgan. Even though Corby's reputation must have filtered through to management, it was still deemed undesirable for record boys to attack announcers, and Norman, still not contrite, realised that his number was up when he 'fronted' next day. Morgan asked him what he had to say for himself, to which Spencer replied: 'Nothing. If you had treated me the way Corby did, I would have done the same to you.' 'You know what this means?' asked Morgan. 'Yes, I resign.' He got in just in time. 'Looking back', he adds

today, 'I may have got it wrong. I am not sure now that I was sacked because I hit Corby, or because I broke a couple of records.' It is quite possible that the latter, in truth, was the more heinous offence in management eyes.

Spencer was not long out of a job. He joined 3DB where he finished up in charge of programmes before going to GTV-9 in 1956. His rise there was spectacular. His major triumph was producing In Melbourne Tonight and giving Graham Kennedy his big chance on television. In the 1960s he crossed to HSV-7.

He was one of the founders of 3MP where he became General Manager. He made a lot of money when he sold most of his shares to the present operators. He is probably, as they say, 'better placed' than all the big names of his boyhood days. The only people he 'flattened', after that boisterous occasion in 1938, were opponents who tangled with him in Association football. He played for Coburg.

Then there was Bob Baeck who came to the station as a studio assistant and was involved, as he puts it modestly, 'in a small way' with such programmes as Victoree Varieties, Junior Information and Yes-No Jackpots, and as an occasional voice in the children's session.

Of his memories of those 'wonderfully exciting years', one incident remains fixed in his mind. 'Records during the war', he recalls, 'were in short supply. If you broke one, that was it, unless you could borrow it from another station. This happened a lot, in fact it was like a continuous round robin. One night, twenty minutes before Hoyts Movies and Music was due to start, we found that one of the scheduled numbers "One Dozen Roses" was unplayable. I had little time to get around to 3XY to borrow their copy. So, using my head — as I thought — I hired a cab, picked up the disc at the stage door of the Princess Theatre, where XY was then located, raced back to the studio and got the disc to air. I felt very pleased with myself. The cab fare was three-and-ten which I presented as a chit. Management knocked it back. When I asked why, I was told that use of a cab had not been approved by a senior executive and anyway the cab fare exceeded the cost of the record.'

It was, he says, a very sobering experience that lived with him right up till the time when he became General Manager of 3XY. 'I made it a policy to reward any such initiative from junior members.' Says Baeck, with a smile: 'The only commendation I ever received was for collecting Norman Banks' beer from the Dover Hotel opposite'.

Another member of this talented group was a man who, at the drop of a hint, can tell you the name, background and recording history of anyone who has ever laid needle on wax, or magnetic pulse on tape — one Fred Tolley, now record librarian with 3UZ. He has been involved with music for nearly fifty years and if a title could be conferred as the Master Mind of Music, in a commercial context, few would dispute Fred Tolley's right to it. Originally, as a lad of thirteen, he joined KZ as a trainee panel operator but graduated to the record library. He was with the station for sixteen years and then went on to his present position. Two jobs, in the same field, for nearly half a century argue a high degree of dedication and competence. Fred has both, plus a retiring nature and modest manner, except perhaps on the occasional feast day.

He wears his profound knowledge with discretion and all you can get out of him, after watching the 'greats' perform over all those years, is that some were better at their jobs than others. His vote for Melbourne radio's three greatest personalities ever, has, thus, a special value. He ranks them in order: Norman Banks, Bert Newton, Douglas Elliot. Such an accolade from such a man is no mean tribute.

And finally, a talented young man who was to make a name for himself as a scriptwriter, Keith Dare who was a programme assistant and junior announcer in the 1940s. He and his wife became a formidable writing team contributing to the enormous demand for serials. At one stage, they also ran a puppet theatre of considerable ingenuity.

6 The Distaff Side

If the women's liberation movement could be assessed in terms of success in infiltrating professions once considered to be the preserve of men, it has, unhappily, gone backwards in commercial radio; that is, in the context of proportional representation at the microphone. Consider the state of balance late 1935–36. Women announcers comprised more than one-third of the total of forty regulars employed on the five commercial stations. Now it is probably one in ten.

3KZ had Dorothy Bush and Jean Balfour, 'Betty' and 'Jean' respectively. 3UZ had no less than five women on staff, half the complement: Dorothy Foster, who among other duties, ran a millinery session; Louise Homfrey, subsequently to go to 3DB; Margaret Manning; Fay Kemple; and the formidable Ida Coffey, 'Penelope', who could out-talk and out-sell any man on the staff. At 3XY there was Madge Thomas, Marjorie Morris, Catherine Neill, 'Mary Lou', and Esme Johnstone. Iris Turnbull and Millicent Osmond, 'Sally Anne', were at DB, while at 3AW, Kathleen Lindgren, 'Nancy Lee' (Nicky's wife), and Gwen Varley ran regular programmes.

The Women's Session in its many varied forms was an essential

ingredient of any station line-up. Not just kitchen capers and fashion jazz, either, but straight announcing, features and compering, were all taken up by a highly talented array of performers from many backgrounds: the arts, the theatre, teaching, business, music and architecture.

A redhaired beauty, Dorothy Bush, or 'Betty' as she was to be called, was there in KZ's distant past, joining Eddie Balmer in the breakfast programme and then on into the morning.

She had teamed with Balmer before at the ABC in radio plays and on stage, as one of the prominent younger stars of the Cairns Memorial Players. Even at the tender age of twenty-three, she played the female lead in *Moonlight is Silver*. By the time she was twenty-five, she had chalked up more than one hundred performances in various plays.

Betty had some trouble with her 'R's, although most people would have considered that the way she rolled them added to her appeal. Nevertheless, she was teased a lot by the male announcers. On more than one occasion, just before she came on air, they were apt to swing in, unannounced, a recording of 'River Reveries' and leave her to it. As it was required practice to identify the title of the number, Betty had to go through the torment of negotiating the rapids of those relentless 'R's, and usually made an awful hash of it.

Still, she thinks they were marvellous to her and she was able to cope. One of her fondest memories is of her first success with a commercial. She apparently made such an impression on her audience with an ad for a dry cleaner that, two hours after, the sponsor rang up and said she had sold 300 pounds worth of business. 'It made it all seem very worthwhile and I enjoyed doing the ads after that,' she says. She is somewhat disenchanted with what she hears today. 'In my day', she recalls, 'fifteen-minute programmes consisted of four recordings and three minutes of advertising. Today, it sounds like the reverse. Too much talking and ghastly screaming.'

Jean Balfour succeeded Naomi Melwit, 'Joan', in 1935. Well connected socially and one of the Gregan MacMahon Players, she brought an informed view to women's affairs, gathered a repu-

tation for the scope and colour of her comments, and was described by one radio paper as 'the lass with a voice of quality'.

Jean was also the 'Madam' in the three-night-a-week strip, The Grocer and Madam, sponsored by Moran & Cato. Banks was 'The Grocer', the man who came around to collect the order, among other things. It was one of those shows, supposed to be a comedy, which showed how radio could be used to thread commercials into the story without too contrived an effect. In many ways it was one long advertisement and built up a surprisingly loyal audience. It went on for several years, obviously to the sponsor's considerable content.

Jean and Dorothy Bush left the station about the same time a year or so later to be replaced briefly, by Margaret Reid, another actress of wide-ranging talent and one who was to go on to a highly successful career making radio serials. She was 'Mary Watt' the madcap schoolgirl in the station feature, Laugh with the Staff. She and Beryl Walker were the 'Agatha and Winnie' of war-time fame. Margaret's stint with the station largely involved singing, telling stories and acting many parts in the children's session.

The sober voice of Sister Bright later in the afternoon brought surcease to any troubled souls with such advice as 'Nuts make for a good body and a balanced brain. They are also useful for their lubricating properties.'

Iris Greenham, too, joined about this time, armed with a Diploma of Music, useful stage experience, again with the Cairns Memorial Players, plus an appearance in *Heritage*, one of the memorable films of that decade. Iris also did kindergarten work and studied child psychology, both of which helped her inject worthwhile elements into the children's sessions. In short, she taught as well as entertained.

Emerald Goetze, better known as 'Mrs Rex', burst on the scene too, a formidable, busy, bustling, talented woman of many parts. She was a former student of architecture, one-time supervisor of a tobacco plantation, Chairman [*sic*] of a Ladies Rowing Club, organiser of the Home Industries section at the Royal Melbourne Show, assistant secretary of the South Australian Canary and Pigeon Society, and, among other things, an expert on cooking, clothes and flower arrangements — a rare bird indeed. It fell to

her lot to start up the daily Women's Radio Magazine, which was to break new ground in the presentation of female affairs and to earn 'Rexy' the reputation as a no-holds-barred battler of causes and a flagwaver of considerable zeal. She even had Syd Morgan eating out of her hand. Nobody was game to say 'boo' to her.

There was great agitation then about such issues as: 'Does listening make us lazy?'; 'Are too many women sitting on their backsides just listening to the radio instead of doing the housework?'; 'Was radio breaking up the home?'; and 'Were women trying to take over radio from men?'. Into such debates as these, Mrs Rex entered with fire and fierce uncompromising views.

Then there was the delicious Kay, so-named by Terry Dear, but who in real life was one Zeris Dunoon, who picked up where Mrs Rex left off. A gentler voice, as befitted a woman on whom a lot of care had obviously been lavished in the physical assembly stage. She was many things at KZ: involved in writing, acting, singing, performing in the children's programme, the Radio Magazine, Kitchen Capers, Women in Uniform, Kiddies Choristers and Husbands and Wives. It was at first thought that the last-named programme might prove a bit much for Kay, as it often involved probing marital secrets, glossing over bedroom bragging, sorting out spooky sexual details and calming down irate spouses. But according to Banks, who questioned the wives, Kay was more than equal to the task of keeping a steady rein on husbands who displayed any tendency to get carried away. 'She had a wicked sense of humour,' he adds, 'and got away with more near-the-knuckle observations that I ever did'.

Women in Uniform, however, was probably her crowning achievement. It was travelled around army camps, featured many stars, and Kay herself in that act 'Ag and Win'. Kay was 'Win' until she left to get married. She tells of one unusual wartime incident. A woman wanted to sing 'Isle of Capri' in her native tongue, but was cut out of the programme because it was suggested by intelligence officers that she might attempt to send a message to the enemy. Whether that was true or not is not known, but it would certainly have been in breach of regulations.

Kay, rising seventy these days, lives in Ashland, Kentucky; is involved in organising community and charitable entertainments,

appears regularly on American educational television and still thinks affectionately of 'those golden years of radio' and the way Norman Balmer and Margot Sheridan helped her.

Margot Sheridan! Now there is a name that should be put in everlasting lights. Probably nobody in the history of radio did more to help aspiring performers than this patient, immensely gifted pianist and accompanist.

Although she appeared on other stations throughout her musical career, her first love was for 3KZ and her association with The P & A Parade in particular. Long after normal rehearsals had been terminated, Margot would stay behind to help singers, both popular and classical, and instrumentalists having difficulties with timing, variations and orchestrations. Nothing ever seemed to faze her except photographers. She had a deep-seated dislike of personal publicity of any sort and would go to enormous lengths to prevent anyone 'catching her in the act' as it were. She also looked upon microphones as instruments of the devil. Once, just once, she was lured to the stand at KZ to 'say a few words' after glowing tributes had been paid her by assembled performers. She managed to negotiate just two words: 'Hello everybody'. Her brevity did not rub off on too many other radio stars of the day. In pain during her last years, she was cheerful and uncomplaining.

Artists who went on to popular success — among them Horrie Dargie, Lou Campara and Lal Kuring, Peggy Brooks, the Sundowners Male Quartette, the Parker Sisters, Verona Cappadonna, Lou Toppano, Annette Klooger, George Bellmaine and many others — would testify to the value of Margot's advice and help.

The early 1950s saw the bubbling Binny Lum come to KZ, originally as co-compere of the children's session with Norman Swain. She was brought in only as a stop-gap after Florence Cheers, 'June', had left — and stayed for nine years. 'No one', she says, 'apart from Swainey thought I was the right person to handle the job, and that included Norman Banks. Later, many years later, he admitted he'd been wrong.'

She was 'Cousin Binny' to 'Billy Bouncer', in her opinion, one of the most versatile radio artists of all time. 'People', she says, 'talk about Mel Blanc, but he has only one rabbit voice and one

bird voice. Norman Swain can tell a story about rabbits or birds, or cows, or dogs or horses, and he'd have different voices to convey the lot. He's brilliant. I've always thought he should have tried his luck with Disney. For all the years we were together we never had one moment of disagreement.'

She also wrote and compered such programmes as Uptown, oriented to the jazz classics, and twice won awards for her original material and personal presentation in Show of Shows. She, too, had many acting credits to her name (including *One Man's Family* and *The Jade Spider*) plus an ability to write, play piano and handle commercials.

It was Binny who introduced into the Birthday segment 'Sweetie Pie Noshy Nishes' and 'Huskies': girls and boys who became eligible for membership in this strange-sounding club. 'Those names', she says, 'are a bit odd in 1984, but believe me, they were hot stuff in the fifties'. Binny is still a considerable voice in the business, handling commercials and voice-overs — some of her sponsors have stayed with her for thirty years — and a Handy Hint stint on 3AK.

From one who did her first broadcast in Adelaide fifty years ago, has appeared on most stations over the years and is a Life Governor of the Royal Women's Hospital and St Paul's School for the Blind, Binny Lum seems to have held time in her hands and not lost any of her charm. 'Too many cooks', she says with some asperity 'spoil the broth of broadcasting today. I miss the well-modulated voices, the tonality of other times. Talkback radio to me is a complete switch-off, full of untrained voices, grizzles, experts who aren't and false information. The swing to current affairs is an over-swing and I don't like the preponderance of journalists. Entertainment is missing; we are being hassled by headliners. Radio should be a pleasant companion not a whinging complainer. All of which makes me so glad I have a cassette machine and a splendid record collection.'

Strong words from a formidable lady, who, for twenty-seven years now, has been married to 'a boy I met in the programme department at 3KZ, Geoff Charter'. That seems to tie the knot of fortuitous circumstance very nicely.

7 The Spectrum Broadens

By any reckoning, 1935 was a watershed in the history of Australian broadcasting. There were more than 40 million registered receivers around the world, 750 000 in Australia. It was a significant year, sociologically. The black burden of the Depression was beginning to lighten, although unemployment was still at an unconscionably high level. There was a dole strike led by the Trades Hall Council in the cause of better pay and improved working conditions. Albert Dunstan became Premier by uneasy arrangement with the Labor party.

The 'wowsers' were still vocal and tremendously powerful. Something like five thousand books were on the local 'Index' and we were still recovering from the cultural shock of Egon Kisch, a Czech who had come here the previous year to address an anti-war congress. Despite the eleven languages he spoke, he found himself banned from our shores by the simple expedient of an examination in Scotch-Gaelic. Kisch, literally, jumped the boat and landed with such force on Port Melbourne pier that he broke his leg. Norman Banks managed to get him on air; one of the many firsts KZ was to rack up in current affairs. Kisch, despite injury and legal devices, was to thumb his nose at authority and

addressed several meetings before leaving the country in March 1935.

Sport, too, saw Walter Lindrum running those billiard balls around the table with uncanny skill; Hubert Opperman pushing those legs of his with staunch speed and incredible endurance; Don Bradman plucking the flowers of English cricket with insolent ease. In other fields: Billy Wentworth's curiously perceptive insights into what the Japanese might be up to in regard to our Continent; a Robert Menzies, who had moved from State to Federal politics, was spinning a web of words that brought a new meaning to debates.

3KZ, in common with other stations, was expanding into hitherto unknown fields. The Voice of the People, the first of many quiz shows, became a Saturday night highlight. Nicky and Nancy Lee were big on the scene at 3AW, as was Fred Tupper. The Glee Club, Eric Welch, and Eb and Zeb were on 3DB; Mrs 'Olmes and Mrs Hentwistle 'stars' of 3UZ. 3XY came on air with Frank Thring's father in charge and a group of Efftee Players who were to give radio drama a tremendous shot in the arm; One Man's Family, Coronets of England, set the stage for others to follow. There were drama groups on other stations: the Paget Players, the Lee Murray Players, the Hal Percy Players and the Ellis Price Players. In the Melbourne metropolitan area alone there were seventy-five amateur acting societies, dramatic schools or play-reading circles. It gave young people a sense of 'belonging' in days when they had a lot of time on their hands. The Air Adventures of Jimmie Allen, Newspaper Adventures and Notable British Trials, were some of the dramas being heard on KZ.

Then everyone went wild about discovering new talent. Mid-year, within a few weeks of each other, 3UZ had launched its Golden Voice Quest, 3AW had its Amateur Hour, 3DB its Amateur Party, and 3KZ its P & A Parade, a show that was to last longest of all.

This, too, was the year of the most bizarre murder mystery in the nation's history, the 'Shark Arm' case. Consider the improbable circumstances. A small shark is swallowed by a larger shark which is captured accidentally in a fish net and sold to an aquarium. A

swirl of water and a man's arm is disgorged. It is traced, identified, and according to police theory, is part of a body that had been cut up and thrown into the sea by people suspected of smuggling. The night before the inquest on the dead man, the key witness is shot to death. Two men are arrested but are subsequently acquitted. The shark arm 'mystery' is still just that.

On the lighter side, there was the Great Wheelbarrow Push. For a bet of twenty pounds, one man wheeled another five thousand feet up a narrow mountain road, over fifty miles, from Beechworth to the top of Mount Buffalo, through rain, snow and slush. The finish of the event was relayed to stations all over the world. For a while the humble wheelbarrow carried the nation to passing international glory.

And toward year's end, the nation mourned the disappearance of 'Smithy' our greatest pioneering aviator. Ernest Fisk of Amalgamated Wireless (AWA), who had played such a significant role in the development of the medium, was to unveil an obelisk to commemorate the first direct radio message from England to Australia on 22 September 1918. Eminent engineers, he pointed out, had once said that 'because the curve of the world set up a wall of one hundred miles of sea which could not be penetrated by wireless, there was no future for international communications'. It was Billy Hughes speaking into a microphone in his native Wales to Ernest Fisk at his experimental station in Sydney, who shattered this myth.

In Federal Parliament, broadcasting became a hot issue. John Curtin, Leader of the Opposition, insisted that it was of paramount importance in view of 'the tremendous influence it can exert' that 'broadcasting as a service shall be essentially and exclusively a publicly-controlled utility in Australia'. There were then three stations in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, with Labor affiliations. But they operated independently of one another and Curtin's concern was more with growing concentrations of press power — and AWA's expansion.

The United Australia Party (UAP) Government came part of the way to meet Labor criticisms, instituting regulations which permitted single ownership or control to be limited to one met-

ropolitan station in each State; four metropolitan stations in the Commonwealth; four broadcasting stations in any one State or eight broadcasting stations, metropolitan and/or regional areas, throughout the Commonwealth.

The commercial stations, however, had another objection to the 'system' as it then was, and were against national and commercial stations being under the same control (the Postmaster–General's Department). They pressed for a select committee to investigate the whole broadcasting structure.

Nothing much happened until 1942 when a Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee was set up to guide broadcasting destinies. It did not work too well, largely, it was claimed, because of differing interests and lack of co-ordination. It was not until 1948 when the Broadcasting Control Board came into being that the industry settled down. The ABC, essentially, controlled its own affairs, apart from technical matters, while the new Board concerned itself mainly with the commercial system.

For reasons which still do not make much sense (apart from political scores being settled), the Board, in turn, was later replaced by the present Australian Broadcasting Tribunal which plays much the same tune, but with different fingering.

8 The Writers

Two names loom large on the 3KZ writing scene: Donovan (Don) Joyce and Alan Stranks. Joyce — dark, bulky, brilliant; Stranks — fair, slim, brilliant. Joyce was a friendly, outgoing fellow; Stranks, studious and reserved.

Stranks joined KZ in its first year, writing continuities that is, the spoken words, songs and scripts. 'Joan' Melwit describes him as 'very clever, indeed'. Stranks prepared material for Joan and Norm, 'Some of it', says Joan, 'quite out of this world'.

His wife also worked at KZ as a typist and later became a writer in her own right. Unhappily, not much is known about Stranks' later career and he is remembered most for his composition of the 'Goodnight Song' which closed the station down every night. There were several recorded versions; the first with Dick Cranbourne, later a DB personality and race-caller, singing the lyrics and Banks handling the narration. It was recorded at the old Vocalion Studios in Bourke Street, long since gone.

Stranks wrote eleven other songs during his term as Continuity Manager. One, 'You Will Return to Vienna', was sung by a P & A artist in 1949 but by that time Stranks was well established as a writer of scripts and lyrics with the Rank organisation in

England. He also apparently acted as a sort of 'agent' for 3KZ in England, sending back occasional reports and programme ideas to Syd Morgan. It was with Rank that Stranks achieved his greatest success. What happened to him or where he is now, no one knows.

Stranks left KZ in 1933, or thereabouts. Frank Allen, with prior radio experience at 2AY Albury and 3WR Wangaratta (now 3NE), joined the station with an established reputation as both a script and song writer. Allen eventually had some fifty songs to his credit. He wrote quite a lot of one-act plays which gained stage exposure among the many amateur societies that flourished in Melbourne in the 1930s.

One of his first contributions to the station was a 'meller-drammer' called Rise and Fall at Endit Hall in which a 'Mrs Say Plenty' and a 'Mrs Buxombod' conducted a dialogue reminiscent of the later ramblings of 'Mrs 'Obbs'. In many ways it was more of an extended three-night-a-week commercial for Tafts the pen people, one of the few early KZ advertisers still trading from their original premises at the corner of Centre Arcade, Melbourne.

Frank did a circuit of 3KZ-3AW-3UZ-3KZ for twenty years or so before seeing out his days as a writer of copy and jingles at the advertising agency, United Service Publicity, now USP-Needham. A sports-car crank, his social life also whizzed along in the fast lane. His sisters were known in the business, too, as a singing group.

When Frank left the station, Reg Stoneham, who had already played several roles — singing, acting and writing — took over the 'continuity' chore to be joined, some time during this period, by Ella Wilson, sister of the well-known advertising man, Harper Wilson, actor, producer and later Chairman of United Service Publicity.

When Ella Wilson left to get married, in came the exuberant Rosa Morgan, bursting with energy, bright ideas, eye-catching 'gear' and social contacts. The place was really jumping by then with the formidable team of Banks, Balmer, Dear, Joyce (who followed Stoneham) and then Hudson, setting a merry pace. Rosa wrote general copy and frequently contributed to Laugh with the Staff, the most under-rehearsed, spontaneously funny, comedy

Don Joyce, script in hand, 'producing' Laugh with the Staff in 1937. Teacher, 'Dick' Hudson; Stinker, 'Terry' Dear; Mary Watt, Margaret Reid; and Teacher's Pet, 'Eddie' Balmer.

Billy Bouncer (Norman Swain) hamming it up for Lewis Bennett and 'Kay' Dunoon.

Bob Baeck, Norman Banks and Keith Dare in Krakpot Quiz.

Norman Banks and Don Joyce discuss a Voice of the Voyager interview.

caper ever to hit the KZ air. Rosa Nicholls, as she now is, is as vibrant as ever. In her early days, too, she wrote bits and pieces for the ABC and for those two long-since disappeared chronicles of 'gay' days: *Table Talk* and *The Graphic.*

Don Joyce was appointed in a somewhat unusual way. He wrote a long letter to 3KZ outlining its faults and, in particular, criticised the double entendres of the station's star, Norman Banks, which he claimed, were damaging the station's image. Syd Morgan was impressed by both the novelty of the gambit and the quality of the writing. In any case, he needed a new writer. Joyce got the job. Prior to that he had experience as both an announcer and writer at five other stations, including 3HS, Horsham, later to become 3LK, the relay outlet for 3DB. Joyce was both Manager and Chief Announcer at 3HS, but his eyes were on the city.

He, too, had a theatrical background, strictly amateur, but covering both acting and stage managing. Among his live performances was his role in *The Romantic Young Lady* staged by the Standard Speech Training and Dramatic School at the Nicholas Building Hall; 'Trip Busty' in the *The Patsy* staged by The Prosperity Players at the Snowdon, later the Garrick; the part of 'Sabot' in *Rage* staged by The Little Theatre, and a role in *The Ghost Train*, by the same group. At this time Joyce was working as a junior clerk at BHP. 'I was fired', he once recalled, 'because my mind was on other things, like the theatre, acting, writing, even singing. [He had been a choirboy for a time.] The testimonial I got from my employer read "He leaves to seek other fields for which he is more temperamentally suited".' All these activities were in the early 1930s before he went on his radio walkabout which took him to stations in Broken Hill, Mildura, Adelaide and Horsham.

He joined 3KZ late 1934 as Relieving Announcer and Continuity Manager. At the microphone he immediately distinguished himself by switching in the wrong record. The Duke of Gloucester was to talk to Australia. A suitable fanfare was needed. Instead, His Royal Highness was introduced by recorded words from the preceding programme which ran 'How do you do, how do you do; How are you everybody? Billie Jones and Ernest Hore here'.

He was in inventive man, alive with ideas. Many of KZ's quiz shows sprang from his fertile mind. One, which he first brought to air, was Spelling Bee which he also compered. Laugh with the Staff he both wrote and directed. Radio Cinema, a one-hour production which, broadly, followed the format of a night out at the pictures, was an instant success.

A man of some perception, too, for he had the nous to appoint as his assistant a young reporter resting between assignments after the sudden demise of the *Star* evening newspaper. This bright young fellow was to become the first Radio Roundsman.

Joyce stayed with 3KZ until 1939 when he moved to 3AW where he was surrounded by other former KZ hands. But it was as head of his own independant production unit that he was to gain his greatest triumphs. That was in 1945 in the middle of the exploding recording boom. Two of his first productions, Departure Delayed and Passing Parade were both recorded and broadcast at 3KZ. Departure Delayed featured some of Melbourne's top drama stars: Patricia Kennedy, Keith Eden, Robert Burnard, Clifford Cowley, Ruby May and Keith Howard, among others. It was written by one of radio's most prolific 'serialisers', Ru Pullan, who with Lindsay Hardy, Niall Brennan, Catherine Duncan and J. Ormiston Reid formed part of the 'stable of scribblers' Joyce called upon for his prodigious output. There was also, according to Joyce, 'an unknown called Morris West who regularly received his fifteen pounds per 1500 words'.

Joyce developed a technique that was to give his dramas a distinctive edge: write to the stars of the show. In other words, after the storyline was established and the plot development worked out, select the actor or actors best suited to the part, and slant the writing from then on to bring out the features of their acting ability.

Joyce wrote a lot himself, too. Indeed he once calculated that during his lifetime he wrote the equivalent of some sixty full-length books. He had the facility to choose evocative titles: The Devil's Duchess, The Strange House of Jeffrey Marlowe, A Mask for Alexis, Two Roads to Samarra, The Legend of Kathy Warren and Knave of Hearts. His Forty Glorious Years, which wove events

of 1900 to 1940 into a fact-based dramatic documentary, earned him an international reputation. Indeed, his shows at one stage were being picked up in sixteen different countries.

Television was to stem the creative flow and bring an end to his studios in 1960. For a time he returned to radio on a 3AW talk-back show, but there were tensions with both management and Norman Banks. Joyce was fired and made no bones about his belief that Banks had a part in it. Banks denies this and says that Joyce simply talked himself out of a job. Whichever way, the two men for years had a guarded but respectful relationship, right from the early KZ days.

In the 1970s, Joyce turned out two books of scholarly historical research, the most important being *The Jesus Scroll* which challenged many of the traditional beliefs about the Nazarene, and *The Secret of the Stones*, an exploration of some of the world's unexplained artifacts.

Joyce died in his seventieth year in 1980. He left behind a rich legacy of radio's golden years, most of which, fortunately, is now held by the Performing Arts Museum in Melbourne.

Survival, considered as the art of overcoming outrageous fortune, was put to the test in 1936 when a young hopeful from the newly defunct *Star* newspaper joined the staff. His duties were many: writing advertising, handling station publicity and subsequently gathering and broadcasting the news on Sunday midday as the Radio Roundsman. He had never done any of these things before, but he was keen, if untutored, and he did not have an auspicious start. One of his first duties was to suggest a suitable gift for sponsors advertising on the station. He came up with the startlingly original idea of a desk calendar, one of those 'bunch of dates'. Surprisingly, his recommendation was accepted and this thoughtful *aide-mémoire* was subsequently despatched to various clients. The top half of the daily flip-over was emblazoned with such messages as '3KZ Sells Seven Days a Week', 'Let 3KZ Tell Your Story'. The lower half carried wise sayings, ancient saws, jewelled epigrams. Unhappily the first day of 1937 carried this discordant notation: 'The spoken word, once uttered, flies away — never

again to be recalled'. This terrible gaffe, fortunately, was indulgently passed over by management and the young man settled down to his regular chores.

One of his early pieces of impassioned selling prose was for Dunklings, the jewellers, who sponsored the late Saturday night dance programme — compere, the inimitable Norman Banks. He was not pleased with the material put before him and sent back an anguished note to Don Joyce, Continuity Chief. It was a cruel blow to the aspiring contender for radio glory, but, on reflection, Banks had a point. The copy was full of obscure literary allusions, one of which sought to link Russian drozhkis driving into the snow with Dunklings diamonds being excavated from South African mines. It was very heady stuff for a Saturday night audience, most of whom, it safely could be predicted, would be in no mood for intellectual indoctrination. A month or so coming to terms with the needs of commerce rather than the well-turned graces of the editorial pages, was sufficient to remove some of the frills from the young writer's output.

The pay was not much: five pounds a week, with assurance that if 'things worked out' there would be a quick review. A year went by and the assumption could logically be drawn that the work must have been satisfactory. But there was no move to increase the sparse emolument. So, a confrontation with Syd Morgan, who, charming fellow albeit, was not all that keen on spreading revenue around. However, after days of deliberation he announced that there was to be 'a step up the ladder, five pounds ten a week'. There was a shocked reaction which must have shown on the recipient's face. 'You don't seem happy about it,' said Morgan. 'Well,' came the response (bold under the circumstances), 'it seems more like a stumble than a step'. 'You've got to walk before you can run, you know,' said Morgan with oracular accuracy. To which the young man, with remarkable aptness and some daring, replied, 'Yes, but respectfully, sir, at this rate it will be years before I even break into a trot.' This inspired interchange moved Morgan to an act of spontaneous generosity, to which he was not usually given. 'Okay,' he said, 'six pounds'. The sweet taste of victory.

As a former newspaperman, the most enjoyable part was preparing the news on Sunday. It was a frenzied affair. There were virtually no overseas items apart from a few scant lines from Australian Associated Press. So, early Sunday mornings were devoted to tuning in to overseas stations on short-wave and 'lifting' stories with no regard for copyright consequences. Radio Belgrade, for instance, had a news service in English about 7.15 a.m. This was a great source of free information except that not long after war broke out it announced, prematurely, that Britain's pride of the navy had been sunk. Thus it was that, single-handed, 3KZ's Radio Roundsman sent HMS *Hood* to a watery grave about two years ahead of the actual event. There was no official reaction; which might mean that the Radio Roundsman had a very small audience or that nobody took any notice of what he said.

Most of the news, however, was local; a quick whip around the morgue, Russell Street police headquarters and hospital casualty wards. Burnt into memory is a salutary tale that took great tact in the telling. Royal Melbourne hospital had three fellows in the same ward with a distressingly similar affliction. One had been whittling wood when his knife slipped and he removed a portion of his under-carriage. Another, in pyjamas, had been asleep in front of the fire, feet up, when the phone rang. He stood on the tail of his Alsatian dog which promptly buried its fangs in the same anatomical area with terrible effect. The third had been in a car accident and a jagged piece of metal had painfully cut him down in size. 'Short shrift for three accident victims,' announced the Radio Roundsman with unforgivable levity.

There was an early brush with Maurie Duffy, the roly-poly, black-coated, pin-striped, bowler-hatted, cigar-chomping secretary, whose main job was maintaining a smooth relationship with the Trades Hall hierarchs. He was a devout Catholic who had strong (pro-Franco) views about the Spanish civil war. He objected to a news commentary one Sunday morning and instructed the temporary engineer to cut off the Radio Roundsman, immediately. The engineer, fortunately, had never heard of Mr Duffy and by the time his credentials were established the broadcast had finished.

Thus was editorial freedom preserved, if only by default. There was a mild reprimand from Syd Morgan for upsetting Mr Duffy; active and undying hostility from Mr Duffy from then onwards. His daughter, Mary, on the other hand, was a real charmer. She worked at the station for many years, typing and writing copy.

Duffy's subsequent attempts to have the Sunday morning news service closed down altogether did not exactly stir feelings of affection from the Radio Roundsman, either. Fortunately, he had an ally of considerable clout, Mr Albert Monk, Secretary of the ACTU — he liked the programme. There was one other close encounter of the worst kind (that is, instant dismissal) when the slogan used by Pepsodent to introduce its serial was deliberately changed (under alcoholic stimulus) from 'Pepsodent, the film-removing toothpaste, presents — The Air Adventures of Jimmie Allen' to 'Pepsodent, the tooth-removing film-paste'. The client, not amused, threatened to cancel, but the day was saved by contrite confession.

Years later, with humour, it was suggested to the same client that he might vary another favourite slogan 'You'll wonder where the yellow went, when you brush your teeth with Pepsodent' to 'You'll wonder where the yellow went, when they drop the H-bomb on the Orient'. He, the sponsor, was still not amused. It was not easy to keep them laughing in those days. Modesty forbids identification of this earnest toiler who went on to other things.

Some of the 3KZ ads were of pretty stern stuff. Consider this one, *circa* 1937. Under the thick black heading 'Two Million Ears Protected by a Blue Pencil', the body copy went on to read: '3KZ's impartial blue pencil hovers over all continuity and deletes any word or phrase that might give offence to any section of Victoria's million listeners. By protecting the ears of our audiences we are protecting you — the sponsor — for if offence is given, goodwill is destroyed. By signing with 3KZ you join a band of advertisers, who because they place incalculable value on good taste and so never give offence to their audience, reap the benefits that always follow goodwill.'

Into the rough and tumble of the Continuity Department in 1936 came a shy, retiring, slip of a girl, Kathleen Margaret Mary Teresa Dunlop, who, despite that formidable burden made a quick

mark for herself as a writer of potted plays for the children's session: one such, from memory, They Came Before It. She also wrote copy for advertising clients and brochures for the selling staff. Short in stature, a twinkling personality by nature, Kathy Dunlop was to spend five years of her writing career at KZ before she, too, moved to 3AW, writing, researching for semi-documentary programmes and then as Production Assistant to Don Joyce. When Don opened up his own drama unit, Kathy went with him. Later she moved into advertising, then into marriage with solicitor, Tom Kane. In recent years she has resumed her writing career with commissioned histories of several church institutions and a volume in the series on the history of the City of St Kilda. At the moment she is collaborating with Wendy Lowenstein on another social peep into the past: *What Happened When?*.

Other writers to come on staff in the late 1930s and 1940s included Nell Nicholson from Mantons; John Alenson, subsequently a big figure in the golfing world, not as a player but as an administrator and Club Secretary in both Sydney and Melbourne; and Reg Foster, an amiable man who also took to bees like honey to a pot as a leading apiarist. Foster, Alan Roberts and Josie Conway were three of the prominent names in the war and post-war years.

By the 1950s, writing assignments related more to the publicity side of the business, for with the slow death of features the need for writers waned. But in the boom times, although they were not on staff, such writers as Alan Nicholls, Vivian Carter, Derrick Warren, Skip Brennan, James Grant, Keith Dare and Frank Rowan, all contributed to programme material broadcast on 3KZ.

It is the news-men these days who provide the bulk of station writing. Marilyn Harris is in charge of station publicity, promotional material and community service. An 'old hand' now herself, she has been with 3KZ for more than a decade. She was preceded by Marion Wilson. It is a vastly different set-up from fifty years ago. Then it was the occasional brochure that had to be produced; or that desk-calendar to be mailed out. Now it is a ceaseless round. As one promotion finishes another starts up. Judy Naumann looks after any commercial copy requirements for 'direct' advertisers which today represent about five per cent of total content. The rest, of course, comes from the agencies. That, as they say, is the name of the game now.

9 The Serial Saga

Radio's progress in the middle to late 1930s could be charted in large part, by the rapid expansion of recorded serials. From 1934 to 1937 most were imported, among them: Chandu the Magician, Tarzan, Jimmie Allen, Eb and Zeb, Frank and Archie, Black Flame of the Amazon, Secret Diary, Crime Does Not Pay, Fu Manchu, One Girl in a Million and Rajput. Many of these titles were sold to stations by a smart American woman, whose name was subsequently to be linked with production of major Australian features under her own label, Grace Gibson. Even so, George Edwards (real name, Hal Parks) was then the most prolific source. Dad and Dave had started on its phenomenal run. From AWA came the early episodes of Fred and Maggie Everybody which was to stack up more the one thousand episodes.

A year or so later Australian production really hit its straps. About a dozen different units were in business, and most of their output was snapped up. It was a sellers' market. Most production was out of Sydney, but there was a strong Melbourne identification from such houses as Featuradio, Televox and Legionnaire. From them came epics like David Copperfield, Emile Zola, Tower of London, Grand Hotel, The Elusive Pimpernel, The Broken Idol

(Lawrence of Arabia), The Dark Invader, Imperial Intrigue, Homestead on the Rise, Sons of Sandy Mac, Beau Geste and the first of the musicals, Rhythm Revels and Rhythm all the Time. George Edwards was also turning out Henry Hardcastle Learns How, Mittens, Oliver Twist, Scott of Scotland Yard, John Halifax-Gentleman, The Rich Uncle from Fiji and Frankenstein, among others.

The first of the indigenous soap operas, I Want a Divorce, poked a timid head over the wash-tub. The genre did not reach full bubble until after the War but when it did, it slopped everywhere. Mid-morning, mid-forties and fifties, there was not a dry eye in the house as Portia faced Life, Delia fronted up to the Four Winds and Doctor Paul, on his house-calls, raised more temperatures than he lowered. Still, a softening influence, for it will be observed that many of the early jewels drew heavily on events or great names of history and literature for their story lines.

The Americans, however, had provided a frame for local writers of washboard-weepers with such tear-laden tremblers as Betty and Bob, Cecil and Sally, One Girl in a Million and Secret Diary — all of them heart-rending and interminable.

Voice of the Voyager steamed on to the KZ stage in 1937 with Norman Banks as 'the man on deck'. Proud ships like the *Mooltan*, the *Moldavia*, the *Strathnaver*, the *Straithaird*, the *Moreton Bay* and the *Largs Bay*, became the water-bearers of great names that Banks corralled and brought to air early Monday morning; rebroadcast later that same night.

The station was to advertise in a way it would not dare to do today. Across the top of ads for one final night of The P & A Parade was emblazoned 'Let's All Go Gay at The P & A'. Don Joyce's Spelling Bee started; election broadcasts became required listening; and George Edwards was conducting his Famous British Trials. 'Knock-Knocks' were all the rage. 'Knock, knock. Who's there? Wireless. Wireless who? Wireless life there's hope.'

And so it would seem, for then came a 'prosperity' allowance of eight shillings a week from the Arbitration Commission as unemployment dropped, nationally, to eight per cent. A year later, unhappily, it had climbed back to nine per cent.

That same year, a boxing match was televised in Soviet Russia; a scientist from Caltech in America was deciphering 'weird radio signals from far out in the Milky Way'; and the 'ailing legs' of Pope Pius XI were subjected to a treatment developed and described by Marconi as 'electric massage by bombardment of high frequency waves'. Radio announcers were being advised 'in *fortissimo* passages of reading to carry the head back to deflect the line of sound and thus prevent blasting'. In *pianissimo* passages, however, 'the head should be placed a little closer to the microphone but care should be exercised to avoid the sound of breathing, creaking dress shirts or other unwanted noises'.

Dress shirts? Yes, even then. Although the commercial stations had long since abandoned the habit, except for showcase programmes like The P & A Parade and The Shell Show, announcers on night duty at the ABC were required to turn up in tuxedos — added a touch of dignity or something. Not like today, according to John Cleese: 'The nicest medium in the world is radio. You don't have to remember lines, you can go to work unshaven, wearing what you like.' Adding substance to the charge of a Labor parliamentarian in the mid-1930s that the ABC was over-burdened with too many people with 'toffy, pommy' voices, was the revelation during a parliamentary debate that one in three of the announcers employed on the national stations was in fact 'British'.

There was, indeed, a marked difference between most commercial and national announcers. How, then, to improve the quality of that sound? Into this perilous realm stepped Lewis Bennett, then with 2TM, Tamworth, with these useful words: 'Quite a number of announcers on the air today, although possessed of delightful voices, tend to become very tiring to the listener. Very often this is due to the voice being too freely modulated. Its pitch rises and falls too much. We find the result within the middle ear of the listener. Delicately suspended there are three minute bones known as the stapes, the incus and the malleus, connected one to the other by extremely fine fibrils of nerve and muscle tissue. This instrument of hearing is not affected by volume of sound but by frequency. So to be sure the listener gets the message properly,

there must be no extreme rises of voice and no extreme falls. Announcers must be trained to modulate their voices within strict limits without sacrificing colour, harmony and contrast.' This clinical dissection did not make much difference, but it helped Bennett in his rise up the ladder as the thinking man's radio man.

The commercial stations were becoming restless with erratic intrusions on their domain by Federal ministers. They were equally suspicious of what they construed as favoured treatment for the ABC. The Federation, the commercial stations' industry group, made its first concerted bid for the appointment of a three-man Board to regulate the commercial system — desirably, a representative from commercial radio itself, a nominee from the Postmaster-General's Department and a chairman 'of legal training'.

At a 1938 World Radio Convention in Sydney, a visiting American delegate said that while he was 'impressed by the Australian broadcasting system, it seems wrong that dual controls should exist. It would be better if the two systems were joined. After all, two men can't drive one automobile.' This observation met with a frosty silence, for by that time the commercials were running rings around the nationals in number of stations (95 commercial, 31 national), variety of programmes and popular support.

The Federation was not very happy with the then Postmaster-General (Senator A. J. McLachlan) who accused them of 'doing very little to foster Australian national sentiment'. The commercials hardly saw that as their job. They were there to entertain and already provided ample opportunities for Australian talent. But they were shaken when he was replaced with a well-known parliamentary firebrand, the Honourable Archie Cameron who did not like advertising, did not like popular music and did not like radio plays. He immediately sailed into the stations with the threat that if they did not do something about removing 'certain undesirable features' he would do it for them.

It was not long before he moved into action. On 21 December 1938, he ordered 2KY, the Labor station, off the air in Sydney without even going through the formality of informing that station. The PMG simply cut the line to the transmitter. The reason?

Mr Cameron did not like the tone or substance of a news commentary. 'The Government did not licence any individual to say nasty things about any particular Minister.'

Even the Sydney press, which was not all that keen on radio competition for the advertising dollar, rallied to KY's cause. 'Hasty Dictatorial Action' ran one headline. Mr Cameron, under Cabinet pressure, backed down, but not graciously. He made it a condition of the issue of a 'new' licence that 2KY apologise in its news service for its 'past offences' without specifying what they were. This blanket apology, however, did not seem to worry 2KY much and they were back on air the next day. But it strengthened the stations' resolve to press for a better deal, free from undue government interference.

This was the year, too, when many irksome bonds were broken. Men were permitted to go 'topless' on Melbourne beaches (black trunks, white singlet represented 'proper gear'). It was possibly hastened by the international ridicule poured on us by the arrest of Baron von Cramm, a Davis Cup star, when he was charged after an early morning dip at St Kilda for wearing only briefs.

According to one sample of public tastes, the most popular recorded stars on the Melbourne airwaves were Richard Crooks, Gladys Moncrieff, Nelson Eddy and Bing Crosby. Richard Crooks, here on a visit, criticised radio stations for their 'limited interest in truly great music'. The great classics, he insisted, were not 'over the heads of listeners'.

Music, quizzes, serials, talent quests and interviews were providing popular formats on all stations. In 1939, KZ had Stumbles, where a studio audience had to pick up deliberate mistakes, Spelling Bee and Correct Me Please. Help Thy Neighbour, Husbands and Wives, Victoree Varieties and The Tarax Hour were other KZ features that year. On other stations there was Battle of the Sexes, Tongue Twisters and Name the Place; Hit Parades were coming into their own; The Lux Radio Theatre started on 3DB; Dorothy Crawford was wowing them as Little Audrey, the naughty little girl with the naughty little ways telling naughty little stories; Iris Greenham ran a charm school on KZ; Hope Alden, East Lynn, The House of Pater McGregor, Inspector Scott and KZ's Five Star Theatre were big on the drama scene.

An unfamiliar voice in Melbourne, although well known in Sydney, was soon to capture Melbourne by the ears in Dill and Daffydill, a comedy routine. Jack Davey was 'Dill' and Jack Lumsdaine was 'Daffydill', or maybe it was the other way around. 'Boomps a Daisy' and 'Little Sir Echo' were on everybody's lips; visiting stars of stage and screen included Fats Waller, Sandy Powell, George Formby, Stanley Holloway, the Mills Brothers and Anna May Wong; Lloyd Lamble was a big hit in a stage show full of undertones of war, *Idiot's Delight*.

Norman Banks sent recorded greetings from KZ listeners to Bing Crosby, who, in turn replied 'I can assure you that 3KZ Melbourne is the talk of Hollywood . . . you really brought your wonderful country close to the heart of all Americans. If I had my way I would hop a boat and come and see you all, but commitments don't permit.' Bing then sang 'If I Had My Way' — a special version for KZ.

One comic on The P & A Parade was hauled over the coals for his 'gross bad taste' and 'moronic offering', charges which Eddie Balmer conceded were justified: 'the script got through without checking'. No sooner had that awkward moment passed, than press play was given to what one correspondent described as the 'semi-obscene sessions coming from 3KZ'. He had in his sights Husbands and Wives. The charge was to be picked up and pursued. Another critic described the show as 'a disgrace to Victorian radio in general and 3KZ in particular'. A university man described one part of the programme as 'absolutely disgusting'. 'How such an intelligent man as Norman Banks could conduct, and how any one of the fairer sex could enjoy, as seemingly many did in the studio, such a pornographic exhibition is beyond me.'

The *Listener-In* endorsed, 'in the main', the substance of the complaint. 'It was a pity to have a man of Banks' stature associated with a session of this type.' KZ's Acting Manager replied that nobody with a normally healthy mind could have taken objection. Many people saw double meanings in the most innocent remarks. But a week later, Husbands and Wives was off the air, forever, to be replaced with a new programme called It's Up to You; run in association with the RSL — then, as now, self-appointed custodians of virtue.

Actors and actresses of talent found regular employment at the major studios and stations, recording anything up to ten episodes a day. Standard practice was for one read through, then record twelve and a half minutes of high drama on sixteen-inch acetate disc which left two and a half minutes for introduction, sign-off and 300 words of commercial. In the control room, producing, were such men as Rupert Hickling, Hal Percy, Lee Murray, Athol Rielly, Roy Steyne, John Cairns, Frank Clewlow and Eric Conway.

Among the early actors, spanning the 1930s to the 1950s, were: George Blunt, Mayne Linton, Catherine Duncan, Catherine O'Neill, Lloyd Lamble, Pat Kennedy, Marcia Hart, Beryl Walker, Lorna Forbes, Walter Pym, Keith Eden, Douglas Kelly, Norman Shepherd, Norman Wister, Clifford Cowley, Moira Carleton, Robert Burnard, Mary Disney, Margaret Reid, Beverley Dunn, John Morgan, Robert Peach, Carl Bleazby, Kenrick Hudson and Keith Hudson (no relation). Noel Ferrier and Frank Wilson were in great demand, too, as were Margaret Mouchemore, Ken Fraser, Stewart Ginn, Richard Davies, Ruby May, Syd Conabere, Nan Summers, Elizabeth Wing, John Ewart, Binny Lum, John Barnes, John Storr, John McCallum, John Bhore, Reg Goldsworthy and Williams Lloyd. And these were just part of the Melbourne chapter of Actors Equity.

It was a restless, volatile scene, breeding fast efficiency, splendid competence and extraordinarily little industrial trouble. Radio was really radiating in all directions, drawing into its ambit writers, producers, sound-effects men and sponsors, in a way that is virtually unknown today.

10 Drums of War

And then — Bang! Or rather Bang! Bang! The War was upon us.

As with all great events since, it was radio that broke the news. Sunday night, 3 September 1939.

At 3KZ, The P & A Parade was scheduled to go to air at 9.00 p.m. The audience was in place, the artists rehearsing quietly in corners, the orchestra tuning up. It was getting near broadcast time. Eddie Balmer, compere, was not to be seen. Unusual, to say the least, for he would normally be buzzing in and out of the main studio, making last-minute adjustments or encouraging the nervous. This night, however, he was being briefed on the Prime Minister making an important announcement. The Parade would have to be delayed. All landlines would be patched in to Canberra.

Balmer was under no illusion about what the announcement portended. Just before nine he came in, grave of face and told everyone that Mr Menzies would be speaking to the nation. Balmer had a word with Gabriel Joffe, the conductor. The audience sensed that something was amiss. And then, over the studio speakers, came the uncharacteristically subdued voice of the Prime Minister. 'It is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that, in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland,

Great Britain has declared war upon her, and that, as a result, Australia is also at war. No harder task can fall to the lot of a democratic leader than to make such an announcement. Great Britain and France, with the co-operation of the British Dominions, have struggled to avoid this tragedy. They have, as I firmly believe, been patient; they have kept the door of negotiation open; they have given no cause for aggression. But in the result their efforts have failed and we are, therefore, as a great family of nations, involved in a struggle which we must at all costs win, and which we believe in our hearts we will win.' (It is curious, looking back, why we should be automatically at war because Britain had so declared, and we, theoretically a sovereign nation, had not even debated in Parliament our course of action. It is difficult to imagine such a gratuitous commitment these days, unless the nation was under direct attack.)

But in 1939, that was it. The studio audience seemed uncomprehending, for the words and their import had not sunk in. But Balmer cued the orchestra which struck up 'God Save the King' — that seemed to relieve any tension or bewilderment. Only one of the artists was unduly perturbed: Ted Muller, piano accordionist. 'God,' he said to Balmer, 'It's the end of the world'. It wasn't, and the show went on, strictly in accordance with theatrical tradition. Within a matter of days emergency regulations relating to radio were brought into force.

Acting KZ Manager, Arch Murray, issued a statement that 'now that the first shock of catastrophe is over, I believe there will be more listeners than ever before. So far we have had no prejudicial reaction from our sponsors at all and we do not anticipate any dislocation of programmes, although some revision to our methods of conducting audience participation programmes may be necessary. Important news bulletins, too, might interrupt schedules from time to time.' In other words, business as usual—or that's what most stations hoped for. There was little patriotic flag-waving, at least not then.

'Radio', it was pointed out by one writer, 'is by no means an unmixed blessing. It is being used by Nazi Germany as a machine for spreading false propaganda, but the good it has wrought is

'Kay' Dunoon and Billy Bouncer (Norman Swain) with assorted children.

Jean Balfour was 'Madam' to Banks' 'Grocer' in The Grocer and Madam, a programme that went on for several years.

Margot Sheridan, a gifted pianist and accompanist, helped and advised many performers on The P & A Parade.

Iris Greenham (Auntie Pat) used her background in kindergarten work and child psychology to advantage in the Children's Session.

Emerald Goetze (Mrs Rex) introduced the daily Women's Radio Magazine, which broke new ground in the presentation of women's affairs.

Some stars of the war years, including the Parker Sisters, Marjorie Stedeford, Margot Sheridan, Beryl Walker and 'Kay' Dunoon.

infinitely greater that the bad.' The Germans, it was claimed in other radio reports, were bombarding civilians with confusing reports designed to create chaos and panic. 'They are using four Polish stations, impersonating Polish announcers and even Polish priests in an effort to cause civilians to crack up. This flagrant disregard for international radio law forces one to the conclusion that the next move in the radio war will be a large-scale attempt by the participants to jam one another's transmissions.' And so it proved.

Norman Banks in Voice of the Voyager was no longer allowed to identify the names of ships, but custom died hard as he announced he was speaking from the decks of the 'Monter. . .' before he pulled up. Clearly, it was the *Monterey*. There were other restrictions designed to ensure security and deny comfort to the enemy: all music had to be chosen and logged fourteen days in advance, presumably because it could be checked for any combinations of words or titles that might convey some hidden message or meaning; all advertisements had to bear the signature of the writer, so that they could be traced; all quiz shows had to be pre-recorded; no foreign languages, in song, script or speech, were permitted although, oddly, in 1944, a Wireless Branch circular granted permission for Lutheran church services to be conducted in German. After Japan's entry into hostilities, weather forecasts were forbidden; not even mention could be made if it were fine or wet, even windy or cold.

Troop movements, location or names of ships, arrival of the Americans — were all strictly taboo. All station staff were checked for background; barbed wire fences were erected around transmitters; armed guards had to be provided in isolated areas; revolvers, typewriters, even field glasses were called up for service; Italians and Germans were banned from holding wireless licences, although, for some strange reason, their sets were not confiscated. They were supposed to be on an honour system and not listen. 'Enemy aliens who persist in using sets after cancellation of their licences will be prosecuted' ran official writ. There is no record of any such action. Ken Howard, the race commentator, after forfeiture of his binoculars, used a telescope to call events. 3BA

Ballarat, whose transmitter was out on a lonely stretch of road on the way to Adelaide, had to hand in its pistol. They were informed that a fire-axe on the wall could be used to deter the enemy who, it must be assumed, would obligingly come unarmed and singly.

In 1940, 3AR, 3KZ and 2UW were all put off the air for a day for breaching censorship regulations and mentioning, even if not directly, the 'presumed' sinking of HMAS *Sydney*. 3AR, you might say, was hard done by. During a schools broadcast from Footscray, the assembled children were to sing 'Lead Kindly Light'. The headmaster asked them to perform with renewed fervour 'in honour of the gallant lads of the HMAS *Sydney*'. All pretty innocent. It was alleged, however, that the stations had disobeyed an express censorship order, even if they were not too clear what it was. Mr Curtin, furthermore, said that the Government had 'positive evidence' that the broadcast references to the loss of the ship had been of great value to the enemy. 3AR was cut off abruptly in the middle of the late-night BBC news; an action, one would have thought, that would have caused more alarm than the accidental mention of the *Sydney* earlier in the day. But the ban was enforced and a telling blow struck for law and order — or so it was believed by some.

By far, the most serious consequence, based on alleged comfort or succour being afforded the enemy, came with the revocation of four station licences of companies associated with the Jehovah's Witness Church. This followed gazetting of a Commonwealth proclamation that the Witnesses and certain other groups associated with them were 'unlawful organisations'. Off the air went 2HD Newcastle, 5KA Adelaide, 5AU Port Augusta and 4AT Atherton; all subsequently re-assigned to other interests. Despite an appeal to the High Court, this emergency war-time act was upheld, although examination of the evidence today reveals a certain comic inconsequentiality to it all. With 2HD, a seaman on the *Iron Monarch* had sent in a quiz question that went unanswered. The announcer, ad libbed words like 'Next time you are here, Bill, drop up to the station and collect your two-and-six'. This was construed as a dark plot to let the Japanese know that the *Iron Monarch* was somewhere out of Newcastle, although not necessarily at sea. The Parliamen-

tary Standing Committee on Broadcasting subsequently declared that the revocation of licences was based on 'flimsy evidence'. But it was too late then and the bans held.

The newly formed Department of Information virtually commandeered time on all stations to present news of the war and comment at 7.00 p.m. each night.

Actors Equity Secretary, Hal Alexander, issued a statement calling on the ABC to abandon its insistence on night announcers wearing evening dress. 'It is', he said with passion, 'snobbish, priggish, un-Australian and undemocratic'. The ABC, after weighty consideration, reluctantly decided that the time was indeed ripe for a such a momentous change.

Some people were complaining about the 'light-hearted' way the BBC (whose bulletins were being re-broadcast here) was describing air battles over Britain. The burden of the argument was that events involving the loss of human lives were being handled like calls of sporting events. Against that, came the overwhelming response that such broadcasts helped to keep up 'fighting morale'.

Australia's Amateur Hour, with Harry Dearth as compere, was one of the big new shows to come on air; Arundel Nixon (King of the Cads on 3AW) saw his two-year marriage founder on the rocks of infidelity; Colgate started the first of its many programmes with the Youth Show; Junior Information hit the air on KZ; The Watchman, the influential ABC news commentator switched to a commercial network; 'Aye, it's me, Doctor Mac,' started to work its way into the idiom of the times. Will Sampson's Community Singing at the Town Hall was attracting audiences in their thousands and Junior Information was to bring to the KZ microphone a burgeoning prodigy, Barry Jones.

The Comforts Fund, designed to provide goodies and extras to men who were enlisting, was launched in November 1939. 'Do your bit for the fighting men' ran the appeal headline. Indeed, many sponsors handed over all or most of their commercial time to war-time appeals. But, there were also to be many subsequent programme cancellations, so much so that in the financial year 1941–42, forty-four of the ninety-seven commercial stations operated at a loss. 3KZ, however, was holding its head above water,

but only just. The station earned revenue of 59 663 pounds in 1941–42, for a net profit of 1233 pounds. The following year, however, revenue was up to 70 000 pounds; profit to 5897 pounds.

The Enemy Within; Adolf in Blunderland; Secret Service Memoirs; Sing a Song, Soldier; Rally to the Flag; Imperial Leader; England Expects; and Unknown Warrior were recorded programmes reflecting the mood of the times.

George Robey, the famous English comedian, starred in a special broadcast described subsequently as 'dull', largely because he specialised in double entendres which were 'incomprehensible to his audience'.

Sir Thomas Beecham in a radio broadcast said that English music was at its lowest ebb for 300 years and would never recover. It was acknowledged by one commentator that Germany was winning the radio propaganda war. Their superiority was so marked 'as to constitute a very real danger to impressionable Australians who tuned in to short-wave broadcasts. The broadcasts are so well done and delivered in such a cultured English voice, that even the thinking listener must feel qualms of doubt as to whether all is well in the Allies camp.'

In mid-1940 local radio was described as being 'in the grip of the quiz-craze'. You could take your pick of KZ's Movie Quiz, Yes-No Jackpots, Who Knows and Double or Quits, or turn to other stations where you could tune in to Musical Consequences, Money for Nothing, Quicksilver Quiz, Name the Place, Cuckoo Court, Comic Quiz, Spelling Jackpots, Tongue Twisters, Battle of the Sexes, What Next, Musicquiz, Musical Consequences, What's Your Story, Surprise Packet, Information Please and others.

In June, stations in all States combined for a 'Win the War' Rally from the Sydney Town Hall and more than four million pounds was subscribed to war loans. And on to the scene with his ukulele and hillbilly act burst 'Bobby' Dyer, little knowing then that from just another minor performer, he was to become one of the greatest names in Australian radio.

Lo, the Magician, The Myer Merrio, The Boy Friend (Keith Howard), Search for the Golden Boomerang (transferred from

3XY), Krakpot Quizz, and alternating week relays of The P & A Parade from 2UE Sydney, were some of the war-time additions to the KZ schedule. The garrulous Mrs 'Obbs made her bow on AW, and went on for years. The Jack Davey production unit became part of the expanding Colgate radio set-up under the aegis of the Patterson agency. The Watchman was gravely assuring listeners to 3UZ that Russia was no longer communistic and that 'the collapse of Germany may be nearer than has been thought'. These were just two of his many ill-starred prognostications but he was, nevertheless, a voice of considerable force throughout the land.

In 1941, Myer went into radio in a big way: the Musicale and Merrio on KZ, Love Tales and The Francis Family on UZ, Moving Stories of Life on DB, and Battle of the Stations on XY and AW. The last named, was originally called Quizkrieg, but changed because Myer did not like the German connotations associated with 'krieg'. It was a novel two-way quiz where an audience in one studio competed with an unseen audience in the other. It was considered quite a technical triumph at the time.

Some months later, however, Myer decided that Japan's entry into the war made it undesirable to continue entertaining people on such a scale while the country was confronted with such a critical situation to the north. All programmes, except the Musicale, were cancelled. Most other advertisers, however, were convinced that their sponsorships were serving a useful purpose and, in this, they were encouraged by the Government, even though some Labor members thought that commercial radio should be closed down for the duration. Indeed, later on, Mr Curtin and Mr Chifley were both to acknowledge that without the commercial system's support, war loans, bonds, the Red Cross, national savings and hospitals, would have been gravely prejudiced. It has been estimated that radio was directly instrumental in raising something like twenty million pounds for various causes.

Restrictions were placed on the import of recorded programmes from America, as a result of which, in the closing years of the war, and a year or so after, Australian radio had a distinctly national sound — more so than before or since. In 1945-46 Australian

recordings of music, drama, sport, audience participation and the like, constituted sixty-four per cent of total programming; thirty-two per cent represented live performances; and only four per cent was imported material. In a real sense the War gave the greatest fillip ever to Australian talent and it was to remain so until television changed it all.

When the Americans arrived, Melbourne became a rest and recreation centre, as well as a transit camp. The Melbourne Cricket Ground was taken over and known as Camp Murphy. The streets had a different shade of khaki and there were one or two unofficial battles between 'them' and 'us'. By and large, however, the competition for female favours, which was what it was all about, was kept on the low simmer. 3KZ tried to improve relations by introducing Aussies and Yanks, a quiz programme broadcast from the 'Dug-Out' under the Capitol Theatre. The Quiz Kids started up nationally. Thrill of a Lifetime, dramatisations of listeners' experiences, was added to KZ schedules and Women in Uniform marched on stage at military camps throughout the State as 'Aggie the Awas' (Beryl Walker) and 'Winnie the Waaf' (first Pat Kennedy and then KZ's own Kay) won their way into the hearts of the troops. Norman Bland, comedian and vaudevillian, was brought in to brighten up KZ's breakfast programme.

Early in the year, 1942, when Japan was advancing swiftly and relentlessly southwards, Junior Information was dropped owing to 'serious war developments' and dangers posed to children coming into town and having to walk along darkened streets. It was reinstated some months later with a different sponsor.

And then, some really startling news on the home front. Frank Forde, Minister for the Army, announced that a secret radio transmitter was operating somewhere in Australia supplying vital information to the enemy. 'It is more important than ever', he said in a KZ broadcast, 'that people should cut out idle gossip and careless writing'. As far as is known the spy source was never tracked down.

There was another move to close down all commercial radio stations because hostile aircraft could be fitted with direction-finding equipment and use the signals transmitted by stations in city

areas as beams to guide planes to bombing targets. It was also proposed that sponsors of programmes should cut out all advertising of products and confine commercial identification to opening and closing credits. This, it was argued, would curb acquisitive instincts and channel more money into war loans and the like. It was pointed out, however, that destroying the manufacturing industry was scarcely a worthwhile war aim. These and other equally obscure propositions were dropped, largely on the grounds that a population deprived of entertainment, news and advertising, was more likely to become disoriented and give credence to idle rumour.

And then a harsh voice from a visiting British speech expert enlisted by the ABC to improve tone and quality: 'Australians are the worst speakers in the world,' he said.

In face of complaints from a Radio Vigilance League that there was too much obscenity on the air, the Federation went in to bat for its members and said the fuss was 'frivolous', 'extraordinary' and 'puzzling', and hinted that it was all a dark plot by enemies of the people to undermine commonsense and good judgement.

All stations joined in air-raid exercises. At 8.54 p.m. the signal would be given 'to prepare for a raid'. 8.59 p.m: 'Raid impending — All lights out'. For the next hour, soothing music and some advice on what to do in a crisis. 10.00 p.m: All clear. It was pretty dramatic, even if simulated.

One short-wave German broadcast heard here said that: 'Australia is being used by Britain for her own selfish ends. The poor innocent Australians, filled with sentimental zeal for the motherland are being rushed to the slaughter. Their economic life is being drained out.'

Partly to make the Yankees feel more at home, American radio programmes featuring Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Fred Allen, Fibber McGee and Molly, were introduced to local airwaves, but they never caught on with hometown audiences. KZ had Red Skelton, Ossie and Harriet Nelson, and the Fitch Band Waggon. Big Sister, Martin's Corner and Digger Hales's Daughters were more to the liking of local listeners. They Shall Fight On — dramatised histories of Allied nations written by Ron Ingleby, with Robert Burnard

producing — became a leading KZ feature in 1943. Paul Fenwick joined the station as a producer. Myer returned to radio with an hour-long Radio Theatre, no doubt influenced by limited newspaper space and the activities of their competitors. Foy's had seven programmes on air; Mutual Store, three. KZ broke new ground with an hour-long serial, Man in the Dark.

A public opinion poll taken in 200 centres throughout the Commonwealth to measure public listening preferences revealed that thirty-nine per cent said they preferred light-classical music, ballads or musical comedy; twenty-three per cent opted for classical or 'anything but jazz'; nineteen per cent preferred jazz or 'anything but classical'; nineteen per cent did not care. Two regular rating services (Anderson and McNair), the following year, indicated that this sampling was very wide of the mark in terms of loyalties to individual metropolitan stations.

In any case 3KZ treated the results with indifference and kept up its popular music policy. Frank Sinatra, described as 'America's King of Swoon' was heard on relay in Australia in a Command performance. Sinatra, then in his twenties, was said to have achieved with his voice what Rudolf Valentino had done with his face. 'Not since Valentino has American womanhood made such unabashed love to an entertainer'. This report, uncharitably, added that Sinatra was 'small and bony, with a scarred neck and a liking for loud sports coats'. A victim of the venoms of war?

11 New Voices, New Programmes

A new KZ voice of authority was to be heard for the first time in 1940. One John Bhore, of whom it was once said that he was the only man in radio who could make a greeting sound like a threat. It was that deep and earthy cadence that caused many a tremble among the ladies of the lock. His qualifications seemed a little at odds with standard requirements: RAAF, commercial traveller and purser on a tourist ship.

But he, as they say, 'had something', and it was that baritone rumble that made him one of the personalities. He started off in the day programmes, then graduated to night, taking over from Banks, at times, such features as Dunklings Dance Programme and Coles Junior Information. He was a bit of a loner according to his contemporaries and had little time for the social niceties. He had on occasions, however, a sturdy capacity to drink his colleagues under the table.

He is probably better remembered these days for his post-KZ career as a freelance actor. That was from 1945 onwards. He recalls with affection two of his starring roles in serials, as Perry Mason and Jimmy Colt, both virtuous upholders of the law. Old radio

hands will recall that when he was stricken with illness, episodes of Jimmy Colt had to be recorded at his sick bed. It was a special dispensation for a hospital to allow a group of actors with portable equipment into the ward. But it apparently speeded Bhore's recovery and did wonders for the morale of the others, including the nurses. He was a handsome fellow, in a rugged sort of way.

Curiously, he cut the ties with this relatively easy life to become a wharf labourer. He is still with us, retired, living down the bay, and occasionally doing the odd radio commercial and voice-over on television with the same grave, convincing assurance of forty years ago. His surname, or rather the sound of it, belies his charm.

There are many infelicitous definitions of that phenomenon, the disc jockey: a spinster with a record; a man who needles records; a fellow who's paid a fortune to sit before a microphone, separate good records from bad records, and then play the bad ones. In truth, it could be argued that he, or she, is someone who handles music with individual style, flair, firm control and enlightened comprehension of the limits and capabilities of the performer.

There are quite a few claimants to the title of the first easy rider. Among them would be Bob Horsfall, song-and-dance man, who came to KZ at the tender age of fifteen, but was well known, even then, as a juvenile performer with the Williamson and Tivoli circuits. At the age of eleven he was appearing as a tap dancer in an act called 'The Three Hotshots', singing solo and dancing in shows like *Sunnyside Up* and *Sleeping Beauty*. It was during a rehearsal for *Kiss and Tell* that he was offered a job at 3KZ as messenger, and helping hand in the children's programme. Subsequently he became a record librarian, announcer and music man.

That was in 1940, when war clouded theatrical prospects. Horsfall stayed with the station for eight years, handled such DJ shows as Solid Serenade, Manhattan Serenade, The Spike Jones Show and others. He built up a quick reputation for his knowledge and appreciation of music in its changing forms, an attribute that was to stand him in good stead when, in later years, he appeared with top world-artists like Mel Torme, Joe 'Fingers' Carr, Louis Armstrong, The Inkspots, Nat King Cole and others. He, with the late Jack Bowkett, was to form the singing group known throughout

Australia as The Tune Twisters. They touched the heights as supporting artists to Frank Sinatra when he first toured here.

Horsfall went on to other successes with other stations in Melbourne and Sydney, around the night clubs and on stage. When television came he found himself in instant demand: first with GTV–9 running his own shows, stand-in compere for Graham Kennedy's In Melbourne Tonight and guest appearances in the BP Show, among others; then to HSV–7 for Variety 7, Sunnyside Up, The Happy Show, Club 7 and many others.

Singer, actor, dancer, pianist, guitarist, band leader, Horsfall has just about done it all. He is in a different sort of production now, at the *Age* newspaper, but he still keeps his interest in music and showbiz going, and is heard occasionally in voice-overs and relief announcing.

What of today's DJ's? 'Too many speak through their noses,' says the man who was once described as 'The Prince of Disc Jockeys'.

Most of radio's shining lights reached their apogee only after years of adventuring in time's dimension. But one John Patrick 'Pat' Hodgins burst upon the scenes like a wayward meteor. He was to achieve overnight fame because of his uncanny capacity to sound almost exactly like Jack Davey.

Pat was working away quite happily, and peacefully, as compere of the The Supreem Hour on 5KA Adelaide. Supreem was a boot polish, and the original sponsor of Mal Verco and his doll, Ginger, before they, too, became national stars. Unknown to Pat, his voice was being taped and sent to entrepreneur Ron Beck who, at that time, was in charge of the Colgate Unit in Sydney. The unit, of course, had the multi-faceted Davey as its principal attraction. Beck, it is said, wanted to take The Protex Show for a season in Melbourne and then on to Adelaide but was having some difficulties with Davey. Jack apparently went north for a holiday while Banks did the show on KZ with, surprisingly, little success. In fact, Norman now admits quite candidly, if somewhat uncomprehendingly, that 'I was a flop'. That sort of acknowledgment does not come easily from Melbourne's most famous radio man, but it shows up one of the many sides to his character.

Pat Hodgins, all nerves, was hired to do the show in Adelaide. And it is not too much to say that only those who could pick the subtle nuances of the Davey delivery would have known that it was not Jack there saying 'Right up close, please'. But as Pat says he never at any stage tried to deliberately imitate the great one. 'It just came, naturally, I suppose. One thing, though, I never used Jack's trademarks: his "Hi-Ho everybody" at the beginning of his shows, and his "Thanks for listening" at the end. Except for the last night when I said something along the lines of "Next week, you'll be hearing that famous 'Hi-Ho and Thanks for listening' from the real master, Jack Davey himself".' Davey, it is said, was not at all amused by the unnerving similarity and cut short his holiday to get back into harness.

Pat confesses that probably the most memorable event in his broadcasting career was the reaction he got from those two weeks as compere of The Protex Show. Pat's performances were good enough to get him a contract with the Beck organisation after it had ceased to handle the Colgate output. Subsequently he was to be heard around Australia in The Aspro Show and The Atlantic Show. He later went into advertising and is now growing old gracefully, despite a damaging illness, in the peaceful setting of Lake Mulawa on the Murray.

Prior to his elevation to national star status, Pat had worked at 3KZ as a breakfast announcer, before that, at 3UZ. That was in the early 1940s, before he went to Adelaide. He has, he says, always been a battler and before breaking into radio, tried anything. He met another great name doing some battling in his formative pre-KZ days, Terry Dear. Says Pat: 'I used to pick up papers from the floor of the millinery department at Myers. Down in the Myer basement I met Terry Dear doing much the same job.'

Pat puts Terry ahead of Norman Banks as Melbourne's greatest radio personality, but reserves number one for John McMahon. 'He's outlasted and out-performed us all and done so much to preserve some of the sounds of the greatest days of the medium.' He makes an interesting point about today's air media. 'Television', he says, 'has got the performing artists. Radio has got the talkers — and they do a pretty good job.'

A fore-runner of talk-back radio was heard on 3KZ in 1944 with the start of Phone-Quiz. Swap Shop, with people exchanging goods, also came on air, as did Woman in Black, a new George Edwards serial. Alan Grant was one of the station's announcing stars and a new breakfast man, Geoff Whitling, was heard for the first time. Len Davis was appointed station organist, the Heidelberg Hospital Show got under way, there was a new Radio Roundsman (Stan Hughes) and Frank Allen was back to scripting. Pat Corby joined 3AW in August as did Jack Davey, compering such name shows as The Robur Show, The Dunlop Road Show and yet another quiz, What Have You Got?. Women in Uniform underwent a change of name to Women at War and after Kay Dunoon had left to marry, Iris Greenham came back as compere to be followed in turn by Irene Mitchell, actress and later a distinguished producer at the Little Theatre. Margaret Reid became 'Winnie the Waaf'.

Perhaps the most dramatic radio event of the year was the June broadcast by all stations of Invasion News — D Day. There was a stirring introduction: 'In exactly fifteen minutes from now we shall be making an important announcement regarding the invasion.' Precisely thirteen minutes later the same voice announced: 'In exactly two minutes from now we shall bring you an important message from Supreme Allied Headquarters'. And then, in dramatic sequence: 'In ten seconds from now you will hear a statement from the Commander-in-Chief Allied Expeditionary Force, General Eisenhower'. Continues this report: 'We then heard the historic message to the people of Europe "promising release from the dreaded Nazi occupation".' Churchill, later was to say on air, that the operation was 'proceeding in a thoroughly satisfactory manner'.

On a slightly less grand scale, in a different theatre of war, Leading Aircraftsman Norman Swain, and others, managed to 'scrounge' their way into a concert for American troops starring Marlene Dietrich. After the show they went backstage, uninvited. The lady of the slumbrous eyes and lissom legs spotted the unusual Australian uniforms among the assembled Yankees, went over to them and said 'it was lovely to meet the boys from the country that's looking after our boys'. And then, to the delight of Swain

'I got a fair dinkum kiss'. Oh rapture, oh bliss. Not many Australians can lay claim to such an experience as this. It left an indelible imprint on Swain.

On the home front, the Federation launched an Australia-wide song-writing competition with a prize of six hundred pounds. The Victorian judges were Jack O'Hagen, Bob Gibson, E. J. Gravestock and Eddie Balmer. Oscar Walters, of Manly, NSW, won the ballad section with 'My Love Song to a Tree', largely unremembered now. But the 'popular' award went to one Letty Katts of Queensland, for 'Never, Never', a song of haunting melody and evocative lyric, still getting occasional air play, especially the version recorded by John McMahon.

And this was the year, 1945, when drama production took off in a big way in Melbourne. Three new studios were set up: Donovan Joyce, Hector Crawford and Morris West whose major claim to fame is now best-selling fiction, but who, at that time, had only one title to his credit *(The Moon in My Pocket)* written under the name of Julian Morris. Above Suspicion, starring Keith Eden and Pat Kennedy, was his first known serial. The Mask of Marius Melville, all about smugglers and black markets, was one of his successful programmes on KZ. West had his own studios above the chemist shop of his brother-in-law in Smith Street, Collingwood. Hessian-lined and hot, it was the starting point of a career that was to take him to undreamed heights of influence — and affluence.

Don Joyce used the studios of 3KZ and 3UZ to put down his earliest shows, among them Departure Delayed, a thriller; the Passing Parade, a semi-documentary; and Scarlet Harvest, a tortured love tale. All three were snapped up by his old station.

Hector Crawford, who had been Manager for several years at Broadcast Exchange, (The Markhams, Delia of the Four Winds, Simon Masterton, Lavender Grove) went out on his own, or rather, in concert with his sister, Dorothy. From them came the first dramatised musicals: The Melba Story, The Amazing Oscar Hammerstein and The Blue Danube, as well as an unstoppable flow of bleeding-heart sagas.

In Sydney, Maurice Francis, the writing machine behind George Edwards, also went into business on his own. He was one of

radio's genuine pioneers, for from him came the original episodes of Dad and Dave, Martin's Corner, Mittens and Famous British Trials, among many others.

Complaints were being voiced about crude advertising, especially in Calling the Stars, a programme which seemed to attract a lot of flak then. Dorothy Foster, Rita Pauncefort, producer Russell Scott and actor Al Thomas, came under the hostile eye of Senator Don Cameron, and were suspended for being associated with the broadcasting of objectionable material. On undertakings not to 'offend' again they were reinstated after an absence of a fortnight.

A popularity contest among Melbourne radio personalities put Ray Chapman, number 1; Jack Davey, 2; and Norman Banks, 3. Pat Hodgins, KZ's breakfast announcer, went back to his hometown, Adelaide, because of 'ill-health'. The Grey Shadow, So Lovers Dream, Little Theatre and Alan Grant's Milady's Matinee ranked highly with KZ listeners.

But overshadowing everything came the end of the war in the Pacific. Street celebrations, which went on for two days, were broadcast by all stations. Norman Banks, from a vantage point in the Manchester Unity Building, headed up the KZ team which, virtually at fifteen-minute intervals, described the rehearsed and unrehearsed incidents in the streets. Banks, at one stage, was called on by the Lord Mayor to conduct community singing from the portico of the Town Hall. It was a noisy, hilarious, confused, forty-eight hours of rejoicing. A carnival of chaos, but happy.

So, what of the commercial radio record of those perilous times? A fair share of radio men answered the call, as they say, but in the sense of direct reporting, there was no great contribution. But, a significant line of communication was kept open to a public committed in one way or another to a total war effort. One in seven of our people were in uniform; there were severe crimps in our life-style; an unrelenting web of regulation enmeshed everybody. Keeping the home fires burning was not just a revival song but a philosophy. Without commercial radio assistance, as Mr Chifley conceded, the supportive arms would have been gravely weakened. Money flowed in; morale was never really low. Radio, it was thought, performed well in adverse circumstances.

12 The Roaring Forties

Other industries may have taken some time to get back into gear after war's end, but radio suffered no real transitional pains. In terms of diversity of programmes, it was all systems go. The production houses were booming.

The 'old school tie' hit the headlines. 3KZ, a Labor station, its philosophical roots, theoretically at least, embedded deep in working-class soil, found itself embroiled in an argument not of its making. Robert Burnard, Keith Hudson, Richard Davies and Reginald Goldsworthy — four actors more or less permanently employed by Don Joyce for his Passing Parade series — walked out after an episode which dealt somewhat harshly with the public-school system. 'It was', they said, 'a sneering, lying attack on an old English institution which has weathered and is still weathering jealous criticism'. Untrue political propaganda, they went on, had been introduced into the programme. It 'held up to ridicule and contempt a section of the community which had done great service to the cause of Empire'. Niall Brennan, author of the particular script to which the actors objected, described the reaction as 'too silly to bother about'. The storm raged several weeks spilling, over into the Press.

Some of the top names in show business appeared in Leslie Ross' KZ live-artist productions in the 1940s. Among them, pictured here, from back to front row: Hec McLennan, Fred Phillips, Fred King, Len Holmes, Anne Lane, George Bellmaine, Laurie Wilson, Jim Berinson, Alan Freeman, Al Royal and Les Ross.

1946 stars of radio and stage. From left to right: Kevin O'Gorman (3KZ), Roy Barlee (3UZ), 'Terry' Dear (3AW), Shirley Ann Richards, John McMahon (3UZ) and Alwyn Kurts (3XY).

Syd Morgan was Managing Director at KZ from 1931 to 1954.

Maurice Duffy, Secretary; Arch Murray, Acting Manager; and 'Uncle' Alec Isaacson, Assistant Manager at an early 1940s function.

A gathering of the clan in the 1940s. The four Morgans — Syd; father, Val; Will; and Stan — are front centre.

Syd Morgan, KZ Managing Director, then issued a statement: 'The episode concerned brings into prominence only the unfavourable side of the question and ignores the great traditions of English public schools. We, therefore, think that no good purpose can be served by presenting a one-sided picture of an important phase of English life.' Joyce bowed to the wind, basked happily in the free publicity and said with suitable, if simulated gravity, that no attempt would be made to present the offending episode on 3KZ or any other station in Australia. The four 'old boys' returned to the microphone, honour restored.

By any count, 1946 was a flag year in KZ history. Virtually on a platter — to coin a phrase — they were handed the entire output of the Colgate-Palmolive Radio Unit. Five of the top-rating radio shows: Jack Davey's Leave Pass; Jack Burgess's variety show, Calling the Stars; Lasting Loveliness, with John Fullard; The Cashmere Bouquet Show, with Willie Fennell; and Colgate Cavalcade, with Davey and Roy Rene — all transferred from 3AW in a programme reshuffle that was to alter the whole Melbourne radio scene. It was a move fraught with some dangers for the sponsor, for 3AW was part of the influential Macquarie Network and 3KZ was an independent.

The reasons for the switch vary, according to who is telling the story. Macquarie were not happy with the way the George Patterson advertising agency, which handled Colgate and supervised the unit, was constantly putting the network at odds with the Postmaster-General's Department over 'questionable' material. Macquarie insisted on the right of veto of all material broadcast, which the unit resented. There were arguments, too, over supporting publicity, rates and participating stations. Patterson wanted to drop some of the regular network stations and substitute independents, some of whom were prepared to take the shows for nothing, or next to nothing, just for prestige purposes and to build audience. Patterson also claimed that Melbourne ratings were not good enough. While all this was going on, Paddy Campbell-Jones of 2UE in Sydney, was putting together an 'independent' capital city network: 2UE, 3KZ, 4BC Brisbane, 5KA Adelaide, 6PR Perth plus thirty-five selected country stations.

Colgate-Palmolive, Pattersons and the Director of Productions, Ron Beck, all decided the new station grouping suited them better. Says Ben Coombs, who was then Macquarie's Programme Sales Manager: 'I always thought our stations were marvellous in this situation. They stood out against Colgate, who, like Lever, were feeling pretty cocky about the audience-pulling power of their programmes. We made it a condition that new stations joining the network must increase their rates and, of course, Lever and Colgate didn't like that. Lever couldn't do much to MBS [The Macquarie Broadcasting Service] but Colgate walked out with their shows — and Davey. Our stations then put in a lot of cash and effort into the making of new shows, and thus began the long haul back, and of course, we finished up with both Davey and Dyer with us.' But it was a wounding blow, Macquarie lost eight stations in the network. Stan Clark, then National Advertising Manager, resigned. He was to rejoin some years later and become Managing Director.

As counter attractions to Colgate, Macquarie launched George Foster as compere of Kiss and Make-up, a domestic comedy show on Monday night; The Tommy Trinder Show on Tuesday; Famous Musical Comedies on Wednesday; and a George Foster quiz Beat that Story on Friday. But the competition was not easy to match for, apart from names already mentioned, Colgate had such stars under contract as 'Ada and Elsie' (Dorothy Foster and Rita Pauncefort), Hal Lashwood, Strella Wilson, Allen Coad, Peggy Brooks, Kitty Bluett, Dick Bentley, Al Royal, Allan Ferris, Denis Collinson, Abe Romain and many others.

'Make a Date at Eight' — with 3KZ, of course — became the peg on which the station hung its new-found riches on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday nights. It is significant that both KZ and AW were not game to tackle Thursday night at eight. For that was when Australia's Amateur Hour took to the air on 3DB. Its hold was just too strong.

In 1947, two moves of industry-wide significance were mooted: one, to revive C-class licences, first suggested in 1929, for the ABC, thereby creating a third network available for limited sponsorship by big advertisers and, two, to nationalise all commercial

radio stations. Both possibilities were discussed by the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Broadcasting; both came to nought. Mr R. G. Menzies, Leader of the Opposition, described the committee as a 'menace', 'useless' and 'dangerous'. There were five Labor members and four Liberal members on the Committee. The Country Party refused to have anything to do with it.

To counter government interference, the Federation set up an Accreditation Bureau aimed at strengthening ethical behaviour 'in keeping with our long-range plans to improve the standards of all Australian broadcasting and to provide an even better service to listeners than they get at present,' as secretary Ray Dooley explained it. All production houses were expected to join a Programme Accreditation Bureau after assurances from stations that they would not treat with non-accredited recording companies. These moves seemed to take some of the heat out of passing criticisms. In keeping with its new highly moral stance, the Federation instructed its members to remove from the music play-list 'The House of Blue Lights' and 'I'm a Big Girl Now'.

Sir Giles Chippendall, Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, helpfully told the Parliamentary Committee that he 'had no enthusiasm for the recurrent suggestions that stations should be nationalised'. Another re-assuring voice was heard. Mr C. G. Brown, Victorian Chairman of the State Advisory Broadcasting Committee, told listeners that 'our radio is the cleanest in the world. The double-meanings which were characteristic of broadcasting till four or five years ago have now disappeared. The commercial stations, to a large degree, are responsible for their absence from radio programmes.'

All this must have had some effect on parliamentary thinking for the Standing Committee recommended, a year or so later, that a Broadcasting Control Board, be set up to supervise broadcasting and all related matters. The Board, with a full-time membership of three and Larry Fanning, former head of Posts and Telegraphs as Chairman, was constituted by a new Broadcasting Act in 1948 and began functioning early 1949. It had virtual total control of all commercial stations, but only limited say on technical matters affecting the ABC. Its functions, broadly, were to ensure 'adequate

and comprehensive programmes, to determine programme and advertising standards, to make recommendations to the Minister about the granting, renewal, revoking or suspension of any licences'. The industry, in the main, welcomed the Board if only as an escape from the whims and waverings of the politicians.

Besides the Colgate shows, KZ at this time, was giving plenty of air play to drama and audience participation: The Caltex Star Theatre, The Mask of Fate, Popular Fallacies, The Monbulk Jamboree, The Malvern Star Show, Patersons Family Quiz, the morning Aspro Show with Pat Hodgins, The Lilian Dale Affair, Madame Bovary, Nom-de-Plume, Saxby's Millions and Youth Steps Out (a junior P & A Parade with Betty Raymond); all these ranked high on station schedules. Jack Dyer made one of his earliest radio appearances as a member of the panel in the Saturday night show, Stump the Sports. Leslie Ross joined the station as producer. One of his first outside broadcast successes was called Somers by the Sea, a live-action half hour. Then came The Real McCoys, a variety show starring such well-known 'muzos' as Laurie Wilson and Bruce Clark, comedians Roy Lyons and Alan Rowe, and songstress Penny Lucas.

Among the most popular daytime personalities during the middle 1940s was John Best with his long running Penny Serenade, where people paid a penny for each vote they cast for their favourite announcer. Proceeds went to the Austin Hospital. Best, an actor, had several stage credits to his name with Fuller's Theatres before he joined the station, such as *Just Married*, *Afternoon Melody*, *Busman's Holiday* and *Stepping Out*, which starred the debonair Charles Norman.

So great was the demand for recorded serials that there was an acute shortage of script writers. Some of them were earning more than a hundred pounds a week, big money then. But they had to work hard to earn it. Don Joyce was complaining that too many local writers were submitting excellent synopses of plots, up to a dozen first-class opening episodes, but then following up with a lot of mediocre material.

A study course for budding writers was set up, but did not last long. There were also some protests about 'the same old voices',

being heard in too many serials. Morris West, dissenting, said that in 1949, he had introduced twenty new artists to his casting list. Keith Eden, speaking for actors generally, pointed to the vast discrepancy in fees between English radio and Australian radio. 'Normal radio players in England', he said, 'received twenty-three pounds, twelve and six for a thirty-minute drama compared with Australians who were fortunate to receive a maximum of three guineas for the same role'. That, in fact, was for the 'star' billing; for the standard fee per actor, per quarter hour, was one guinea. Don Joyce, responding, emphasised the difference in population, the size of the respective audiences and the time allowed for rehearsals. Hector Crawford joined the argument and made the point that the cost of living in England was much higher than here.

There was some justice on both sides. In truth, Australian recorded shows, especially serials, were priced too low. You could in fact, buy a quarter-hour serial for national release for as little as thirty pounds an episode. A typical cost break-down allowed four pounds for the script, nine pounds for a cast of six; eight pounds ten shillings for recording and processing; two pounds ten shillings for extra pressings; six pounds for overhead and production. But this represented the bottom line. Most fifteen-minute serials, for national release, cost from thirty-five to forty-five pounds an episode; half-hour, from seventy-five to one hundred pounds. Hector Crawford broke the cost bind when he launched dramatised musicals like The Blue Danube, probably the costliest radio show to go to air in those days. It cost something like three hundred and fifty pounds an episode but that of course, had to cover orchestra and singers, as well as actors. The Blue Danube sold nationally and overseas and is said to have recouped two thousand pounds an episode, clearly the most financially rewarding effort ever.

Australian actors and producers developed a production-line technique that was marvellous to behold. One run-through or rehearsal, then cut, was the usual procedure. Between four and six quarter-hour episodes in an afternoon was a not unusual schedule. It was, in many respects, a sausage machine of sex, sin and suffering.

Up until the early 1950s, actors in 'commercials' were receiving two pounds, three and six for an hour's engagement, but they were not happy and threatened a walk-out. In 1953, an agreement was reached with the advertising agencies on the basis of not less than three guineas an hour for ads which were to be used in a single State; four guineas an hour if the ads were to be used outside the one State. Actors' Equity wanted royalties more or less in perpetuity, but the advertisers and the agencies stuck to a 'work paid for work done' formula, with the advertisers free to use commercials as long as they liked. Their point was that most ads had a natural limited life-span anyway; actors, demurring, pointed to many still being used that had been recorded ten years beforehand. There are still no 'residuals', as such, even though many other countries have to pay them. But the commercial scene has changed vastly in the last thirty years. A big-name star can get, perhaps, $50 000 for a national campaign over one year. But that is more like television money and would represent an unusual pay-out for radio only. Nonetheless, high-ranking names in the radio spectrum can command $10 000, and there are quite a few earning fees in that bracket.

The rank and file are covered by an award which lays down basic charges. A one-hour engagement, cutting up to six separate commercial tracks for radio and short-term use only, is costed at ninety dollars. Short-term means transmission for less than three consecutive months. If the same commercials are to be used over a twelve-month period, the individual voice fee goes up to one hundred dollars. After twelve months, if the advertiser wishes to continue with the same commercials he has to pay an additional negotiated fee. These are the minimum fees. Most radio 'voices' do much better than this.

Curiously, a double fee is charged for political and alcohol commercials. Whether this premium is geared to a natural distaste for either product, which can only be assuaged by more money, is not clear.

Richard (Dicky) Davies, an actor in great demand, condemned producers for the very low standard of many recorded shows. 'Artists here', he said, 'are capable of finer things than portraying

a never-ending run of phony counts and addled-brained families. Good stage actors are being snowed under with tenth-rate bits and pieces of characters who should never have been conceived.' Despite that outburst, the mills ground majestic fast, and Dicky Davies was not averse to participating in the abiding prosperity they generated.

At the turn of the decade, the air was dripping with tears as marriages were wrecked, homes broken up, children cast aside and the coinage of love debased. But then, of course, came alternating moments of reunion, forgiveness and renewed passion. 'Doctor Paul' was there every day on 3DB to bring comfort and encouragement. To those less fortunate souls on other stations subject to the ravages of loving well, but not wisely, there was KZ's Kathy Warren or Office Wife, or UZ's Convict Girl; or the folk at Martin's Corner and Hagen's Circus; or poor 'Portia' who had to face up to a life of extraordinary ill-fortune. By then, however, Big Sister, one of the greatest tear-jerkers of them all, had come to an end after six years of terrible trial and tribulation.

Wrote one tormented listener, awash in the sea of domestic disaster: 'Most of the serials served up to us as we do our household chores are moronic, insulting to our intelligence, ramble on too much, are not in good taste and are far too morbid'. Dorothy Crawford from whence came such representative samples of the genre as Sincerely Rita Marsden, Women in Love and Prodigal Father, observed, equably: 'There are probably more complaints about them because more people are listening to them'. There was, indeed, tearful turmoil in the house between nine and noon, as that revolving needle cut deep into the tracks that Mills & Boon were to follow, in print, a generation later.

But then came a real occasion for tears for 3KZ. In what was virtually a replay of 1946, all Colgate-Palmolive shows switched to 3DB in December 1949. DB, the Melbourne outlet of the Major network, carried the flagship Lever shows. In a statement, Syd Morgan said that 'difficulties had been encountered during recent negotiations with Colgate and, as a result, 3KZ has requested the firm to vacate all channels after Friday, 9 December'. Programmes included Jack Davey's Protex Show, Cashmere Bouquet, Calling

the Stars, Music Soft as Silk and Cavalcade, which occupied key 8.00 p.m. channels on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday nights. Cavalcade, while produced by the Colgate Unit and featuring many of the regular stars, was not under their direct sponsorship, but it was, nevertheless, part of the package.

Colgate's view, if unstated, was that they could do better on the Major network. A Lever/Colgate combination of programmes would be virtually invincible. Aside from that, they were not happy with promotional support. Melbourne performance, although very good, was not as good as Sydney. So, a deal was struck and KZ suffered the same fate as AW — out, virtually overnight. It was a cruel blow, for as the ratings demonstrated, KZ's popularity was heavily reliant on Colgate.

Indeed, astonishing audiences were stacked up, far greater proportionate to population than television's best shows today. In 1947, for instance, The Protex Show (formerly Leave Pass), a Monday night quiz hosted by Jack Davey, had a fifty-four per cent rating, that is, more than half of all homes in Melbourne were listening. On Tuesday night, Calling the Stars with Jack Burgess, Dick Bentley, Mo and Denis Collinson's band, chalked up a forty-one per cent rating. The Cashmere Bouquet Show on Wednesday with Hal Lashwood, Willie Fennell, Ada and Elsie, rated thirty-seven; on Friday night, Colgate Cavalcade, another variety show, dragged in more than four homes in ten. In 1948, over a typical week, DB and KZ, between them, accounted for sixty per cent of Melbourne listening. The other four commercials and two nationals shared the remaining forty per cent.

KZ tried to counter the loss of the Colgate shows by switching to serial drama: Sergeant Crosby starring Marshall Crosby, four nights a week at eight; followed, three nights a week, by A. J. Cronin's The Green Years, and then A Tree Grows in Brooklyn. It was a holding exercise of moderate success.

By this time, too, Jack Davey was back with Macquarie and all sorts of moves and counter moves were to follow on the radio scene. According to Ron Beck, who left the Colgate unit in 1947 after a disagreement with Pattersons, Macquarie had tried to lure

Davey back to their fold in 1946 and 1947, and 'each time I foiled it'.

Beck, too, became an independent producer of considerable substance; at one stage, in the 1950s, he had something like eighteen programmes on the Australian air. His best-remembered shows on 3KZ were The Aspro Show, Painting the Clouds with Sunshine, Mr and Mrs Australia and Ladies College of Knowledge. A restless, vital man, Beck is now retired on a property at Ballan and is still an avid listener. 'Being quite frank', he says, 'I would feel the loss of radio more than I would television. There is far more satisfaction in what the mind creates. You remember more of what you hear than what you see.'

Among the big spenders, change was the order of the day in the lead-up to television in 1956. Largely due to the radio experience, television managements, right from the start, were determined to hold firm control over their programming so that agencies and advertisers could not chop and change, and take large audience segments with them. Thus, while it could be said that agencies exercised great influence on radio, the same could not be said of television. The myth of advertiser pressure, often trotted out by television critics as a reason for what they see as overemphasis on sex, violence and majority values, is simply nonexistent.

Stations do what they like; advertisers and agencies merely go along for the ride — but strictly on station terms. This does not prevent stations hiding behind the protective shield of 'We wouldn't be able to get a sponsor for it', whenever somebody puts up an idea that the station is not keen on. It is a useful escape hatch to attribute inscrutable powers to someone else. Besides, there is no such 'animal' as a single sponsor any more. Stations buy programmes and sell spots within them. It is just too expensive for any one sponsor to pick up the total tab.

Nonetheless, it can reasonably be said that if it had not been for the injection of agency thinking and enterprise, radio might not have taken off in the way it did in the late 1930s. So, while there was outward power, which may have been exercised ruthlessly

at times, there were counter-balancing benefits for listeners who would be blissfully unconcerned by any such internal wrangling.

Some more name-calling is relevant to those times. Of all the KZ players and stayers, Kevin O'Gorman, now leads the field, heading for a forty-year association with the station he joined as a breakfast announcer in 1945. He has survived all the changes well, sampled practically every job in the place, and thus has been remarkably adept at turning his hand to many things. He has, in turn, been announcer, producer, performer, programme manager, acting sales manager, publicity manager, community affairs director, and currently retail promotions manager.

He trod the boards, early on, with a ventriloquial act; his doll — 'Archie' by name. He went on to write, produce or appear in shows like Identities Choice, Among the Girls, The Wonder Show and The Oxford Show, and for several years after Banks and John Ford, he handled Voice of the Voyager. But by then, 'the man on deck' had given way to 'the man at the airport', for travellers were now coming in by overseas flights. He probably interviewed more stars of show business than any other radio man before or since. Post-1960s, Australia was becoming a favourite one, two or three-night stand for celebrities of the stage, television and musical hall circuits.

O'Gorman managed to interview such people as Liberace, Maurice Chevalier, Charlton Heston, Robert Cummings, Danny Kaye, Chico Marx, Basil Rathbone, Gregory Peck, Fred Astaire and even Billy Graham, a 'star' with a different halo. He got on well with them. 'Never once upstaged,' he recalls which is probably as much a tribute to his methods and manner as the desire of the people he talked to for publicity.

He had one hair-raising experience with Identities Choice, a programme that went in search of people doing unusual things at their place of work. This occasion, he had to enter the lion's den at Wirths Circus to talk to a Madame Kovar, who assured him that there was no real danger. 'The lion', she said with religious certainty, 'is a lamb at heart'. Three weeks later, after the Madame had returned to California, the lamb decided to revert to type. She finished up dead; the lion met a similar fate. Such grisly events

aside, 'Radio was a lot more fun then,' says O'Gorman. 'More excitement, more variety, more competition dreaming up new programme ideas.'

He rates Doug Elliot as one of the few characters left in the business. 'He lived his roles', says Kevin, 'and still does on television. I remember when Richard Tauber died, Elliot devoted his entire programme to him, tears streaming down his face and voice choking up as he talked. But, as soon as the programme finished, Doug, magically, returned to normal.' Amazed at the rapid transformation, Kevin inquired 'How come you were so upset?'. Doug replied: 'Got to get in the right mood son. Anyway, I think I gave the old bugger a good send-off, don't you?' Said O'Gorman, reverently: 'You're not wrong'.

Kevin still keeps the flickering flame of live artist shows alight around the suburbs. As part of a sales promotion deal, KZ have developed a special off-air presentation called You're a Star, which is designed to draw people to major shopping areas by a sensible combination of bargains to be bought and free entertainment to be watched. A guest star, audience participation, stunts and giveaways, figure in these thirty to forty minute promotions — with O'Gorman as compere. Watching the reception he gets when he walks on stage testifies to the lasting popularity of one of KZ's most engaging characters.

Alan Grant was another substantial name in the mid-1940s. Tall, distinguished, a ball-room dancer of international repute, he had hearts a'flutter when he came on air at KZ with his Milady's Matinee each day. Music of the Masters was another Grant showcase. For a while, too, he teamed with Betty Raymond in the children's session. Betty, for a time, compered Youth Steps Out, before she left to get married. Her place was taken, briefly by one Gillian Ferris, later to achieve her own niche in broadcasting history with her women's programmes on the ABC, as Norma Ferris.

And for those who have forgotten, there was 'Nicky', acknowledged by Graham Kennedy as the man who 'taught me all I know about radio'. He is remembered, mostly, for his association with other stations but, he spent a year with 3KZ between 1949 and 1950, putting snap, crackle and pop in the breakfast cornflakes.

The day before he died, in September 1956, he signed off his programme with the words: 'To all the sickies — keep smiling — hope you are feeling better by Monday'. Most of them made it. He didn't. According to Kennedy, who came on air with him at 3UZ, as a boy of seventeen, his last words to him, off air, were: 'I've just built a new aviary for the kids and tomorrow I'm going to fill it up with birds. See you Sunday.' He died from a heart attack on Saturday, aged fifty-one.

Even the Governor of Victoria, Sir Dallas Brooks, was moved to instant tribute: 'My wife and I were shocked by the news. The voice, the character and the personality of this man were known and loved by thousands and thousands of people.' Nicky was one of the few radio personalities, apart from Jack Davey, to receive a front-page editorial farewell. Said the *Argus* 'Melbourne mourns the loss of its friendliest, funniest voice'. Said Kennedy: 'He was like a father to me. We were just as good mates off the air as on.' According to the *Sun* of 12 September more than 100 000 people lined the funeral route.

His wife was Nancy Lee, famous in her own right as one of radio's warmest, most talented performers. She was to return to air not long after Nicky's death.

13 The Managers

It is a matter of speculation how the 'K' got into the call sign of so many stations around Australia with Labor affiliations, past and present: 4KQ Brisbane, 2KY Sydney, 3KZ Melbourne, 5KA Adelaide and 6KY Perth. One theory was that it had something to do with Robert Arthur King, former organising secretary of the Labor Council in New South Wales, long-time MLC and Secretary, then Manager of 2KY. The 'K' it was suggested, represented the first letter of King; the 'Y' the last letter of Sydney. As 2KY was the first Labor station in Australia, coming on air in 1925, other similar politically-oriented stations simply followed suit. It sounds plausible, but it is not true.

There is another fascinating possibility. As far back as 6 January 1923, the Wireless Branch of the Prime Minister's Department, which handled broadcasting administrative affairs before the Postmaster-General's Department took over, granted an experimental licence to a Mr J. C. Stewart of Stephen Street, Campbell's Creek (near Castlemaine). He was given permission to transmit and receive for a period of one year. 'Your call sign', said the letter of authority, 'will be 3KZ'. The licence lapsed, but could 3KZ lay claim to being the first station on air in Australia? Maybe that is

the origin — simply revival of an old, unused call sign. But nobody seems to know. Perhaps Walter Matthau accidentally stumbled on the truth. All words with 'K' in them, he insists, sound funny, like Alka Seltzer.

Most stations trace their signatures back to location or company names: 3AW from the alliance of Allans and Williamsons, principal shareholders in the original operating company; 3DB came from the Druleigh Business and Technical College, the first licensee operating from Capitol House; XY and UZ just a combination of letters, signifying nothing; AK, the Akron Tyre Company; MP, Mornington Peninsula; 3BO Bendigo, 3BA Ballarat, 3GL Geelong are self-explanatory. Why 3TR Sale? The station was first located at Trafalgar. 3YB Warrnambool? The 'Y' comes from the surname of a Jack Young, one of the founders; the 'B' from Ballarat where he was born. Such 'name-calling' aside, how did 3KZ get off the ground? The granting of the licence, slow and tortuous as it was, has already been explained. What happened when the green light was given?

In May 1930, the Industrial Printing & Publicity Company had a radio licence, a building, no money and no expertise. With a deadline to meet, it found itself being pressed by the Commonwealth Bank to substantially reduce an overdraft already at its limit of 10 000 pounds. Unions were reluctant to contribute to the cost of erecting a transmitter at an estimated cost of 2000 pounds. But then, as the word got around about the radio licence, a Mr Haynes approached the company and offered to establish the station without cost and with reasonable allowance for Labor propaganda. But it would appear that Mr Haynes was a well-known supporter of the Nationalist Party and could scarcely be considered a compatible white knight, as they call such benefactors these days.

Then, virtually out of the blue, emerged one E. L. (Lou) Dahlberg; smooth-talker, man-about-town, former radio salesman with 3UZ — indeed, at one stage, that station's Commercial Manager — with slick assurances that he could raise the necessary money to float the station. Although there were doubts about the 'stability of the individual concerned', it was decided to give Dahlberg the chance to handle the project.

There are conflicting stories of what happened immediately after this, but it would seem that Dahlberg's confidence in being able to get music houses or electrical stores to put up the money was sadly misplaced. But Dahlberg, apparently, had some small resources of his own and was able to borrow or buy basic equipment. Extensions of time, however, had to be sought. Then, either by chance or fortuitous circumstance, Dahlberg managed to interest Val Morgan & Sons, the street-map publishers and theatre-slide contractors, in the venture.

According to early records, the original agreement with Dahlberg was transferred to 3KZ Broadcasting Company, in which Dahlberg was to hold 500 shares, and the Morgans and Maurice Sloman of Hoyts, the majority shareholding of unknown number. Dahlberg was to manage the station; M. B. Duffy was to act as Secretary. After several mishaps the station eventually got to air — two months late.

Dahlberg, however, although quite adept at broadcasting, was no financial genius and ran the station into further difficulties. The situation had deteriorated rapidly by mid-1931 and, in crisis talks, Dahlberg subsequently agreed to quit his shareholding and the company. There are varying accounts of what he was paid as a consideration, ranging from 500 to 999 pounds. Whatever it was, it lay within that range, and Dahlberg went on his way.

The agreement between 3KZ Broadcasting Company and the Industrial Printing & Publicity Company (IP&P) called for a nine-year arrangement based on twenty per cent of profits to IP&P for the first three years, the right of renewal for a further three years on the same basis, and a further three years based on twenty-five per cent of profits, or 1000 pounds, whichever was the greater. This was to be altered as the years rolled on and there were to be many adjustments — upwards. But the fact that it lasted for nearly half a century argued managerial competence and reasonable accord.

Not that there were not attempts from time to time to make it a real Labor station in terms of management and programming. In 1937, for instance, there were at least two bids from other companies to take over the licence, but it stayed where it was

— under more favourable terms. By 1948, forty per cent of profits was going to IP&P, subsequently increased to fifty per cent. With Dahlberg's departure, the station came under the directorate of Syd Morgan, Managing Director; Will Morgan, who controlled the associate company 3KZ Advertising Service Pty Ltd; and Maurice Sloman, General Manager and Director of Hoyts Theatres Limited of Australia, who owned fifty per cent of the shares (the Morgans owned the other half). M. B. Duffy, the Secretary, was also a member of the Commonwealth Bank Board and President of the Australian Federation of Broadcasting Stations, a position he occupied from 1931 to 1934.

Duffy was in charge at KZ for a while but when he returned from a Bank conference in Ottawa, found Syd Morgan in the chair as the Boss — and that was that. Under new management, and with the aid of a talented staff, the station prospered.

Dahlberg went on to other things but re-emerged on the scene as a feature writer on *Radio Times*, a weekly news-and-gossip magazine set up in opposition to the *Listener-In* in the mid-1930s. By then, he realised that he had sold his interest for a song and, thereafter, was never averse to taking a tilt or two at his old station. In one article derogatory of management, he referred to Syd Morgan as 'Mr Kid Big-Gun' and Norman Banks as 'Mr Enormous Swanks'. A law action was contemplated, but not pursued.

Syd Morgan, a likeable, basically shy and sometimes indecisive man, was to remain at the management helm until 1954 when Eddie Balmer took over. SM, as he was invariably called, remained on the Board, however, until illness forced him to retire from active participation.

Faults aside, SM had the ability to recognise a good idea when he heard one, and gave the innovators on the station pretty free rein. He chaired the Wednesday conferences when it was no easy task to hold such volatile fellows as Banks, his brother Arthur (who was Sales Manager), Eddie Balmer, Lewis Bennett, Don Joyce and Ken Hudson in line — and preserve the peace. His eye, or that should be ear, for values, must have been worth a lot more than was generally conceded, for it could not have been by accident that he managed to assemble such a gifted group under one mast.

Five of a kind in 1946. From left to right: Norman Banks, 'Eddie' Balmer, Ron Atholwood, Kevin O'Gorman and Lewis Bennett.

Kevin O'Gorman interviews two of Australia's greatest stage stars, Cyril Ritchard and Madge Elliott.

The old 'Kanga' (Doug Elliot) flanked by Joyce Simmonds, singer and P & A Parader, and 'Skip' Brennan, writer.

The Prince of the Disc Jockeys, Bob Horsfall, was heard on KZ throughout the 1940s.

John Best and Bert Merick polled nearly 200 000 votes in Penny Serenade.

Betty Raymond and Alan Grant, KZ post-war personalities, teamed together in the Children's Session.

When Balmer became Manager in 1954, it fell to him to plot the path the station was to follow in the television era, when radio was supposed to fade into the background and become little more than a filler for when people were not watching 'the box'. It did not work out that way, largely because men like Balmer had the good sense to realise that the old 'steam radio' would have to vacate some of its sacred ground — drama, quiz, children's shows and women's talk — because in these fields what you could see would hold sway over what you could hear. Thus KZ changed course, gradually. Music, news, sport — any format where the enormous advantage of pure sound and immediacy could hold listener interest — became the revised touchstone of programming.

Said Balmer in 1959: '"Top Forty" is a phrase you hear a lot of these days. That type of music has been the backbone of our policy for thirty years almost. KZ's awareness of the power of pop music has, however, not diminished our assessment of the value of middle and upper-class music when you place them in the right time segments and with the right personalities to match. Otherwise, how would you account for the continuing popularity of World Famous Tenors now in its twenty-fifth year; the Monday Musicale, twenty years; and Musical Matinee, twenty-five years. Temper that with our belief that drama has a big audience for stationary housewives. But music is the right medium for housewives on the move.'

The early 1960s were to see the end of many of the long-running favourites, among them The P & A Parade, Voice of the Voyager, World Famous Tenors, Monday Musicale and, in 1965, out went that old signature, 'The Brighter Broadcasting Service'. Time, as you might say, had caught up with KZ.

Balmer and the Board found themselves in disagreement over programming policy and in 1965, he was to leave the station after an unbroken thirty-three years of distinguished service. During that time, he estimates he wrote 2600 programme scripts, mostly musical and prepared some 16 000 quiz questions. What does he think of radio now? 'Almost back to square one,' he says. 'In 1932, it was a record, commercial, describe record, next record. Quite exciting if you were young! In 1983, it's record, commercials

(plural), describe record, next record. Doubtless exciting if you were still young! This technique dulls a bit compared to the years of 1938 to 1956.'

Les Heil, who came in as the new Manager in 1965, started off in broadcasting as a junior announcer and copywriter with 3SR Shepparton in 1952. Most of his salary went on board and lodgings. To supplement his income he slipped in a mention on air that if anyone wanted their lawns mowed for ten shillings he was a willing starter. He got a job, borrowed a mower. His 3SR pay packet, the following week, was five shillings 'light'. 'To advertising mower service, five shillings', ran the accompanying invoice. But he got a raise and his outdoor career came to an end. He did well and in the words of the then Manager of 3SR, Murray Clyne, 'he was a very nice lad, quiet, thorough. As a trainee announcer he was the model for others to follow.'

Four years there, another two at 3BA Ballarat, and Heil came to the 'big smoke' as announcer and newsreader at 3UZ. He graduated as assistant to Lewis Bennett and became involved in the administration of the station — a task that was to equip him well for his move to 3KZ.

'The station', he says, 'was in a difficult position, with poor ratings and facilities. Both technical and administration required upgrading and reorganisation. Upheavals and disagreements between licensee and lessee made life difficult for everyone.' Heil and KZ parted company in March 1978, but it was to prove temporary. Ian Major became Acting Manager.

There were other causes of ferment. In the late 1960s the Labor member in the Upper House for Melbourne Province, the Honorable Douglas George Elliot, MLC, 'strictly in the interests of the party', thought it was about time the Party itself ran the station, not an outside company. He, together with a group of prominent Labor men — politicians, trade union leaders and party faithful — mounted a challenge to the lessee company, but it did not really get far. Elliot says that in the long term he himself was not interested in becoming permanent executive head, but would merely stay as a sort of overseer until things settled down.

Whatever hope Elliot may have held of gaining control — and

this was never rated very highly by the incumbent company — was probably blocked by the late Senator Patrick John Kennelly, variously known as 'The Kingmaker', 'The Fixer', 'The Bush-ranger', and 'The Numbers Man', and the man to whom all other men were 'Brother'. He was also described by one writer as 'the antipodean version of the Irish Tammany politician at his best and most attractive'. The *Age* post-mortem, headlined him as 'Labor's lovable scoundrel'. Kennelly was Chairman of IP&P.

In 1972, however, the advent of the Whitlam Government posed a real problem for the Morgans. The new government, 'in the public interest', was concerned about 3KZ and four others — 2CH Sydney, 2KY Sydney, 2WG Wagga, 3XY Melbourne — being operated 'by persons other than the licensee'. After two hearings, however, during which attention was drawn to a forty-year record of considerable achievement, 'The Minister . . . gave his consent to a new agreement . . . ending on 6 September 1975. This was subsequently extended to 1978'.

But the station was running into troubles brought about by both loss of ratings and business, plus, according to the then management, increasing financial demands from the actual licensee. Val Morgan, nephew of Syd, and head of the company, says he would have been driven into further unacceptable losses. At this stage, apparently, IP&P was receiving a basic fee of unknown dimension, plus fifty per cent of profits and some other considerations charged to the associated 3KZ Advertising Service. So, the break came, officially, in 1979 after almost fifty years. A wholly-owned subsidiary of IP&P under the chairmanship of Pat Kennelly, was set up to carry on after 1 February. According to Senator Kennelly, '3KZ had been losing money and didn't want to go on losing it'. Les Heil returned to take charge.

In May, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal formally granted approval for 3KZ Radio Pty Ltd, to operate the licence from 1 July 1979. It was the end not so much of an era as a family dynasty, for no fewer than six Morgans had been associated with the station in one way or another. On any count their record was a creditable one, difficulties and disagreements of the last few years notwithstanding.

14 The Spectre of Television

In the early 1950s with television and all its golden promises being dangled before fascinated eyes, radio girded its loins for the onslaught of sight and sound.

Said Eddie Balmer: 'This station is consolidating its daytime programme strength with new serials and other shows designed to provide a background to housework'. Lady in the Lake, High Window, Devils Holiday, Dragnet, True Confessions and Deadly Nightshade were among some of the first spine-chillers and seat-warmers on KZ. Other stations, generally, also went for a mix of news, music and sport, plus generous helpings of richly-spiced drama.

KZ's battle for audience in 1950 took a turn for the better when Dick Fair's Amateur Hour came to the station. Fair had 'resigned' from the showcase Australia's Amateur Hour which Terry Dear took over. Thus there were two Amateur Hours running against each other Thursday night at eight. Leslie Ross, station producer, was not happy with all these 'amateur' shows. 'They can', he said, 'frighten young people off and kill any latent talent once and for all'.

Ripley's Believe It or Not, produced by Walter Pym, joined the station listings as did Charlie Chan and Don Joyce's absorbing thriller, The Strange House of Jeffrey Marlowe. There was a new sporting show starring Ernie McCormick, the Test fast bowler, and Checker Hughes, the famous football coach. Paterson's Family Quiz was offering the biggest local jackpot prize ever, 1280 pounds, for the correct answer to the question 'Where did Queen Victoria die?'. Up came the contestant with: 'Osborne House on the Isle of Wight' — and walked off with the prize. At that time, it was estimated that in Melbourne alone quiz cash awards each week topped, on average, 2000 pounds. To the relief of many, the distress of most, the garrulous 'Mrs 'Obbs' on 3AW, finally ran out of breath and disappeared, dramatically, after ten years of nagging. But for her sponsor, that steady 'Sip, sip sip of Bonnington's Irish Moss made out of a rare seaweed found only on the north coast of Ireland', had seeped deeply into public consciousness and it went on for many years as a favourite physic for colds and flu. The product out-ran the programme.

And if commercial radio, to its critics, achieved little else, it is well to remember that but for Hector Crawford's Mobil Quest on 3DB, Joan Sutherland may have been a rose born to blush unseen — or unheard. She was fourth in the quest in 1949; won in 1950. After that, it was roses all the way for 'La Stupenda'.

Bill Macaboy, Script Editor for Lux Radio Theatre was protesting that 'mid-Victorian attitudes towards sex and morals are a serious bar to the development of virile radio drama in Australia'. It all started over the use of the word 'bloody' and 'the gurgles from the Mrs Grundys'. Ron Beck's Downy Flake Show on KZ broke new ground. Quiz questions were directed to housewives in their own homes, rather than gathered around the studio mike. Actor's Choice, an original drama series, was a big hit on KZ. Teenage Talent, a Friday night feature compered by Doug Elliot, sent a bright new name, Toni Lamond, on the course to stardom. And in October 1951, the Austin Hospital Children's Block, built mainly from funds raised by 3KZ over the preceding eighteen years through their Christmas Day appeals, was opened by Prime Minister Menzies.

The slings and arrows of outrageous fate were to strike again at the end of 1950. Maples pulled out of The P & A Parade, and took the Steinway piano with them. That was harder to replace than a sponsor, for Swallows, of biscuit fame, snapped up the show with alacrity. It took longer to get a decent piano.

Morris West, in yet another breakthrough, sold his serial, Affairs of Harlequin, to the BBC. He and Don Joyce were blazing export markets for the Australian product. West, at his oracular best, assured his fellow Australians that while he had become conscious of the many shortcomings in our way of life, 'I have also become convinced that we have something which Europe once had but has lost irrevocably — a new country, clean air, a past unclouded by the multitudinous storms of the past two thousand years, a future in which we can build a new Jerusalem, a new, free, proud and shining Europe by that sea which is called the Pacific, "the ocean of peace".' West clearly was beginning to lengthen his literary stride.

KZ producer, Leslie Ross, was to find backing for his wide-ranging allegation about plagiarism in Australian radio when it was revealed that 'a Sydney radio man' had been conducting a profitable sideline over the previous few years by recording top-line American and British comedy shows, and selling gags and even entire routines to local comedians. Roy Ledwidge, supporting this general thesis, wrote in the *Listener-In* about 'the great air lift'. He nominated shows like Top Town, Strike it Rich, Twenty Questions, Dragnet, Information Please, Portia Faces Life, Stop the Music, Two for the Money, What's My Line and Any Questions. Said he: 'We not only lifted the ideas, we took the names as well'. But, as some sort of counter-balance it could be said that the Americans lifted at least two of our programme ideas and formats: Pick-a-Box and Say What You Think.

According to the ratings, which were slowly if sceptically being accepted as the revealed truth of listening preferences, variety and quiz shows were most popular in Melbourne, with twenty-eight per cent of homes regularly tuned in; followed by musical shows, twenty-two per cent; nineteen per cent, dramatic shows; and fifteen per cent, daytime serials.

The virtual explosion of 'typed' radio productions — quiz, drama and talent — produced the inevitable public reaction. Too much of the same was the cry then, as it is now. Firmly in the sights of critics, who complained most bitterly, were the audience participation shows, which were overladen with plugs for give-away products — as distinct from the actual sponsors' goods. Even Bob Dyer, who was riding high in popularity with his Pick-a-Box and Cop-the-Lot, was moved to comment on this 'rat race for audience supremacy'. He insisted on a 'reasonable limit' on giveaway credits.

There was one other significant development which demonstrated the power the big sponsors, agencies and big name-stars still exercised over the stations. Dyer and Davey reached an agreement that they would not compete against each other on conflicting network shows in the same time-channels. As one trade paper put it 'neither saw the need to engage in cut-throat competition. There was plenty of room in radio for both of them.'

Davey, at this stage, had left Colgate to rejoin Macquarie at a reported salary of 13 000 pounds a year plus fringe benefits, which probably equalled, in real terms about as much again. Dyer, in another major move, took his shows to Colgate for a reported figure of 33 000 pounds a year. Late 1951, however, Davey became the highest paid radio star ever. He signed a contract with Macquarie, as Director of Productions, said to be worth 70 000 pounds a year. The two were without question, the biggest drawcards in the business.

It was programme 'switches' that made for turbulence in the air, and heightened stations' resentment against both Lever and Colgate for the way they had been able to call the tune. Says Ben Coombs, former Macquarie sales chief: 'After the 1946 lesson, we tried to follow a strict policy of using the peak times only for shows that were either owned or produced by us'. Even so, they bent their own rules to accommodate the Dyer shows when they switched to Colgate sponsorship under control of the Patterson agency. At one stage, 1955, Dyer and Davey were on the one station — 3AW.

The virtual sub-letting of part of station time to agencies pro-

ducing shows for clients, led to problems of accountability. The Postmaster-General's Department, and subsquently the Broadcasting Control Board, quite properly held the stations responsible for total on-air output, and it was they who copped the blast when items of questionable taste or objectionable matter were broadcast. This happened quite frequently especially with people given to the facile ad-lib. Characters like Jack Davey, Mo, Rita Pauncefort, Max Reddy, Dorothy Foster, Hal Lashwood, Norman Banks and John Stuart, were not easy to pin down to orthodox proprieties.

The problem was accentuated when Senator Don Cameron was Postmaster-General. He launched a campaign to remove 'moral impurities' from the air. Thundered Bob Money, then Editor of the *Listener-In*, 'There is no room for anything savouring of the lewd or the suggestive. Clean shows are the best box office. Lyrics or wisecracks which arouse the covert snigger will re-act against the announcer, his station and his sponsor.'

A stiffly-worded circular went to all stations from the Wireless Branch of the Postmaster-General's Department warning that importation of 'suggestive' records would be banned unless stations exercised more self-restraint. Measure of the concern felt by bureaucratic purists might be gauged from the fact that between 1930 and 1948, there were some forty-seven circulars about proper behaviour and ethical standards. Most were based on public and parliamentary complaints about off-colour jokes, stories, profanity and double entendres in songs.

A Mr B. A. Longfield, a leading Collins Street psychologist, was to warn housewives that they were in danger of becoming 'pessimistic and destructive' as a result of too many serials. 'With their strong emphasis on crime, domestic maladjustment and sexual irresponsibility, they don't help housewives become calm, poised and collected. They are detrimental to women's minds. They are one of the high-powered influences which are burning people out.'

Police Commissioner Alex Duncan was to complain, too, of the over-emphasis on crime stories, although he excluded Hector Crawford's D24 which relied on police co-operation for much of its background material.

Sexism reared its head. As the traditional women's session started to die out, fewer women were being employed as announcers. Lewis Bennett at 3UZ was to observe that 'men did a better job, although some women have been very good'. Dave Worrall, 3DB: 'Listeners prefer male voices'. Randal White, 3AW: 'Surveys have shown that male voices attract better audiences. The trend away from women started years ago.' Frank Mogg, 3XY: 'All indications are that lady announcers as such are no longer popular'. Syd Morgan: 'Most women are very critical of their own sex. That's why the average woman doesn't like women's voices on air.'

Unlike today, when outraged feminists would have stormed the inner sanctum of each station, there were few dissenting voices. But Martha Gardener, who in real life was Mrs Dave Worrall and even then worked at 3AW, retorted with some asperity: 'Women play a very valuable part in radio, particularly in specialised sessions'. KZ's Binny Lum, chipper as ever: 'As a member of a dying race I must say I feel remarkably healthy'.

Unhappily, the specialised woman's announcer, as such, almost disappeared — but not quite. Thirty years later there are clear signs of a return to favour, although not in the same number or proportion as the 1930s.

By the 1950s most of the men, and women, who contributed so much to KZ in its formative and highly creative years, had moved to fresh fields. The migration north to 3AW was the most marked of all these movements. In the 1930s Lloyd Lamble, Fred Tupper and writer Frank Allen switched allegiance, to be followed later on by Terry Dear, Don Joyce, Ken Hudson, Pat Corby, Stan Hughes, Jim Archer and writer Kathy Dunlop. But it was Norman Banks' defection in 1952 that really shook the radio world. In most instances the motivating force was simple, more money. In the post-war years, right up to the advent of television, there was a lot of chopping and changing on all stations, for they now had more funds to tempt the talented. New sounds, new personalities were on line from KZ.

John Ford who, as already noted, had — and still has — one of the best commercial voices in Australia, stacked up a lot micro-

phone mileage: 7ZL, 7BU, 7HO, 3DB, 3KZ, 3XY, 4RO and 4MK. He joined KZ in the late 1940s as a general announcer and reached his peak when Banks left. He took over Voice of the Voyager and Junior Information, and was associated with Family Quiz and Myer Musicale. He also acted as co-compere of Carols by Candlelight with Philip Gibbs and ran the Friday night BSA Show, starring Peggy McDonald.

Ford introduced a novel 'documentary' style programme called Court Room Stories, based on current cases and vetted by well-known criminal lawyer, Ray Dunn. Ford and Phil Gibbs also crossed words in an unusual show called Battle of Music, a kind of contest between modern and traditional.

Banks, not unnaturally, regarded the Voyager programme as his property and was a bit short with Ford when he filled in during one of Banks' illnesses in 1951. Says Ford: 'When Norman returned from sick leave he asked me how I liked doing the show. I told him it was fantastic. "Then you can forget it, pal," he said. "You've done your last one."' Banks was to leave KZ the following year. Ford, too, departed the station in 1955 to become Radio Manager at Carden Advertising. He went on to 3XY as Studio Manager and then to 3UZ as News Director in 1962. Fortune smiled on him in the 1970s and he journeyed north to the sun in 1975, where he is still heard occasionally as a part-time announcer and news reader.

Ford is not keen on much of what he hears these days. 'It is too slick and brassy,' he says. 'Radio used to be part of family life which by no stretch of the imagination is it today. Announcers were real people the public identified with; now they are just the link between jingles.' It is significant that he, too, rates Norman Banks as 'the greatest'.

Stan Rofe was up there with the best of them. He is still a considerable force on the music front, indeed, he seems to hold an ageless fascination for rock-music devotees. 'Stan the Man' became his trademark and he handled most of the rock'n'roll programmes on the station. But there is more to him than that, for he has a wide interest in other musical forms. His knowledge of the classics is almost as broad-spanning as his mastery of the more popular idiom. At twenty-three, he became the youngest member

of the KZ announcing team in 1956. He was a product of the Lee Murray school, got his first job at 7AD and then moved to 3XY for two years. Sport was and still is a major interest, and he handled quite a few fixtures, including football. Swap Shop was another programme he presented on KZ. Possibly his most successful show, with the 'rockers', was Party Time. He also built up a formidable reputation among his sponsors. 'A very compelling salesman,' was how he was once described.

Then there was the irrepressible Ron Cadee, spoken of still as one of the funniest fellows in the business — big, jovial, a real song-and-dance man and musical to his finger tips, for he plays piano with uncommon skill. An improviser of rare, sometimes rude, talent too, and composer to boot. He came from 3YB in 1956, started in the breakfast session, featured in a segment called Chicken and Champagne and handled the popular Sunday Concert which used to pack the studio in the afternoon. Ron Cadee Sings was another morning highlight on schedule then.

Kevin O'Gorman tells of how, not all that long ago, Cadee spotted him coming into a suburban hotel where he was playing. 'Ladies and gentlemen,' said Cadee, 'I am going to play and sing, try to entertain you. Some people say I'm not all that good so if you have any complaints make them to the manager. My name is Kevin O'Gorman.'

A happy-go-lucky fellow, Cadee went on to other things in television after a decade of 'fun' at KZ. A measure of his temperament can perhaps be gauged from his response to the question 'Why did you leave?' 'Sacked,' he replied succinctly but cheerfully.

Alan Freeman was another KZ voice of those times. He, like Phil Gibbs, came from Tasmania and when Balmer moved to manager, took over the prestigious World Famous Tenors. When he wanted to he could also sound like Banks; in fact many people thought Banks had returned to the station when they heard him. In 1958 he decided to try his luck in London. He was, virtually, an overnight success. He ran a hit parade type of show for the BBC called Tops of the Pops and became one of their most valuable properties. He called himself 'the oldest teenager in the world'. As such he also became one of the highest paid radio artists in England.

Graham Stone, the Man-About-Town with gossip, cafe talk and show-biz, introduced another new programme element at 12.30 Monday and Friday. He also ran Calling the Ladies five afternoons a week, a show which included interviews, panel discussions and listeners' problems, facts and fancies, and music.

The beauteous Margaret Hughes, Miss Australia, talked of fashion and other things. Then there was Jim Archer, one of the few men in the history of Australian broadcasting to die at the microphone. But that was in his post-KZ days. He came with experience at stations in Tasmania, Orange, Newcastle and Sydney, and was blessed with a splendid basso-profundo voice. He was a natural candidate for World Famous Tenors, after Balmer moved into managerial spheres, and other station features like Classical Hit Parade and Monday Music Hour. As one description has it 'a rich and authoritative voice of rare quality which is, without question, a selling power with our women's audience'. Barry Ion, of recent date probably Adelaide's top radio personality, was there, too, as was John Maybury, conducting, co-compering Sports Parade, Who's My Hero and Call from KZ.

Geoff Brooke, singer, sportsman and restaurateur, ran his late night Supper Club on KZ for many years: a mixture of melody and comment on the big names in show business. For a time, too, he was compere of Lee Gordon's Big Show. *Argus* columnist Peter Golding, now a big name in public relations, handled a twice-daily commentary; Gordon Chater, a programme for Rosella called Looking at Life; Leslie Ross' New Oxford Show featured Anne Lane, Roy Lyons, Laurie Wilson and Lance Ingram who was to achieve international status when he went to live in France; Tom Blake was doing a regular stint in the breakfast programme; Tom Moon took the station into a new sporting field, Saturday Night Trots.

Also at KZ in the middle 1950s and early 1960s, guiding the musical destinies of the station, was record librarian Neville Wragg, now a radio historian, archivist, collector and compere (with Clark Sinclair) of the programme Anything Goes on 3AW.

In 1955 stations were given permission to move to transmitting sites in the Heidelberg-Lower Plenty area and to increase their power to 5000 watts. The new 3KZ tower, 444 feet high, went

to air in March 1956. Primary coverage area was extended and quality of reception improved. Car listeners could drive greater distances without losing contact with their favourite station.

KZ is an 'AM' station. AM stands for amplitude modulation, the process by which a 'carrier' wave is adjusted to the nature of the intelligence of sound being carried. FM or frequency modulation is different. The frequency itself is varied. It is often claimed that FM offers better-quality noise-free reception. This is only true in part, according to Brian Perry, 3KZ's Chief Engineer. 'Because of the nature of the wavelength of the FM signal', he says, 'its performance is optimum and noise-free only when line of sight reception exists. That's why FM transmitter antennae are installed at high locations like Mount Dandenong. However, when AM reception is also within line of sight it too is comparatively noise-free. When we do hear an AM signal that is a little noisy, it is usually being received at a distance or location beyond the reach of FM.' He sums it up, thus: 'When listening or comparing AM and FM under ideal conditions on an expensive high-fidelity receiver, there is no doubt FM will offer the highest quality. But when listening on the average domestic transistor or car radio, quality differences are so minimal that comparisons between AM and FM really relate more to programme preferences. Furthermore, when listening to FM stereo on a car radio, or anything else that is moving, signals can disappear below the horizon, while in urban areas they get bounced around by tall buildings and other obstructions. This results in "picket fence" reception, where the signal rapidly cuts in and out. Also you get "platform" motion, that is where "left" and "right" sound changes back and forth.' What's ahead? Well, AM 'stereo' for one. Long wavelengths of AM signals provide stereo reception for distant listeners and no 'picket fencing'. As with 'output', so with 'input'.

The microphone where it all begins, has seen many changes. In the old days most stations used the then popular bass-sounding ribbon type. Announcers had to keep their distance to avoid a 'popping' sound when they pronounced their 'P's. Voices also tended to be coloured by poor studio acoustics resulting in muddy, indistinct sound.

Modern microphones allow much 'closer' work with no acoustic

or popping problems, but a 'presence' effect which compounds the illusion that the announcer is in the room with you. The 1950s and 1960s also saw most radio stations dispense with all seventy-eight rpm records and substitute long-playing discs. Lightweight pickups and better quality turntables helped in the never-ending quest for better definition. It was now all solid-state technology and the only radio valves to be found were at the transmitter. Next up? Digital sound, which will enable the original input at the microphone to be reconstructed with perfect fidelity at the other end.

Middle-fifties singer, Alan Redding, banjoist Hec McLennan and the multi-voiced Jim Berinson were making regular appearances on KZ. Berinson also came in to the breakfast show when Kevin O'Gorman left for a year or so to 'go into commerce'. New voices, too, came in the persons of Ivor Hancock, handling Sporting Round-Up; Ian Halket, as a straight announcer; Gordon Bell, who took over Voice of the Voyager from John Ford; and Bill Rundle, a disc jockey in charge of Youth at the Helm.

The Air Adventures of Biggles was a daily 8 a.m. feature; John McCallum was the star of the Saturday night one-hour serial The Strange Tale of Eastermain; Darrods, 'the style store in the heart of Bourke Street' was running the nightly Three Roads to Destiny; Jack Dyer, even then known as Captain Blood, teamed up with Philip Gibbs in a football show, and Geoff Brooke's new programme Coffee Time introduced a fresh, tangy flavour to interviews with show people.

KZ, in conjunction with the very active Clemenger agency, formed a joint pool of talent to chart new ideas aimed at matching the challenge of television. Some sixteen artists and announcers from both organisations joined forces to launch The Show of Shows, a Friday night feature which ranged over drama, music and quiz — compere: Alan Freeman.

Australian vocalist, Billy Day, gave as his considered opinion that 'television was just like having your best friend calling around every night and interrupting your home life — you get sick of it after a while'. The testing year had arrived — 1956. The Box was opened, the Furies escaped, Hope remained.

15 Weathering the Storm

The 'television terror', expected to reduce radio to a small, feeble, ancillary voice, never really struck — at least, not in any economic sense. There was a brief pause in performance in the first year of television. The decline in profitability, over all stations, was a mere 13 000 pounds. By the end of the decade, radio's profit margins virtually doubled the 1956–57 figure.

Said Lewis Bennett: 'After twelve months of competition, we are not fighting television. We are living with it. Financially, it is not affecting us. Radio will gradually become a service medium with its greatest power in fields of music, news, sport — three areas where television cannot really compete.' His views were to be echoed four years later by Dave Worrall: 'Australian radio has passed through its first years of television with the greatest prosperity boom in its history'.

And that was the way radio went — upwards. Gradually, however, the drama and quiz shows faded. Oddly, The Lux Radio Theatre, Australia's Amateur Hour and most of the Colgate shows, disappeared before television started. But four years later, there were still a surprising number of big-name programmes on radio. The P & A Parade, World Famous Tenors, Voice of the Voyager,

Life with Dexter, Winner Take All, Cop-the-Lot, Leave it to the Girls, Quiz Kids, General Motors Hour and Smoky Dawson were beguiling night-time audiences. During the day, Portia, Aunt Jenny, Doctor Paul, Big Brother and the folk at Martin's Corner were still pursuing their aqueous way. The disc jockeys, or deejays, were the new stars of sound.

The secret of the unexpected resurgence had one perfectly reasonable explanation. Radio had been so dominated by big national advertisers with sponsored shows that many smaller, but nonetheless substantial advertisers, had been squeezed out of the peak times, not from lack of desire but absence of opportunity. Now, they could move in relatively cheaply.

Radio was being looked at in a new way. Instead of huge, static audiences tuned in to one leading programme on one station on any one night, it was possible to reach the same number of people, probably at less cost, by spreading the radio message over several stations on several days. Said the Patterson agency in March 1958: 'The new emphasis in radio usage is on cumulative audiences: the number of net unduplicated homes reached in a week or a four-week period. The current pattern is to use many programme segments and many spots, putting the emphasis on the overall audience rather than the audience of the individual units involved. The key to this entire buying pattern is the way radio's audience turns over during any one twenty-four-hour period so that the cumulative audience is constantly enlarging'.

In a way, the fact that KZ no longer had the Colgate shows was a blessing. They did not have as much to lose from the mass move of the giants into night-time television. Besides, in terms of sets in homes, radio still had the advantage in numbers over television. Even by 1960, radio could boast something like 140 radio sets for every 100 people. Television, in March 1960, had only one television receiver in every three homes.

KZ was still fairly strong on serials up till then. Among them, Don Joyce's controversial T-Men, which was all about tax investigators and, surprise, surprise, tax evaders. Joyce apparently got so near to the bone that at one stage, the Commonwealth Police called on him to inquire about his sources of information. Another show, Destiny for One, was high in listener preferences. And a

John Bhore recording episodes of Jimmy Colt from hospital. From left to right: Marcia Hart, John Bhore, Keith Eden, Jimmy James (producer), Bob Burnard, Reg Goldsworthy and Monty Maizels (sound engineer).

Pat Hodgins, renowned for his uncanny capacity to sound almost exactly like Jack Davey, handing out a prize in The Aspro Show.

About a month after this picture was taken in Melbourne with Kevin O'Gorman, Madame Kovar, walking a tightrope at Sevenoaks, California, slipped; the lion pounced, and she was killed. So was the lion.

Cousin Binny (Binny Lum) and Billy Bouncer (Norman Swain) whooping it up for the kids.

John Ford, one of the best commercial voices in Australia, was heard on KZ in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

new prophet, Billy Graham, with his Hour of Decision took to the KZ airwaves on Wednesday night at 9.30.

Douglas Elliot, by then appearing in some fifteen different radio shows, bought the Doutta Galla pub and hinted — also prophetically — that 'some day I may be a member of Parliament'. By way of light relief, 'Professor' Tommy Davidson, comedian Jack Perry and John Maybury, were contributing a musical quiz, The College of Knowledge.

Brash's took over The P & A Parade from Swallow & Ariell, who had launched a similar talent quest on HSV–7 called 'Swallow's Parade' on Saturday night. Somewhat unsportingly, many thought, 3DB rebroadcast it as a straight 'sound' show on Sunday night, slap-bang up against The P & A Parade at 9 p.m. But in terms of audience, The P & A was a clear winner.

In the late 1950s, the eminent 'musicologist' John Cargher, presented Record Collectors' Showcase on KZ, Tuesday nights at eight; John Maybury was handling the ninety-minute Hit Parade; Doug Elliot and Norman Swain were joint-comperes of The Secret of Happiness, four mornings a week; Bruce Skeggs, later a member of Parliament, called the field at The Showground Trots. Stan Rofe took to the sea to record his impressions of the trials of the new destroyer, *Vendetta*, in the Bass Strait; sporting cadet Barry Ion, now the biggest voice on Adelaide radio, was roaming the beaches in search of material for his recorded programme Seaside Serenade; a 'young miler', Ron Clarke, began a Saturday morning sports call; Neil Thompson joined the staff; Pat Hodgins rejoined in 1959; Mothers' Opinions gave Kevin O'Gorman further rein as 'the ladies man'; Spin and Win, a new musical quiz came to air; Ben Kerville became one of the team of Football Roundup; Alan Freeman, prior to moving to the BBC, was making quite a name for himself on Radio Luxembourg which beamed programmes in England; the 1959 Christmas Day appeal brought in 71 000 pounds for the Austin hospital and the blind kiddies; and Ron Cadee and June Green composed the melody and lyrics of a song they called 'On the Beach', hopefully for use in the Stanley Kramer film being shot at Frankston. But Percy Faith, unfortunately, had the sole contract for all the music. Nevertheless, their number was recorded and rated higher in KZ listeners' estimation than the Faith number.

While radio, financially, was doing very well indeed during television's early years, it became clear to the brains of the business that more was needed than just easy compliance with the theory that there was room for everyone in the expanding media spectrum.

In 1958, Radio Week was launched around Australia, with all 123 commercial stations participating in the drive to bring home the message that radio was everywhere. While it may have lost the family as a group around the console in the lounge-room, it had picked up the individual attention of members of the family in other areas — outdoors, in the car, on the beach and in their own room. A commercial broadcast on all stations summed it up, thus:

Voice 1: The way I understand it, this person came into your house and stole all your radios?
Voice 2: Every radio I had to my name.
Voice 1: M'mmm. Including transistors?
Voice 2: Yes. But he left me one earplug. I'll say that for him.
Voice 1: Did he take anything else?
Voice 2: Just the radios. Oh, and a couple of pieces of fruit. I don't begrudge him that.
Voice 1: Are you and your husband going to replace the radios?
Voice 2: Well, we'll have to. Arthur is late for work because he has no radio to keep reminding him of the time and traffic conditions. I have nothing to keep me company while I work around the house.
Voice 1: I can imagine.
Voice 2: We have a ten-room house. We had a radio in every room.
Voice 1: Then he stole all ten radios?
Voice 2: Eleven
Voice 1: Eleven?
Voice 2: He also stole the car.
Jingle: Who listens to radio? Only ten million six hundred thousand people — that's all!

16 The Swinging Sixties

In the 1960s voices came and went. The multi-faceted magic of Jim Berinson was frequently heard; Denise Drysdale did a stint for a time; Kitty Bluett teamed up with Norman Swain and Ron Cadee each morning, with special segments of her own, like Sing-along and The Kitty Bluett Show; Margaret Cook ran a thrice-weekly Women's Show; and Harry Beitzel, besides calling the game with Phil Gibbs, Cyril Stokes and Rod McLeod, was involved in other football shows. Indeed, during the mid-1960s KZ had no fewer than six programmes devoted to football in one form or other, quite apart from the actual descriptions.

Eyebrows were raised when this ad appeared: 'Win a Blonde for Christmas. 3KZ is giving away a blonde, a real live blonde and she could be all yours for Christmas.' As might be imagined, the protests rolled in. KZ maintained its silence. Came the night at the Southern Cross for the awarding of the prize, and a young man, filled, perhaps, with hopeful expectation of transition to the Elysian fields, took unto his arms — a white miniature poodle.

To that KZ sound of the sixties came Michael Sharpley from 3CS; Bruce Mansfield, seventeen-year-old nephew of Terry Dear; Peter Hadrian, doing a programme in German; Ray King 'the

fledgling personable character'; Jim Hilcke from 3BA, now Assistant Manager of the station; Jim Vickers-Willis called square dancing from Earl's Court; Barry Ion joined Philip Gibbs and Jack Mueller for the football descriptions, Cyril Stokes, too, for a time; Geoff Brooke's Fisherman's Luck came on air once a week; soccer also got a 'guernsey' in three different KZ programmes; Keith (Doc) Livingston was the deejay in Platter Party; and Rod McLeod went into the breakfast session and also became principal news reader. During this time Norman Swain went to GTV–9 in 1963 to conduct The Tarax Show; Jim Archer gained a press award as Voice of the Month; Kevin O'Gorman, in May 1964, brought the Voice of the Voyager to its last berth; and The P & A, after nearly thirty years, was no more. Also in 1964, after thirty-three years with the station, Norman Balmer, Manager since 1955, resigned. His place was taken by Les Heil.

In 1965, Heil announced a new music policy for the station based on recorded albums rather than Top Forty. 'I feel', he said, 'that the teenage-only market is already well-covered. The station will now concentrate on four basic music segments: established album tracks, selected items of current popular transient music (which could include some Top Forty), items from past popularity charts and a limited playing of records which we predict will become popular.' One of the results of this change of direction was Stan Rofe's resignation. He disagreed with the new policy and went to 3UZ.

Other programmes that were judged to have outlived their attraction and pulling power, and which were reckoned to be in conflict with the new policy, included the thirty-year-old Musicale, World Famous Tenors and programmes like the one John Cargher presented for a year or so. Also, attempts made, passingly, to cater for ethnic musical tastes were abandoned. At one stage in the mid-1960s, ten per cent of KZ's programmes were in a foreign language. The station, in short, was using a rifle not a shot-gun to hit home at its elected target — the twenty to forty-year olds.

Philip Gibbs succumbed to the lure of camera, lights, action in 1964 after an association of fifteen years. He went to ATV-O, now Channel 10, as Sporting Editor. Others were gravitating to

television, among them KZ's breakfast man, Jon Royce, who joined the panel of one of the early 'talk' shows, Tell the Truth, on HSV–7; Ron Cadee, before trekking north to Brisbane television, compered Make Mine Music on the same station.

At KZ, Bill Pinell, six years with the station, became Programme Manager. Brian Perry, ex-UZ, was appointed Chief Engineer. John Bright was one of the brighter stars of that decade; also a twenty-two-year-old Queenslander, John McDonald; and Dean Reynolds from 5KA. There was Tom Worland broadcasting the morning and afternoon news services, and now an established name on television news; Rex Mitchell, fresh from working on a 'pirate' station in England, was engaged to compere the nightly Sound Survey Music Show, to be replaced later on by Bill Rule; and adding to the new 'sound' too, was former 2LM announcer, Mal Rennie. Then there was John Fossey, writing and reading the news; Gary Nicholls, Nicky's son; Peter Leslie, manning the early morning watch when KZ went to round-the-clock transmission in 1968; Peter Philp, part of the news team; John Jones as new breakfast announcer; Don Rowe as sporting editor; Barry Casey from 3GL; Ric Melbourne; Rob Maynard and even the late, great Bill Acfield, briefly. All were part of the 'Most Happy Fellas', as KZ was promoting its on-air personalities.

The air was thick with individual 'sign-on' and 'sign-off' identifications of the deejays: 'Hello Dere', 'Boo Boo Pa Doo', 'Hidey Hodey Everboady', 'Stay Keen on the Teen Scene', 'The Daddio of the Raddio' and 'This is Lap Lap saying Bye Bye for Now Now'.

Said John McMahon: 'The difference between the disc jockey and the radio announcer of ten years ago is that the deejay is slicker, sleeker and smarter. He is now an air salesman. If he can't sell himself and his product he is useless to a radio station.'

Said Stan Rofe 'More discs are made in Sydney than Melbourne, but the percentage of rubbish from up north is higher. Most of them are hopelessly inferior products.' Rofe refused to play quite a few top names on his programmes.

Stations, too, were using their own musical identifications, mostly rhyming jingles. UZ's Jim Wood (Woody) came on air

with this processional: 'Good morning, good morning, a very bright morning to you and you. We'll give you the time and weather reports. Keep you posted on traffic and news of all sorts.' John Bright when he transferred to AW was preceded by 'In the early light, John Bright, gets you on your way, he kinda gets you feeling right, for the day, for the new day. Our bright breakfast programme, turns yawning into morning.' It was a phase, thankfully since passed.

In 1966, the radio–television war could, in part, be measured by the number of 'troops' in the field. By September, 1 889 427 Australian homes had both radio and television. But there were still 627 637 homes where radio was the sole electronic medium; 235 754 were said to have television only. In 1966, Station Manager, Les Heil in an angry response to criticism about 'the quality and presentation of radio' declared that 'personal experience overseas clearly indicates that commercial radio standards in Australia rated equally with the higher levels of American commercial radio. Technical standards here are, indeed, the highest in the world. The fact that one and three-quarter million people in metropolitan Melbourne tune to commercial radio during the week, is powerful testimony to radio's entertainment, information and service functions.'

But there was no doubting the pace was getting increasingly frantic. It had to keep up with the restless beat of the music. Keeping the station on its toes with programme ideas was Chief Announcer, Jim Hilcke, while Kevin O'Gorman switched to Sales Promotion Manager. The station was literally bursting with stunts, contests, give-aways and awards, used as a counter-point to music, news and sport.

The competition of television, the change of pace in radio generally, the battle for ratings and the quest for new business, all contributed to rapid changes in the ten years to 1970. Staff turnover was high. All the old KZ voices had gone, the standard-bearers of yesteryear no longer heard.

But then, in what seemed a partial reversion to the programme philosophies of other days, KZ, in 1969, decided on an experiment: two blocks of serials at 6 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. Back to the airwaves

came such old favourites as Dossier on Demetrious, the 'atmospheric' thriller starring Guy Doleman; Harp McGuire in Night Bear; Rex (Whacka) Dawe's school-room comedy series Dr Pym's Progress; Dragnet; Theatre Time with Somerset Maugham; Under Arrest, with Nigel Lovell as Captain Scott of Homicide and Al Thomas as his somewhat fey assistant; plus The Horatio Hornblower series. The experiment lasted for six months or so, but did little for station ratings. So, it was back to music. It was all part of Les Heil's plan to restrict the range of programming activity to areas where the station might hopefully gain dominance with a particular segment of the audience. That policy persists to this day.

17 'B' Comes before 'A'

It is difficult to underestimate the fortuitous value of the tiny transistor, post-war. While television might now claim to have taken over the lounge-room in the evening, the 'tranny' took over people increasingly on the move — around the house, working, walking, sun-baking or driving. Significantly, in 1963-64, more radios were sold than in any other period of broadcasting history — a mammoth three quarters of a million. The demand has not slackened. There are, today, more radio sets than there are people — 15 million people, at least 20 million radios. 'Wherever you go, there's radio', as the saying goes. And while commercial radio has never ranked highly with intellectuals, receives scant coverage in print media, runs a poor second to television in gossip or hard-core trade-paper programme publicity, and is said to drive listeners up the wall with its advertising content, there is a curious but relentless statistic that continues to make mock of its critics. Ever since surveys came into existence, the distribution pattern of listening has been, year in, year out for forty years now, of the order of eighty-five per cent commercial, fifteen per cent national.

Perhaps of even greater significance is that there is no sign of diminution in the number of hours the average listener is tuned to his set. In 1973 it was about three and a quarter hours a day.

In 1983 it was the same. Why is this so? Have the writers who talk of commercial radio as a desert of dross, a circus of clamorous voices, missed something? Could it be that their disinclination to accept commerce, advertising, the bargain basement, the denominators of simple desire, ordinary people talking, the basic attractions of popular music and spectator sport as markers of everyday life, has led them into errors of elitism where they bear not witness, but prejudice?

Not many studies have been made of this overwhelming preference for commercial radio but one, and a wide-ranging one at that, was conducted in 1979. First, Audience Studies Incorporated, tested the validity of assumptions concerning the attitudes and behaviour of commercial radio listeners, by putting forward a series of propositions to groups of different people in a discussion atmosphere. The aim was to get some sort of qualitative guide to what people thought about the medium in both a social and economic sense. From these talks emerged broad headings that could then be measured quantitatively, that is, how many people thought this or that about aspects of commercial radio that had been thrown up in the 'qualitative' pilot stage.

In general, commercial radio is seen as 'an essential, habitual, instinctively consumed product'. Its advantages are identified as 'its mobility, its immediacy and its undemanding nature. It is viewed as more necessary but less involving than television or press.' This friend-in-need, always there, to be switched on according to whim or fancy, formed what the study construed as 'an acceptable predictable, dependable part of daily routine'. Many respondents talked in terms of 'getting up to the radio', 'getting to work by the radio' and 'getting through breakfast by the radio'. Thus radio, especially commercial radio, was seen as a 'companion, an unobtrusive, friendly medium — an entertainment source which is unthreatening, uninvolving and easily mobile'.

The ABC was seen as essentially a 'minority' medium—an 'alternative for . . . people who were not satisfied with commercial radio product'. The major objection of commercial radio listeners to the national system was, surprisingly perhaps, 'its lack of consistent identity'. In general terms respondents considered the commercial sector as primarily an entertainment medium; the ABC

primarily an information medium — which, one might have thought, was a readily identifiable factor. A 'regular' ABC listener carried associations of being 'an intellectual' or 'high brow' and 'thus the ABC becomes . . . the acknowledged minority programmer'. One guide to such an assessment is contained in the observation that because the national system had no clearly defined personality, listeners were unable to form any expectation of what they might hear were they to switch over. And this suggestive comment: 'The only truly predicable elements of ABC programming that they could identify were cricket, parliament and classical music'. But where was one major exception: the ABC was seen as 'a newscaster of the highest quality'.

How, it might be asked, did respondents view the advertising content often criticised as noisy, excessive and intrusive? Here, a very interesting finding has been thrown up. That is, the disposition, as it were, for commercials to blend in with the landscape, or rather soundscape. These are the words used in the study: 'There was some evidence that a discussion on advertising on television rather than advertising on radio would have produced significantly less tolerance or approval'. Then this pointer: 'Since advertising on radio is more inextricably mixed with the overall product, consumers appear to have accepted it as intrinsic programming, in contrast to television where it is seen as decidedly extrinsic to programming'. In other words, television is cut up into defined programme and commercial segments. Radio is seen more as a whole: 'the way a radio station handles the insertion and presentation of advertising is read as an integral part of its overall performance'. Because television was a more 'involving' medium, advertising was considered more intrusive. With radio 'even those respondents who claimed to have an ingrained resistance to advertising, did not see its lack on the national service as being a sufficient inducement to alter their listening habits in favour of the ABC'. Out of all this came three clear indicators: most people like commercial radio the way it is; few have any idea who owns what stations and do not care anyway; and commercial radio is seen as 'ours' — the ABC as 'theirs'. In sum, commercial radio is better liked because it *is* commercial radio, impugn it who so list. Small wonder they abandoned 'A' and 'B' classifications all those years ago.

18 Music, Maestro, Please

For a device which, poetically, is supposed to have charms to soothe savage beasts, soften rocks and bend knotted oaks, music — as heard over the radio — has produced some very discordant notes.

Many musical numbers, for instance, have come under the hammer. Forty or so years ago, 'She Had to Go and Lose It at the Astor', named after a popular New York hotel reputed to be a house of assignation, was deemed to imply surrender of a non-negotiable asset. It was blacklisted by the radio industry itself, although quite a few stations defied the ban. There is an opening speak-piece, a mother warning her daughter to be 'very, very careful', and then the lyrics; some verses of which ran:

But she had to go and lose it at the Astor
She didn't take her Mother's good advice
Now there aren't so many girls today who ***have one***
And they shouldn't let it go at any price . . .

They questioned all the bellboys and the ***porter***
The chef appeared to be the guilty guy
And the doorman also acted quite suspicious
But he coyly said 'I'm sure it wasn't I'.

And then the finale:

They just about completed all their searching
When the chauffeur walked up with it in his hand
All they did was stand and gape
There was Minnie's sable cape
And she thought that she had lost it at the Astor.

So all that had been forfeited was a fur coat, but that did not save the song.

Another to arouse official ire was 'The Man who Comes Around', which carried lines like:

Now there's a man who comes to our house every single day
Papa comes home and the man goes away
Oh Papa does the work and Mumma does the play
And the man comes around when Papa goes away.

It ends with:

Now when I grow up I never want to be
A plumber or a carpenter, no sir-ee
I'll never be a doctor with an office down town
No, I'd just rather be the man who comes around.

Outraged women rushed to the barricades, and out went the song.

But perhaps the greatest fuss was raised over 'Only a Glass of Champagne' a touching song of an evil Earl and a pure village maid:

It's such an old story, it's always the same
Like every poor moth she flew too near the flame
She opened her wings and she lost her good name
All through a glass of champagne.

What will become of her, spurned and reviled
Into oblivion hurled
And what can she offer her fatherless child
That she has brought into the world.

On and on, in similar vein, until the last verse which may have just put the sealer on it all:

She lost her armour in sorrow and pain
And with her false lover she pleaded in vain
But by the next morning she'd lost it again
All through a glass of champagne.

Even Gracie Fields when she was touring the military camps had to alter the words for fear of offending the omnipotent Senator Cameron.

There were other songs, too, which were frowned upon: 'That Lovely Weekend' which implied a 'few days of heaven' illicitly spent; 'Bill', which built up to a climax of twittering expectation–a maiden about to be bedded–but the last line simply said 'And when I sleep, and when I sleep, I always *dream* of Bill'. Still others like 'Doin' What Comes Naturally', 'You Can't Get a Man with a Gun', 'Too Darn Hot', 'Always True to You in my Fashion' and 'I Hate Men' were removed from the play-lists of many stations.

Today such merry refrains, touched with humour, would scarce raise questioning brow. Certainly they sound infinitely preferable to the furtive suggestiveness of some more recent lyrics. Most music these days is played to a fixed format — arrived at by guess, by God, by intelligent assessment of recorded sales or by computer analysis.

In more restful times, that is pre-television, two types of music, classical and popular classical (sometimes churlishly described as something you listened to in the hope that it might turn into a tune) did not get much air play on 3KZ. But it was there, as a sort of cultural counterpoint to the best of ragtime, jazz and swing. The Myer Musicale was one such programme which transported listeners into heady realms of opera, oratorio and concert hall. Despite the fact that it was out of key with the rest of the evening's entertainment, it appeared to attract an audience of sufficient size to justify its place on the station schedules for more than two decades.

Of even longer duration was World Famous Tenors, Sunday

nights at eight — compere, Eddie Balmer. It lasted for thirty-three years, 'outliving' Balmer. One disenchanted listener, however, was a visiting American 'racqueteer' of those days, Donald Budge, who was under the happy but mistaken impression that the show was 'World Famous Tennis'. After being urged not to miss it, he expressed some disappointment when all he heard during an overnight Melbourne stay was 'bloody music — highbrow stuff' at that.

Music comprised about eighty per cent of programming and over the years it has remained the staple of presentation. In the early days of broadcasting it was station practice to borrow music from the old 'music' shops: Christies, Glens, Suttons and the Melola Salon. Little money changed hands — most of the deals were contra — your records for free plugs. Some of the old Edison diamond discs were quarter of an inch thick, which made them heavy going for KZ announcers who would have to carry them to the studio.

It was not until about 1926-27 that 'electrical' recordings, with an electro-magnetic pick-up replaced the old 'acoustic' system. Coincidentally came improved audio-amplifier design. Almost overnight music started to sound better. Still, ten and twelve-inch '78s' — such being the number of revolutions per minute — often suffered from 'wows and woofs' induced by both overuse and poor frequency response. Most of them, apart from the few imported individually, were played by all stations.

However, KZ was to break new ground with its 'Hill and Dale' or wide-range system: numbers recorded exclusively for stations which took up in their broadcast area, sole franchise for this American library on 16-inch discs. Here is how Eddie Balmer explained it to listeners in 1935: 'You doubtless know that in an ordinary gramophone record the track in which the needle travels is not a perfect circle, but sways from side to side. This 'sway' causes the musical notes; the bigger the sway the bigger the range of notes. However, if too large a range of notes is attempted, the sway is often so great that the track may break into the next one. Hill and Dale recording uses a diamond instead of a gramophone needle and this diamond moves in the track not from side to side (laterally)

but up and down (vertically). As there is no danger of the track cutting into its neighbour, they can be made as deep as necessary to record the entire range of musical sound.'

Hill and Dale was strictly rationed so as to preserve that vital 'exclusive' edge. Two or three sessions a day and that was it. One song, with narrative, was to capture Melbourne by the ears, 'The Bluebird of Happiness'. In today's terms, a real washboard weeper, but in a city still in stress, it was a mirror of the times, a testament to courage under adverse circumstance, a peg on which to hang hopes for the future. Even the stoniest hearts responded to its soul-stirring words:

Bluebird of Happiness

(Sung)
The beggar man and the mighty king are only different in name
for they are treated just the same by fate.
Today a smile and tomorrow a tear, you're never sure what's in store
so learn your lesson before it is too late.

So be like I, hold your head up high
till you find the bluebird of happiness.
You will find greater peace of mind
knowing there's a bluebird of happiness.
And when he sings to you
though you're deep in blue
you will see a ray of light creep through.
And so remember this—life is no abyss
somewhere there's a Bluebird of Happiness.

(Spoken)
The poet with his pen — the peasant with his plough
it makes no difference who you are.
It's all the same somehow.
The king upon his throne — the jester at his feet,
the shopgirl, the actress — the woman on the street.
It's a life of smiles and a life of tears,
it's a life of hope and a life of fears.
A blinding torrent of rain — and a brilliant burst of sun,

a biting tearing pain — and bubbling sparkling fun.
And no matter what you have, don't envy those you meet.
It's all the same — it's in the game — the bitter and the sweet.
And if things don't look so cheerful, just show a bit of fight.
For every bit of darkness, there's a little bit of light.
For every bit of hatred, there's a little bit of love.
For every cloudy morning, there's a midnight moon above.

(Sung)
So don't you forget
you must search till you find the bluebird.
You will find peace and contentment for ever
if you will be like I
hold your head up high
till you see a ray of light and cheer.
And remember this,
life is no abyss —
somewhere there's a Bluebird of Happiness.

Jan Peerce, under the nom-de-plume of Paul Robinson, recorded this version. There were others, including a local variation with George Bellmaine singing and Ken Hudson narrating. But the original was the big hit. Each time it was played, Melbourne closed its eyes, mouthed the words and melted into silent tears. It became a cameo item on the station's schedule, with its popularity scarcely waning for almost a decade. Even today, the occasional request comes in. The only jarring note to this moving saga: objection was raised to the phrase 'woman on the street' by several listeners, including the late, ubiquitous Reverend Stanley Judkins, a one-man Savanarola of his day, who would have the Festival of Light look like Fun in the Dark. In the home-town version that phrase was changed to 'the admiral of the fleet'. Thus was parochial modesty and virtue preserved.

Another highly distinctive 'sound' came from the sign-off or 'Goodnight' song written by staff-scripter and composer, Alan Stranks, a man of rare genius who was to find even greater fame on English soil. It ran, too, with melody and narrative, thus:

Geoff Brooke gets a new platter fresh from the press for his Coffee Time.

Ron Cadee and Margot Sheridan rehearse Ron Cadee Sings, a morning programme on KZ in the 1950s.

Stan Rofe (Stan the Man) is pictured here with Mavis Cohen selecting discs for Party Time.

The man who sang 'Bluebird of Happiness' Jan Peerce alias Paul Robinson talking to Kevin O'Gorman.

Norman Banks and 'Kay' Dunoon at the Austin Hospital.

The 3KZ Children's Block at the Austin Hospital. 3KZ has won many awards for community service.

The 3KZ Wing for babies at the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind.

(Sung)
Every little star is peeping — now's the time for
counting sheep.
Everybody's weary eyes are blinking
Soon the world will be sleeping.

Goodnight, goodnight — it's time for bed
And now we're closing down
We've weaved sweet dreams around your head
and cleared away your frowning.
First twist your dial around and find a smile
And close your eyes tightly
Goodnight, goodnight until the morning light
Goodnight, goodnight, goodnight.

(Spoken)
Goodnight, goodnight everybody, sleep tight.
Don't forget to lock up, put out the cat
And don't forget the milk jug.
Goodnight Dad, and goodnight Mother
With tired and wrinkled hands.
Forget all the worries each long day demands
Why, tomorrow will dawn and a new happy day.
So just fold your hands, close your eyes
And let 3KZ say:

(Sung)
Goodnight, goodnight, goodnight.

There were again several versions. Probably the most popular was the recording put down in London when Banks was visiting there. He induced George Scott Wood's band with Sam Costa as vocalist to do the whole job for 100 pounds. Later on, Hayes Gordon sang the vocal and it became the standard version until about 1960, when KZ called it a day — or a night — and the song became another memory.

Although, preponderantly, a popular music station there was

a fair leavening of classical music on KZ. 'Popular classical' as Norman Banks described it. He was instrumental in selling Norman Myer on the idea of running the Musicale on a trial basis. After the second night, Banks called on him and asked what he thought. Myer replied: 'Well Norman, I heard it. Quite good, but it was purely experimental and we don't want it any more.' Banks, aghast, said: 'But the whole town is talking about it, why not let your customers decide?'. Myer, reluctant but obviously swayed by what customers might think, agreed, but only on condition that Banks said no more than once the following week that 'If you like the programme write to me'. Write to Myers he should have said, but didn't. For an astute business man that may have been a mistake. As Banks recalls: 'We got a flood of letters and we made it look like so many more by sorting them into bundles, by suburbs, and stacking them with cardboard'. When Norman Myer and Managing Director Harry Tolley saw the evidence (without going through it) they decided it might be imprudent to cancel. The Musicale went on under Myer sponsorship until Banks left the station. Which only goes to prove how the judicious use of a spellbinding word like 'customers' and a modicum of rigging, can sometimes produce highly favourable results.

One odd musical 'note' to these days: Peter Dawson, no doubt tongue-in-cheek told Norman Banks that jazz was a serious business. 'It is', he said, 'good for men but wicked for women'. Music is sexist?

There was a great debate in the early 1940s about the future of Swing music — almost soporific by today's tortured standards. AW's John Masters, conceded then to be one of the most knowledgeable of music men, insisted that 'Swing is not here to stay'. 3XY's Manager, Bert Snelling, agreed. 'People', he said, 'are asking for more melody. They are eschewing that which may be mentally and physically more disturbing. Sentimental numbers are being asked for now.' UZ's John McMahon would not have a bar of that. He cited 'In the Mood' and 'Chattanooga Choo-Choo' as compositions with melody but which were, nonetheless, strictly Swing. Eddie Balmer of KZ agreed and also pointed to 'Chattanooga Choo-Choo' as one of the biggest world sellers of 1941, more than two million copies. But he did agree that 'the main

Swing bands are now turning out discs created with the aid of more stringed instruments. There is more melody in the music and it is now appealing to more people than it was in its noiser and more turbulent form.' And what were the big hits of 1941-42? 'White Christmas', 'Sleepy Lagoon', 'Paper Doll', 'That Old Black Magic', 'The White Cliffs of Dover', 'Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition', 'Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered', 'Deep in the Heart of Texas', 'I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire' and 'Chattanooga Choo-Choo'. Ten years later, these were tops of the pops: 'C'est si Bon', 'Goodnight Irene', 'Tzena, Tzena, Tzena', 'Mona Lisa', 'Music, Music, Music', 'Sam's Song' and 'Bushel and a Peck'. And in 1960: 'Yellow Polka Dot Bikini', 'Let's do the Twist', 'Never on Sunday', 'Calcutta', 'High Hopes' and 'The Sound of Music'.

Right up until television began to capture a substantial and growing share of audience, KZ persisted with its predominantly pop music background.

Jim Archer with his afternoon programme, I Bring a Love Song, plunged the arrow of his charm deep into distaff hearts; the Monday Musicale, no longer under Myer sponsorship, nevertheless had maintained an unbroken run of twenty years; World Famous Tenors had passed its silver anniversary; Musical Matinee had also chalked up its quarter-century and running its full three hours on LP microgroove discs each Saturday afternoon after the football season had finished. Dance music was still the biggest musical attraction.

In the 1960s, however, stations looking for ploys that would help them maintain audience loyalties in areas where television could not realistically penetrate, were aiming at targeted audiences that might logically be expected to appeal most to specific age groups. Middle-of-the-road was, roughly, the designation set upon KZ's output. But by that time, with revenue all that more difficult to maintain under television competition, there was a tendency to grant individual advertisers, including ethnic groups, too much licence in selecting programmes that *they* wanted rather than what might be good for the station image.

Les Heil, when he became manager in 1965, decided on a much tighter format. He set his sights on the eighteen to fifty-four age

group which, in itself, was a pretty wide span. Middle-of-the-road changed to adult contemporary. Heil then decided that the age spectrum he was trying to cover was indeed too broad to be fitted into a specific music category. He has since concentrated on the twenty-five to thirty-nine age group — with remarkable success, for it is here the station dominates listening. He and his Programme Manager, Peter Meehan, try to sustain a 'softer' sound these days with, roughly, fifty per cent current hits and fifty per cent 'golden' flashbacks.

But how do you decide what is a hit? It is easy enough to say: well, let's check the records and cassettes being sold, that should be a good guide. Sounds fine, except that probably only ten to fifteen per cent of the population, and this group is mostly under twenty-five years of age, makes the purchases. No one really knows what that far greater audience, out there, really likes, especially in the target group KZ is aiming at. So KZ set up its own checking system. It involves six people working two nights a week on a research plan which calls for participation of a constantly changing proportion of metropolitan Melbourne listeners. These listeners, literally, dictate composition of that play-list; their actual musical preferences are represented, rather than hunches or extrapolations from a very small base of record buyers. It is a computer-fed operation, ingenious in its 'programming' but accurate, it is suggested, to within five per cent of the truth of the matter, and strictly tied to the twenty-fives to thirty-nines. This makes KZ's play-list a true reflection of 'tastes' in the market that KZ is after.

But don't tastes change suddenly, often without reason? Says Peter Meehan: 'That's the beauty of our system. The computer can pick up those switches virtually overnight, and we can vary our play-listing accordingly.' Meehan, too, sees a growing emphasis on 'intelligent' musicianship, as exemplified by such groups as Air Supply, Men at Work and Little River Band. 'The days of the transients are still here, probably because there's more of them, but the tried and true artists, who can actually read music, are and will be the real survivors.' He thinks it highly likely that Australian music will comprise thirty per cent of air play in the foreseeable

future, that is, within a time frame of five years. Integrity in music is the test and 'the three bands I have already mentioned certainly have that — intelligent people, trained musicians'.

So as far as KZ are concerned, they are probably in a better position than other stations to actually give the public what the public wants rather than as happens with a lot of other stations, what they think they want. As they say on air now: 'Melbourne 3KZ. One great song after another.' And that's just about the size or sound of it.

19 More Music

Music has produced other worries; all bound up with copyright, royalties and payments to artists and manufacturers. At the moment, each commercial station pays two per cent of its gross revenue into a fund for disbursement to authors, artists and composers. It is the mechanical side of this business that has produced long-running discord.

As far back as 1925 there were sounds of unrest. Composers and record manufacturers were claiming that they were not getting proper playing rights and that royalties were insufficient. However, one station, 3UZ, was tempted to forfeit its licence because it found the crippling costs of music too much to bear. The station, apparently, was paying three-and-six for each number broadcast, plus a royalty fee for patent and other rights. As a result, a minute of those days reads that the station 'was a dead loss'.

In 1931, a major row blew up when stations throughout Australia refused to pay Australian manufacturers for the use of records. They claimed that royalties paid to the Australian Performing Rights Association (APRA) should absolve them from other payments.

A ban was placed on 'the use of gramophone records for broad-

casting'. The larger commercial stations were able to sustain their music content by importing the product from overseas. The smaller stations had to subsist on records they had in stock, which were played over and over again — plus any they could beg or borrow. It was an uneasy truce but, ironically, the war years brought temporary peace to the troubled airwaves.

In 1955 the long-stirring discontent bubbled again. The record manufacturers were still convinced that the stations should pay something for each individual playing of one of their recordings. The stations insisted that by giving play-time to recordings they were promoting sales. They pointed to the figures: disc sales since war's end had increased from two million pounds a year to more than eight million. A compromise involving an increased overall fee system was reached.

In 1965, at a time when the ABC was said to be paying the manufacturers about $40 000 a year in royalties, another bid was made to make the commercial stations toe the line. Again, fierce resistance and great play made of the fact that commercial television and radio were paying more than one million dollars a year to APRA for distribution to the 'proper, people: the songwriters and publishers'. The Radio Federation, representing all the commercial stations, 'vigorously contested that record manufacturers should be given rights to control the playing in public and the broadcasting of records and to demand royalty payments not now received . . . The making of a record is not in the same category as the original creative activity of a composer or author for whom full copyright protection is properly provided.'

All this long drawn-out disputation led to an even stranger compromise: a Copyright Act which gave manufacturers the right to control the playing of their records, but a royalty reimbursement system that involved no money changing hands. Instead of cash, a contra agreement was reached whereby manufacturers could plug their product on air on an agreed formula, based on usage of individual labels. In other words, what they might have got in money they could take out in free advertising time for their titles. It was doomed not to last.

It was during the 1950s that music started to pound rather than

lull the senses. 'Orchestrated noise' said those who were appalled by the emergence of new cult figures: look-alike, hairy contortionists writhing in amplified anguish to the plucked strings of what was once a quiet, contemplative instrument, the guitar. 'Music' gathered new names: Rock (soft, hard, acid, chicken, lolly pop, bubble gum), Boogie, Country and Western, Middle-of-the-Road, Album, Top Forty, Contemporary, Chart and other obscure appellations.

Whereas stations of the past tried to please all tastes, now they have a music 'policy' which is predicated, broadly, on the proposition that is better to concentrate on a specific target audience, rather than try to be all things to all people. Also, to make it easier for respondents to survey inquiries to identify stations by their musical 'sound', there is a system of musical categories split up, thus:

> *Contemp:* Contemporary music, current hits, singles and albums, mostly up tempo, typical Top Forty including some rock and roll.
> *Standard;* Past hits which retain general popularity, evergreens, established melodies in either stock or current versions.
> *Popular:* Current hits excluding hard rock or noisy treatments; sometimes called Chicken Rock.
> *Show Music:* Music from musical shows and movies.
> *Good music* or *Beautiful music:* Easy listening selections of vocal and instrumental tracks played in uninterrupted sweeps.
> *Mellow music:* Contemporary artists, mainly album, selected single chart tracks, soft rock played in uninterrupted sweeps.
> *Jazz:* No explanation needed.

These are the regular categories. Stations however can insert their own definitions like Classical, Underground, Old Time and so on. So there it is. It was all simple and straightforward once.

But one thing that can be said about the explosion of musical styles is that it brought fresh opportunities to Australian performers who might not otherwise have made the big time, as they say. Individual artists like the late Johnny O'Keefe, Johnnie Farnham, Johnnie Chester, Colleen Hewett, Jamie Redfern, Brian Cadd,

Billy Thorpe, Rick Springfield, Robyn Jolley, Ted Mulry and the original Seekers, were among those who shot to the top, not only here, but overseas. Such groups as The Twilights, Blackfeather, The Group, Daddy Cool, Sherbert, Jigsaw, The Beegees, Little River Band, Men at Work, Air Supply, and The Mixtures have become national, even world figures. And apart from the disc manufacturers, whose roots are largely international, such indigenous recording companies as W & G, Fable and Festival have, as you might say, cut deep into the world of wax.

But the whole music scene is still far from orderly. It seemed possible that agreement could be reached on a 'pay for play' basis, which meant stations could control, to a large extent, the size of royalty payments by controlling the extent to which they used copyright records. The big question hanging over the industry in 1984 is whether the record companies intend to cancel the agreements under which the great bulk of the industry, 126 AM stations, broadcast copyright records in return for contra airtime — three announcements a week. Current feeling is that the record companies will cancel. In anticipation of this, the radio stations have prepared a massive catalogue of recordings, conveniently divided into two sections: protected and non-protected. It is not hard to figure out which group will get the most air play. In which case, as they say, 'the House will divide' and a new type of musical warfare will be upon us.

20 Sports Parade

When radio, with its capacity to describe sporting triumph or tragedy, burst upon the scene, who would go to see the actual event, when you could listen to some oracle on the airwaves paint a picture and give you the score? In short, why stir yourself when you could hear all about it in your lounge-room? Such was the enormous dilemma facing the sporting administrators of the 1930s. The racing and the football fraternity decided, early on, that the new medium posed an awful threat to attendances and erected all sorts of obstacles — physical and notional.

The racing people appeared most fearful. At Mornington racecourse, they would not allow radio callers on the course. So our pioneering peepers hired the roofs of nearby houses and trained their glasses on the track from shaky outposts. To deter them, screens were placed around the judges' box and in front of the starters and riders. At Pakenham, the late Ken Howard, then operating in Melbourne, at one stage used a telescope from half a mile away to tell his story. And picture poor Eric Welch, the doyen of the 'describers' who died last year, standing in the public enclosure on a very rickety platform on a very wet and windy day, juggling umbrella, microphone, race book and field glasses as he

called the October Stakes at Flemington. And, until the last stride, calling the leading horse wrongly, because he simply could not see — but on the post, he got it right

Racing was not one of KZ's concerns, although it is interesting to speculate if Fred Tupper had stayed with them, instead of transferring to 3AW in 1932, whether KZ might have developed on-the-course broadcasts.

Football was different. South Melbourne was big with the station because the Morgan family were fanatical supporters — but that did not help KZ. They had to build a steel tower outside the ground so that Norman Banks, Terry Dear and the late Jack Green could describe matches there. In reply, South Melbourne erected a great hessian awning in front of them. Eventually reason prevailed as it dawned on the football fraternity that radio might, only might mind you, stir sluggish home bodies to get out and sample the splendours of the great game where it was all happening. Football boomed; radio was the prime mover.

Thus orthodox sport, in a very real sense, gave rise to an ancillary unorthodox sport, getting around the blue-noses who were trying to frustrate multiplying microphones. With racing, the stations had to take their case to the Privy Council at the then enormous cost of 4000 pounds. But they won out and, provided they were prepared to abide by what were termed reasonable prescripts, broadcasts could go ahead from inside the track. Legal precedent thus being created, other sporting bodies fell into line. One of the sillier bans however, was that no sponsor's names could be read or mentioned by announcers at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, because of the quaint theory that it would offend austere members. It was easy to by-pass; feed crowd noises in from a record and superimpose a studio voice. Listeners would not know that the commercial was not coming direct from the ground. So in terms of impact it did not matter. This absurd proscription persisted for many years.

To return to the beginning: Lou Dahlberg, Station Manager, Arthur Mathers, a young sporting journalist, and Fred Tupper were all involved to varying degrees in KZ's early sporting history. Dahlberg, says a 1931 report, 'was well known for his graphic

descriptions of motor and motor-cycle races', then held at various venues including the old Motordrome (now part of Olympic Park), Port Phillip Island, Baxter and the 'dirt track' or more correctly, the cinders circuit at the Exhibition.

Boxing was held at two stadiums, West Melbourne and Fitzroy, where Dahlberg and Mathers became well known for their calls. Wrestling was very big then, too, but 3DB and 3AR had that pretty well sewn up. Norman McCance and Eric Welch were to become famous for their picturesque descriptions of this fairly well-rehearsed sport, where forearm jolts, gouging, kicking, jumping on your opponent or throwing him out of the ring, all looked very fearsome, but were not all that damaging to such behemoths as Man Mountain Dean, Jumping Joe Savoldi, Chief Little Wolf and others with sufficient fleshy padding to cushion illegal assault and battery.

Banks was to demonstrate his early versatility when he was sent to describe tennis, cycling, golf, athletics and of course football — at first on his own, then with Terry Dear, and later still, Jack Green, at his side. Banks and Dear also improvised Test Match 'descriptions' from England in 1934 with Don Blackie, one of Australia's great spin bowlers, feeding in expert opinion.

At KZ, Fred Tupper was responsible for race reviews, form guides, sporting results and general sporting news. In the late 1940s, one of racing's most colourful characters came to the station on a trial run as a racing tipster. He was 'Manfred', one Jim Coghlan, who had the frame of a brood mare, a tongue with more whip than a riding crop, a racy style and a bagful of jokes. He stayed for more than a decade. Ex-bookmaker, hotelier, generous host, he conducted the Saturday morning Racing Review with authority and considerable inside knowledge. A rare identity.

Then, in 1949 a fresh-faced, twenty-year-old arrived from 7LA Launceston, full of hope, high aspiration and considerable sporting skill. His name was Philip Gibbs, now star of that other electronic media. Phil really came into his own when Banks went to AW; Phil became not only chief football broadcaster but compere of the Pelaco Football Inquest and a leading light in Sports Parade. He was to graduate as Announcers' Supervisor and then Studio

Manager, besides acting as compere of The P & A Parade, Carols by Candlelight and Musical Phonequiz, as well as Royal Tour commentator and one of the official callers of the Radio Federation team at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.

Phil was to be joined for his football broadcast first by Jack Dyer and then, after Captain Blood went to 3XY, by one of Melbourne's most famous sons, Jack Mueller. Mueller played League football for seventeen years and left an indelible mark on the game, and a bruise or two on the body corporate of more than one unfortunate opponent who got in his way. Gibbs recalls that in the mid-1950s KZ also ran a trotting programme on Thursday nights with tips and form guide. As well there was cricket news and teams with Doug Ring, and on Friday nights, ice-hockey descriptions. Tom Moon also called the trots on Saturday nights from about 1952.

Phil went to Channel O, now Channel 10, when that station opened in 1964, as Sporting Editor. He made a name for himself organising that station's sporting coverage, describing Association Football, and as the top-hatted toff acting as anchor man at the Melbourne Cup and other major racing telecasts.

That garrulous go-getter Harry Beitzel, whose knowledge of football is legend, came to the KZ microphone as football commentator in the early 1960s and started the uninterrupted format which has served commercial radio so well. He was joined in 1964 by Rod McLeod who called the game until he moved to Adelaide in the late 1960s.

Other well-known names have graced the commentary panel at various times: Barry Ion, who apart from working at KZ first as a panel operator and then an announcer, also played for Footscray; Doug Elliot and Cyril Stokes, later heard on 3XY; Don Rowe who came over from the West in 1969; and Lou Richards who shortly after he 'retired' did a brief stint with KZ with special comments during a final series.

It might be said, of course, that the football commentary is a grammatical sub-culture where adverbs do not exist, where players now 'finess' the ball, where a mighty knock-out is known as 'getting the tap', where the verbs 'to be', 'to come' and 'to do' are treated with syntactical disdain, and where a vocabulary of fifty

words seems ample to cover all descriptive exigencies. None the less, it has produced some remarkably colourful commentators.

And rising above them all, that rarest of birds — the winged Tiger. The iron-fisted, granite-faced, gravel-voiced, Jack Dyer — once scourge of the fainthearts, standard-bearer of the proud Richmond tradition and man-about-town. For if sport, as some suggest, is now King, he is one of two splendid Princes of the Realm—his consort, Ian Major. Not for them, however, the titles and privileges of the Court. They opt for military ranking: the Captain and the Major. The *nom-de-guerre*, 'Captain Blood', was first conferred on Dyer by Maurice Fleming, then Secretary to the Richmond Club. Says Ian Major, KZ's Sporting Editor who joined the station in 1968: 'Jack has been able to get across his humour, his love of the game and his genuine affection for people. His knowledge of the sport and his ability to assess the talents of new players have kept him at the top of the tree for nearly twenty years . . . When Jack and I were together at 3XY in the late sixties, a couple of station executives there felt he might be at the end of his career. He's still going; I don't know where they are.'

One of Major's minor triumphs has been to keep relatively intact the same panel of people calling the game at the various grounds. He has his own criteria. 'I attempt to maintain a balance of personalities with different views on the game, but with dry and outward humour; some outspoken, others more reserved.' He seems to have succeeded judging by the loaded exchanges that sometimes occur as the listener is taken around the grounds. 'It's a pleasure to say that I have not had to dismiss one regular member from the panel. Those, now doing other things, include Jack Hamilton, who had to leave because of his job as General Manager of the Victorian Football League; Morton Browne, whose legal practice made it difficult to ensure regular participation; Ted Rippon, now retired; Ted Whitten, now calling for 3GL; John Beckwith, whose job of running a hospital at Sunbury made it awkward for him to keep going; and John Peck, who moved up to Euroa on an agistment property.' The present team of ex-players, with varying years of service, includes George Ferry of Carlton, Gerald Burke from the same club, Hugh Mitchell from Essendon, Bob

Henderson of Fitzroy, Laurie Sandilands of Footscray and Peter Charleston, statistician and former XY commentator.

It is virtually a four-and-half hour stint, without let-up, each Saturday — high pressure stuff. The wonder of it is how well it works, for space is cramped, timing is tight and there is no slowing down or allowance for social niceties. '3KZ *is* Football' is the cue for commercials which are slotted in from the studio, each written with the pace and demands of the game in mind — short, sharp, spot-on. Sponsors, too, like Carlton and United Breweries, Tip Top Bread amd Statewide Insurance, link their destinies, or part of them, to the sport year after year — testimony again to the pulling power and professionalism of the football operation.

Watching Dyer and Ian Major calling a game is a treat in itself. A rare sort of chemistry is at work; each seems to sense when to take over the commentary without nudges or cues. Jack watches through field glasses and has propped up in front of him, written in large letters, a card showing the numbers and names of players not altogether familiar to him. Ian Major occasionally corrects him, but the old master rarely puts a foot — or rather a word — wrong, even though that word might not necessarily come from the lexicon of language as it is written or should be spoken.

Ian Major points to the long KZ football tradition, going back fifty years now. 'The style of coverage', he says, 'has altered a lot and so has the station's involvement. Years ago we had football programmes like Sports Parade and Football Inquest. But television forced us to change. We introduced a faster, more comprehensive on-the-spot service, with commentators at each ground giving listeners flash scores, highlights and wrap-ups of the game at the end of play. Pre-match discussions, too, are part of it all. Like the game itself, we had to step up the pace. There's less time now to mention all players in the centre of play. Five men can handle the ball within a second or so and that takes some mighty clever mouth work — especially when you run into names like Dipierdomenico. It's no-frills, fast-food we serve up these days.'

Off the field, Dyer has been described as 'a quietly spoken, likeable personality'. Perhaps the dedication of his book (*Captain Blood*), written in co-operation with Brian Hansen, provides the

essential clue. 'To my Mother', it reads, 'who at the beginning of my career started worrying that I would be hurt, and finished worrying whom I would hurt'. (That 'whom' has to be Hansen's.) After he hung up his boots, Dyer coached Richmond and was bitterly disappointed when he was asked to resign by a group which included Pat Kennelly. 'But', says Dyer, 'because of his speech impediment, Pat took so long to express his view that I still don't know whether he was for me or against me'.

Dyer, of course, is also known for his television appearances, especially with that cheerful chatterbox, Lou Richards. No doubt the years have mellowed both, but according to Dyer who, like Richards, enshrined his football experiences in a book of reminiscences, there was not much love lost between them on the field. 'Lou', writes Dyer, 'gave me a bit of a blast in his book *Boots and All*, but I've always felt he was a bit jealous of me. He claims that I broke many collarbones in my career, but my victims would have qualified for a pygmy side. If ever I wanted to iron out a pygmy, Lou was it. The nuggety little ankle-tapper was one of my pet hates and he played for that side, Collingwood.' Dyer says he really hated Collingwood. 'If they win they gloat, if they lose they hide themselves away and sulk . . . whenever I have a nightmare it isn't in colour. It's always black and white.'

But back to Richards. 'I never hit him', writes Dyer, 'you couldn't. You just ran right over the top of players like Lou and they are too close to the ground to be hurt by the fall.' 'Richards wasn't a gentleman,' expostulates the shining exemplar of manners, decency and kindness, but 'he was the only little man at Collingwood who had the decency to put iodine on his boots before going out to kick somebody'.

What does Lou Richards have to say of Jack Dyer? In his book *Boots and All*, written in conjunction with Ian McDonald, Richards writes 'Jack didn't care who was in his way, he'd still knock them down. And when he sprawled out little men on the turf, I used to shout at him "Why don't you hit someone your own size, you big b. . . . ."' "This is a man's game, son", Dyer would snarl. "If you don't like playing, get your schoolbag and go back to

Ian Major and Jack Dyer calling the game from the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

John Maybury with Jim Coghlan(Manfred), stars of the 1950s, and a protesting pony.

Phil Gibbs and Jack Mueller at the football in the 1950s.

Les Heil, current Managing Director of 3KZ, at a beachside promotion.

T-shirts and car stickers, all part of the station's recent promotion activities.

school." Richards speaks of him as 'a relentless opponent' who played to win. All this, of course, could be taken with a generous dash of sodium chloride. The two are firm friends.

The late Norm Smith, player and coach of Melbourne, rated Dyer one of the three greatest players of all time, 'probably the toughest and most colourful man ever to pull on football boots'. Alf Brown of the *Herald* says Dyer rode to football fame 'on his great ability and cold-blooded, ruthless, relentless vigor. In his nineteen years of football [he] was involved in more incidents than any two dozen other players . . . but . . . was reported only five times and disqualified once.'

By today's standards Dyer was a small man — a mere six feet — but he was built like a red-gum post, 'amazingly fast, a fine mark, a good kick and with a football brain that made him instinctively do the right thing'.

The late Ray Dunn used to tell a story, possibly apocryphal, but illustrative of Jack's dry wit. (Percy Bentley is the coach. He is instructing the team what to do from the first bounce so as to jump the gun on South Melbourne.) The story goes something like this: 'You Jack, I want you to palm the ball to Martin who is to go wide to the left flank and swing the ball to Baxter, who baulks and then goes back on his tracks. Murdoch runs around him as if he expects a handball, but Titus is to make position, grabs the ball, and pops it through. Next bounce we vary that. Dyer hits the ball hard to Zscech, Gordon Strang gives a false lead while Harris falls back into the goalmouth, marks the kick from Zscech, goes for the doctor. Any questions so far?' Jack Dyer: 'Hasn't South come on the ground yet?'

That same tongue-in-cheek astringency is still there. Nearly fifty years after the above incident, Jack, calling the Fitzroy-North Melbourne clash in 1983 — at a stage when Fitzroy were leading 220 points to 70 — observed with splendid irony after Fitzroy had scored another behind: 'It's a very valuable point at this stage of the game'. He is fond of gently upraiding the umpires in an injured tone: 'Oh umpire . . . if you don't mind . . . Pleeeaase!'. His name is associated with other expressions like: 'picks it up like a cherry

bob'; 'he couldn't knock a chook off the fence on a windy day'; 'you can shut the gate now'; and 'they're so far in front, you couldn't stop them with a pea rifle'.

As has been suggested he and Major are a splendid team. Major has experience in other sports, indeed, was part of the official Australian broadcast team of three at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, where he called swimming, track and field, and cycling — and got caught up in the tragic reporting of the Israeli team massacre. He and Vince Curry of the ABC mounted the long waiting vigil and sent back regular reports of events as they moved to their climax at the airport.

The colour and strong character of his comments earned for him the commercial stations Sports Commentator Award in successive years, 1977 and 1978. His outspoken observations (not only on football) which are part of KZ's regular news services, have sometimes put him in bad grace with various sporting bodies. But for him, that is part of the game. His comments about broadcasting facilities provided at Waverley Park when it opened up were far from complimentary. Changes have been made, but Major still thinks the media set-up is inadequate. He has one other concern: 'Life these days is so much harder for sporting commentators. One word or sentence out of line — and it is difficult in the heat of the moment to avoid some theoretical lapses — and you can cop a legal writ, even though you may be stating facts.'

Whatever the future of sport on 3KZ, it's Dyer to a doughnut that '3KZ *is* Football' will be around for quite a while yet.

21 A Word from our Sponsor

Not the least of the big changes in radio over the last half century is the difference in advertiser identification. Sponsors of programmes have virtually disappeared, that is, where one firm or one name-brand is associated with a particular show. The Colgate shows, The General Motors Hour, Maples P & A Parade, Lux Radio Theatre, Coles Voice of the Shopper and Paterson's Family Quiz are no more than memories. These days, it is all 'spots', most of them of thirty-seconds duration. Other standard categories are sixty-seconds and forty-five seconds. You can also negotiate others, down to ten seconds.

In the early days, twenty-five-word spots were called 'scatters'. You could also buy fifty or a hundred worders, or quarter, half or one-hour sessions — longer, too, if you liked. Three hundred words was the standard count in one quarter-hour period, which usually consisted of a short flash of your 'theme' and a brief introduction along the lines of 'It's 8.15 and Tyes, the home of good furniture at the top of Bourke Street, bring you — Musical Memories'. Four ten-inch records, each of three-minutes duration, usually comprised the musical content; ads in between, and a sign off at the end: 'Listen again at 8.15 next Thursday for another

programme of Musical Memories. And remember, for furniture — it's Tyes, if you're wise.' Half-hour shows were limited to 450 words; one-hour, theoretically, 600 words, although a certain amount of licence was permitted.

At the beginning you could buy scatters on KZ for as little as two-and-six; 100 words for five shillings. HSK Ward, flour millers and cereal manufacturers, paid ten shillings for a half-hour breakfast programme. A fifteen-minute night programme was supposed to cost two pounds, but there were many 'off-the-card' deals until the industry settled down to some sort of cost stability in the middle-to-late 1930s. In 1935, for example, when there were five stations in Melbourne, a fifteen-minute night session could cost between five pounds ten and seven pounds. A 1938 KZ rate card shows the base cost for twenty-five words or less in the evening programme at one pound seventeen and six; 100 words at three pounds five shillings; a fifteen-minute session at eleven pounds ten shillings; and a half-hour, twenty one pounds ten shillings. The breakfast programme was much cheaper, ranging from fourteen and threepence for a 'scatter' to nine pounds for a half-hour session. Quantity discounts could reduce the unit cost by fifty per cent or more. There were three time zones; Breakfast, 6.30 to 9.00 a.m; Daytime, 9.00 a.m. to 5.45 p.m; Evening 5.45 to 11.30 p.m. Sponsored sessions had to comprise not less than eighty-five per cent music or 'other approved entertainment'.

By contrast Breakfast is now the dearest category with a base rate of $143 for thirty-second announcements. Breakfast is part of 'zone 1', which also includes 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Monday to Friday and 5 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday. There are two other 'zone' plans, plus a 'Total Audience Plan' and a 'Housewife Plan'. These allow for various combinations aimed at particular audiences for maximum effectiveness and a substantial discount structure.

One of KZ's earliest advertisers was Gary Russell who marketed yeast in powder, tablet and liquid form. It did everything: got rid of skin blemishes; toned up the blood; strengthened limb, eyes, Christian resolve and fortitude under stress; improved your love life; and helped you sleep. Gary, an amiable, shambling man, rode

roughshod over the station rules about commercial content, for he rambled on about your health and it was difficult to separate the general from the specific. It was, in truth, one long commercial. But he got away with it and apparently sold a lot of yeast. He used to distribute the stuff lavishly among station staff and if there was one noticeable effect — 'broadcast' in unorthodox fashion — it was that Cenovis Yeast induced wind effects of considerable resonance at both ends of the body's 'sound' system.

Another odd bod was the Reverend Doctor Blackney who ran a chiropractic business in St Kilda Road, but who could also straighten out your conscience as well as your bones or recalcitrant muscles. He was very given to high-toned pronouncements between his urgings to consult him on just about anything.

One of the most colourful of sponsors was the indomitable, indestructible Stephanie Deste, who brought to women of all ages, beauty and peace of mind. An actress of rare talent in her early days, she moved to a different stage when she opened her salons and used 3KZ, among others, to spread the good word. She is still with us, and is one of the few survivors of radio's golden years. Her 'Salome' is a treasured memory among old theatregoers.

It was curious, too, how radio tended to attract specific groups of advertisers. KZ, for instance, was heavily identified with furniture firms: Maples, Patersons, Smiths, Davis Brothers, Pears, Macks, Clauscens, Tyes, Beauchamps, Hickmans, Malcolm Reid, Kiernans — all in there wooing listeners with their wares. Tailors cut quite a dash too, for you could get 'ready-mades' from thirty shillings to three pounds, tailor-mades from three to five pounds. One-Price Tailors ('where the little man taps on the window'), Wardrop (My Tailor), Holborn, Fred Hesse ('To be thrifty and dressy, be clothed by Fred Hesse'), Three Little Tailors, Town Talk Tailors, Wilkes Mens Wear ('Men swear by Wilkes mens wear'), Redapple and Cocking, Leviathan, Boston and others. Shoe stores were stepping out too: Wittners, Clyde, Public Benefit and Ezywalkin. There was a sparkle from Dunklings, Rundles, Catanachs, Direct Supply Jewellery and Paul Bram, the oldest of them all.

On the 'health' front: Heenzo, Yeaston, Russells yeast, Golcryst, Clements Tonic, Hearns, Cystex, Kruschen Salts ('It's the little daily dose that does it'), Rexona, Forbes Phospherine, Fishaphos and Bidomak were among the noted nostrums of the day, promising the world. Pepsodent, Colgate, Coles and Garrard were early starters too. And for the ladies: hair stylists, beauticians, frock shops, with Madame Pompadour and Make-Ups, among the first of the many. On the food front: Swallow & Ariells, Guests, Phoenix Biscuits, Robur Tea, Griffiths Tea and plenty of cafes where 'Tea and Wireless' were being advertised. And, seven nights a week, Hoyts Suburban Theatres ('Oh we can't show all the pictures, so we only show the best, the others get the rest, you can put it to the test, so–ring your girlfriend right away, when she hears the news she's bound to say, let's hurry along to a Hoyts Suburban Theatre'). Eddie Balmer got two guineas for providing those imperishable words.

Cigarettes were quite big on the airwaves in the late 1930s. De Reszke, for instance, sponsored World Famous Tenors and even then, seemed to be somewhat on the defensive about smoking. Consider this commercial: 'Do you know you needn't cut down smoking if you change to imported De Reszke Filter Tips? The exclusive filter in every De Reszke Filter Tip absorbs half the nicotine and prevents little dust particles from irritating your throat. And you'll be surprised how much cooler De Reszke Filter Tips are. That, of course, is due to the absorbent cottonwool too. Yes, De Reszke Filter Tips are fifty per cent safer and a hundred per cent satisfying. Altogether, these finer cigarettes will solve your smoking problems. Imported from Number One, Piccadilly, London, for your express enjoyment–De Reszke Filter Tips.' That 'fifty per cent safer' is the intriguing line. Why fifty per cent, and safer than what? That was 1939. Filters really did not make much impression on the market until Rothmans burst on the scene with King Size filters in the middle 1950s. Cigarettes, of course, are now no more on either radio or television.

Most of the copy, indeed, the whole programme continuity was written by station staff. Advertising agencies did not really get into the act until the middle to late 1930s, co-incidental with the

growing interest being shown in radio by national advertisers. The agencies could be accused legitimately of being slow off the mark. It was clear from the American experience that the medium had a big future and was set to explode in Australia with the proliferation of commercial stations and the rapid increase in licences. In the ten years to 1940, they jumped from around three hundred thousand to about one and a quarter million, plus, probably, another ten to fifteen per cent who neglected to pay the required fee.

Sam Dobbs of the J. Walter Thompson agency, who arrived in Australia mid-decade with a wealth of radio experience behind him, started the agency trend to the air. Thompsons set the pace. Other agencies like George Patterson, Goldberg, Paton and Hansen Rubensohn, followed suit, opening up radio divisions, installing studio equipment and employing people with radio know-how to handle the business.

The agencies were to have a significant influence on station programming. It was to prove a boon to listeners, a mixed blessing for the stations. For the agencies initiated shows of their own which rapidly became very popular. With popularity came bargaining power. J. Walter Thompson, for instance, controlled such features as Mrs 'Obbs, The Lux Radio Theatre, Australia's Amateur Hour and others. Pattersons set up the Colgate Unit in Sydney with stars such as Jack Davey, Hal Lashwood, Roy Rene, Denis Collinson, Jack Burgess, Willie Fennell and many others, featured in programmes which dominated the week-night 8 o'clock spot, nationally.

On a slightly less grand scale, Goldberg in Melbourne produced and placed nightly shows under the umbrella title of Dunlop Presents and the highly-rated March of Time. Patterson initiated Two-Way Quiz, The Maples Show, The Francis Family and The Boy Friend; Leyshon and then Clemenger, who were later on the scene, contributed such shows as Sports Parade, Fifty and Over, Starnight, Are You an Artist and Top Town. Paton, led by the dynamic Geoffrey James Montgomery Jackson, was responsible for many top shows; perhaps the most spectacular was Patersons Family Quiz.

And who could forget 'Buckleys Canadiol', a formulation straight from the sub-arctic wastes of 'blizzardly cold Canada' — a mixture that moved strong men to adulatory tears. Here is one typical announcement resurrected from the past:

Sound effects: *Wind howling*
Announcer: On the bridge of an ice-breaker!
Man 1: Say Cap'n, they reckon this is the biggest ice jam in seventeen years.
Man 2: They're pretty right. The ice along here is twenty-five feet thick.
Man 1: Say Cap'n, there'll be trouble if you *(wind howls)* . . . I said there'll be trouble if you stand out in this blizzard with that cough of yours. Will I get the steward to fetch up some Buckleys?
Announcer: You'll find Buckleys Canadiol Mixture on the Alaskan salmon schooners, along the Canadian snow-trails. It's the great remedy up in the blizzardly rugged north — where life depends on stopping coughs quick. One dose will stop your worst cough. A single sip proves it — Buckleys Canadiol Mixture.

Mighty powerful stuff. Buckleys is still around, still getting occasional bursts on radio.

This commercial for Gouge, the Dry Cleaners, gained a Merit Award in 1933.

Woman: Gouge.
Man: *(spells)* G–o–u–g–e.
Woman: Remember Gouge when your suit or frock needs cleaning. Gouge methods are safe and satisfactory. The name is easy to say — Gouge.
Man: G–o–u–g–e.
Woman: Ring X3101 and the van will call. Country listeners post or rail to Middle Brighton. For all dry cleaning remember Gouge.
Man: G–o–u–g–e.

The unknown writer who adjudged this ad worthy of merit appended this cautionary note: 'It is to be hoped that simply because the award was given this month to an advertisement in which the name was spelt, copywriters will not deluge the announcer with instructions to spell every proper name. Harping upon an old theme becomes only wearisome and monotonous.'

A lot of copywriters chose to ignore this plea. There were other editorial injunctions: 'To gauge the time for the copy, it should always be read over aloud, full allowance being made for commas and full stops. The eye and the brain generally skip punctuation without losing the sense when reading inaudibly. There is nothing weaker than a slurred or hurried announcement.' Black type on white paper was standard, but 'no exception is taken to tinted paper provided that the colour is not red or cerise, as these colours exert a definite strain on the [announcer's] eyes'. And as a fitting sign off: 'Co-operation with the announcer means satisfaction to the advertiser'.

Word count (the 25, 50, 100 etc.) was changed to a time count in 1961; a rough, recommended guide being sixty-five words per thirty seconds. This was later changed to seventy-five words or two and a half words per second. In 1952 the Broadcasting Control Board confirmed word limits of 450 words of commercial in a half-hour programme, 750 in an hour; 300 words were still allowed for a quarter-hour show. Spot announcements, they said, should be broadcast at 'reasonable' intervals and 'should not be so placed as to destroy the value of the entertainment or service'. Stations could place them in groups of three provided no group exceeded ninety seconds. Overall, not more than thirty per cent of any programme could be devoted to advertising and not more that eighteen minutes in any one hour. The rules have not changed much to this day. Most stations operate below the permissible limits.

In 1950 the top-spending advertisers by brand, or proprietary name, were: Persil, Lux, Palmolive, Protex, Cashmere Bouquet, Colgate Dental Cream, Atlantic, Caltex, Heinz, MacRobertsons, Cadburys, Wrigleys, Hoover, Mobil, Dunlop, Swallows Biscuits and Johnson and Johnson. Twenty years later the biggest names on radio were Coca Cola, Vincents, Bank of New South Wales,

Woolworths, Kelloggs, Mortein, Bushells, Kraft, Ansett, Avis, Waltons, Rothmans, Wills, Phillip Morris, Commonwealth Bank, Chrysler, Levi Strauss, Shell, Ampol, BP, GMH and Carlton and United Breweries.

And if further confirmation were needed of the inaccuracy of forecasts that come television, national advertisers would abandon radio, was the break-up of advertising in 1972: fifty-two per cent, national; forty-eight per cent, local. In 1983 it was national, forty per cent; local, sixty per cent. Advertising revenue is now well in excess of $200 million a year. When television started, it was $14 million. Todays biggest advertisers, nationally, are Cerebos, Wander, Kraft, ANZ Bank, Citicorp, building societies, Mazda, Ford, Datsun dealers, Roche, Oxy products, Macro vitamins, TAA, Pando and Government Tourist Bureaus. Perhaps the biggest, single, concentrated campaign of all time was Mitre 10's 1983–84 holiday effort: 14 000 spots on 109 stations, reaching an audience of six and a half million people over three weeks.

Radio's 'prime prospect' profiles show that an average of seven people in ten, who are active consumers of goods and services (like breakfast foods, household products, kitchen appliances, music, petrol, spirits, beer, books, shampoos, life insurance, canned foods, soft drinks — in fact just about everything that comes into the home or is used outdoors), are regular and significant listeners to the medium. During the day, in particular, radio continues to far outstrip television as the chosen company. Weekly time spent listening by people ten years old and over, rose by twenty-two per cent in the period 1979–83. Other basic statistics read impressively: eighty-seven per cent of all people listen every week for more than three hours a day; there are more than twenty million sets in use; nine cars out of ten have a car radio; housewives are the biggest listeners and regard radio as their last point of contact before going out shopping or ordering; and on a cost-per-thousand contacts, radio holds a distinct advantage over other media. It was a medium that was supposed to fade to eternal silence after television arrived. As Winston Churchill might have said: 'Some silence'.

Persuasion by vibration, as the radio commercial was once described, is obviously the life-blood of the system. It has seen many changes. At first there was considerable restraint — sparing use of music, no jingles and minimal sound effects. Mostly, the spoken word, quietly and consecutively delivered. Plenty of slogans though, at least on KZ: 'For the bath or for the beach, keep Dickies towels within your reach'; 'There's a Maples store right near your door;' 'It's Tyes — if you're wise'; 'Clements Tonic — for that zing, that zoom, that zest for living'; 'They're well worn, but they've worn well — thanks to Kiwi'; 'Kruschen — it's the little daily dose that does it'.

The entry of the agencies changed all that. Experimenting with new forms became the norm. The 'spoken' word became a relative rarity. From 1940 on, ninety per cent of commercials came to the stations on discs, later, tape — most cast as miniature dramas rather than straight selling.

In 1953 the Broadcasting Control Board was concerned about 'excessive and inappropriate advertising' and made pointed reference to the over-use of slang. Not long after, the Patterson agency was observing in one of its Annual Air Media reports, that 'the standard of present-day radio commercials has reached a stage of static mediocrity — people hitting gongs to preface their messages, recapitulating great moments in history, monotonously using shopsoiled superlatives, projecting threadbare situations of irritating improbability'.

A major radio research project pointed out that radio was the only medium the listener characteristically paid attention to while doing something else; its purpose kept changing with the mood of the listener and the time of the day; and it was directly related to varying habits and activities such as getting out of bed, driving to work, seeking diversion from household chores and looking for companionship or outside stimulation to match a mood or create a new one. Much the same could be said today.

The radio stations themselves, in an endeavour to contribute something useful to the debate, issued a booklet in 1966 which made the point that radio was 'a medium that has to be taken in

context to gain its greatest impact'. In other words what the advertiser is saying has to be 'related directly to time and place and character of both the programme and what the prospects for your product might logically be expected to be doing at that time'. But the following years saw, or rather heard, a riot of sound. Everybody had to have a jingle. Every sales message had to be sung. A few were comprehensible, many not. The message was being lost in the melody.

In 1983, in a further attempt to improve the standard of commercials, the Federation issued another document, *Writing for Radio*, in which it is observed: 'Ever since man abandoned grunts, snorts, and swipes as a method of presenting an alternative point of view, it has been accepted that in human contact the more you raise your voice or the more you feed in extraneous sound, the more difficult it becomes to understand what you are talking about. When you are trying to impress somebody, the voice of ordered reason is more likely to achieve the desired result.

'Unhappily, many advertisers and their advertising agencies seem to set little store by the nature and quality of their radio output, regarding it as a spin-off from the audio of the television commercial. Some still seem to stick to the theory that if you have something serious to say, you should sing it. Or scream it. The curious contradiction in this philosophy is that great and earnest effort goes into the preparation of the sales virtues of the product. When these are being hammered out there is no musical accompaniment. Or any anguished souls in torment in the background.

'It can be accepted that the communication of an idea from one person to another is best accomplished by relatively low-key, soft-pitch, persuasively-argued talk. Advertisers obviously want people to know about the good things they have to sell. But then many of them go about complicating that simple task by placing their presenters in what often sounds like a musical madhouse.' Strong words. How to overcome the dilemma? Herewith 'The Ten Commandments':

1. You are talking to sales prospects on the wing; more likely than not to be doing something else; not immobile; not hanging on your every word.

2. In most circumstances the quicker the reality of your sales proposition can be established, the better for business.
3. Talk works quicker than song, otherwise we would all go around warbling. Thus, music should be used only if it contributes a worthwhile element to the sales pitch. The same goes for sound effects.
4. If your product is used in a setting where enjoyment, laughter, the good or lighter things of life are a natural concomitant, maybe melody can help. But only if it acts as a quick product identification trigger.
5. Strive for one key melody line, one key selling point. Short, simple, infinitely repeatable.
6. The job in hand is to sell, not to entertain. The station has already provided the entertainment pad from which you can launch your selling ideas. Why try to compete?
7. Telling the story of your product in the way you might if you could confront the customer face-to-face is a pretty sound base on which to build your message.
8. Music is an aid, not an end.
9. Singing, raising your voice, feeding in irrelevant sound, tend to obscure meaning.
10. If nobody can understand what you are on about, you might as well shut up.

Much has been made of the so-called advantages of television advertising over all other advertising forms. Radio has had to come up with answers to questions inherent in that assumption. In one pointed case study, the radio people made great play of television's 'halo' effect, that is the disposition of many viewers to believe that they had seen advertising on television, when in fact they had not. In one test — relating to a popular food product — four housewives in ten gave a 'yes' to a question about product X being familiar to them. Some six in ten of that number said they had seen it on television. In fact there had been no television advertising at all; the budget had been split sixty per cent, radio; forty per cent, magazine. Radio people, in effect, say that budget thinking among many advertisers — even more agencies — is based on over-estimating television, underestimating radio.

Radio, however, seeks to come to terms with television, not fight it. In one persuasive exercise it showed that using television and radio in tandem could produce significant increases in target audiences. The study demonstrated that by reducing the number of television announcements and adding radio to the campaign, about twenty per cent more people could be reached twice as often, without any increase in costs. As the 'cost-per-thousand' of actual people reached is the accepted yardstick of advertising effectiveness these days, the radio people have been able to argue a convincing case.

There are, too, very real signs of increasing recognition of the sales value of the spoken word. Research has long shown that the ear is faster than the eye, and, according to a recent American study, it could be shown that the mind is able to identify a printed word, on average, in 190 milliseconds; the spoken word — twenty per cent faster — 140 milliseconds. And, say the researchers, 'not only do you hear faster than you see, but your hearing lasts longer'. A visual image, conveyed by picture or words, is said to fade in about one second, unless there is some supporting reason to file away the idea conveyed. Retention of a neutral message by ear, on the other hand, 'lasts four or five times longer'.

'The ear drives the eye.' There is much evidence that the mind works by ear: that thinking is a process of manipulating sounds, not images. Even when pictures or photographs are involved. 'As a result you see what you hear, what the sound has led you to expect to see, not what the eye tells you it has seen . . . When people communicate with each other, the ear is the preferred avenue of entry.'

The writers, to support their theory, quote some interesting examples — American, but probably applicable in Australia.

> There are five times more telephone conversations than there are letters.
>
> On a leisured 'pleasure' scale, compare the time spent listening to music with the time spent looking at art or photography. 'The ear wins by a wide margin.'
>
> Over a similar time span, present a list of words to people by eye and by ear. People remember more words they have heard.

Tone and rhythm, absent in written language, help in the learning process.
Unlike other media, radio has no built-in visual distractions to deflect the mind from registering the message.

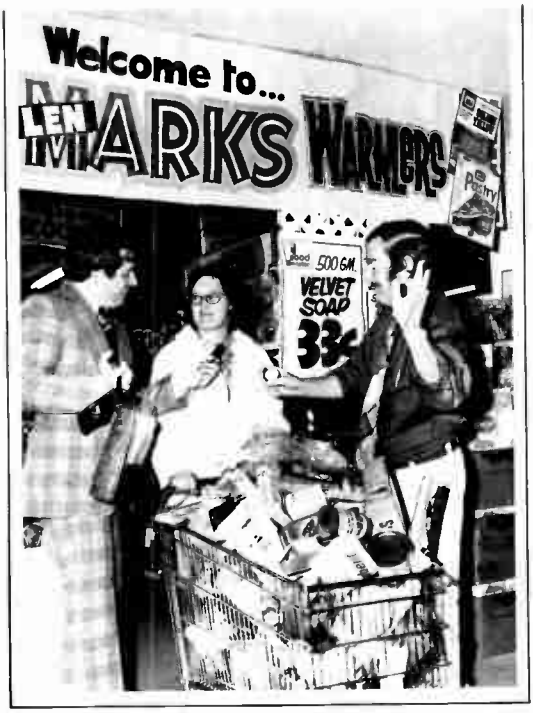
With sound, you can make what you want of it. You can look as beautiful as a picture in any shape, colour, garb or setting you want. You do not have to let television boss you around and tell you 'This is it — take it or leave it'. Such splendid autonomy of interpretation is one of the great residuals of the radio message. You are the master or mistress of your own desire or fantasy — both self-starters in the decision-making and purchasing process.

Radio is very happy to go along with the theory that it is, indeed, 'all in the mind'.

22 Here is the News

'And now for the news — with the Radio Roundsman making it up as he goes along,' said Richard (Bob) Everard, the Irish Jester, one Sunday morning on 3KZ, *circa* 1939, so breaking up the unfortunate reader that music had to be played until he recovered his poise. Apart from this ten to fifteen-minute weekend bulletin, the station, up till then, had drawn almost entirely on the resources of the press for a thrice-daily cover of five minutes. It cost about five pounds a day and was usually read straight from the paper.

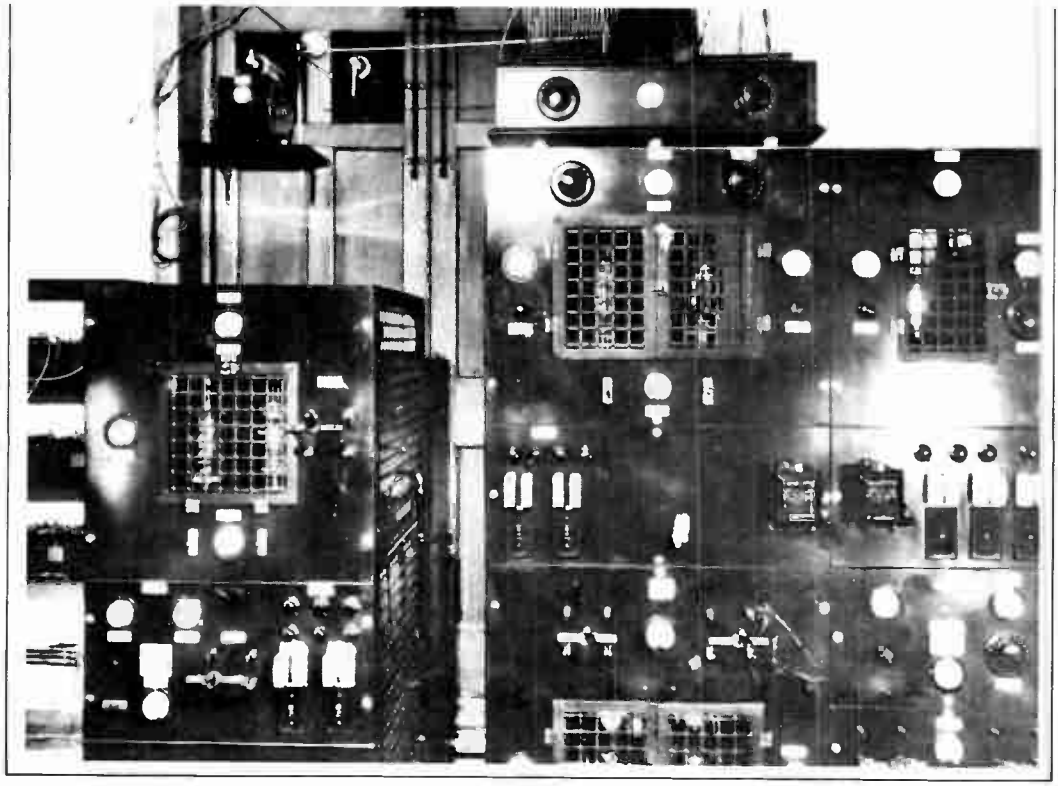
It was 3XY which broke the newspaper monopoly in 1935 with an independent service. Early on, newspapers did not treat radio as any sort of rival, but in the middle to late 1930s they displayed some signs of concern, especially the country press. The ABC had an agreement with the Australian Newspapers Council for a limited cover. But it was an uncertain arrangement, which the ABC, it was alleged, constantly breached. Keith Murdoch, the Herald & Sun chief, at one stage told the ABC that its proper function was to entertain people and 'not to encroach on the newspaper's sphere'. The national stations' running battle with the press is too long to go into here, but it ended with the Commission setting up a full



A winner in KZ's Wish-a-thon wished for two minutes in a supermarket and came out 'loaded'. On her left is KZ personality, Peter Van.

Recently a tour of 'The City of Light' was part of KZ's Melbourne Cup festivities. KZ's David Lyons was on escort duty.

KZ's Barry Casey with another Wish-a-thon winner who gets her wish and meets her idol, Johnny Farnham.



The 3KZ control room in 1931.

Console and recording units in Number 2 studio today.

national and overseas service of its own in 1946–47. It had gradually built up its news resources from about 1936 on.

Signs of testiness between radio and press surfaced in 1937, when newspapers refused to publish free programme listings and debarred staff journalists from appearing on radio. During the war years many commercial stations took a split from the ABC, supplemented by BBC broadcasts and bulletins compiled by the Department of Information. Ironically, the Department was under the control of Keith Murdoch. Prime Minister Curtin, disenchanted by the British attitude towards the Pacific, found evidence of 'our' war being downplayed by the BBC and asked, not too gently, that priority be given in news broadcasts and commentaries to what was happening closer to our shores.

One of the limitations imposed on the commercial stations was that news-flashes between regular broadcasts were to be confined to two a day, no longer than thirty-five words, and aired only once. The thinking, apparently, was that sudden interruptions to programmes with items of possible alarming consequence, might have an unsettling effect on the community. The then secretary of the Radio Federation, Ray Dooley, appearing before an all-party Parliamentary Committee inquiring into broadcasting (the Gibson Committee), cheerfully told its members that 'on the day peace is declared, we will break that regulation'.

Commercial radio's contribution to the newsfront was relatively insignificant, at least compared with the ABC which had men posted to various theatres sending back 'actuality' or on-the-spot reports.

Because of a dispute over land-lines, a plan was discussed in 1945 to set up a separate, independent commercial operation involving all stations. Disagreements, however, set in, largely, it would appear, because of the unwillingness of the *Herald* group to share any of its resources other than with 3DB which, of course, it owned. The upshot was that 3DB instituted an exclusive service from Flinders Street reporters who were attached to the station. 3KZ, 3AW and 3UZ were forced to arrange a joint cover from both the *Age* and the *Argus*. 3XY was still on its own.

But to 3KZ, went a singular honour, forgotten now by the

passage of time. It was the first station in Australia to broadcast the news that, subject to Emperor Hirohito being allowed to maintain sovereign rights in his country, the Japanese would be prepared to accept the Potsdam surrender terms drawn up by the Allies. This was four days before the actual day of surrender, 14 August 1945.

The story is quite fascinating, comically casual, and reflects great credit on the late Ron Atholwood, announcer on duty on the night of 10 August. As *Radio Times* tells it, this is how events unfolded. An urgent telephone call had come through to the Trades Hall from Doctor Evatt who wanted to contact Arthur Calwell, Minister for Information. The Doc, excited, had mentioned to Joe Bell — the caretaker who took the call and who was known to Labor men from the lowest to the highest — that it was all to do with a capitulation offer from Japan. Joe went looking for the Minister who was supposed to be somewhere in the building. He poked his nose into the small KZ studio where Atholwood was working, mentioned what had transpired, and asked 'Have you seen Arthur Calwell?'. 'No', said Ron, 'but that's great news'. He spun another record. Then the nature of it all hit him and he raced after Joe, told him to track down Calwell and to bring him to the studio, 'even if you have to drag him here'. On Ron's figuring, if he could get Arthur Calwell to the microphone, the Minister, who had to authorise all such intelligence, could give himself permission to announce the stirring tidings. Joe Bell found the Minister downstairs and hurried him to the KZ studios. Fortunately, Calwell readily agreed to go on air immediately (after all it was the Labor station).

Calwell acknowledged that news of Japan's willingness to surrender had been broadcast over Tokyo radio at 9.55 p.m., our time. It had been picked up and processed (by monitors in his own department) and was deemed to be authentic. 3KZ listeners thus heard about it at 10.08 p.m., only thirteen minutes later. The news did not reach other stations and the press for another half hour.

Commented *Radio Times*: 'The scoop was not without its soupcon of humour. KZ is an independent station in the sense that it is not connected with a daily newspaper. Two dailies rang up a

few minutes after the first KZ announcement and asked if it were true that the war was over'. It was not official until four days later, but that was purely academic.

Scoops like that rarely happen these days; most news sources are simultaneously tapped by all media and stories go to all outlets at the same time. But it was heady stuff in 1945.

Post-war, Stan Hughes read the news three times a day, handled interviews and featured in sporting broadcasts, sometimes with Banks. The wire-recorder was opening up new on-the-spot possibilities, taking stations more and more into the streets and out where things were happening. The magnetised wire, however, often had a habit of slipping the spool and would spin off into tangled heaps which were difficult to unravel. It was a great blessing when wire was replaced with tape, although the so-called portable machines were still as big as a medium-sized suitcase, and heavy too. But miniaturisation was on the way and people, concerned with events of the day, got used to being bailed up in the street and having microphones stuck under their nose. The habit has grown as the new breed of radio reporters, importunate and impatient, has expanded radio's capacity to tell it all first.

During the 1950s and 1960s KZ news came mainly from Australian Associated Press which provided what they call a 'rip and read' teleprinter service. Rod McLeod, then Studio Manager, read the major breakfast and midday bulletins as a 'separate' news voice. In 1965 Jim Archer and John Best performed part-time news duties. From this developed the facility as it is today: a self-contained, specially-trained unit with preparation and presentation of news as its sole concern.

The operation is based on five full-time reporters under the direction of Robert Hicks, plus Ian Major, the Sporting Editor. Hicks and Barry Owen present the highly-rated Hicks-Owen report, several times in the morning and at midday. It is significantly different from other news services in that it has a personal, conversational style, designed to make news, some of which is complex, more readily assimilable to listeners. For many are on the wing, doing other things and can miss the import of what is being said if it is read as a straight newspaper report. Thus the radio

reporter is a different animal from the newspaper reporter, concerned almost as much with sound and sight, as content. Ability to write in consecutive, simple, straightforward manner and read in a way that can be quickly understood — and with a measure of quality and drama — are requirements of today's radio newsmen.

Monday to Friday KZ broadcasts about twenty news services a day, from five to ten-minutes duration. There are links with interstate and overseas stations which provide background or expanded cover for stories or voice-overs of major importance. What goes to air, and items are constantly being revised and up-dated, is a culling from something like 500 to 600 different Australian Associated Press stories which flow into the KZ newsroom each day.

Most local stories are fed in by phone, teleprinter or telex. Leg men, or 'stringers' as they are called, at such places as Parliament House and Government State offices, provide feeder information. The Police have a direct land-line with all news media, for they now regard information about crime, accidents, fires or other disasters, as part of a public service. Not like the old days when you had to dig out stories, often from reluctant law men. There is a special police squad looking after these media relations. It seems to work well. A simple phone call on the land-line actuates a tape recording machine. This 'Disaster Line', as it is called, enabled KZ to keep up with events almost as soon as they occurred during the Ash Wednesday fires.

KZ's newsmen are, thus, mainly re-writers and presenters, and hence the emphasis is on trying to make the news sound right — crisp, comprehensible, colourful. News, is 'programmed' to achieve compatability with the overall station 'sound'. There are regular reviews of performance by an American consultant, Todd Wallace, who runs what is called a Radio Index. Wallace visits this country each year to carry out a regular 'audit'. Les Heil sets great store by the skills of Wallace and his resident partner, Bill Clemens, both of whom — in concert with the in-house programming team — examine, adjudge and advise on the nature and quality of the entire station output. This includes the news, which Heil insists is just as vital a component of programming as music.

There are some ancillary features built into the KZ format, such

as an Economic Up-Date from two specialists in money matters (Bruce Bond and Adrian McCabe), a Medical File, a Consumer Check, Bay Reports, Weather Watch, Traffic Flows and the Bullion Market. There are no 'editorials' as such, but occasionally, when matters of public concern arise, there is a mini-debate called Point-Counter-Point, where two speakers of opposing views will put both sides of the argument.

The nearest KZ get to editorialising is in Trades Hall Talk at 7 p.m. each night. The speaker is KZ Chairman and Secretary of the Trades Hall Council, Ken Stone. His two to three-minute commentaries, however, could scarcely be described as hard-core political propaganda. They are concerned with social issues related to news of the day — more to do with explaining than exhorting.

Sunday night at seven, Caroline Holt runs The ALP Show, a brisk quarter-hour interview and music programme, usually featuring Parliamentarians, Labor spokesmen and people in the news, including union officials, expanding on current affairs or government activities. The Victorian Premier, John Cain, often uses this programme to announce policy initiatives. One could, in truth, scarcely say Labor's voice was excessive or intrusive. Enlightenment rather than indoctrination — a point of view, nevertheless.

News, in short, no longer belongs to newspapers, although most media involved in its dissemination have developed an ingenious capacity for drawing on research to demonstrate that they are the source of major recourse when people want to find out about event and circumstance.

Radio seems to have established firm claim to its 'time' advantage. Consider: The attempted assassination of the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, occurred in Washington DC on Tuesday, 31 March 1981 about 5.30 a.m. our time. That same day, within five hours, Audience Studies, a highly respected Sydney research group, conducted a telephone survey of more than 300 people asking two questions: 'Have you seen or heard the news on the attempted assassination of President Ronald Regan?'. If the answer was 'yes', this was the follow-up: 'How did you first become aware of this news event?'. The result: seventy-seven per cent heard it on the radio; eleven per cent television; one per cent, papers; eleven per cent, word-of-mouth.

When Skylab plunged to earth in Western Australia on the morning of 12 July 1979, seventy-four per cent of people heard about it first on radio; ten per cent, television; five per cent, not sure/word of mouth. That same year, Mrs Thatcher gained power in England; fifty-two per cent of Australians heard about it first on radio; thirty-eight per cent, television; six per cent, papers; three per cent, word of mouth. And so, too, with Princess Diana's baby and the Falklands ceasefire. The evidence is irresistible. Radio's news primacy, in terms of time, is overwhelming.

In 1981 an Australia-wide survey of people thirteen years and over, covered two specific questions about news access. The first question posed was: 'When you wake up in the morning, from which source do you usually find out about what happened overnight?'. The result: seventy-six per cent said radio, twenty-seven per cent said newspapers, two per cent said television, four per cent, other sources. For news access during the day, the second question, the result was fifty-three per cent, radio; thirty-three per cent, newspapers; sixteen per cent, television; nine per cent, other sources.

In more general terms, a comprehensive study of listener attitudes was undertaken in Sydney in 1979. It revealed that, overwhelmingly, the 'best-liked' things about commercial radio were 'local news/local ads'. Strangely perhaps, these far outstripped music, serials and morning programmes. Furthermore, updates on news, traffic and weather ranked third in the scale of programme preferences. Compared with newspapers and television, the advantages of commercial stations as a source of communication and entertainment, lay in listeners being able to 'work and listen' and to get a 'continual updating of news'. In Melbourne, the greatest advantage was in commercial radio being 'quicker/up-to-date with news/news flashes'. On the 'negative' side, only seventeen per cent of Sydney people saw radio's 'lack of visual communication' as a disadvantage. This suggests, again, that radio can handle its own 'illustrations'. It is all in the mind, as they say.

It costs 3KZ about $350 000 a year to maintain its news cover. 'Money well spent', says Les Heil.

23 The Sound of the Seventies

Came the 1970s and the long-running 'music' war exploded again. Record companies were once more demanding royalties. The stations on the other hand held firm to the view that they were already paying legitimate performing rights. The free advertising the record companies were getting by air play on stations, not only was their most powerful promotional medium but, without the station, no record would ever make the Top Forty Charts, or whatever other measuring stick was applied to the popularity stakes. (In 1966–67, for instance, 14 million records were produced in this country, a staggering 100 per cent increase on five years earlier.) Neither side retreated. Thus it was that one Friday night in May 1970, the songs of such artists as The Beatles, Tom Jones, Mary Hopkin, Johnny Farnham, The Axiom and Normie Rowe, disappeared from commercial radio. KZ ushered in the 'ban' with Petula Clark singing 'Kiss Me Goodbye'. As recorded earlier another compromise was reached and, as they say, the melody lingered on.

The Post Office had reason to be grateful to KZ's John Bright, 'The Cheerio King of Melbourne' and sometimes called 'The Ruler of Requests'. He encouraged listeners to his various programmes

to write in about anything 'the family, their ailments, their animals, their problems, life in jail, life out of jail — anything'. On average, he got 400 letters a day.

In 1973 KZ, in association with a sports magazine, launched one of the first big-prize football contests, $1000 for the best and fairest; Peter Van, from 7EX Launceston, came on mike; an out-of-character programme The Christ Chronicles, a sort of musical documentary 'tracing the birth, development and current status of the Jesus Revolution' was broadcast each Sunday, with some understandable controversy; Strip Jack Naked, a serial dealing with a jockey, also raised some eyebrows; a $10 000 Money Spree set a new high in radio money prizes to be won; Ted Rippon, John Beckwith, George Ferry, Gerald Burke and Ian Cooper were the round-the-ground football commentators in 1973 (Ferry and Burke are still there); and for the second year in succession, KZ won the award for the top community service.

This was the year when commercial radio celebrated its golden anniversary, '50 Years–and the best is still to come'. Said Les Heil: 'Music, news and sport will continue to be the staple diet. A lot of advertisers won't be able to afford colour television in 1975 — so they will turn to radio.'

In 1974 the commercial stations were locked in argument with the Victorian Football League over broadcast rights. The League wanted $5000 more; a compromise figure of $13 850 was worked out.

The 'personality team' comprised John Bright, Paul Konik, Gary Newton, Mike Menner, John Jones, Bill Rule, Peter Van, Tony Hartney and Peter Adams — all since departed to other places. Such was the measure of change.

To KZ in the 1970s also came such personalities as Adam Joseph, Greg St John, Fred Botica, Brian Torrens, Stephen Curtis, David Tincombe and Tom Payne. In the news department, John Treagus, Graham Rebbeck and Bill Steele. Peter Leslie, KZ personality and vice-president of Country Music Guild, went into bat for the twangy, earthy sound of the voices from the bush which, he said, were replacing 'the era of the screaming guitar'. The rapidly changing roster of names, so different from radio's early days, at least

lent some surprise element to the sound scene. As well, publicity managers came and went — Murray Jones, Paul Jacobson, Graham Braddy, Des Sporle and Marion Wilson.

Jack Dyer joined, or rather rejoined, in 1972. His descriptive style was soon to show up. He said of Adrian Gallagher of Carlton, after a poor performance against Essendon, that 'I thought he had a rabbit trap on his leg'.

There was a passing attempt in 1972 to bring back drama. My Father's House, a 'tense, compelling tale of murder, violence and sophisticated romance', went to air at 4.15 a.m., 2.15 p.m. and 10.15 p.m. It worked its way through to the final episode without much effect.

Paul Konik, now a familiar face on ABC–TV, said of that medium when he joined KZ ten or so years ago: 'Television's not for me. You couldn't walk into Myer to buy a pair of socks without people staring at you.'

The multi-voiced Paul Jennings was working at KZ as a news reader, Peter Dight as news editor and 'newsmen' Ian Neil, Max Duggan, Rowan Forster, Peter Lee and Peter Philp.

By way of balance, Ross Napier's serial, The Way of the Cat, took to the air each day, 'the story of Cynthia Hammand, a woman with all the fury of a four-footed feline', and We, The Wicked People, starring James Condon as a roving newspaper columnist, came on air three times a week.

Then there was a 'little bit of Becker's boomph' as the agile, acrobatic Sue Becker, of recent television fame, joined the station to exercise minds and bodies as part of the Barry Casey show each afternoon. One, Casey Kasem, was piped in from America with Top Forty Special; Slim Whitney and Tony Hartney were adding to the music format; and Norman Swain, Monday to Friday at 7.45 a.m. was running a segment for Western Star butter. And in that year, 1974, came resounding endorsement for the view taken by Les Heil that concentration on one segment of the audience was what radio was all about. The ratings showed that in a five-day stretch between Monday and Friday, KZ emerged clear winners in the twenty-five to thirty-nine age listening bracket.

To the not inconstant criticism in the early 1970s that most

commercial radio stations, as far as their music content was concerned, all sounded the same, Les Heil was to observe that 'anyone who still thinks that radio stations all sound alike, simply cannot be taken seriously. Every station carefully selects a target audience. It then programmes its format to specifically appeal to that target group. As a result, there is a range of musical formats from heavy rock, through middle-of-the-road, to classical.'

Then, in 1976, 'The Great 3KZ Radio Coup' as three disc jockeys and a newsreader left 3DB to join 3KZ — Ric Melbourne, Ron O'Neill, Ted Bull and Robert Hicks. 'The biggest air-lift in Australia's history', as it was described in one trade journal, was aimed at implementing KZ's policy of strengthening its hold on the middle-year listeners. With perhaps unconscionable pride, KZ trumpeted the headline in one of its ads that 'The Pirates are Here'. Underneath, the team to promote 'Playin' the Hits': Melbourne, Bull, Peter Watkins, Glenn Driscoll, Ron O'Neill, Greg James — all since departed to other fields.

New faces, new voices seemed to be the order of things in the 1970s. The 1980s have been more stable — in terms of people, ratings and profit.

24 UFOs

The unusual, the funny, the odd — all made fleeting appearances on air in random, unguarded moments when words were let slip or circumstances conspired to distract attention from the job in hand. Likewise, some printed reports of events made for unplanned diversions, hilarity, wonder.

Early radio, clearly, was not all fun and games. It performed useful side functions. It could, it was claimed by one inventor, be used as a 'snore cure' to eliminate 'tempestuous noises' in the night. A microphone could be suspended 'just above the head of the slumberer. When the snores register a sufficiently high level of sound, a little electric shock is administered to the sleeper, just enough to wake him up.'

And what marvellous benison here: 'Radio waves can relieve hangovers by warming the walls of the stomach, causing them to relax and bringing comfort to the patient by eliminating the craving for strong liquor'.

There was a certain picturesque madness about in those days. Even Marconi was hearing things, like signals from Mars which he claimed to have picked up when cruising the Mediterranean. They were in code, he said, broadcast on a varying wavelength between 14 000 and 150 000 metres.

Lewis Bennett, reading a news item about the Wonthaggi Mine Disaster: 'One of the rescuers was examining the shaft when the respirator clipped off his nose. I'm sorry, that should read slipped off his nose.'

Eddie Balmer, one bright morning, arrived at the studio to do his normal breakfast programme. There was no engineer. So, he switched on as many switches as he could find and hoped for the best — not a bad best, but not quite good enough. While the music went to air all right, 'Alarm Clock Archie's' cheery chat, station identification, ads — in short, all voice output — was heard by none. It lasted for about twenty minutes. There were some churls who said they did not mind the silence between records.

Balmer, who usually handled Voice of the People during Banks' frequent overseas jaunts, put this question to a theatre-goer on his way to see *The Dark Angel*. 'What is your definition of an angel?' 'Fellow who dies before he's found out' came the snap response.

Norman Banks, in another Voice of the People asked of a sailor 'What is the difference between a gherkin, a jerkin and a firkin?'. Sailor: 'A firkin what?'.

Wireless Branch Circular No. 3, *circa* 1932, warned stations of the dangers associated with broadcasts on medical matters, and the need for strict supervision of what went out over the air. This followed the death of a listener, who had committed suicide after he had heard that cancer was incurable unless picked up in its early stages and treated.

'Announcers Wed' 'Eddie Balmer and Monty Blandford' — so ran the heading over a story in 1937. Eyebrows, however, were lowered when the names of the contracting female participants were revealed in the body copy. In Eddie's case, the delectable Melva Short. They are still together after forty-seven years.

In China, in 1936, broadcasting authorities introduced regulations to prohibit 'any programme which would provoke laughter among children'. No story or song was to be broadcast which would cause naughty children to laugh.

In Republican Turkey, no radio plays were permitted in which civil or military officers had a part. 'Furthermore, broadcasting of pornographic works is not allowed.' Praise was not to be given to any former Sultan or anything nice said about their reigns, the old Ottoman Empire or the constitution of those times.

In Moscow, radio was running 'hot'. It was claimed that radio waves were being used to heat the coats of policemen on traffic duty during the winter. A wire mesh, acting as some kind of receiver, was concealed between thin layers of asbestos inside the lining and 'these could be tuned to neighboring stations designed for the purpose'.

Snippet from Voice of the People:

Banks: What is Toc H?

Lady: A Cure for TB.

The Reverend Dr Blackney concluded his remarks one day on KZ with 'We shall all meet in the Kingdom of Heaven'. Then, under the happy but mistaken impression that he had switched off the microphone, he went on to ask of the regular KZ announcer 'I don't think I spoke too long, did I?'. But he just had not been quick enough with that switch, for his listeners, faithful and fervent, heard this popular oracle of the day, utter words of seeming blasphemy: 'We shall all meet in the Kingdom of Heaven — I don't think'.

Overseas, the French developed a 'limited' radio system that enabled firemen to sleep at home and be summoned, when needed, by a low-frequency signal. Married life, it was said, improved enormously.

In 1946 a Church of England conference in Adelaide heard one of its Bishops condemn the 'lust for greed' brought on by the rash of quiz programmes on commercial radio. Professor W. A. Osborne, scholar, panel member of Information Please and long noted for his scepticism about the existence of both God and Jesus Christ, said that one of the obsessions of clergymen of all creeds down the ages was to 'denounce the prevailing type of amusement'. He added: 'I thought, in my innocence, that the quiz would escape ecclesiastical upbraiding — but no'. Professor Osborne continued to appear; the quizzes multiplied. The church's voice was lost in the gathering acquisitive stampede.

Lewis Bennett, *circa* 1938, addressing a Rotary meeting on how to 'deliver' radio commercials: 'In most instances a sentence of twelve words contains only six or seven of any real value to the message. Words must be emphasised according to their relative value and the unimportant skimmed over. Accented words are not emphasised by increasing the volume and pitch of the voice, but by elongating the syllables. The accepted psychological angle is that these message-carrying words are retained a little longer than normally on the lips of the speaker, and so are more indelibly impressed on the subconscious mind of the listener. It is important that the voice be conservatively modulated, the broadcaster being taught to speak almost in a monotone, and to control his upward and downward inflections without sounding flat. The reverse action, as in the case of declamatory, attention-getting announcements, is to vary and lift the pitch as much as possible to excite the listener.' The audience, awed into silence, gave 'Mr Bennett a vote of thanks for these scholarly words'.

Most old KZ hands seem to agree that the funniest thing that ever happened was shortly after Kevin O'Gorman was preening himself

on the birth of his first son. He was in the control room when Banks, on air for the Myer Musicale and during one of the quieter passages of 'Orpheus in the Underworld', threw what he thought was the inter-com switch and asked of Kevin, 'Have you had him circumcised yet?'. Unfortunately, he had thrown the 'on air' switch and the real world, as well as the underworld, heard this fateful inquiry. Phones ran hot, protest letters poured in, Banks was reprimanded. One dear old gentleman who apparently thought Banks, personally, conducted the orchestras heard in this programme, 'live' from the studio, placed, as he thought, that offending voice among the string section. He suggested it was entirely improper for a trained musician to talk while he was playing. 'I hope you are taking action,' he added.

Spelling Jackpots, a quiz handled by Don Joyce, used to award money prizes according to the difficulty of the word. For a shilling, Don asked a contestant to spell 'weather', as in climate.

First try: Whether.
Second try: Wether.
Last try: Wetter.
Don: That's the worst spell of weather we've had for a long time.

By the late 1940s, stations had explored just about every possible variation of question and answer programmes, and audience participation shows. Lewis Bennett, as KZ station producer, came up with a twist, a Spirit Show, asking questions of the dear departed. He enlisted the support of a university professor who delved into psychic research. Bennett used members of a spiritualist society to pop the questions. They got some weird answers which, aided by sound effects and sepulchral responses from the nether world, made for a thoroughly unusual broadcast. But the Spirit Quiz had an unusual result. It upset someone in top management who was something of a 'believer'. So much so, that Bennett was instructed to terminate the experiments immediately and 'bury' any evidence.

Up till the time television changed the pattern of life at home in the evening, commercial radio went on its merry way as the

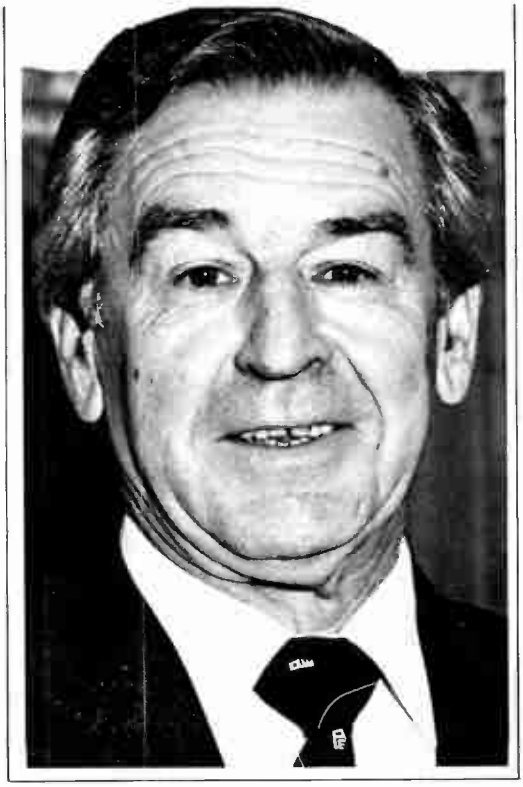
medium of the masses; its stars set firm in astral lights. Two great names in the galaxy were to disappear in the 1950s, Jack Davey and Nicky. Crowds of 100 000 saw them move to their final resting place. Contrast that with the passing of Eric Welch in 1983. In his day, in his way, Eric shone as brightly as anyone. Fifteen people attended his funeral. By his own wish, Bob Dyer's cremation, early 1984, was a strictly private affair. *Sic transit gloria*.

Graham Kennedy probably learned the art of the advertising send-up from Nicky. The Commonwealth Bank ad each morning was supposed to be a simple ten-word spot: 'It's 10 o'clock and the Commonwealth Bank is open for business'. That short sentence became an epic of fumblings, delays, burglar alarms and awful warnings. Nicky might whisper to Graham just before the time signal pips: 'Have you got the key?'. Graham: 'What key?'. 'The key to the bank you fool.' 'I gave it to you.' 'When?' 'Just a little while ago.' 'Well, I can't find it. How the hell are we going to open the joint?' There would be various suggestions like blowing open the door with dynamite, ramming it with a bulldozer, borrowing a key from the bank opposite, or just closing down for the day. 'That's a good idea,' Nicky would say and then add 'The Commonwealth Bank is *not* open for business'. The bank oddly, was not amused.

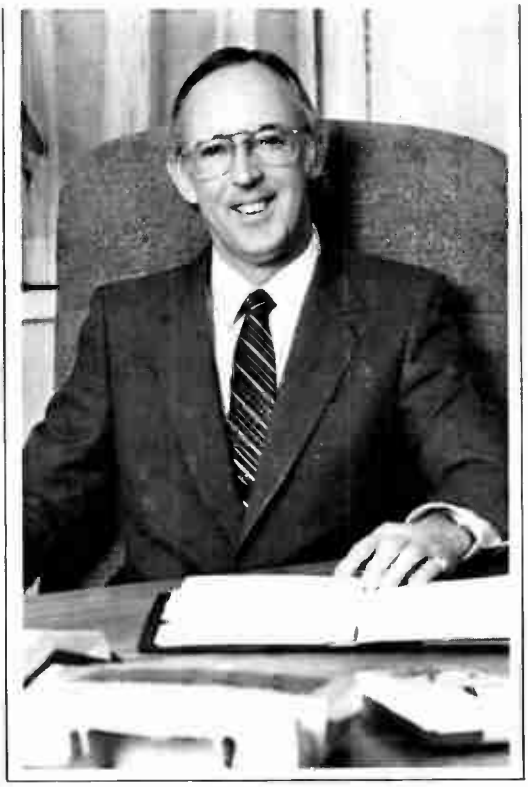
In the early 1960s, KZ ran a competition for housewives — jokes, funny sayings of children and family incidents. There were more than 45 000 entries. Two of the winners:

A little boy had been very naughty and had been thoroughly spanked on the rear by his mother and sent to his room. Later on, his mother was astonished to see him standing in front of a mirror viewing the spanked part. On seeing his mother he said: 'I suppose you're satisfied now you've cracked it'.

My young daughter was explaining to her younger brother, who is rather lazy about saying his prayers, that he must pray every day 'for our daily bread'. Said he: 'Why not just pray once a week. Wouldn't that do?'. Said she: 'Not if you want fresh bread'.

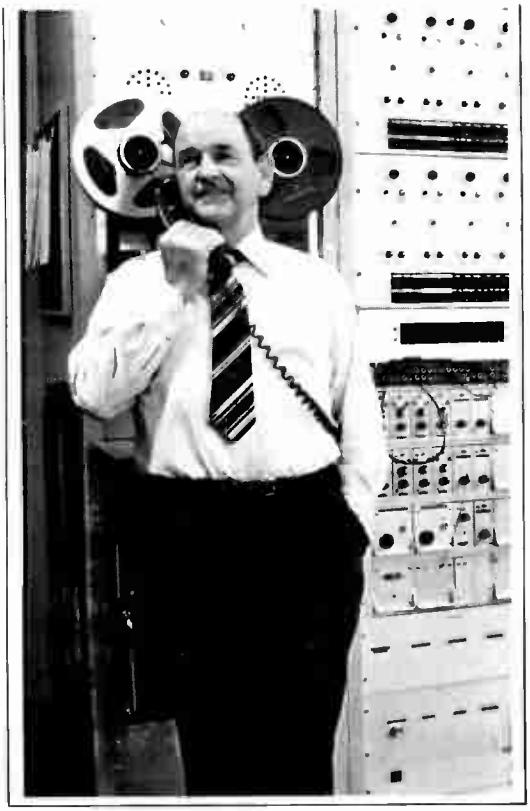


Ken Stone, Chairman of the Board.

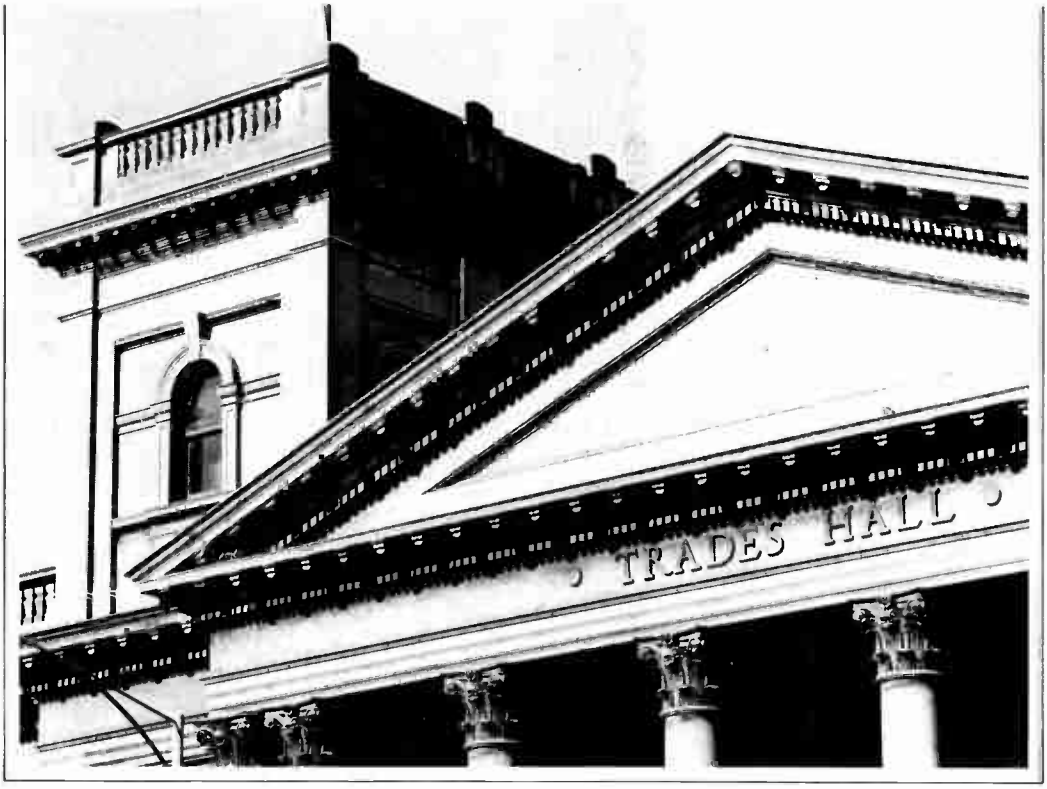


Les Heil, Managing Director.

Jim Hilcke, Assistant Manager.



Brian Perry, Chief Engineer.



Where it all began, the 'tower' studio at the Melbourne Trades Hall.

Philip Gibbs, fresh-faced, full of zeal, just twenty years old and anxious to please, encountered a live hazard in the form of Ron Atholwood on his very first day at the mike, script in hand ready to deliver his first commercial. Atholwood set fire to it. Lugubrious of countenance and given to strange enthusiasms, Atholwood was a difficult fellow to treat with. His sense of humour, to say the least, was errant. However, he once managed to bring a phantom smile to his sore-pressed colleagues, when he mixed up Rimsky Korsakov's famous piece and announced it as 'The Bum of the Flightly Bee'.

Norman Banks, blessed with confidence even in his formative years, moved easily in exalted circles. But he did not exactly endear himself to the then Governor of Victoria, Sir Winston Dugan, in the late 1930s. On one occasion when he was somewhat 'under the weather', Banks answered an unexpected summons to appear at Government House for a 'chat' with His Excellency. Banks recalls being sat down in an ante-room by one of the aides. When the Governor came in, Banks tried to rise from his couch but could not make it and slid to the floor. He has somewhat imperfect recollections of what happened then, except he was ushered out. He never got to find out what the Governor wanted to see him about. Banks tells the story against himself with great good cheer. His 'black' did not prevent him gaining a MBE in later years. However, Sir Winston was not in charge of the investiture.

In 1976, 3KZ did a broadcast from Pentridge Jail. Some of the 'trusties' were allowed on air in carefully-screened interviews. One, however, could not resist a fling at new-found freedom of expression. Asked if he would like to send a final cheerio, he boldly paraphrased the then familiar slogan 'Get with the strength — Bank Commonwealth'. Over the air from Prisoner X, serving a sentence for relieving a bank of some of its funds, came 'Get with the strength — rob Commonwealth'. The aftermath is not known.

25 Top Shows

If it were put to the vote of those who can recall the 1930s and 1940s, the chances are high that the best remembered of KZ's programmes would be The P & A Parade, Voice of the Voyager, Voice of the People, World Famous Tenors, Junior Information, The Myer Musicale, The Saturday night Dance Programme and the football broadcasts. And if you could further fine-tune that list, the P & A would probably be the one to be singled out as most closely identified with the station call-sign.

It was even so as far back as 1936. There were no surveys then. However, KZ decided to run its own, primitive though it was by today's standards. A competition, with twenty-five pounds in prizes, was organised by Eddie Balmer. Points were allotted for nominations of the most popular programmes in order of preference — strictly KZ programmes, that is. The results were: The P & A Parade, 12 391 points; George Edwards Sunday Plays, 10 932 points; Voice of the People, 7489; football broadcasts, 7435; World Famous Tenors, 7216; Jimmie Allen, 6338; Hill and Dale Recordings, 6133; Laugh with the Staff, 5537; Inspector Scott, 4836; Dance Music, 4510; Sunday Morning Programme, 4064; Community Singing, 4019; Breakfast Programme 3032; Saturday

night Sporting Results, 2622; Songs We Love, 2342; Jim Davidson's Band, 2162; Darby and Joan, 1994; P. W. Pearce's Health Session, 1984; Children's Programme 1938; and News Service, 1935.

They comprised the top twenty. Said Balmer in an amplifying report to management: 'The outstanding lesson learned from the competition is not so much a proof of the already anticipated fact that Sunday is the best listening night of the week, but that in relation to other stations, Sunday night at the present time [May-June 1936] is our strongest night of the week'. (Junior Information, The Myer Musicale and Voice of the Voyager had not started then.)

In the beginning, in 1935, the P & A was Banks' baby, but Eddie Balmer was the one to nurture it through its long life. The sheer mechanics of the show give some insight into its remarkable history. No fewer than 72 000 'hopefuls' faced up to the audition microphone in its almost thirty-year span. And pause to consider some of the names that 'passed' through the Parade: Coral Gunning, Smoky Dawson, Peggy Brooks, Horrie Dargie, Annette Klooger, John Lanigan, Lou Toppano, Beryl Jones, Patricia Kennedy, Beryl Walker, Verona Cappadonna, Daryl Stewart, Frank Wilson, Greg Dempsey, Lauris Elms, Lou Campara, Lal Kuring, Jack Perry, Chris Kimber and John Weaving — a star-list of varied talents, many of whose names are still up there in lights.

Take Junior Information, which preceded Quiz Kids, starting on KZ in 1940. Among those to test his mental mettle against youngsters of much older years, was one Barry Jones, aged nine or ten, whom Banks described as 'a bit too precocious for his years. I had to sit on him to keep him in order'. Barry did not make it to the top in this particular show, but he still says that if anyone 'discovered' him, it was Norman Banks. This was long before he became a household name around Australia and pocketed some 30 000 pounds in prize-money.

In May 1943, a heated argument developed in the press when allegations were made that children appearing in Junior Information — no doubt influenced by the American 'invasion' — were displaying marked anti-British, pro-American feelings in their

answers to questions. KZ management issued a statement to the effect that it was no reason for curbing 'the free expression of views' adding, somewhat patronisingly, that 'after all, they were only children's opinions and could not be regarded as authoritative'.

Voice of the Voyager, however, was the programme Banks liked doing most. He still recalls with glee 'stealing' Richard Tauber and wife, Diana Napier, from the ABC which had brought the pair to Australia and, naturally, expected exclusive interviews. Banks lured them to his cabin, locked the door against the ABC's Charles Moses, proceeded with his cross examination and got them first to air. His most memorable interviews include the pianist, Benno Moisewitsch, the Duke of Gloucester, Fats Waller, Anna May Wong, George Formby, Hepzibah and Yehudi Menuhin, Sir Ernest Fisk, The Princess Melikoff, Oscar Hammerstein, A. P. Herbert and Lady Murdoch.

Then there was the formidable Right Honourable Viscountess Dawson of Penn whose husband was surgeon to the Royal Family and was, Banks had been warned, very touchy about her age. When, during the course of the grudgingly-granted interview, it transpired that she lived in Wimpole Street, Banks, innocently, said: 'You must have known the Barretts'. A deathly hush, and then: 'If I look old enough to have known the Barretts, it can only be because I have been dragged from my bed in your stupid country by stupid people asking stupid questions. I can tell you this, young man. Two things I shall remember about Melbourne — its drizzle and your drivel.' The high-born lady, having achieved the rare feat of silencing the loquacious Norman, then swept out.

26 Helping Hand

In so far as radio stations can be said to have a 'soul' in a world of commercial reality, 3KZ seems to have a creditable record for its charitable and community-service activities. A measure of that record can be gained from the fact that the station has won more awards for community service than any other broadcasting group in the country: four main Wales Awards (now known as the Westpac Awards) and five Highly Commended Awards in the last fourteen years.

In the twenty-year period between 1933 and 1953, KZ raised some 333 000 pounds in charitable appeals, of which 140 000 pounds alone went to the Austin Hospital. Indeed, the greatest 'living' testimony to what it has accomplished in the past, can be seen at Heidelberg, where the 3KZ Children's Block of the Austin is one of the district landmarks. Carols by Candlelight and Penny Serenade, two long-running KZ features, helped make this possible.

By 1963 Carols had raised more than one million pounds, part of which by then was also going to the blind babies at the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind. There is now a 3KZ Wing there, too.

During the war — indeed in one year alone, 1943 — the Red Cross and the Australian Comforts Fund, also benefited from the 18 000 pounds the station raised.

In the 1960s KZ moved deeper into community involvement. One such was the School of the Year Award, from which some 400 educational institutions benefited. Then there were the Community Club awards with some 160 or so charities, clubs and associations sharing in the thousands of pounds raised. Elwood Life Saving Club, for instance, gained its first radio direction finder from this source. 'Keep Melbourne Beautiful' became part of the station plan.

An on-air public service bureau was opened on holidays to provide listeners with a list of amenities, facilities and events to which they could gain access. Then there was the daily programme The Womanly Art of Self-Defence devoted to helping women face 'danger' at home, on a date, in a car or on the street.

Of more recent times: In 1981, to counter one widely-held idea that the constabulary are there purely to catch and punish people, Public Affairs Director Kevin O'Gorman suggested to Victoria Police a series of full-day exercises where a large group of children from known problem areas 'could observe at first hand some of the police activities'. The Police Public Relations Division was keen too. Thus it was that 350 children from under-privileged areas set out in buses, supplied by the station, for the Police Training Centre at West Meadows. Police personnel from the Police Community Involvement Programme mapped out the day's programme for the nine-to-eleven year olds. Visits to police stations, demonstrations by the dog squad, watching mounted troopers in training, driving school tests, search and rescue operations, motor boating, helicopter displays, lectures, and plenty of food and soda pop to keep the youngsters happy, were all part of the venture.

Said Chief Commissioner of Police, Mr 'Mick' Miller: 'This most worthwhile event, which was of your inspiration, would not have been possible without your effort and support'.

In that same year, and in the broader domain of a full twelve months community work, 3KZ again picked up the Wales Award. It covered such events as 3KZ's sponsorship of the Prince and

Princess of Moomba; a giant hand-crafted koala to delight children in hospitals, shopping centres, the Zoo and suburban streets; a hastily improvised Father Christmas scheme to pass on children's requests because of a mail dispute; an Easter Egg 'pool' to be drawn on by Welfare homes; free rides in a London bus for kindergarten children; a day's outing for children from high-rise flats to the Point Cook Air Base; a Fun Run to help physically-handicapped kiddies; a tour of a newspaper office, again for disadvantaged children; and visits to farms, fire stations and life-saving clubs. All this, plus free publicity station plugs for more than 1200 separate appeals for an astonishing range of organisations, involving an advertising value in excess of $150 000 in that one year.

Today, something like six to eight hours a week are given over to publicity for worth-while causes, now under the direction of Marilyn Harris. It is part of the service for which KZ, along with other stations, is happy to maintain. Not too many people appreciate its worth or even know about it. But then, as they say, the greatest happiness is to do good by stealth and be discovered by accident.

27 Stand by, Studio

Anyone who imagines that the modern disc-jockey has an easy ride, should go side-saddle with one. A more apt tag would be sky-pilot, for he has to ride the airwaves with steady eye, sure touch and a bewildering array of knobs, switches, buttons and flashing lights to watch and manipulate. Breakfast, which should be the most leisurely of times to prepare for the rigours of the day, is the most frenzied. In front of that studio console is a jack-in-the-box, who has to keep more wits about him than were dreamed of in the halcyon days of lifting up the arm of a turntable, watching the Engineer for your cue, throwing a switch, and reading, perhaps, one commercial and the name of the next record. (And if nature called, you could swing in a four-minute 12–inch disc and worry not one whit.) It is not like that now.

Two hours with 3KZ's Peter Meehan in the morning between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. is exhausting, just to observe. The chair he sits on is on a wheeled track. It swivels round when he has to pick out a recorded segment from the tape bank behind him, and put it on 'hold' for later transmission. On either side are racks of numbered cartridges and cassettes containing music, commercials and station promos. One is taken out, to be replaced by another.

Every item is checked and logged. Some of the sound to be broadcast is automatic, some manual. Pressing the right play button is thus of enormous consequence. And while the music is being fed to air, there is no time for relaxing, casual conversation. Crosses have to be made to Jim Hilcke who is on a street median-strip, handling an outside broadcast — or 'mobile' as they call it these days. Plugging away there for $200, is Debbie, a substantial lass of not-so-tender years, singing Christmas Carols for an hour without stop. There are honks and hoots and handwaves from passing motorists and truckies. Some even throw her money for they can hear on their car radios that she is part of the Sixty-Minute Challenge, one of KZ's many breakfast stunts dreamed up by the inventive Hilcke.

Meehan has to tape regular one or two-minute flashes of Debbie, now, literally, singing in the rain on this particular day. And after her, there are phone calls to be made to randomly-selected listeners participating in Cash Call or Money Exchange, two more station giveaway features that are part of the swift-moving wrap of music, news, traffic reports, weather conditions on the bay and flash interviews. The pips are coming up to seven. Robert Hicks and Barry Owen move into the booth facing Peter Meehan, adjust headphones and wait for the news 'effects' signature to finish. This is probably the most important, and the most listened-to news service of the day, and ranges over international, national and local affairs. It is split with cross-overs to people in the news, comments on economic trends and points of argument. It flows easily, unhurriedly, but tightly; lasting up to fifteen minutes. Ian Major caps it off with his Sports Report, done from another booth where he has access to his own contacts and recording facilities. Hicks and Owen are supported by another radio reporter, who is located in the adjoining news room — itself a highly sophisiticated receiving and information centre. The telex is chattering away, almost without let. If an item comes in of urgent currency, a light flashes, a buzzer sounds and strip of paper will be ripped from the machine and whisked into Robert Hicks, the News Editor.

In another studio, adjoining Meehan, is Elizabeth Walley, collecting, collating reports on the traffic, accidents, roads to avoid;

all of which come in from regular out-stations — taxi drivers, petrol garages, people living in strategically located zones.

Debbie sings on . . .

The disc-jockey rides herd over it all. The strange part is that through one window you can see the outline of the transmission equipment — a silent, grey bank of lights and circuitry — untouched by human hand. For such is the degree of automation these days that the station engineers are the nine-to-five men. No longer are they seen at their own control panel behind their own window making signs, or cueing the announcers. Their work is mainly maintenance, development and experiment. But if anything does go wrong, there are the 'panic' signals. You can see them on the wall, high up, in front of the announcing console. Prosaic letters can light up if somebody, in the silent reaches of night, rings the front-door bell — 'Door Flash'. Then there is 'FM Call' and 'Time Signal'. Routine stuff. But the two to be dreaded read 'Program Fail' and 'Carrier Fail'. The chances of either lighting up are remote, but if it happens, the switch can be made to an emergency standby transmitter with little or no interruption.

It is 8 a.m. Debbie's song has ended. She collects her $200 and goes on her way, an ephemeral figure merging into the morning crowd.

At 9 a.m. Peter Meehan hands over. He thanks the audience for their company.

It is, at base, potted drama; live theatre on a small scale geared to cues and cross-overs; voices on, voices off. There are rehearsed lines, throwaway lines, the occasional ad-lib. The thrust of personality, the push of character projection; brief actors with strange, electronic props and walk-on roles. The sound of music, people, events. In the background, a city waking up to noise, congestion, humour, sometimes tragedy.

In short, the varied pace of commercial radio where the 'time' is always — now!

28 Now is the Time . . .

The 1980s have seen 3KZ maintain its position at or near the top of the popularity ladder. Concentration on the audience it sees as its major target — those in the years of greatest accumulation of material goods — has been the dominating factor in station thinking. Says Les Heil: 'To operate profitably in this business, you have to identify a large target group, research and develop a format that will appeal to them, and then sell advertising time on the basis of your station being the most popular among the members of that specific group'. Thus, being first or second in that segment of the audience is more important to KZ than being first or second in the over-all ratings.

The formula has been long-running and successful, and it is highly likely that in the foreseeable future the station will stick to that 'one great song after another', each earning its position on the station play-list by sheer dint of its appeal to a sufficient number of people who are prime listening prospects.

Supplementing that music, liberal segments of news, sports, community services, stunts and on-location promotions that literally take KZ to the people — shopping malls, beaches, sporting

fields, entertainment halls, recreation centres or wherever people congregate.

The song is never-ending, but both its transmission and reception will keep on improving. AM stereo is now an accomplished fact. With it has come trouble-free listening over a much wider range than previously thought possible. The 'perceived' fidelity difference and stereo advantage of FM have been largely overcome, and some of the FM difficulties encountered on car radios, like signal deterioration, need no longer be a hazard.

Competing FM and AM systems, in terms of quality of sound, are not likely to concede anything to the other, but it seems reasonably clear that the advent of AM stereo has, in trade terms, meant 'injection of a new vitality into the medium as a whole'. But that is not the end of it. Coming up is that 'digital' sound that Brian Perry has talked about, theoretically the ultimate — until someone refines it to a further point of near-perfection.

It is tempting to postulate the view that in the rapidly expanding spectrum of communications, 'traditional' television is faced with far greater challenges than radio. Cable, subscription or radiated television, video information services, satellites, home access, recording and direct response units, could well put television as we know it today, in much the same position as radio was thirty years ago. That is, threatened by new technology.

Says Les Heil: 'We have survived our greatest test. Radio, as a pure, singular, sound system has no perceivable fight on its hands. There is a growing interest in just listening. Just reading or watching, or watching and listening, have their own attractions, but the chances are that the number of ways you will be able to do that will erode the established base of television audiences as they are constituted today. I have no doubt, however, that "straight" television will survive and flourish — just like radio.

'But whereas we used to worry about our future, now it's television's turn. It is, therefore, instructive to recall that the gramophone, the theatre, the billboard, the cinema, the newspaper — even the Church — all felt that the end might be nigh when radio and television came on the scene. They all managed to adapt

and survive.' But he was careful to add that he would rather radio be where it is today, than where it was in 1956.

What will it all be like in ten years?

Les Heil's approach — and it seems to have worked very well in the last decade — is that 'the team is more effective as a group of people than as separate parts. The star of our station is the format, and the team that put that format together — and that involves everyone.' He is totally in accord with the view expressed recently in an overseas trade magazine: 'What differentiates the excellent stations from the merely mundane is consistency, character, a defined and confident personality taken from its Manager and a stable supportive management.'

From another angle, Des Foster, Federal Director of the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters says this: 'The "buzzword" for the next decade will be "convergence" — the coming together of a great range of new technologies which have particular relevance to broadcasting. The new technologies will create what has been aptly described as a smorgasbord of choices for the citizen who wants to be visually or aurally entertained, or informed, and who may also want to play an active role in that process. The odds are that the "traditional" media as we know them today may be not much more than a memory by the turn of the century. Radical though the changes will be, I believe radio will be the least affected, because of its unique qualities: portability and the absence of a visual component.

'Programming? The same kinds of programmes we get now, but much more specialised — all news, all rock, all classical, all sport — as more and more sources of information and entertainment become available.'

But let us go back to 1930 when it all began, at least as far as 3KZ is concerned. It has been a long haul from those cold, stone steps of the old Trades Hall, those sparsely-equipped studios, the muted sounds and memories, to the comparative luxury, electronic sophistication, restless vitality of 3KZ as it is today.

Many of the big names of yesteryear have disappeared, not only from the corridors but this mortal coil itself. Nevertheless, from

those who can still recall the 1930s and 1940s — either through working there or as one of the long parade of performers — there is, with one or two exceptions, a strong attachment to 'The Brighter Broadcasting Service'.

Let Horrie Dargie, maestro of the mouth-organ and two-time winner of The Parade, spell it out: 'I have many happy memories of the early days of 3KZ. In fact, if it were not for that station and the people who worked there, I would probably have not made music and theatre my way of life. Quite a few of us Paraders were eventually given our own shows on KZ. People like Smoky Dawson, Peggy Brooks, George Bellmaine and myself graduated to professional ranks as a result of the opportunities given us by the station. They were happy days, with nice people, and I look back on them with affection and gratitude.'

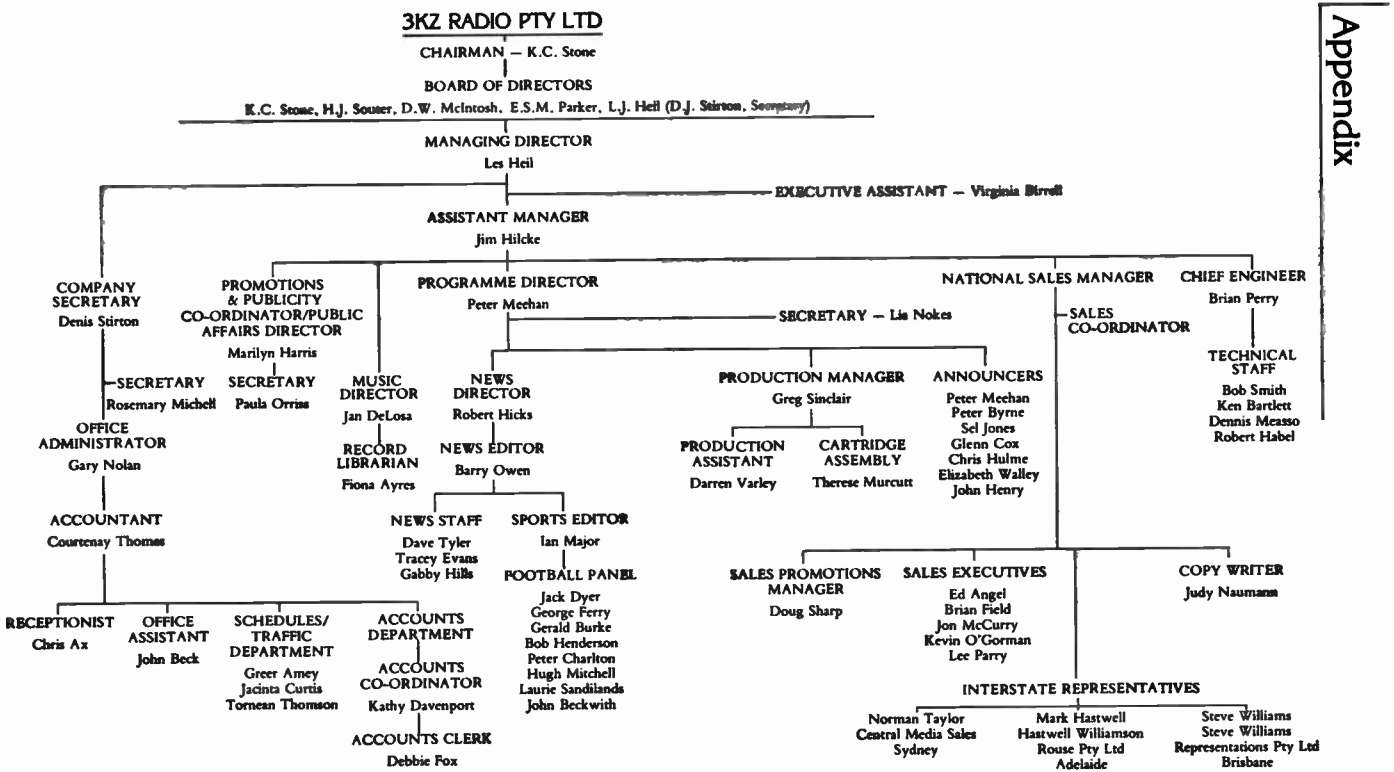
Says writer Kathy Dunlop: 'I enjoyed my years at KZ. Weird though the Morgans were, they at least knew how to run a station'.

Eddie Balmer, lyrically:

> Though you belted us and flayed us,
> And always underpaid us,
> It was that call-sign that made us — 3KZ.

The good thing, of course, is that it is still there. Just dial 1179.

Appendix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