

"The Vanishing Island", which is to be broadcast over all main national stations on Sunday, September 9, at 9.15 p.m., has been described by one of its principals, Reginald Owen, the noted Hollywood actor, as "unique in theatrical history". This musical play, since its premiere in America in April last year, has been taken by the world force of Moral Re-Armament through Asia, Africa and Europe. It has now returned to the United States at the invitation of 62 Senators and Congressmen.

Peter Howard, the author, was a leading political commentator in Fleet Street. He captained England at rugby and was a gold medallist at the 1936 winter Olympics. His books have run to two million copies in a dozen languages and his plays are being performed by 27 casts in Europe, America, Africa and Asia.

Besides Reginald Owen, the cast includes Ivan Menzies and his wife Elsie Griffin, who are well-known in New Zealand for their roles in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. These stars, as well as the cast of sixty, the technicians and stage crew, give their talents and their time without salary.

After its tour through Asia, the play was presented in ten European capitals. In London, its season began at the Hippodrome, where the crowds were so great that the overflow nightly filled three other theatres for simultaneous plays and demonstrations. The "Daily Mail" declared that it was "the most melodious show that this, or any other West End stage, has ever produced."

The play depicts two countries - the Island of Eiluph'mei (I love Me), which lives and indulgent, self-satisfied democracy, and the Land of Weiheit'tiu (We Hate You), which lives organised ruthless totalitarianism. The clash between the two brings Eiluph'mei to the point of extinction until, through a change in its king, the people find the secret of unity between the two countries.

The Moral Re-Armament musical play, "The Vanishing Island", which has gone round the world in one year, will be broadcast by all YA stations in New Zealand on Sunday, September 9, at 9.15 p.m. The author is Peter Howard, London journalist who captained England at rugby and was an Olympic Games gold medallist.

The principal parts are taken by Ivan Menzies, well-known in New Zealand for his Gilbert and Sullivan roles, and Reginald Owen, Hollywood actor who has played in 150 films. A cast of 60 includes Michiko Tanaka, the Japanese star of "Madame Butterfly".

Lewis Allen, Hollywood director, Mico Charisse, one of the world's leading choreographers, Herbert Weiskopf, director of opera of the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music, and Thomas Peluso, former West Coast music director of the National Broadcasting Company of America, produced the play.

Lauritz Melchior, world-renowned singer, said: "'The Vanishing Island' is a wonderful and original play. The idea, the music and lyrics will capture the hearts of men and nations."

"The Vanishing Island" is set in two countries - the island of Kiluph'mei ("I Love Me") and the land of Weiheit'tiu ("We Hate You"). It portrays with trenchant satire and puckish humour the clash between snug, well-fed democracy and ruthless, purposeful dictatorship. The final act shows how unity is built between the two peoples by a change in one man, the King of Kiluph'mei, played by Ivan Menzies.

A Russian script just produced brought the number of foreign language translations to 15. With the aid of these scripts, half a million people in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and America have followed the play in the theatres. Millions more have watched on television and listened on the radio.

"One of the best musical comedies London has seen for a long time", was Sir Beverley Baxter's evaluation.