

A PHOTO

Album

~ THE ABC
from 1932 to 1982



This album was compiled by Jack Bennett, Tony Denny,
Helen Findlay, Glenn Hamilton, Pat Kelly, Peter Lucas
and Nina Riemer.

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Introduction

At some time during every week of the year, almost every home in Australia has a television or radio set tuned to the ABC. It's been that way since July 1, 1932, when the Australian Broadcasting Commission began operations as the country's national broadcaster. Broadcasting has seen enormous changes since those early days. So has Australia. This family photograph album has been put together to remind you of those pioneers of the early days of Australian broadcasting, and to show you how your ABC has developed into one of the world's major broadcasting organisations—and how it remains distinctively Australian.

Left A military look was favoured for the ABC's first commissionaires. This is John Costella, appointed commissionaire of the Melbourne studios in 1932.



How It All Began...

Radio was a curiosity for us in Australia at the beginning of the twentieth century. From its earliest days it stirred imagination, sparked interest. In 1905 the Wireless Telegraphy Act officially recognised communication by wireless, then used mainly for navigation, and it was in that year that the Marconi Company built the first two-way radio station at Queenscliff near Port Phillip Heads in Victoria. The next year C P Bartholomew built an experimental station at Mosman in Sydney and by 1914 there were fourteen wireless telegraph stations around Australia and in Papua New Guinea.

Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd (AWA) was formed in 1913, its first managing director being Ernest Fisk who had served his apprenticeship with the Marconi Company. He built an experimental station in the garden of his Sydney home where, in September 1918, he received a message from Carnarvon, Wales, the station of Marchese Guglielmo Marconi, inventor of wireless telegraph. That was the first direct radio message between England and Australia.

Fisk addressed the Royal Society of NSW in 1919, finishing his talk with a recording of the National Anthem played five blocks away on a hand-wound gramophone. The following year, at the Melbourne Aircraft Exhibition, the Commonwealth Government radio service broadcast to the Exhibition building and AWA gave demonstrations in Sydney and Melbourne.

In 1923 a conference, convened to see if a unified broadcasting scheme could be devised, decided on the 'sealed set' scheme. This allowed for stations to be financed by listener fees. Listeners would use sets capable of receiving only on the station frequency they'd subscribed to. Sets were sealed by the Postmaster-General's

Department so that people couldn't listen to broadcasts they hadn't paid for. That was the theory. In practice people soon found how to listen to any station they wanted.

Australian broadcasting began officially at 8pm on November 23, 1923, when 2SB, owned by Broadcasters (Sydney) Ltd, transmitted a concert from its Phillip St offices. By June 1924 only 1400 listeners were licensed although the PMG had received applications from 5000 people who claimed to be experimenters wanting the right to listen to any station they chose. By July the Government abandoned the sealed set idea and launched a new broadcasting system. This system involved two different types of station, the A class station, financed by licence fees, and the B class station, to be financed by advertising revenue.

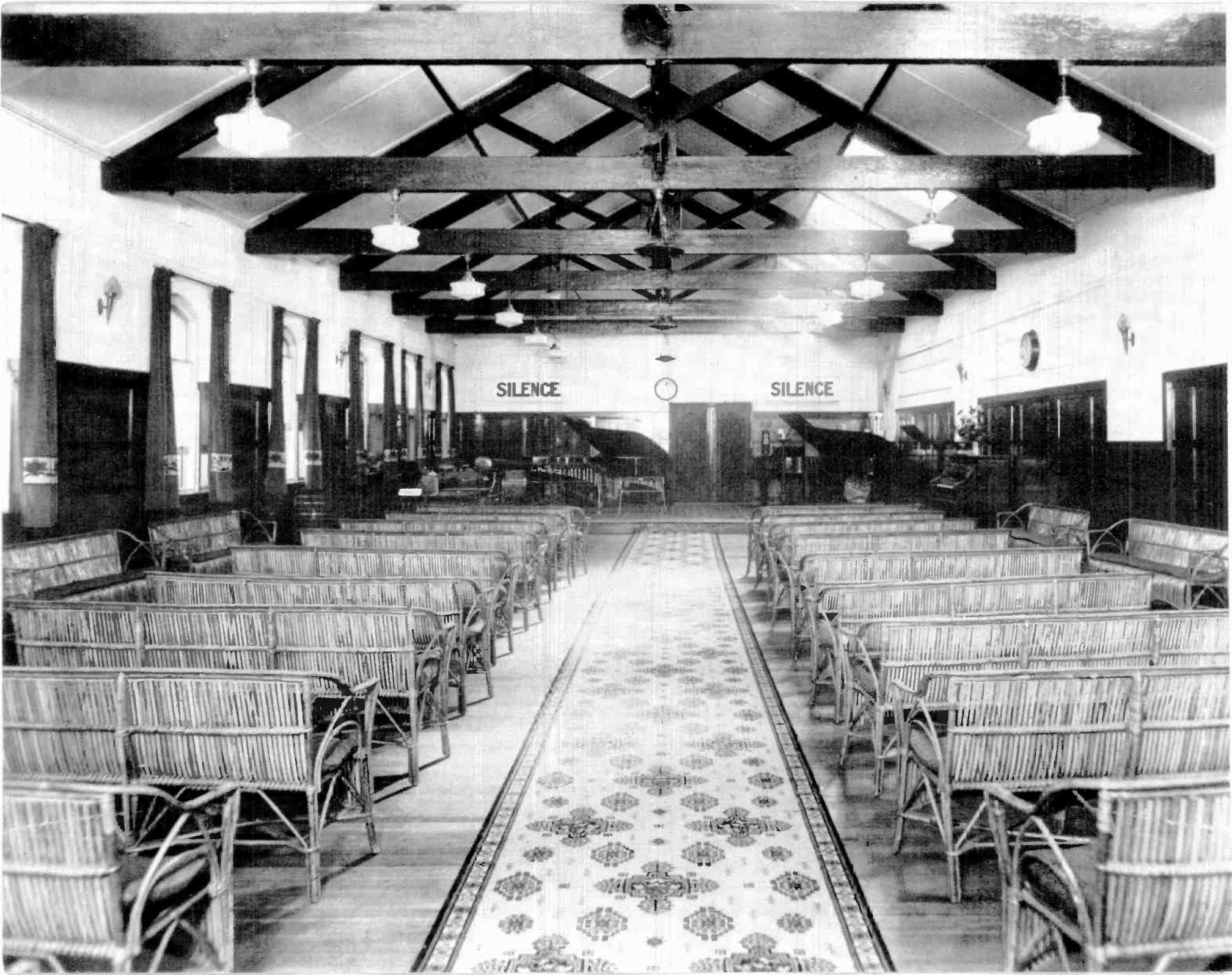
The A and B class system operated for five years but discontent at the absence of any kind of national service was growing. Providing a service to the more remote country areas would have cost the stations more than they were earning. Broadcasting was only for the cities.

The Government gave notice that it intended to establish a national broadcasting service by acquiring the technical equipment of the A class stations as their licences expired. The PMG's Department would operate the equipment and experienced entrepreneurs would produce programs under contract. Tenders were called for the supply of a full program schedule and a combined tender submitted by Greater Union Theatres Ltd, Fuller's Theatres Ltd and J Albert and Sons was accepted. The group formed the Australian Broadcasting Company which contracted to supply a full program to all States for three years until June 1932.

Soon after the Australian Broadcasting

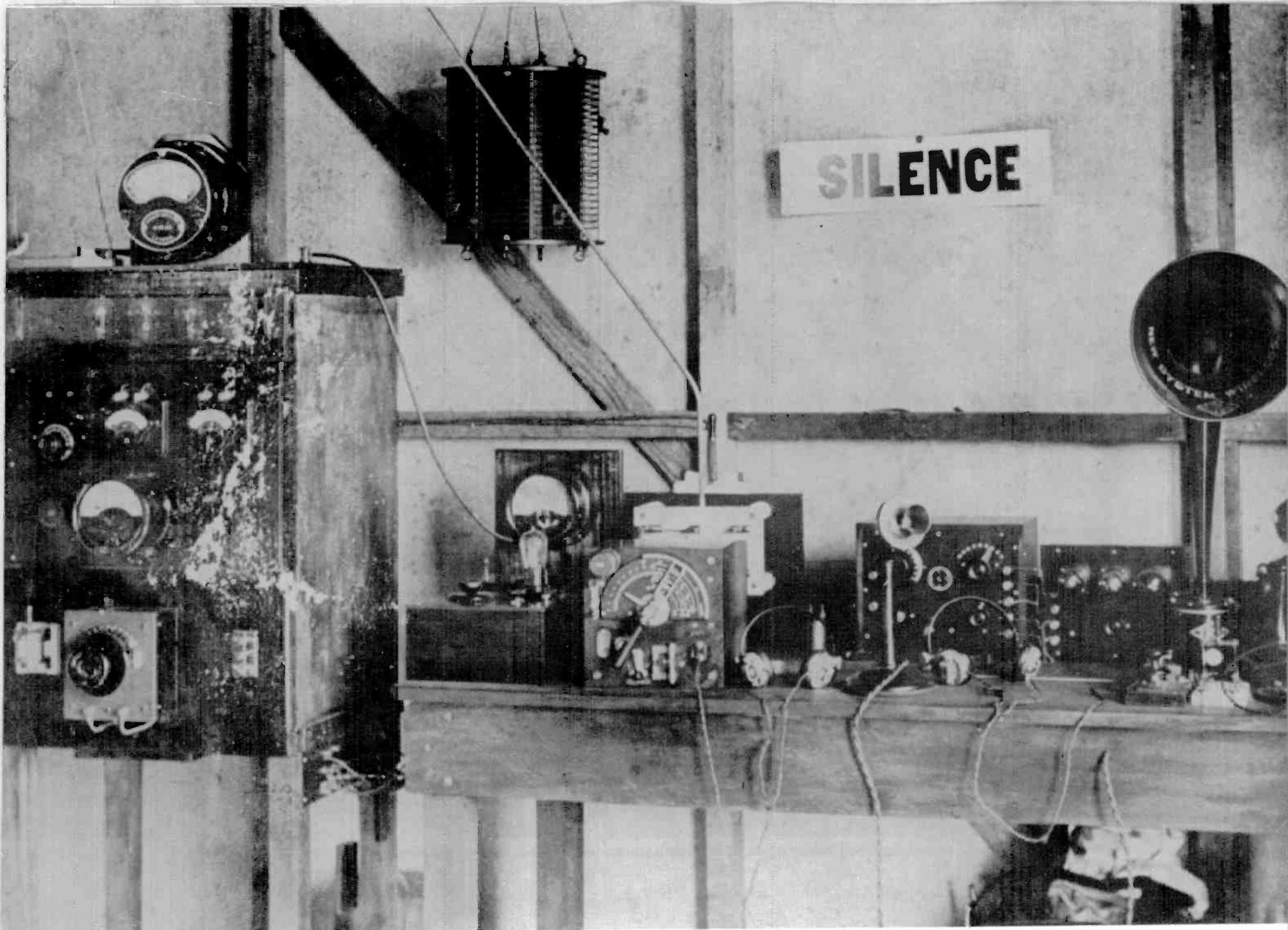
Company's formation, the Scullin Labor Government gained power, prepared a Bill to provide national broadcasting early in 1931 and told the Australian Broadcasting Company its contract was to be terminated. Before the Bill could be introduced the Government was defeated but demand for a change in the broadcasting system was so strong that the incoming United Australia Party could not ignore it and adopted almost unchanged the Bill prepared by the previous Government. This Bill provided for the control of A class stations by a commission. After a lengthy debate Federal Parliament passed the Bill which became the Act establishing the Australian Broadcasting Commission. It received the Royal Assent on May 17, 1932.

Left 2FC's first broadcasting studio in the Farmer and Co building. Members of the 2FC Trio, formed in 1923, were John Farnsworth Hall (violin), Horace Keats (piano) and John Boatwright (cello).



SILENCE

SILENCE



Left Melbourne's 3LO broadcasting studio where community singing was held.

Above Sydney 2BL used this equipment for experimental concert broadcasts and, later, regular broadcasts in 1923.



The Melbourne Dance Band, 1932, conductor Cecil Fraser (right). Dick Bentley is second from left in the front row.

The Thirties

On the first day of July, 1932, we came into existence . . . the Australian Broadcasting Commission, on air in every capital city and four regional stations. We had our offices at 264 Pitt Street, Sydney, and on opening day there were 265 people working for us.

Opening day programs included our first *Children's Session*, conducted by Bobby Bluegum, our first sports program—*Racing Notes*—by MA Ferry (we believe he was the world's first regular race-caller, broadcasting from his flat near Randwick racecourse), British Wireless News received by cable from London, weather, stock exchange and shipping news, the *ABC Women's Association Session* (topics were 'commonsense housekeeping' and needlecraft), a talk on Goldfish and their Care, plenty of music and *Morning Devotions*, the first of fifty years of daily devotional sessions.

When we began broadcasting there were 369 945 licensed radio receivers. The number rose to 469 477 during that initial year and that was important because we were financed by a proportion of the licence fees. In 1932 we received 12/- of the 24/- a licence fee cost, not much in today's currency (\$2.40) but a lot in 1932 when the average wage for men was about £4 (\$8) a week and about £2 (\$4) for women.

By the end of that first year we had regular program relays between Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide and by 1933 a relay link between Adelaide and Perth, but until the Bass Strait cable was in operation in March 1936 our Hobart station had to pick up what programs it could, make its own or use disc-recordings of programs shipped from the mainland.

In those early days it was our job to 'establish and utilise . . . groups of musicians for the rendition of orchestral, choral and band music

of high quality'. So we formed studio orchestras, wireless choruses, dance bands and a National Military Band which gave concerts throughout Australia. But our first big musical step came in 1936 when Professor (later Sir) Bernard Heinze advised us to establish studio broadcasting orchestras in all States, providing a core of professional musicians that was augmented for public concerts. We gave annual Celebrity Subscription series of concerts and engaged overseas conductors and soloists and when we brought out such musical luminaries as Malcolm Sargent, Richard Tauber, Lotte Lehmann, Arthur Rubinstein and Artur Schnabel, our audiences grew rapidly.

From the beginning we saw it as part of our job to foster local creative talent. In 1932 we launched the first of our Australian Composers' Competitions which attracted more than 800 entries, and in 1934 we held a competition for plays and sketches as no local and little overseas drama was written specially for radio. By the end of the 'thirties more than half of our main evening plays were written by Australians.

Schools broadcasts were then, as now, a major part of our service, and in 1934 we made broadcasting history with our 'synthetic' broadcasts of the cricket Tests played in England between Australia and England. Our sporting commentators achieved marvellously authentic-sounding results by blending cabled descriptions of the Tests into commentary and sound effects produced in our Sydney studios.

News and current affairs were very much our concern from the start. Our first Federal Department was Talks, predecessor of nearly all our spoken word departments. Its head was C J A (later Sir Charles) Moses, who was to become our longest-serving General Manager. But in

1934 matters of national or international interest were not debated live on air as they are today. Instead, prominent personalities expressed their opinions. 'Distinguished Speakers' listed in our first Annual Report included King George V, Pope Pius XI, the Prime Minister of the UK Ramsay MacDonald, WM Hughes, JT Lang, JB Priestley, GK Chesterton, Air-Commodore Sir Charles Kingsford Smith and JH Scullin.

From 1932 to 1936 our stations in each State produced their own news bulletins—mostly the duty announcer read local and foreign news items straight from the newspapers, an arrangement sanctioned by a gentlemen's agreement with the Australian Newspaper Proprietors' Association. A midday news commentary by 'The Watchman' was one of our most popular programs. In 1936 we appointed a Federal News Editor to control a national news service relayed from Sydney to all States except Western Australia (because of the time and distance factors). For the first time, too, our news broadcasts contained material specially written for radio while 'back-grounders', as we'd call them now, were provided by 'prominent students of overseas affairs'. We arranged for a cable service from London to cover the abdication of King Edward VIII, and in 1939 appointed a full-time reporter in London.

One of the by-products of our national service was the immediate and large listeners' mail we received. In our first year of operations there were 189 749 letters, 57 601 of them from children. By 1939 there was so much mail we decided to establish a program guide and forum for our listeners and so was born the *ABC Weekly*, priced at 3d and published for twenty years.

Mary - Mary
Mary Hamlet



Billy Burns

Favourites at 3 LC Melb
The Children's Hour Story-tellers

Hand-out postcards
for children's programs





Above J Osborne gave a regular gardening talk—*The Weekend in Your Garden*—on 7ZL.

Right In August 1933 ABC Radio station 7ZL Hobart produced its first major dramatic production—the play *Shadows Alive* by FS Shaw, based on the exploits of the Tasmanian bushranger Martin Cash. Frank Purchas, seen here with the pistol Cash used in his bushranging days, played the part of the outlaw.





TONIGHT
JIM DAVIDSON AND HIS AUSTRALIANS

PALAIS DE DANSE

RICO
DANCING

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
LIBRARY

JIM DAVIDSON AND HIS AUSTRALIANS

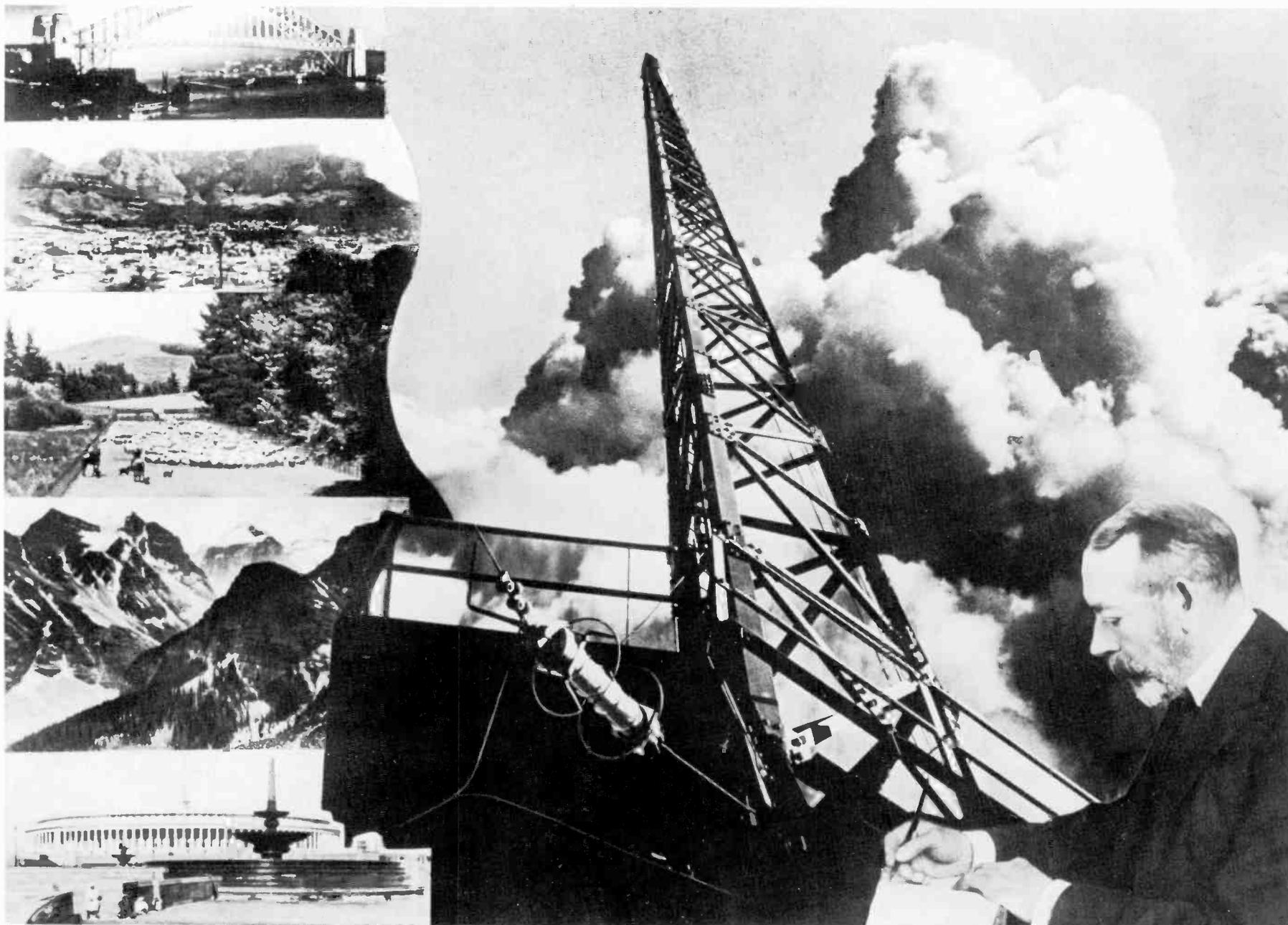
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Left One of the most popular dance bands of the 'thirties was Jim Davidson and His Australians, under contract to the ABC from 1935.

Right New Zealander Jean Batten broadcasting at the end of her record-breaking flight from Great Britain in 1934.







Left ABC Radio adaptation of *Daddy Long Legs* in 1935 with (left to right) Philip Haddon-Cave, Dorothy Green, Betty Benjamin, Pamela Haddon-Cave and Janet McPhee.

Above The sovereign's Christmas broadcasts included contributions from all Commonwealth countries from 1935 when King George V's broadcast was titled 'The Great Family'.



In 1934, when Australian broadcasting and long-distance aviation were still in their infancy, the ABC was involved in a dramatic incident which linked both. A special air race from Mildenhall Bay, England, to Melbourne was in progress. On the night of October 23, 1934, a Dutch entry in the race, the KLM DC 2 aircraft Uiver (Stork) was reported lost in stormy weather somewhere over Australia. Arthur Newnham, a 2CO announcer, was at his home in Albury when he heard the drone of an aero-engine overhead. From information he had about the air-race route he instantly realised the aircraft blundering about in the murk over Albury must be the Uiver.

He rushed to the 2CO studios—but could not go on air to contact the circling aircraft because there were no PMG broadcasting technicians on duty. However, an engineer, Jim Nicholls, was on the premises, and he and Newnham patched together a sort of jury broadcasting rig—Newnham used an ordinary telephone handset as a microphone, and Nicholls got him to air. Newnham broadcast an urgent appeal to Albury car-owners—would they drive to Albury racecourse and use their headlights to illuminate an emergency landing strip on the racecourse? The cars sped out by the dozen in response to Newnham's plea and the makeshift strip was soon lit up enough to ensure a safe—if tricky—landing. Meanwhile, to let the Dutch fliers know where they were, the civic authorities had Albury's street lights flashing the town's name in Morse code.

The Dutch fliers—Captain K D Parmentier and his co-pilot, Jan Moll—saw the flashing town lights and the illuminated racecourse, dropped a flare in acknowledgement, and landed safely, although Uiver became bogged in the racecourse's soft turf. The next day 300 enthusiastic Albury citizens pulled the plane clear and, lightened by off-loading mail and passen-

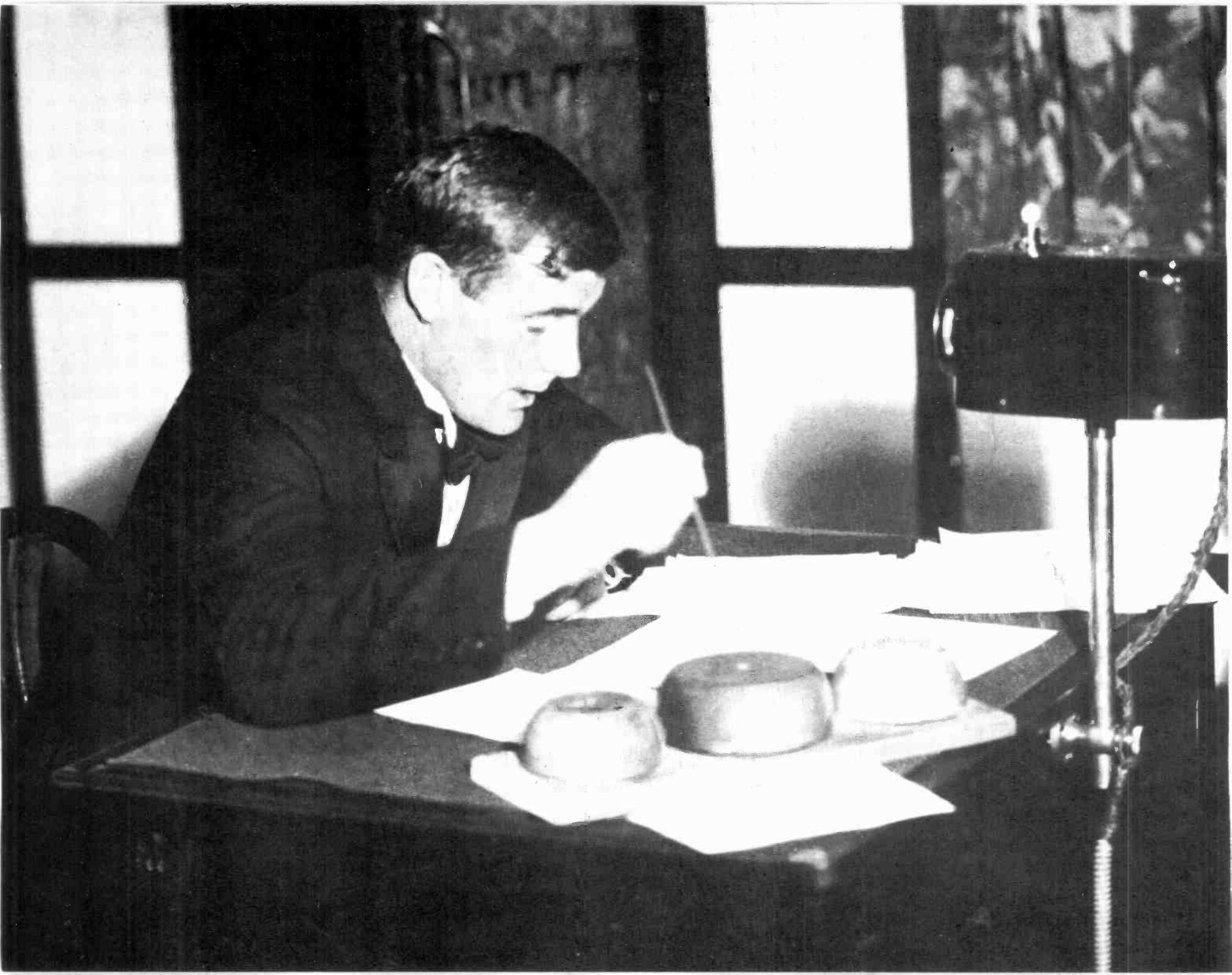


gers, it flew on to Melbourne and second place in the air race. Uiver won the handicap section with an elapsed time to Melbourne of three days eighteen hours thirteen minutes.

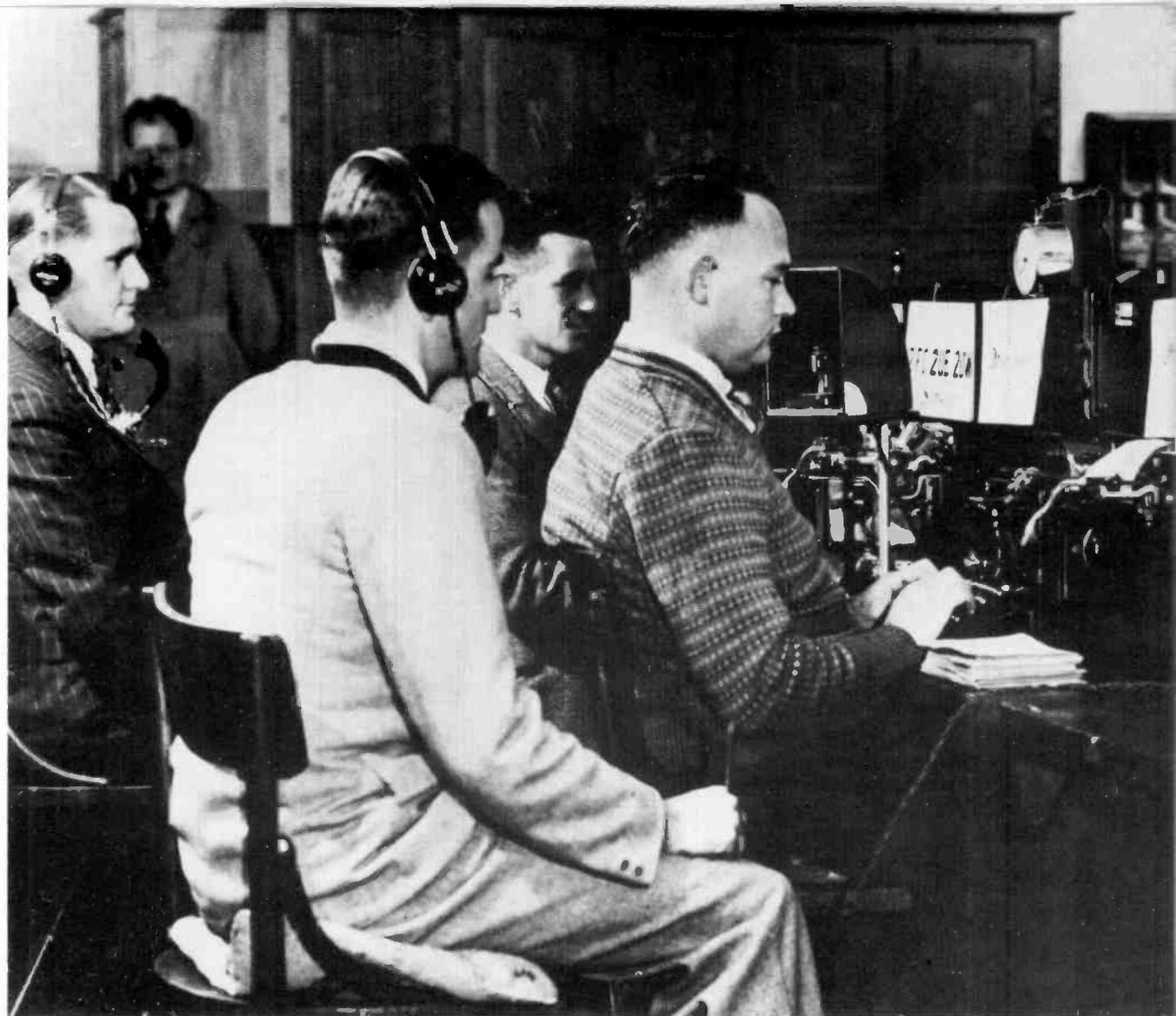
In appreciation of the role played by the city guiding Uiver safely to earth, the Dutch Government presented the Lord Mayor of Albury with a commemorative plaque—in Delft Blue, of

course—which still hangs in the Council Chambers; 2CO was given this drawing (*above*) by a Dutch artist, UA Raaf.

Left Enthusiastic crowds flocked to Amsterdam's Schipol Airport to welcome the DC 2 Uiver home. (Photograph by courtesy of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines)



In the 1930s, cricket was probably the most popular sport in Australia, so when the Australian team was in Britain for the 1934 Test series, the ABC had to devise a way of getting fast and factual broadcasts to its listeners, in the days before shortwave broadcasting. The answer was 'synthetic cricket'—broadcasting ball-by-ball descriptions of matches within minutes of play. The broadcasts were made from the Sydney ABC studios and this is how it worked. Reporters in England typed their stories simultaneously with play. Stories were telephoned to the cable office for dispatch to Australia at the end of each over, or earlier if a wicket fell. The messages were received in morse code at the GPO in Sydney and were relayed by direct telephone line to the broadcast studio. The service developed a remarkable expertise and information reached the studio from the field in England in forty-five seconds. At the studio, ABC staff quickly amplified the messages to recreate a description of play and handed them to the broadcaster. Listeners then heard a ball-by-ball account of the game just as if the announcer were watching it. The atmosphere of the game was expertly recreated by sound effects men, who brought in applause and other crowd noises as required. The announcer contributed to the atmosphere by tapping a pencil against half a coconut shell and simulating the sound of bat meeting ball. No attempt was made to hide the fact that the descriptions actually came from the ABC studios, but the illusion was so successful that many people refused to believe that they did not come from the ground where the match was being played.



Above: At the Telegraph Branch of the PMG the operator on the extreme right J Luke, is receiving and transcribing a Morse code message cabled from London. Immediately behind Luke sits a telephone

operator, who reads the decoded version and telephones it through to the ABC studios.

Left Compiling the commentary for one of the 1934 Tests is Charles Moses (later Sir Charles) who became General Manager in 1935. He retired in 1965.



Left In September 1935 Australian pioneer aviator Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, on the eve of his departure for England, broadcast a farewell message to Australian listeners. On November 6, 1935, with Tom Pethybridge as copilot, 'Smithy' flew *Lady Southern Cross* out of Hamble airport near London at the start of his attempt to break the Australia-England flight record. He had arranged to cable to the ABC progress reports of the flight from stops along the route and he filed his first report from Greece, the second from Iraq. On November 7, *Lady Southern Cross* took off from Allahabad, heading south-east for Australia. The aircraft was seen passing over Calcutta and Akyab, Burma, and by an Adelaide solo flyer, Jimmy Melrose, going the other way across the Bay of Bengal. After that, the *Lady Southern Cross* flew into oblivion and history. No trace of the aircraft, or of Kingsford Smith or Pethybridge, has ever been found.

Right In 1938 a young hillbilly singer from Tennessee named Bob Dyer was engaged to tour all States with Jim Davidson's band.





Left On December 20, 1939, Australia's overseas shortwave service, Australia Calling, later known as Radio Australia, began broadcasting in English, French, German, Dutch and Spanish. Pictured at the official opening are, standing, left to right: S G Wigmore, Basil Kirke, C P Smith, George Ivan Smith and Ronald Jackson (German service), Mark Visser (Dutch service). Seated: Henri Mornand (French service), Carlos Zalapa (Spanish service), John Royle (English service).

Right In 1939 a young comedian named Mo McCackie was lured from the stage to work on ABC Radio with Jim Davidson's Dance Band. In 1940 he was given his own show, titled *The Misadventures of Mo*. Within a few years Roy Rene had become one of Australia's most popular performers.





Left Baritone John Brownlee and conductor Malcolm Sargent were among the leading local and overseas artists who performed at the 250 concerts arranged by the ABC in 1939-40. Malcolm Sargent was brought to Australia from Britain by the ABC, while Brownlee performed at ABC concerts after fulfilling his obligations to the commercial organisation which had brought him to Australia. When their professional engagements were completed, both performed free of charge at concerts in Sydney and Melbourne in aid of the Red Cross. Left to right: accompanist Ivor Newton, John Brownlee, Malcolm Sargent, and Mrs Brownlee.

Right In 1938 sound effects were simple but effective. In this scene from the crime serial *Grey Face* (written by Max Afford) Des Turner blows a police whistle to indicate that the house is surrounded; Jack Butler, as the criminal, slams and bolts the door of the hideout, forcing the police to break in—the sounds of rending timber being provided by Wally Hanley jumping on a fruit-box.







Left Marie Dalton and John Bedouin in Fitzmaurice Hill's serial *Wilkins Jorum*

Above WA (Mick) Ferry, the first regular race caller in Australia, joined the ABC in the early 1930s and was our chief Sydney racing commentator until his death in 1943.

Right Elsa Stralia, a popular prima donna of the 1930s





The Forties

World War II made more and more difference to us in the 'forties. With the Department of Information and the defence authorities, our stations and the commercial stations planned special emergency programs. We even had plans for demolishing broadcasting equipment to prevent its falling into enemy hands and to stop sabotage by fifth columnists.

We had to submit most programs to the censors three weeks before broadcast date so weather reports and other broadcasts were eliminated. More staff joined up as the war continued and this gave the opportunity to many women to become announcers, supervisors and musicians. War in the Pacific and the threat to Australia were underlined by the Japanese air raids on Wyndham, Darwin and Broome in '42 and we temporarily suspended our northern Queensland service.

Early in the war we decided we had to have our own news gathering in the field with the AIF. We established a unit with Lawrence H Cecil as commanding officer and commentator Frank Hurley as second-in-command. When Hurley was transferred to the Australian Information Service, as replacement we took on Chester Wilmot, soon to become our most famous war correspondent. The unit was based in Gaza, Egypt, reporting and recording in the Middle East and Greece (including the attack on Tobruk and the Allied advance to Benghazi). In December '41 we sent another mobile unit to Darwin, we had correspondents throughout the huge South-East Asia/Pacific theatre and we formed and operated a third mobile field unit in Papua New Guinea from 1942.

As well as special programs for servicemen and women we organised in-camp concerts and play-writing and short story competitions.

Left In 1941 a handsome young actor co-starred with the army.

Austerity measures required our licence fee share to be cut but the number of licence holders had increased tremendously and by June 30, 1941, 1 293 266 licences had been issued. Our growing Concerts organisation also had particular problems. The flow of overseas artists stopped and transport difficulties, partial black-outs and the official discouragement of large public gatherings made it difficult to maintain quality concerts. The main burden of conducting here fell to Professor Bernard Heinze and conductors such as Joseph Post, Percy Code and William Cade.

In 1939 we had bought a cable news service and the right to re-broadcast all BBC News Bulletins. Now we introduced a thrice-daily national news bulletin to all ABC stations and could re-broadcast speeches by wartime leaders Winston Churchill, Franklin D Roosevelt and John Curtin. Curtin had instructed us 'to cheer people up' so we increased our light entertainment, had morale-building radio documentaries, Listening Groups to discuss Allied war aims and peacetime re-construction, and began *The Nation's Forum of the Air* in 1944 to encourage discussion of national problems. We gave more air-time to the works of Australian composers and encouraged young talent with the program *Young Australia* and the introduction, in 1944, of our annual Concerto and Vocal Competition. It was in 1944, too, that General Douglas MacArthur opened 9PA Port Moresby, which was under our control and funded by the Australian Army and the US Army.

The 'forties saw the start of two of our best-loved programs—first, in 1941, came the Argonauts' Club in association with the *Children's Session* and Elizabeth, Mac and Joe and their friends became part of a nation-wide radio

family. Then in 1942 we launched *Kindergarten of the Air*, an instant success which, forty years later, is still a regular program. It has been copied by broadcasters across the world.

When the war ended we had to re-establish our service on a peace-time basis. We attended the first Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference, held in 1945, began our parliamentary broadcasts in 1946 and made one of the most important steps in our career when, with the help of the NSW State Government and the Sydney City Council, we established our first full-time orchestra, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Within four years we had formed full-time orchestras in the other five States.

We'd had a program called *Town and Country Hour* since 1941 but in 1945 we re-designed it as *The Country Hour* to encourage a better understanding between country and city and in 1949 we began another popular program, *The Land And Its People*, best described as a radio predecessor to ABC-TV's *A Big Country*. In *The Country Hour* we also started a serial called *The Lawsons*. It was written by Gwen Meredith—a 'saga of a country family'—and was hugely popular. The equally popular and immensely long-running *Blue Hills* was its sequel.

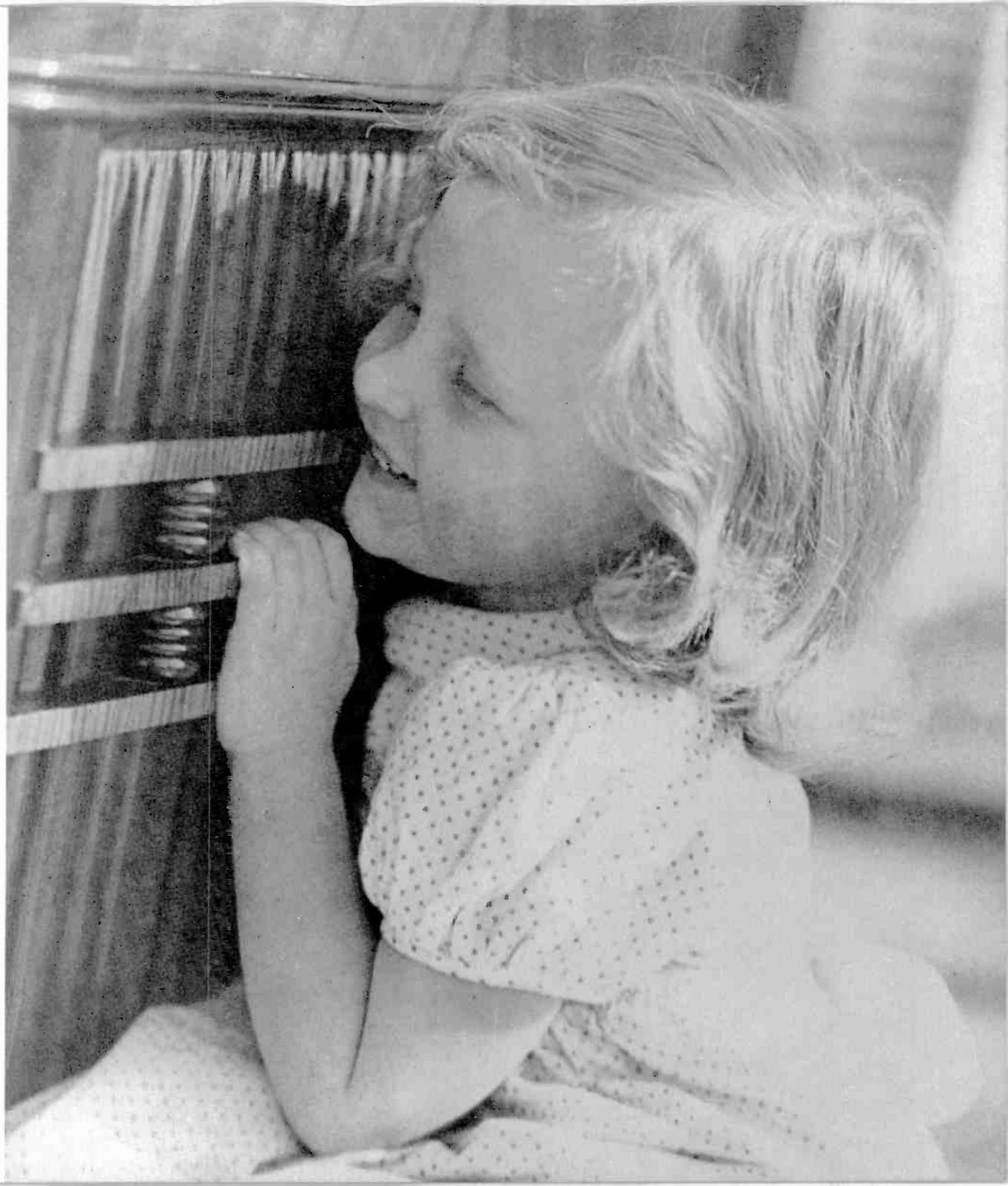
In 1947 we established our own news gathering service, the ABC News Division, now the largest single news-gathering body in Australia with full-time staff correspondents around the world. In 1949 the Federal Government introduced a system of financing us by a direct annual parliamentary appropriation (instead of a share of the licence fees). Our national network had grown to forty-five stations on the air for 257 462 hours. In that year 1949 too we began our *Showman* program, still going strong in the 'eighties.

Left In 1941 a handsome young actor co-starred with Neva Carr Glynn in the ABC radio play *Mr Deeds Goes to Town*. The next month Peter Finch joined



Left Harold Williams—Orpheus of the ABC Argonauts' Club—with some of the program's young listeners in 1941. Standing on Williams' left is Charles Mackerras, now Sir Charles Mackerras, and chief conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. On the extreme right is David Netheim and bottom left is Don Unicomb. Both went on to establish reputations as actors. The boy on Williams' lap is Don Unicomb's brother Morris.

Right Started in Western Australia in 1942, *Kindergarten of the Air* rapidly won a huge national audience. This 1943 publicity photograph typified for thousands the appeal of the program.





Left In December 1940 the ABC's General Manager, Charles Moses, joined the increasing number of Australians in the armed forces. At a special function on the eve of Captain Moses' departure on active service, the Assistant General Manager, T W Bearup, made a presentation on behalf of the staff. Seated, centre, is Keith Barry, President of the ABC Club.

Right To bring the actual sound of an air raid on enemy territory into listeners' homes, technician Len Edwards—pictured—built this recording equipment and fitted it into a RAAF Liberator bomber. Edwards and ABC war correspondent Raymond Paull used the equipment to record an attack on Japanese oil tanks on an island off the north coast of Papua New Guinea by Australian bombers flying from Wewak on March 21, 1944. Edwards' improvised equipment—enthusiastically described at the time as a neat, compact job—weighed 50 kilograms. It performed well during the raid.





Left An up-and-coming young actor and singer, Keith Michell, appeared with Nanette Gilbertson and Audrey Parsons in the musical radio play *Hit a New Note* in August 1947.

Right War correspondent Chester Wilmot

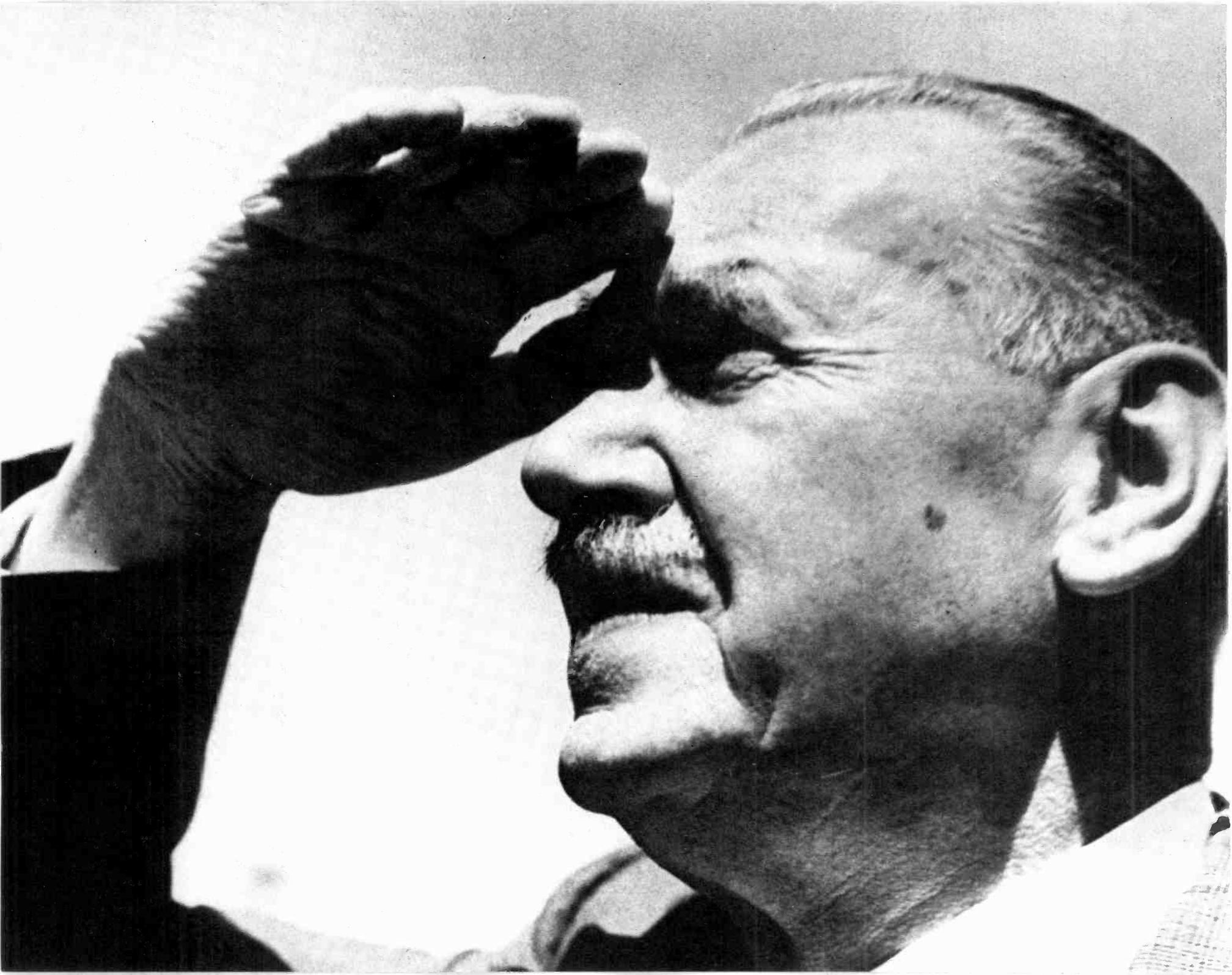




Left Even the cool Noel Coward got overheated during a concert at Puckapunyal, Victoria, when he gave a concert for the troops in November 1940. Coward toured Australia raising funds for the war effort, entertained the forces with several concerts and also gave ABC Radio talks.

Right Damien Parer was probably the most famous Australian war photographer of World War II. With an unerring eye for a good picture and incredible daring—he often got in front of advancing troops—he filmed Australians fighting in the Middle East, Greece, and the Pacific. In Papua New Guinea, ABC war correspondent Chester Wilmot—himself destined for fame as a reporter and writer—interviewed Parer for the people back home shortly after Parer's return from the attack on the Japanese-held village of Salamaua, in north-east Papua New Guinea, in 1943. The next year Parer was killed while filming the American landings on Peleiu Island in the Philippine Sea.





Left Atholl Fleming, 'Mac' of the Argonauts' Club

Right Escapist entertainment was popular in the 1940s. Queenie Ashton and Eric Bush, seen here in a publicity photograph for the radio romance *Masqueradio*, helped the listening public forget their worries for a while.





Left In 1948 The Old Vic company recorded performances of *School for Scandal* and *Richard III* at the ABC's Forbes Street studios in Sydney. Seen here discussing the productions are, from left, Terrence Morgan, Laurence Olivier, Peter Cushing, George Relph, ABC Director of Drama FD Clewlow, Mercia Swinburne and Vivien Leigh.

Right In 1947 the ABC picked this fresh-faced youngster to play the lead in *Stumpy*, a radio serial for children written by Ruth Park. Today John Meillon is one of Australia's most respected actors.





Left The finalists in the ABC Circular Waltzing Competition of 1941, WA Division

Right In November 1940 the ABC created a small sensation . . . it appointed a woman announcer. Margaret Doyle, pictured, became the first woman to be rostered for general announcing duties.







Left ABC war correspondent Bill Marien made himself comfortable on the tail of a downed Japanese fighter to compose his report of the capture of Lae, Papua New Guinea, by Allied forces in September 1943.

Above In 1940 this was the newest ABC Mobile Studio, a caravan specially adapted for broadcasting and used for concerts at 2nd AIF and Militia camps.

Right One of the most familiar voices on the airwaves in the 1930s and 1940s belonged to race-caller Big Jim Carroll. Trained as an accountant, Carroll was approached at very short notice to call the 1934 Easter Meeting at Williamston, NSW, for the ABC. He did it so well that he was signed up the next day as the ABC's regular course commentator. During his career Carroll called twelve Melbourne Cups, starting with Peter Pan's victory in 1934 and ending with Rainbird's in 1945.





The Fifties

We all remember the 'fifties as the decade when television came to Australia but before that . . .

As part of the Commonwealth Jubilee Celebrations in 1951 we staged a re-enactment of the Sturt Expedition, the largest re-enactment attempted here and also the largest outside broadcast we had ever arranged. The first *School of the Air* broadcast was made over the Flying Doctor Service equipment at Alice Springs using transcriptions of ABC and BBC Schools broadcasts; we made our first *Sportsman of the Year Award* (now one of Australia's major sporting accolades) to tennis player Frank Sedgman; we introduced regional farm *Breakfast Sessions*; and, in the '51-'52 financial year, we organised 504 orchestral concerts, 190 of them being free concerts.

Audiences continued to grow for the Youth Concerts we'd begun during the war. The audience for our Schools broadcasts was growing too and sales of program booklets neared the half-million mark. We continued to arrange tours by overseas concert artists and encouraged local talent, featuring Australians in 300 public concerts and many more in studio broadcasts.

Local talent was important to us in other areas, especially among writers. In 1951-1953 Australian writers submitted more than 700 manuscripts to us and we used 270 of them. The 'fifties was the time for developing the Feature as a special radio art form. It was also the time when we had special programs for migrants and when we brought to Australia successful stars of BBC comedy programs to take part in locally-made comedy shows such as *Gently Bentley* with Dick Bentley and *Idiot Weekly* with Spike Milligan.

In 1954, the year of our extensive coverage of the first Royal Tour by a reigning monarch,

Queen Elizabeth II, the Federal Government appointed us as the authority to provide national television programs. Our television studios were to be at Gore Hill in Sydney and at Ripponlea in Melbourne. We began buying programs from the BBC and other overseas organisations and we started a TV training school in Sydney.

The Prime Minister, R G Menzies, opened our television service in Sydney at 7 pm on November 5, 1956. Michael Charlton was the compere and among other ABC well-knowns were Frank Legg, James Dibble and John West. Paul O'Loughlin produced our first TV play, J M Barrie's *The Twelve-Pound Look*, which went on air at 8.00pm and starred Margo Lee, Alexander Archdale, Joan Lord and John Brunskill. Melbourne's opening night was two weeks later, November 19. It followed a similar format to Sydney, with John Royle and Corinne Kerby as the announcers.

Only three days after our Melbourne TV service came on air the 1956 Olympic Games began in Melbourne. All Olympic Games events were telerecorded and sent to Sydney by air each night. The Sydney mobile TV unit went to Melbourne to back up the outside broadcast van already there and, despite our relative lack of experience, we managed first-class cover of the Games. In 1956 too we recognised that South-East Asia was an area of considerable and growing interest to Australia and appointed a Singapore-based representative. In 1959 we also opened an office in Djakarta, Indonesia.

In the financial year 1957-58 we produced twenty-four live one-hour or longer plays (seven by Australian playwrights) in our Sydney and Melbourne studios, an achievement no other television organisation in the country had ever attempted. Also in 1957 we helped establish the

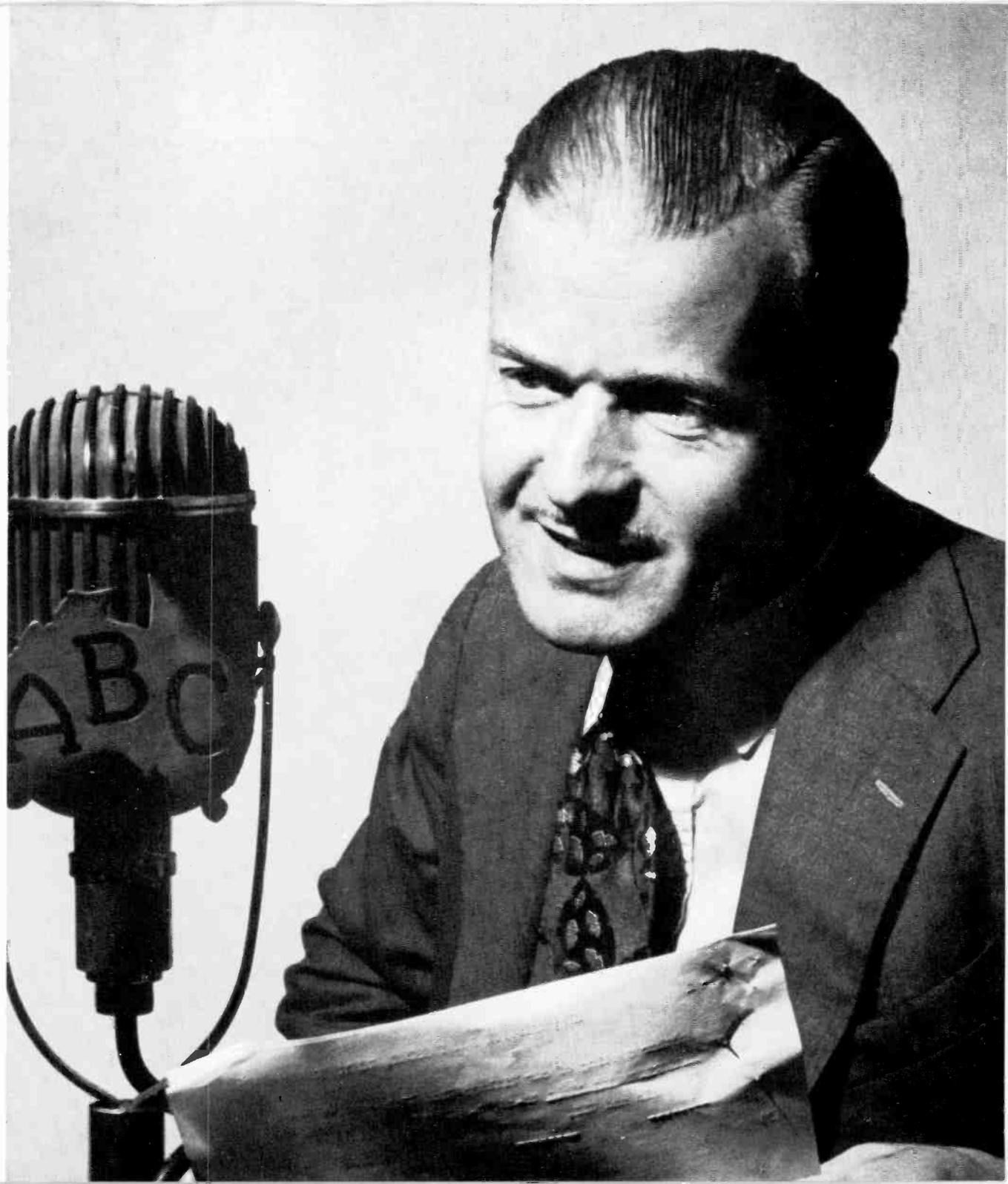
British Commonwealth International Newsfilm Agency known as Visnews. This is the world's largest television newsfilm agency and its present Chairman is our manager for Europe, Stuart Revill. Then, in the last year of the decade, we began *The ABC Lectures*, later re-named *The Boyer Lectures*, after an ABC Chairman, Sir Richard Boyer.

Left Johnny O'Keefe and the Dee Jays on Six O'Clock Rock



Left ABC Sporting Service reporter Talbot Duckmanton—later the ABC's General Manager—with members of the Sydney University Rugby Union team before the second Test in the Australian Universities-New Zealand Universities series.

Right Ralph Collins, whose *Sunday Morning Concert* began on ABC Radio in 1958, still has a large and devoted following.





Left British philosopher Bertrand Russell, one of the many famous men and women whose ideas have been brought into Australian homes through ABC Radio. With Bertrand Russell are Talks Officer Gordon Betts, left, and Director of Talks BH Molesworth.

Right Joseph Post, one of Australia's leading conductors and an Assistant Director of Music for the ABC.





Left While host Wilfrid Thomas eavesdrops, Gogie Withers checks John McCallum's heartbeat in a 1951 skit in *The Wilfrid Thomas Show*.

Right In 1951 Australia celebrated fifty years of nationhood. The ABC's contribution to the celebrations was a re-enactment of Charles Sturt's 1829 Murray River expedition. With George Macleay, Sturt traced the Murrumbidgee to its junction with the Murray, and then travelled down the Murray to the sea. With Grant Taylor and Rod Taylor playing respectively Sturt and Macleay, the ABC re-enacted the expedition's departure from Sydney in November 1829 and then—with the actors accompanied by Army personnel to help with the transport of supplies and to man the whaler used on the river sections of the journey—the whole journey was retraced, on foot, by horseback, and by boat, with regular radio reports of its progress broadcast from towns along the route.





Left Senior ABC Sound Effects Officer Des Turner provides the clashing of a swordfight for a 1953 play with a pair of real fencing foils.

Right A young singer and entertainer from Perth, Rolf Harris, was becoming increasingly popular on radio in 1953.





Left Broadcasting of proceedings from Parliament House, Canberra.

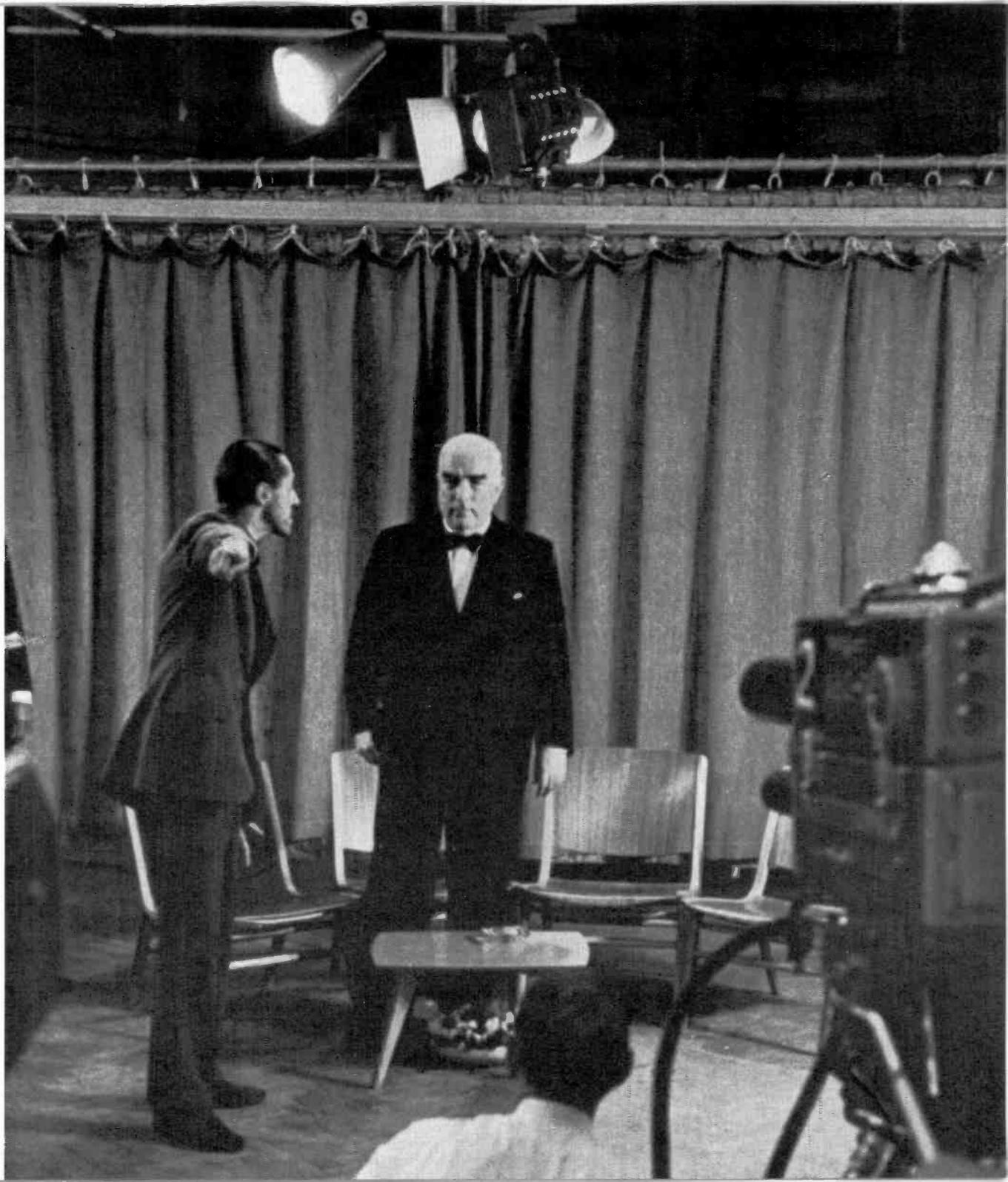
Right Ann Roberts conducts a *Kindergarten of the Air* program at the Adelaide Show in 1955.





Left ABC-TV covering the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne

Right It looks as though compere Mungo McCallum is ordering Mr Menzies off the set, but in fact he is only giving the Prime Minister a last-minute briefing before the cameras roll on ABC-TV's opening night in Sydney on November 5, 1956.





Left Inter-city and even inter-country quiz contests were popular in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1956 this Melbourne University team competed against an Edinburgh University team via ABC radio link. Left to right: Alix McDonald, John Peter White, producer Bill Newnham, Joan Lindblad, Barry Jones and quizmaster Creighton Burns.

Right Child prodigy Daniel Barenboim was a visiting concert artist in 1958.





Left A popular radio show in the 1950s was *Much Murdoch and Horne*. At rehearsal are Neva Carr Glynn, Ray Barrett, Georgie Sterling, Richard Murdoch and Kenneth Horne.

Right ABC Sydney race caller Lachie Melville







Left One of ABC-TV's early panel games was the quiz show *What's in the Picture*. In this 1958 picture are (standing) panel chairman Harry Dearth; (left to right) team members Elizabeth Riddell, Frank Clune, Gwen Plumb and Peter Lazar.

Above On radio *The Idiot Weekly* featured Ray Barrett, Michael Eisdell, John Bluthal, Bobby Limb, Reg Goldsworthy and a popular young comedian named Spike Milligan.



The Sixties

The 'sixties brought us the miracles of satellite transmission, the most exciting telecast in television history and tremendous advances in our public affairs programs.

The decade began for us with a prize: in 1960 we won our first major international award, the Prix Italia, for our radio program *Death of a Wombat*. The same year we had a different type of prize . . . we opened our new Perth office where *all* our activities are under one roof.

By mid-1960 stage two of our network to Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart was complete, ABC-3 Canberra opened in 1962 and stage three of the expansion plan—thirteen country stations—was begun.

University of the Air was launched on television in 1961 and that same year we pioneered current affairs television in Australia with *Four Corners*, now in its twenty-second year and one of the world's longest-running current affairs programs. We also developed other important current affairs programs: *This Day Tonight* (1967), the first live national magazine-style public affairs program to be telecast nightly in Australia; the long-running radio program *AM* (1967); later to be complemented by *PM* (1969); and the start of science broadcasts (1965) leading to the establishment of our Science Unit.

We extended more and more into the international broadcasting area. Now we had offices in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (1963), New Delhi, India, and Tokyo, Japan (both 1966). Our Washington office was opened in 1967 (the New York office had been set up in 1941) and Hong Kong in 1972. Closer to home we had begun broadcasting from 9RB Rabaul in 1962 and in 1964 the Port Moresby branch moved from the old army quarters into a brand new building.

In 1964, too, we were delighted to be host

when the Asian Broadcasting Union held its first general assembly in Sydney.

Another 'first' was touring outside Australia by our orchestras: early in 1965 the Victorian Symphony Orchestra travelled across the Tasman to New Zealand for a series of concerts and later that year the Sydney Symphony Orchestra went overseas to take part in the Commonwealth Arts Festival in London and to give concerts in Asia and Britain. Other orchestral tours have included a trip to North America in 1967 by the now re-named Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (it gave a special performance at Canada's Expo '67 trade exhibition) and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's European tour in 1974.

In 1965, too, TS Duckmanton (later Sir Talbot) became our new General Manager.

We were involved in the largest cross-country hook-up ever organised by Australian television in 1966 when Sir Robert Menzies called a press conference to announce his retirement as Prime Minister. Later that year we made headlines in Britain and the United States by using an Intelsat II satellite which had gone into a random orbit over the Indian Ocean and the OTC's earth station at Carnarvon WA for our program *Down Under Comes Up Live* which showed people and street scenes from a sleepy Western Australian town and which was transmitted to the BBC via the British earth station at Goonhilly Downs, Cornwall.

The next year we had *Our World*, the first live round-the-world television program and the first live Australia-Japan telecast when the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Sato, visited Australia. But our most ambitious telecast was our coverage of the memorial service for the late Prime Minister, Harold Holt. (He disappeared

while swimming off Portsea, Melbourne.) Via satellite we supplied news bulletins on the service to United States' CBS, NBC and ABC networks and to Japan's NHK network. We telecast a live coverage of the service itself to the US and Japan and in New York the BBC recorded the telecast and re-broadcast it to Britain, again by satellite, making it the first satellite telecast originating in Australia to go to both Britain and North America.

But in May, 1969, satellite transmission, new though it was, was eclipsed by the direct transmission from the American Apollo 10 spacecraft on its way to the moon and as the 'sixties drew to a close we watched, fascinated, the remarkable achievement of the Apollo II project—man's first steps on the moon.



Left In 1962, The Village Glee Club celebrated its 1000th program and twenty years on the air. Cast members joined in a special program recorded before an invited audience in Melbourne's Lower Town Hall. From left to right: Colin Crane—who, as Mr Crump, hosted the program from its beginning in 1942—Flo Robins, Fred Collier, Nance Studley, Verona Cappadona, Muriel Luyk, Dan Hardy, Carl Bartling—at the piano, Phil Darbyshire—who wrote every script from 1942 to 1962, Loris Synan, Lorenzo Nolan and Mervyn Bray.

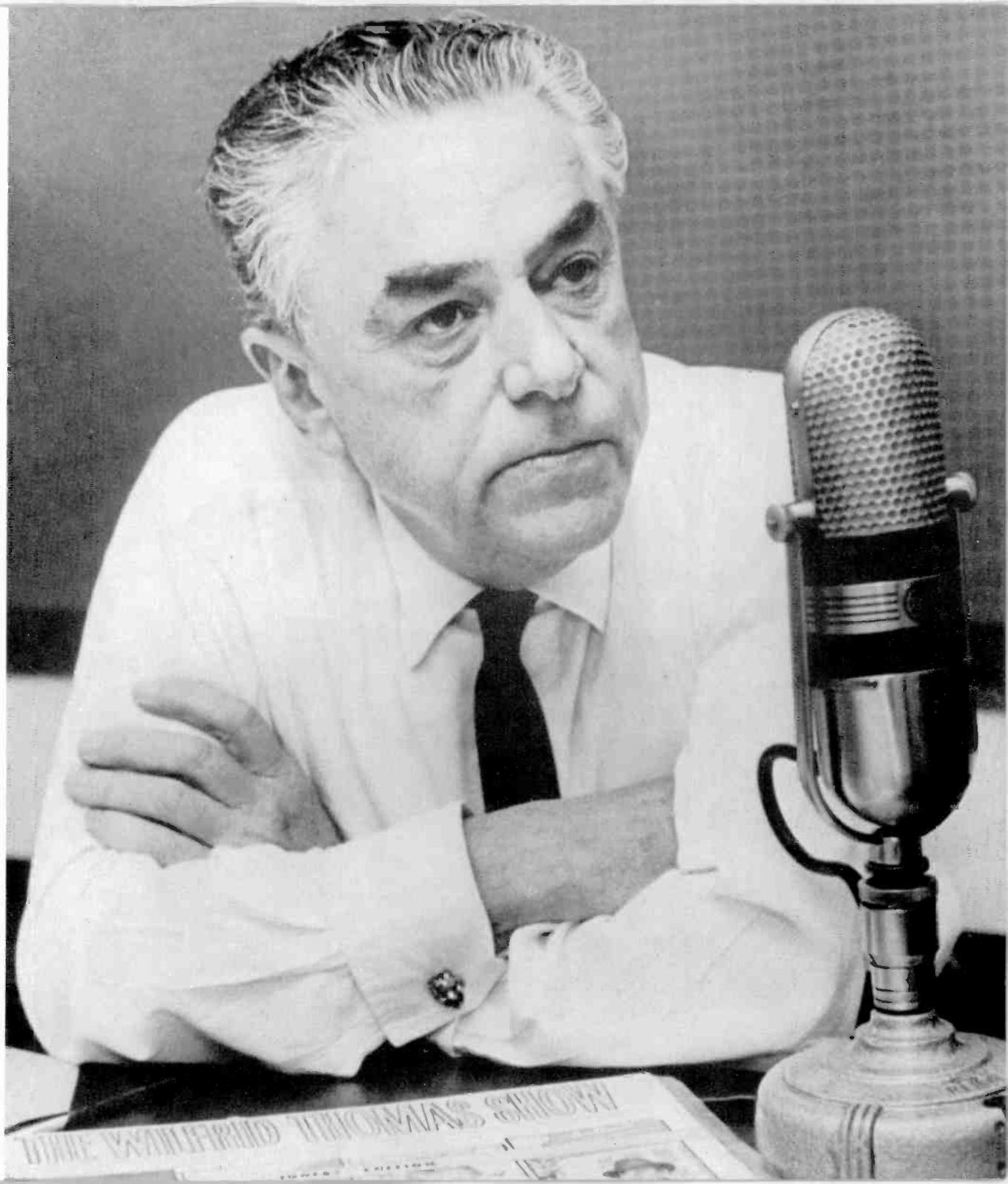
Right TV's popular presentation announcer Tanya Halesworth

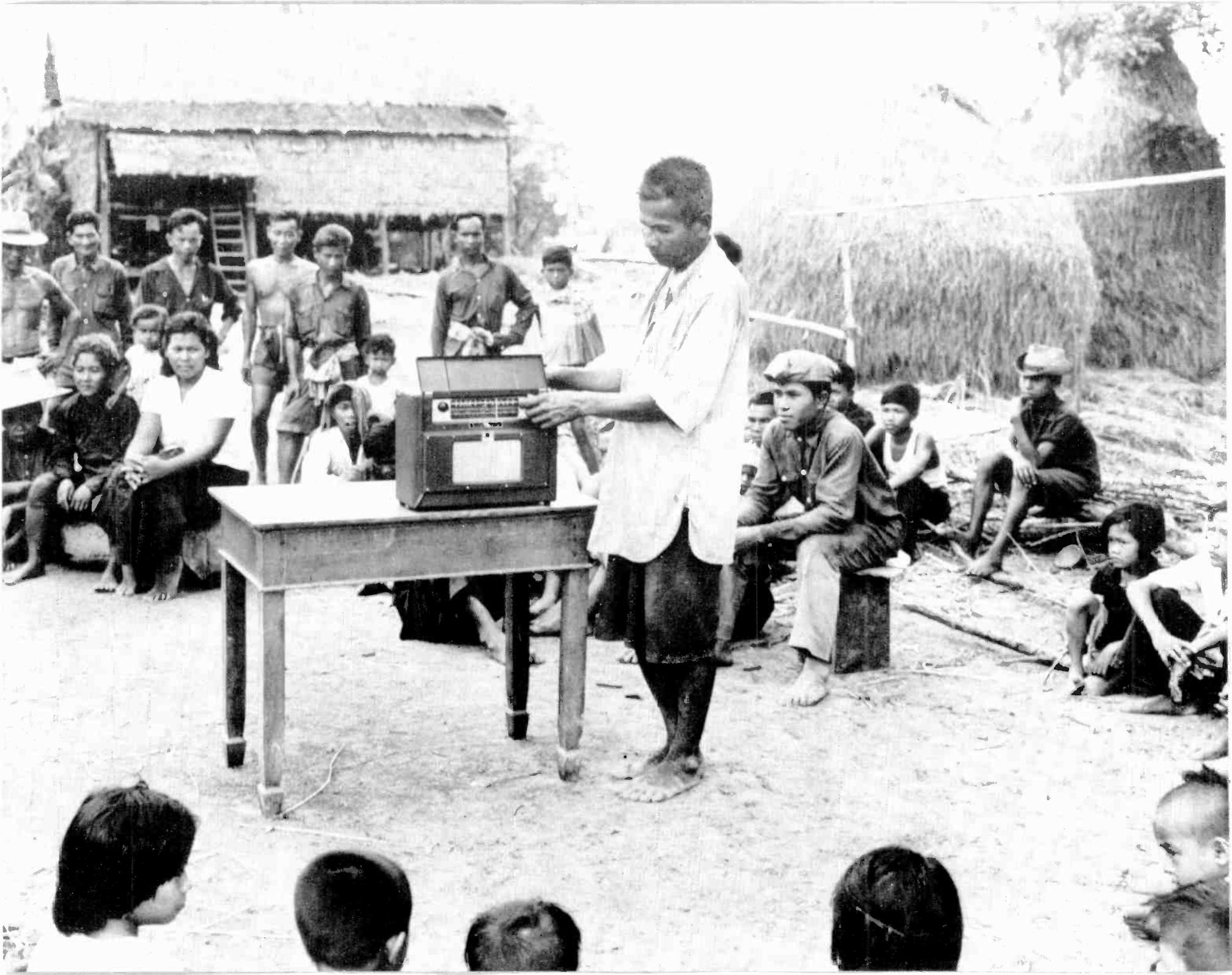




Left Sue Becker's fun fitness series on television had an enthusiastic following. Here pop star Normie Rowe keeps fit with Sue.

Right One of radio's great personalities, Wilfrid Thomas began broadcasting in 1923. His own program *The Wilfrid Thomas Show* began on ABC Radio in 1941 and ended its phenomenal run on December 28, 1980.





Left Listening to Radio Australia in a Malaysian village in 1964

Right In December 1967, the Prime Minister, Mr Harold Holt, appeared on *Four Corners* in a special interview to discuss the implications of Britain's devaluation of the pound. Mr Holt is seen here making a point to *Four Corners* executive producer Robert Moore before going on air. A short while later, on December 17, Mr Holt was drowned while swimming off Portsea, Victoria.





Left As well as sending war correspondents to South Vietnam to report on the fighting, the ABC helped entertain the Australian troops—and their allies—in the field, as part of an organisation called FACE (the Forces Advisory Committee on Entertainment).

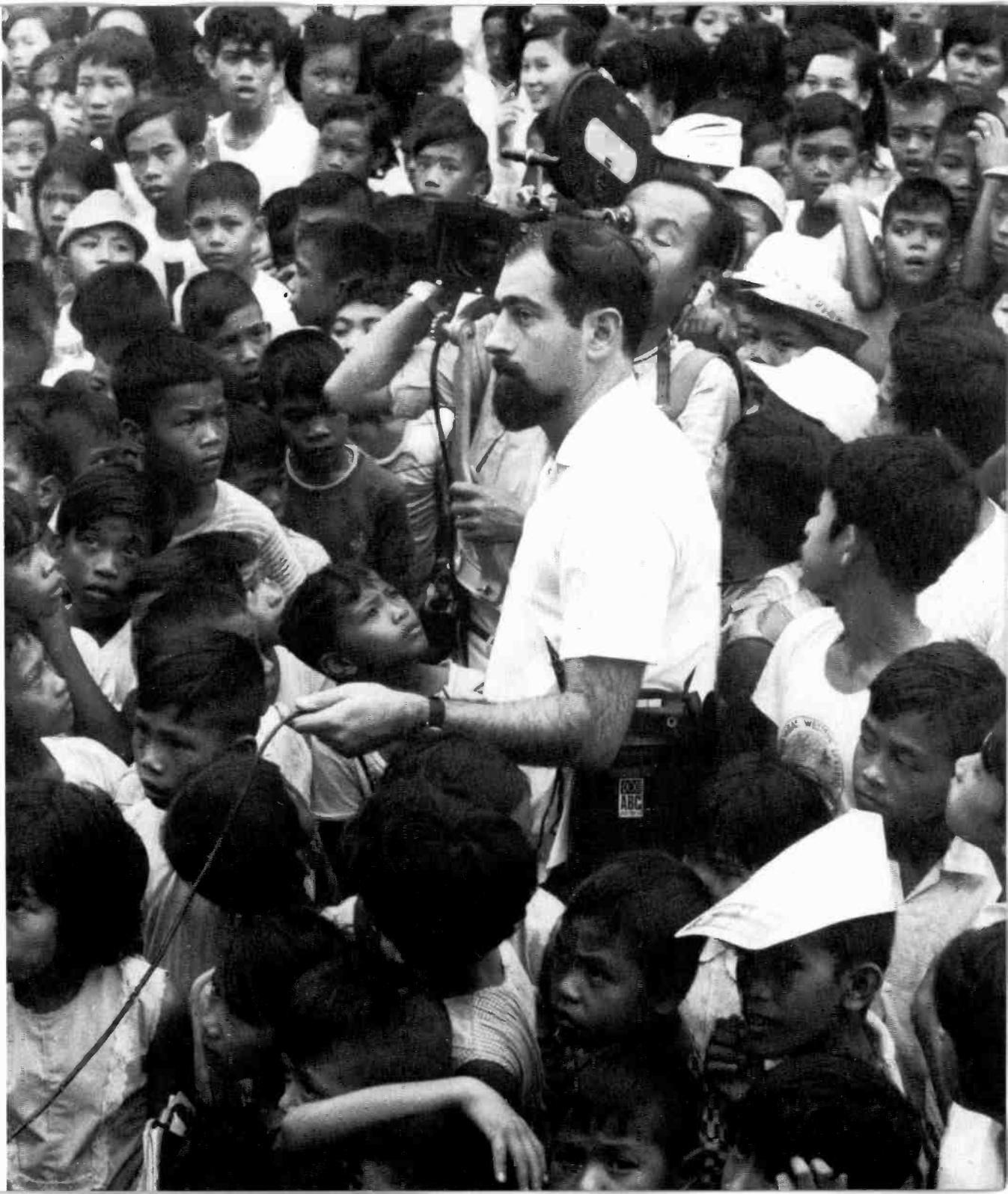
Right Lorraine Desmond singing to Diggers during a 1967 concert at Nui Dat.





Left Singer Shirley McDonald with Eric Jupp in the TV series *Magic of Music*

Right William Pinwill reporting in Manila for Radio Australia





Left American conductor Dean Dixon was musical director of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra from 1964 to 1967. For a special concert for kindergarten children in the Sydney Town Hall Dixon had the orchestra seated on the floor, not on the stage, with the children surrounding it. After the performance Dixon invited the young audience to mingle with the players and examine the instruments.

Right Melbourne breakfast announcer Peter Evans





Left General Manager Talbot Duckmanton with boxer Lionel Rose, 1969 Sportsman of the Year

Right Two of TV's best-known personalities at the 1969 Waratah Festival in Sydney





Left War correspondent Tony Ferguson with South Vietnamese soldiers in 1965

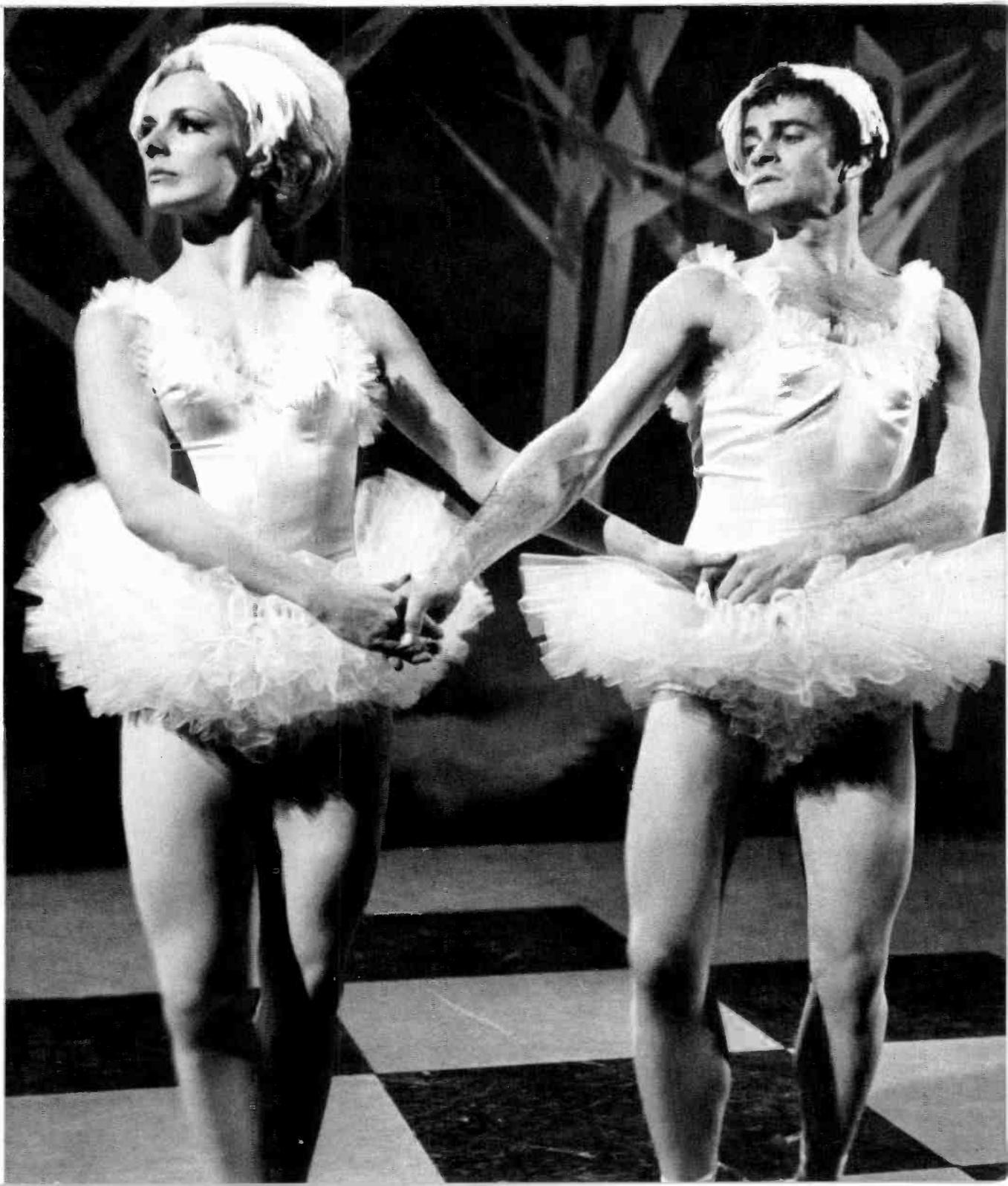
Right Polish violinist Wanda Wilkomirska takes her bow after the fourth Melbourne Youth Concert with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 1969.





Left ABC-TV's first contemporary serial was *My Brother Jack*, in 1965. It was based on George Johnston's novel of the same name, with script by his wife, Charmian Clift, and starred (left to right) Ed Devereaux (Jack) with Rosalind Seagreave (Helen) and June Thody (Jack's wife, Sheila).

Right Reg Livermore starred in *Crackerjack*, a TV series produced for family viewing. Here Livermore (right) appears with Judy Roberts in a ballet sketch.





The Seventies

Expansion, natural disasters, colour television, FM, Double Jay, *Nationwide*, troubles with cricket . . . that was the 'seventies.

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra made a highly successful tour of North America in 1970 and that same year opening our east-west microwave television system and linking western and eastern Australia saw the end of one of the world's largest telecommunications projects. Two years later our permanent Melbourne-Hobart TV bearer link and TV link from Melbourne to Adelaide via Mildura were operating. We opened our office in Bangkok, Thailand, and in 1973 our first office in China, in Peking. In December that year Papua New Guinea's National Broadcasting Commission assumed responsibility for its broadcasting system and we handed the New Guinea operation over to them.

Early in 1974—a year we won't forget—Darwin had its first direct telecasts from the eastern States. Then our Brisbane studios were badly damaged by the disastrous flooding experienced in Queensland and only extraordinary efforts by our staff kept us on the air. But the really memorable event was on Christmas Day, 1974: Cyclone Tracy.

Tracy crippled our Darwin station 8DR in its first onslaught, but, working in terrible conditions, Post Office engineers made emergency repairs and the station was able to resume its local service next day. For fifty-two hours we broadcast information and instructions from the National Disasters Organisation, the police and social workers . . . information vital to the health and safety of the population. We provided the only local broadcasting service and the only service between Darwin and anywhere else.

Our Radio Australia aerials were com-

pletely wrecked by Tracy and Radio Australia had to rely on its transmitters in Victoria to broadcast special programs to devastated Darwin. But our overseas reception—in South, South-East and East Asia—was badly affected and it was not until we could establish a temporary transmitting station at Carnarvon in Western Australia in 1975 that reception improved in those areas.

Nevertheless, things were much better for us elsewhere. '74 was a great year for music. The number of subscribers to our concerts was the highest ever recorded (78 039), the Sydney Symphony Orchestra travelled abroad and played to full houses in Hong Kong and the Philippines and later made an extensive tour of Europe and the United Kingdom.

In 1975 the Vietnam war ended. Our radio and TV correspondents were working in the region continuously until the last days of the South Vietnamese Government and Radio Australia provided special news, sporting and record request programs for the Australian forces. Our bands and entertainers gave concerts at Australian, New Zealand and some American bases.

Nineteen-seventy-five saw the start of colour television in Australia. It was also International Women's Year—and the year for the formation of the Australian Women's Broadcasting Co-operative workshops on radio and television production which led to our weekly *Coming Out Show* on radio. This was the year, too, when we began 2JJ, a rock and pop station and our first twenty-four-hours-a-day radio station. In 1976 we started our FM service, based in Adelaide and broadcasting in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Adelaide. We produced the first edition of our FM Program guide, the magazine *24 Hours*. Today our FM

service covers most major centres for twenty-four hours a day across the country.

By the end of the decade we were making increasing use of the Intelsat IV satellite and we'd begun *Nationwide* which pioneered mid-evening current affairs TV shows.

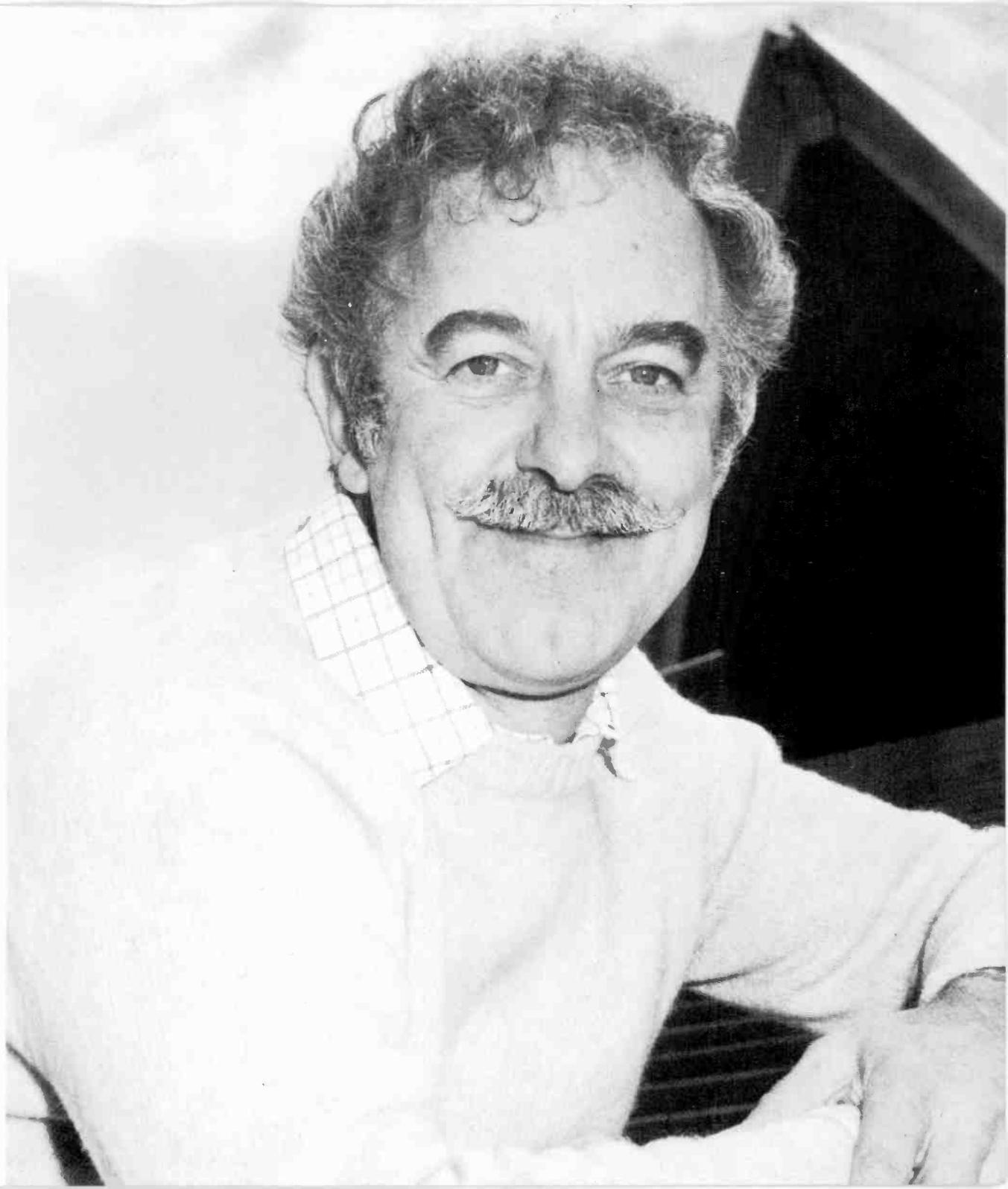
The Committee of Review of the ABC (the Dix Committee) held its first meeting in 1979 and about the same time we began litigation in the Federal Court of Australia against the individual members of the Australian Cricket Board and three companies. We were challenging an agreement which would have excluded us from televising cricket as we'd done for twenty-three years. The case, which ended with a settlement in March 1981 and which invoked the Trade Practices Act 1976, was the largest anti-trust case mounted in Australia at that time.

Left The 200th program in the TV series *A Big Country* was *The Bergin McHugh Expedition* which retraced the steps of explorers Burke and Wills. Pictured are Paddy McHugh (left) and expedition leader Tom Bergin.



Left The Sydney Symphony Orchestra on tour in Austria, with conductor Willem van Otterloo

Right Announcer Arthur Burrage

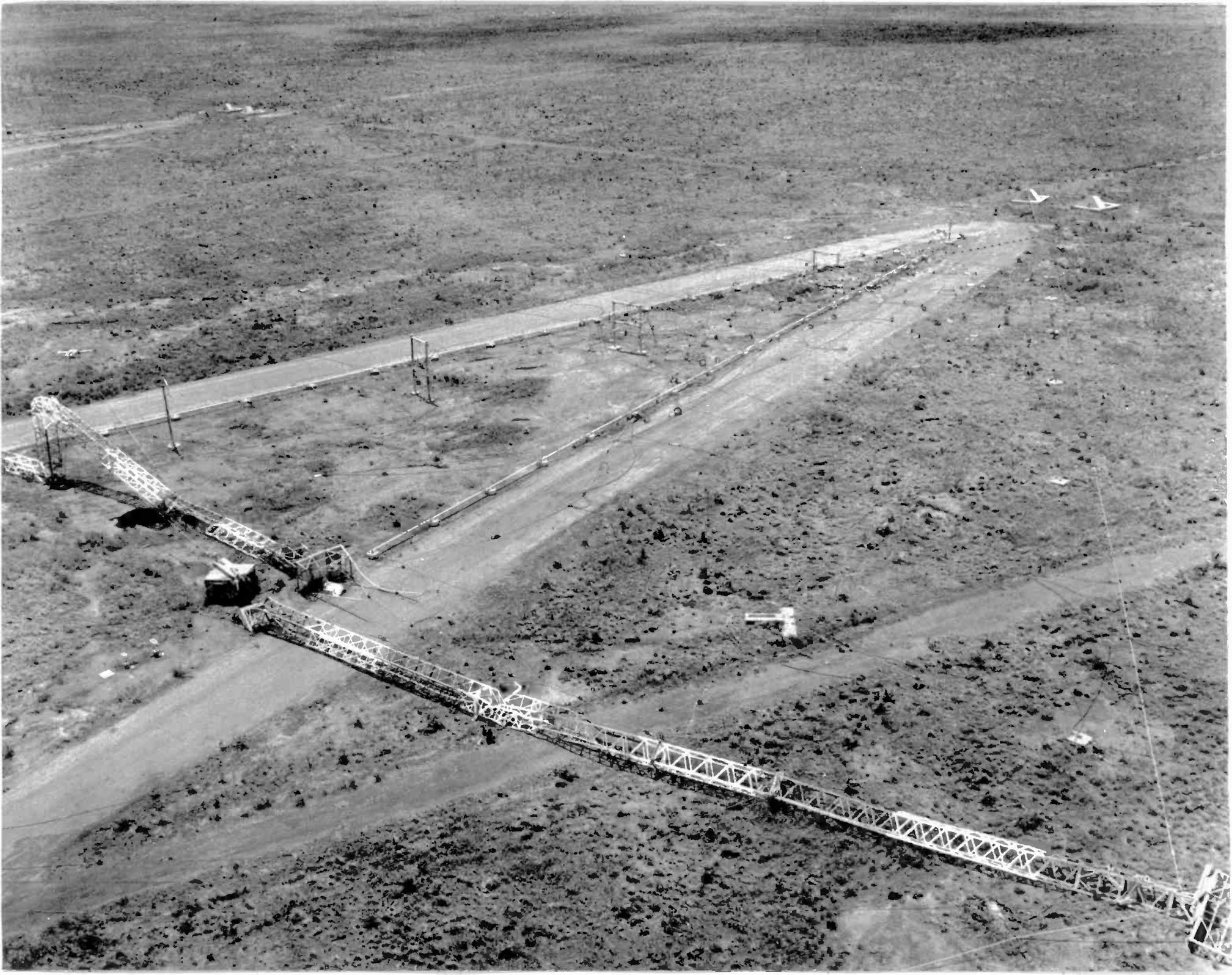




Left TV's current affairs program *This Day Tonight* began in the 'sixties and was still running in the 'seventies. Pictured in 1974 were (from left to right) Paul Murphy, Bill Peach, June Heffernan, Tony Joyce and Peter Luck.

Right Edward Miller and Patricia Cox in *Peter and the Wolf*. Prokofieff's famous children's ballet was produced in the ABC's Melbourne studios.





Left An aerial shot of the Darwin transmitter, wrecked by Cyclone Tracy.

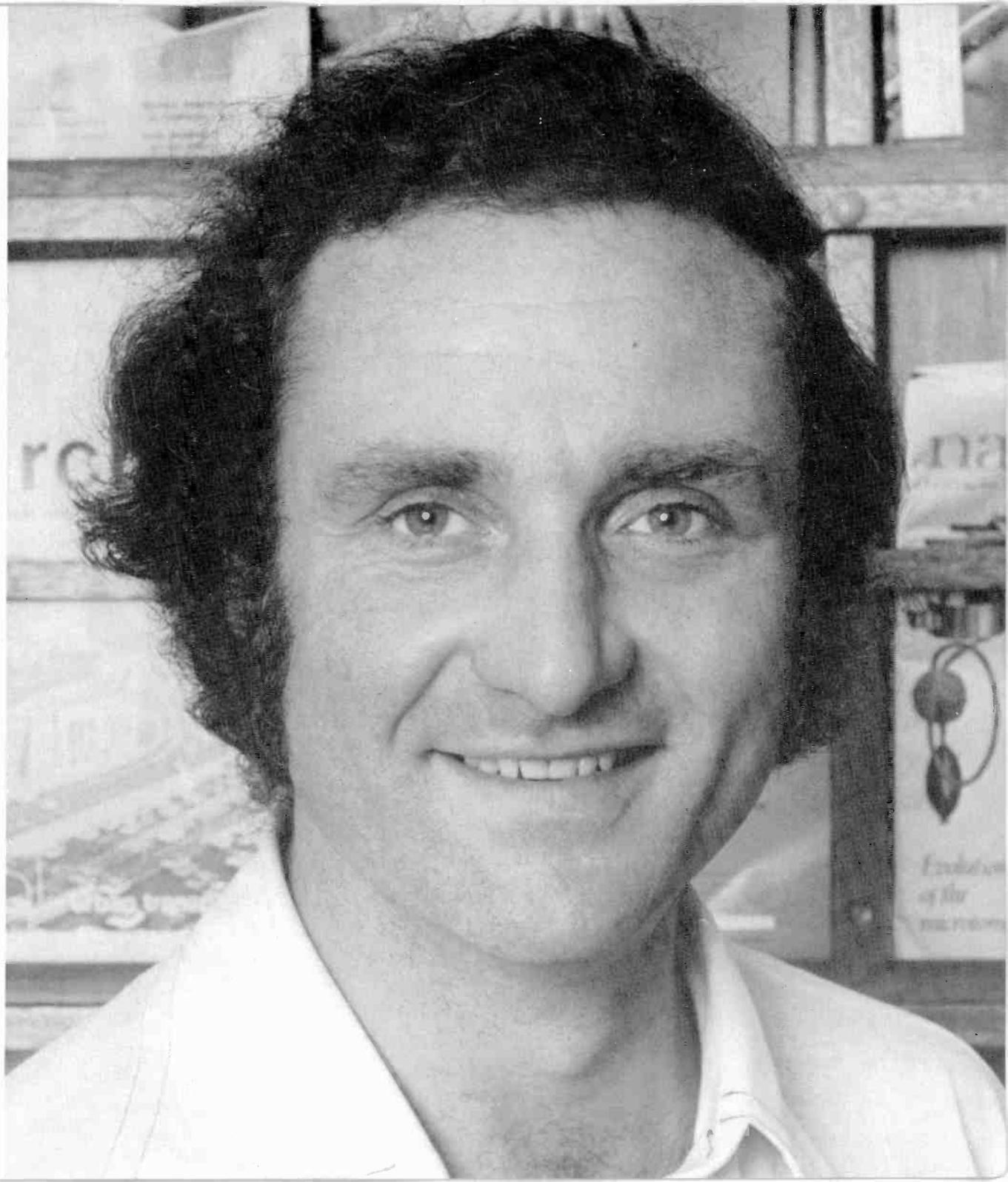
Right Harry Butler's *In the Wild* was not just a top-rating television series. It was also a series of best-selling books for the ABC.





Left British interviewer Michael Parkinson came to Australia to make a TV series for the ABC. Here Parkinson (left) interviews Kate Fitzpatrick and Bob Hawke.

Right Robyn Williams of *The Science Show*, the weekly radio program which has become compulsive listening for the curious and the lively-minded.





Left American physicist Professor Julius Sumner Miller made many series of *Why Is It So?* for television. Here his guest is Felix Prentice.

Right Marcia Hines with guest Mark Holden in *Marcia Hines' Music*





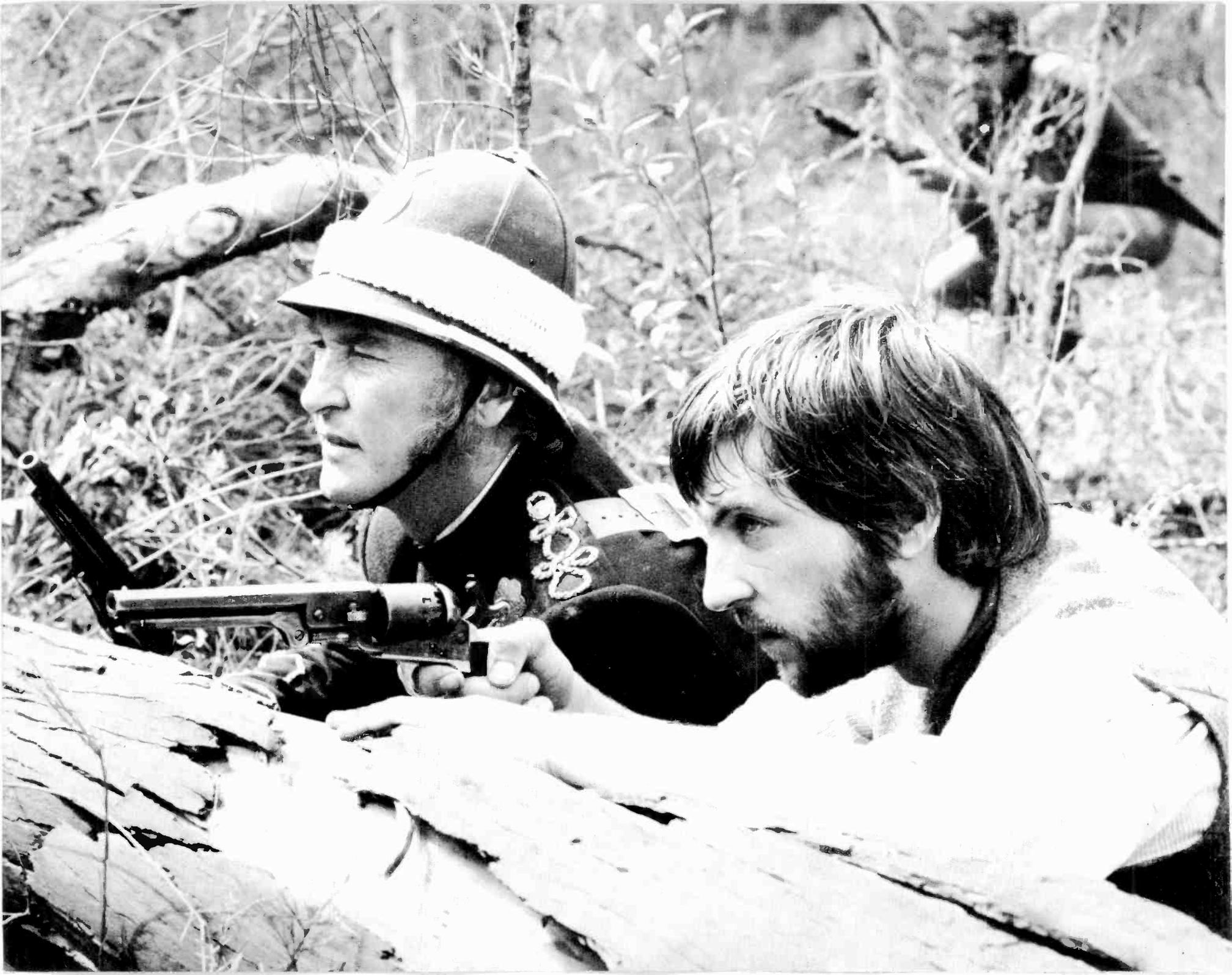


Left Peter Wherrett during shooting of 'The History of Film Car Chases', which was part of his motoring series *Torque*.

Above June Barton, heard all over Australia through Radio 3

Right A serial of family life, *Certain Women*, had a cast which included (left to right) Jenny Lee, Joan Bruce, Queenie Ashton, June Salter, Elizabeth Crosby and Judy Morris.







Left The TV drama series *Rush* was set in the Australian goldfields during the 1880s and starred John Waters (right) as Robert McKellar. Here Vincent Ball plays Superintendent Kendall.

Above Huw Evans of radio's PM

Right: Danny Kaye conducting the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra with flyswat at a MSO Provident Fund concert





Left Ian 'Molly' Meldrum (right) of television's *Countdown*, with English singer Leo Sayer and an enthusiastic audience

Right Benita Collings meets some fans at the *Play School* concert at the Sydney Opera House.





Left An outdoor rock concert, presented by radio's Double Jay

Right The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra on tour in North America. Outside New York's Carnegie Hall are the MSO's Associate Concertmaster Donald Scotts (left) with a representative of CAMI (Columbia Artists Management Inc) and Concertmaster Leonard Dommett.





The Eighties

The 'eighties are a time of new directions for us.

In 1980 we were host to the Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference held in Sydney and in 1981 we opened an experimental Aboriginal radio service through 8AL in Alice Springs, a service produced by Aboriginals for Aboriginals. We operate it with the Central Australian Media Association and it receives assistance from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

We've begun to emerge as something of an entrepreneur, both here and abroad. Internationally, *The Timeless Land* set a record for Australian program sales when we sold it to Paramount Pictures for US \$1 million in 1981,

and here at home our own Merchandising Department—with ABC Shops in six capital cities—has been steadily increasing its range and sales of books, records, cassettes and other ABC products. We also launched our own record label.

Sir Talbot Duckmanton, CBE, retired in 1982 as General Manager—only the second holder of the post since 1935. His career—which began forty-three years earlier as a cadet announcer—spanned three wars, seven changes of federal government, and massive revolutions in taste, standards, technology. It saw the ABC become integrated into our society to the point where virtually everyone in Australia uses our

services each week.

Internationally our reputation stands high. Our television programs are bought and screened in Iceland and Algeria, Mexico and Jordan, and some fifty other nations as well. The ABC plays a leading role in councils of world broadcasters. Radio Australia's audience is numbered by the tens of millions.

Ahead challenges run apace—the government's response to the Committee of Review into the ABC; decisions about the application of new hardware—satellites, cables, optical fibres; about the impact on transmitted programs of home video-tape machines.

Involved as ever, we look forward to it all.

Radio Australia

Radio Australia, our overseas shortwave service, has an audience estimated at over 100 million.

Radio Australia (it was called Australia Calling at first) began broadcasting from Sydney on December 20, 1939, with the Department of Information preparing all news and other material to be broadcast while we provided studios, speakers, announcers, designed the programs and arranged translations as required. The Postmaster-General's Department would provide all technical facilities using PMG and leased AWA Transmitters. In July, 1941, Radio Australia officially transferred its operations to Melbourne which has been its base ever since.

For the next two and a half years there was

uncertainty within the government as to who should control Radio Australia and early in 1943 a Cabinet sub-committee studied the matter and recommended that Radio Australia should, in matters of general policy, conform to directives issued by the Minister for External Affairs and, in administrative matters, be subject to the Minister for Information. It further recommended that the internal shortwave service, aimed at listeners in remote areas, should remain with us.

We protested that establishing what would be virtually a separate broadcasting department would be inadvisable but on April 1, 1944, administrative control of the overseas shortwave service passed to the Minister for Information.

Between 1944 and 1950 we campaigned ac-

tively to regain control of the overseas service but we didn't achieve it until April, 1950. We've controlled it ever since. Today Radio Australia's 100-million-strong audience is mainly in South-East Asia. Radio Australia broadcasts twenty-four hours a day 365 days a year in English and for shorter periods each day in Indonesian, Standard Chinese (Mandarin), Cantonese, Japanese, Neo-Melanesian, French, Thai and Vietnamese. Radio Australia, one of the most popular shortwave services in the world, is frequently used as a source by South-East Asian newspapers and in business, political and diplomatic circles.

Left Sold internationally, *The Timeless Land* was a TV series based on Eleanor Dark's historical novel about the early days of settlement in New South Wales.





Left Lighthorsemen drill in the desert near Alexandria in a scene from the drama series *1915*.

Above Geraldine Doogue, *Nationwide*

Right Familiar face, even more familiar voice ... cricket commentator Alan McGilvray's career with the ABC spans the five decades of our history.





Left The story of Australian author Alan Marshall's fight against polio was told in the TV series *I Can Jump Puddles*. The eleven-year-old Marshall was played by Adam Garnett, pictured here with Bruce Kerr as Dr Robertson and Lesley Baker as Matron.

