

CATHLEEN NESBITT: BRITAIN'S FIRST RADIO DRAMA PRODUCER

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The BBC's early history was dominated by men. But in radio drama, it was a woman who led the way. Cathleen Nesbitt, heralded as 'one of our most popular actresses' in the 1920s, was also the first person responsible for producing plays on the BBC.<sup>1</sup> This article will show that her 'pioneering' work led to the establishment of a new broadcasting genre and a legacy that continues to this day.<sup>2</sup> By piecing together contemporary accounts, it is possible to demonstrate that she worked as adaptor and director, as well as producer: a practice that has continued into the twenty-first century. Her work seems to have been largely unacknowledged within the BBC: her personal file does not start until after the Second World War and programme details held by the BBC do not mention a producer for these productions. In addition, anecdotal comments by a colleague made half a century after she produced these plays wrongly credited them to one of her male contemporaries, a mistake that has subsequently been repeated elsewhere. This article will restore the credit Nesbitt deserves as a radio pioneer.

Nesbitt was born in Liskeard, Cheshire, in 1888, but when she was 'probably about seven or eight' her father was given the command of the merchant ship *County Antrim*, and the family travelled with him to locations including Buenos Aires, Alexandria and St Petersburg, before eventually settling in Belfast. After winning a school essay-writing competition she decided to spend her ten pounds prize on 'further education' rather than

books.<sup>3</sup> However, Nesbitt's idea of further education was to work as an *au pair* in Paris, where she stayed for two years. Shortly after her return to Belfast the family moved to London, where she took acting lessons. In the end of term play, she played the part of a 'French wet-nurse' with an impeccable accent, thanks to her time in France.<sup>4</sup> She also 'discovered I had authority' and was awarded a contract at the Court Theatre.<sup>5</sup>

In 1911, Nesbitt was invited to a lunch attended by patron of the arts, Lady Isabella Augusta Gregory. Nesbitt overheard a conversation Lady Gregory was having about a forthcoming American tour by Dublin's Abbey Players that was short of an understudy. Nesbitt writes that 'after lunch I summoned up courage to attack' - and was rewarded with the job, being quickly moved up to full cast member when another actor pulled out at the last minute.<sup>6</sup> The trip was a success, and on her return to London the following year, she was cast as Perdita in Harley Granville-Barker's production of *The Winter's Tale* at the Savoy Theatre.

Granville-Barker, a respected Shakespearean producer and critic, was clearly influential on Nesbitt. She writes about him with a great deal of admiration in her autobiography, commenting that: 'I feel that Granville-Barker was a genius and so did everyone who knew him'.<sup>7</sup> Two other observations about him may also have informed her later work with the BBC. Firstly, that he 'cast the play magnificently'.<sup>8</sup> This is evident in the actors she later recruited for the radio, drawing on some of those she met ten years earlier when working with Granville-Barker. Secondly, that 'Barker had a wonderful ear for the orchestration of a scene'.<sup>9</sup> Her choice of words here is telling: a wonderful *ear* not *eye*. Media academic John Drakakis, writing about the early years of radio drama, states that 'what was for radio a natural reliance upon "sound" and the spoken voice was also the

condition towards which, *mutatis mutandis*, the presentation of Shakespeare in the theatre had been moving for some time'.<sup>10</sup> As such, the transition from stage to studio, where having an ear for storytelling is particularly important, may have seemed relatively straightforward to Nesbitt. It was also something recognised early in the BBC's existence by its then managing director, John Reith: 'As vision does not play a part, the audience is deprived of many of the most valuable aids to illusion and imagination [...] Other aids to the imagination, such as music, incidental sounds contingent to the situation, pauses and various dramatic devices are introduced wherever possible'.<sup>11</sup> Nesbitt employed all these elements when adapting Shakespeare for radio.

After *The Winter's Tale*, Nesbitt went on to appear, and often star, in a number of other theatre productions, including plays by Shakespeare and other Early Modern playwrights. She played Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice* (Court Theatre, 1919), the Duchess in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (Lyric Hammersmith, 1919), Fiorinda in Philip Massinger's *The Great Duke of Florence* (Middle Temple Hall, 1922), and Cleopatra in an Oxford University Dramatic Society production of *Antony and Cleopatra* (1921), opposite Cecil Ramage, who became her husband soon after. By the time the British Broadcasting Company was starting up at the end of 1922 she was a thoroughly experienced actor with a good grounding in Shakespearean drama.

The BBC first presented Shakespeare in February 1923, although this was just a few short scenes from *Julius Caesar* and *Othello*. Two months later, to celebrate Shakespeare's birthday on 23 April 1923, members of the British Empire Shakespeare Society were invited to the studio at Marconi House.<sup>12</sup> Earlier in the day they had presented a series of scenes from Shakespeare's plays on the stage of the Haymarket Theatre, and in the evening they

reprised their performances at the BBC.<sup>13</sup> Among the group was Nesbitt. It seems likely this might have been when the idea of broadcasting a whole play first came about, especially as four of the group appeared in the BBC's inaugural production a month later on 28 May 1923.

However, before then Nesbitt was back on air. *The Times* listings for 2 May 1923 state: '5.30. Children's Stories. Miss Cathleen Nesbitt will recite some of "The Children's Garden of Verses"'.<sup>14</sup> Nesbitt was clearly getting a taste for performing in front of a microphone. Meanwhile, on the same page, the paper reported on an issue that was becoming a real problem for the broadcaster: 'the deadlock that has arisen ... over the question of broadcasting plays'.<sup>15</sup> Earlier in the year, listeners could hear extracts from West End productions, but the theatres became concerned about the threat that radio might pose to their livelihoods.<sup>16</sup> Just a few days after the British Empire Shakespeare Society broadcast, the Entertainments Industry Joint Broadcasting Committee had agreed a resolution: 'That the broadcasting of plays, music, songs, or other entertainments is prejudicial to the interests of all connected with places of public entertainment, and that such steps shall be taken as might be necessary to protect such interests'.<sup>17</sup> Theatres refused to allow their plays to be broadcast and even banned some performers from appearing on the BBC. By 1 May it was being reported, under the headline 'Wireless War Goes On', that 'Prominent theatre managers, producers and actors have now made statements to the "Pall Mall Gazette" supporting the boycott'.<sup>18</sup> And a few days later members of the Actors' Association were told that those who were not under contract elsewhere 'could enter into an engagement with the broadcasting company', but if they did, they might find themselves 'faced afterwards with a refusal on the part of managers to engage' them.<sup>19</sup> Nesbitt's involvement with the BBC therefore had the potential to damage

her successful career. It does not seem to have deterred her, though. Within three weeks of this story being published, she made history.

At this point, no-one had broadcast a play on the radio. Until 1 May 1923 it had been barely feasible, with the cramped studio at Marconi House. But with the move to Savoy Hill, the BBC had the space, and the row with the theatres may have provided the incentive. The BBC's staff was small and did not include anyone who specialised in drama: this meant that the first plays would have to be 'handled for the most part by outside producers'.<sup>20</sup> Deputy director of programmes, Cecil Lewis, was 'extremely interested in drama' but not experienced and so 'obtained the services of Miss Cathleen Nesbitt'.<sup>21</sup> Her task was to create a script that would convey the action and cut down the text of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* to fit a two-hour slot. However, before the broadcast, the feedback she got on her script was not favourable. Lewis later wrote in the *Radio Times* that he and Nesbitt had invited George Bernard Shaw to introduce the production.<sup>22</sup> Shaw declined, but not before telling them what he thought of the script:

Your prologue is beyond human patience. Instead of supplying a very brief description of what the listeners would see if they were in a theatre, and leaving Shakespear [sic] to tell his own story, you are kind enough to help the lame dog of Stratford over the stile by telling the story yourself in your own inimitable way, leaving him to repeat it superfluously and to damn your impertinent vanity.<sup>23</sup>

Bernard Shaw went on to complain that Nesbitt had swapped the first two scenes around, opening with the more dramatic moment when Viola is washed ashore from a shipwreck, instead of Orsino's famous 'If music be the food of love' speech. Shaw wrote: 'Do you begin to realize what an utter chump you are?'<sup>24</sup> Perhaps Nesbitt took this on board, as none of the reviews of the production mention the switch, suggesting she may have returned to the play's usual opening.

The script no longer exists, but several newspaper and magazine articles that were written before and after the broadcast give some idea of Nesbitt's work. In terms of cutting, the only scene anyone seems to have been aware of being removed is 'the duel scene, which was not broadcast'.<sup>25</sup> This was also mentioned by respected actor Dame May Whitty, who was listening: 'Viola's and Sebastian's fights with Sir Andrew Aguecheek were difficult to grasp—the explanation was inadequate'.<sup>26</sup> The mention of explanation here indicates one of the major issues Nesbitt faced in transferring a stage play to radio: what to do about scenes that are highly visual, such as a sword fight. Her solution was to use narration, something the producers of Shakespeare's plays on radio continued to employ for decades until more sophisticated use of sound became possible. Ahead of the broadcast, *The Stage* reported that 'The play has been specifically arranged in order to adapt it to the medium. The matter that links up the scenes has been either specially written for this purpose or adapted from Lamb', referring to Charles and Mary Lamb's book, *Tales from Shakespeare*.<sup>27</sup> Comments made by a reporter from the *Daily Telegraph*, who was at the studio for the broadcast, echo this: 'It was not deemed advisable to present the piece in its entirety, but merely in a series of scenes, the necessary links for the full understanding of the story being provided by an interlocutor'.<sup>28</sup> This might suggest that the play was not fully

adapted, but other comments from those listening at home or watching at Savoy Hill indicate the broadcast was more akin to an actual play.

The correspondent for the *Daily Herald*, another journalist invited to the broadcast, described for his readers the end of act one, scene three, where Sir Toby urges Aguecheek to caper higher, stating: 'So well did they play this, that if my eyes had been shut, I should have sworn that Sir Andrew was not standing motionless, as he really was, but capering to the ceiling'.<sup>29</sup> Dame May was also impressed with this performance: 'One visualised the foolish, timorous knight though one could not see him, and that was because the speaker used the upward inflection almost continually'.<sup>30</sup> It seems the performers understood that they needed to do more than just read the play aloud: they had to give a full performance in sound only. This is likely to have been down to Nesbitt as producer: for most of the BBC's history, producers have also acted as directors in radio drama, as well as adaptors for Shakespeare's plays.<sup>31</sup>

Dame May also praised Herbert Waring as Malvolio: 'One realised the pomposity and fatuousness of the character, and one saw that painful smile and the yellow stockings cross gartered'.<sup>32</sup> And she commended the other performances of the cast, all of whom were professionals and, like Nesbitt, were risking both livelihood and reputation on the broadcast. Again, it would almost certainly have been Nesbitt's job to recruit actors for the performance and perhaps even talk them into trying this new medium. It was something her co-star Gerald Lawrence, playing Orsino, found quite odd:

There is a sort of fascination in playing before an invisible audience. One feels that at the back of it (the big receiver) there are thousands of people listening ... It is always

a joy to speak Shakespeare's lines, because they are such wonderful music. But of course you miss your audience.<sup>33</sup>

Lawrence cannot have found it too disorientating, as he came back to perform in the next production just over two weeks later, *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>34</sup>

Just as modern radio plays feature music, so did *Twelfth Night*. The BBC already had regular live music from its own 'orchestra'; in reality, this was often a small group of between six and eight musicians.<sup>35</sup> However, combining a group of ten actors with musicians and their instruments would be tricky, not only in terms of space but also sound. There was only one microphone for everything, with no way of mixing separate sources. Director of programmes, Arthur Burrows, explained what needed to be done:

The variation in intensity of accompanying sounds is obtained by opening and shutting the doors between the studio and the property-room. Some of the instrumental music in Shakespeare's plays is performed in a room outside with the door open two or three inches only.<sup>36</sup>

For *Twelfth Night*, music by Henry Purcell was played on a harpsichord.<sup>37</sup> It is less clear whether sound effects were used: they are not mentioned in contemporary accounts and a later article about their use states they were 'in a rudimentary stage' during 'this first year of broadcasting'.<sup>38</sup> The actors also had to be positioned with care, because of the single microphone. However, this seems to have been successful as *Popular Wireless* magazine



noted that: 'no drowning effects were caused by a strong voice being placed nearer to the microphone than one not so powerful'.<sup>39</sup>

All this may have been taken care of by Lewis, credited in some sources as co-producing the play with Nesbitt. Asa Briggs notes that Nesbitt 'produced several of Shakespeare's plays for radio', as does the *Radio Who's Who* in 1947.<sup>40</sup> However Lewis himself suggested in 1924 that he was jointly responsible.<sup>41</sup> And Glyn Dearman, a BBC producer writing nearly sixty years later, stated that the plays 'had to be produced from the studio' and that Lewis 'was chiefly responsible for the early work in this direction, assisted by the late Cathleen Nesbitt'.<sup>42</sup> Lewis was a full-time employee of the BBC, so would have understood how the technology worked. But by his own admission he was merely a 'Shakespeare enthusiast'.<sup>43</sup> This suggests that the work on adaptation and direction fell entirely to Nesbitt, with Lewis being responsible for liaising between her and the engineers.

The reaction to the broadcast from listeners was hugely positive. The actors were even getting responses while they were still on air. The *Belfast Telegraph* reported that 'Shakespeare was applauded by telegram for the first time' with the first arriving at the end of Act Two and describing the performance as an 'enthalling, wonderful, triumphant success'.<sup>44</sup> The reporter added that 'Actors and actresses read the applause while they said their lines'.<sup>45</sup> Two weeks later, *Broadcasting News* reported that 'About five hundred letters were received by the BBC couched in the most laudatory vein, all asking for more'.<sup>46</sup> And more plays did come soon afterwards. Nesbitt went on to adapt and produce *The Merchant of Venice*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* before the end of July 1923, as well as appearing in the plays. She is also credited as adaptor for a production of *Macbeth* in October 1923, but did not appear in it and does not seem to have been involved in its

production, although no producer is listed. Her scripts also found their way to other corners of the BBC, which at this point was made up of a series of stations in major cities, with the Manchester and Glasgow stations each producing two of her scripts.<sup>47</sup> By this point Nesbitt was busy back on stage in the play *Hassan* at His Majesty's theatre, something she was thrilled about: 'To be in a verse play by one of my favourite poets, James Flecker, music by Delius, a sumptuous production. I could wish for nothing more'.<sup>48</sup> And as she wrote in her autobiography, she 'wickedly concealed from the management the fact that I was pregnant!'<sup>49</sup> In fact, not only was she pregnant then, but she had been pregnant throughout her association with the BBC, quite possibly the first pregnant employee of the company!

Though Nesbitt's work producing plays for the BBC came to an end less than six months after it had begun, she was still regularly employed by the company. In May 1925 she – almost – became the first person to have a flying lesson live on the radio.<sup>50</sup> The *Western Mail* reported that 'She is to be the pupil of that intrepid airman, Mr Alan Cobham, for a flying lesson, and as his instructions to her will be broadcast the public will for the first time be given a vivid idea of what such a lesson in actual flight is like'.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, on the day, the actor Heather Thatcher took her place, although no explanation was given for the change.<sup>52</sup> In the same year she appeared with her *Hassan* co-star, Henry Ainley, in scenes from *Antony and Cleopatra*.<sup>53</sup> And the following year she played Portia in the successful and highly publicised series *Shakespeare's Heroines*.<sup>54</sup> She later went on to give readings and perform in many plays, both before and after the Second World War, including the first radio production of Noël Coward's *Cavalcade* in 1936, a one-hour, wartime *Macbeth* opposite Godfrey Tearle in 1939, and Edward Sackville-West and Benjamin Britten's *The Rescue* in 1943, as well as appearing on television from 1948.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to her acting work, Nesbitt was also a BBC announcer. A columnist in *Wireless World* wrote in 1926 that she had appeared as an announcer in March and April that year and that ‘a personality of her type would be a decided asset to the small band of male announcers at 2LO, and, as I stated in these notes recently, I have reason to believe that Savoy Hill is of the same mind’.<sup>56</sup> Two years later, former BBC artistic director Arthur Corbett-Smith told readers of *Modern Wireless* ‘that the most attractive and compelling programme announcer that I have heard in British radio was a woman—Miss Cathleen Nesbit [sic]’.<sup>57</sup> It is not clear how long her tenure as an announcer was, but she was evidently a rarity for some time: it was not until July 1933 that the first woman announcer was to appear on the BBC’s national service, and even then Sheila Borrett was ‘withdrawn’ after just three months.<sup>58</sup>

Since Nesbitt’s initial Shakespeare productions, the BBC has gone on to present more than four hundred versions of his plays on radio. But her legacy has not always been well recognised. Lewis, writing more than fifty years after their association in his book *Never Look Back*, seemed to forget ever having worked with her. Recalling the experience with Bernard Shaw, he wrote that he had asked the playwright to ‘introduce our first series of Shakespeare plays that Nigel Playfair was producing’.<sup>59</sup> This has subsequently been quoted elsewhere. Playfair did produce radio plays for the BBC but never Shakespeare, although he did appear in the first two productions. In fact he had rather negative views on the subject, believing that ‘the broadcasting of Shakespeare should be confined to lectures on his plays, with recitations of his more famous speeches and scenes’, adding that full plays would be ‘too tedious’ for the average listener.<sup>60</sup> Nesbitt, on the other hand, saw the possibilities of radio: ‘she was an ardent lover of Shakespeare’ and ‘preferred to sit with her eyes closed,

listening to the words, and to imagine the scenery for herself'.<sup>61</sup> As the BBC's first drama producer, she endeavoured to help her listeners do the same thing.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Broadcasting flying lesson', *Western Mail*, 13 May 1925, 6. The BUFVC cites Nesbitt as producing three of the first four plays ever broadcast: 'Twelfth Night [28 May 1923]', British Universities Film and Video Council <http://bufvc.ac.uk/shakespeare/index.php/title/av66566> (accessed 23 Jul. 2022); 'Romeo and Juliet [5 Jul. 1923]', British Universities Film and Video Council <http://bufvc.ac.uk/shakespeare/index.php/title/av66580> (accessed 23 Jul. 2022); 'Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream [23 Jul. 1923]', British Universities Film and Video Council <http://bufvc.ac.uk/shakespeare/index.php/title/av66588> (accessed 23 Jul. 2022). See also 'Cathleen Nesbitt', *Radio Who's Who*, ed. by Cyrus Andrews (London: Pendulum Publications, 1947) 250: 'Adapted and produced the first Shakespeare plays to be broadcast at Savoy Hill.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Broadcasting and Drama', *Wireless Constructor*, Apr. 1925, 508-10 (509-10).

<sup>3</sup> Cathleen Nesbitt, *A Little Love and Good Company* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 23, 25.

<sup>4</sup> Nesbitt, *Love and Good Company*, 47.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Nesbitt, *Love and Good Company*, 52-53.

<sup>7</sup> Nesbitt, *Love and Good Company*, 196.

<sup>8</sup> Nesbitt, *Love and Good Company*, 62.

<sup>9</sup> Nesbitt, *Love and Good Company*, 193.

<sup>10</sup> John Drakakis, 'Introduction', *British Radio Drama*, ed. by John Drakakis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1-36 (2).

<sup>11</sup> J. C. W. Reith, *Broadcast Over Britain* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924), 166.

<sup>12</sup> The BBC did not open its first studio at Savoy Hill until 1 May 1923: Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: Volume I – The Birth of Broadcasting* (London: Oxford University Press, 1995), 193.

<sup>13</sup> 'Broadcasting – A Shakespeare Night', *The Times*, 23 Apr. 1923, 10.

<sup>14</sup> 'Broadcasting – Programmes Today', *The Times*, 2 May 1923, 12. This was part of what would become known as 'Children's Hour', although the term was not consistently used at this time.

<sup>15</sup> 'The Theatres and Broadcasting – Conference today', *The Times*, 2 May 1923, 12.

<sup>16</sup> Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting*, 229; A. R. Burrows, *The Story of Broadcasting* (London: Cassell, 1924), 80-81; C. A. Lewis, *Broadcasting From Within* (London: George Newnes, 1924), 88.

<sup>17</sup> 'Broadcasting and the Theatres – Entertainment Industry's Opposition', *The Times*, 28 Apr. 1923, 8

<sup>18</sup> 'Wireless War Goes On', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 May 1923, 9.

<sup>19</sup> 'The Actors' Association', *The Stage*, 10 May 1923, 18.

<sup>20</sup> 'The Old BBC. The Story of the British Broadcasting Company, Ltd. November 1922-December 1926', *BBC Year-Book 1930* (London: BBC, 1930), 151-86 (164).

<sup>21</sup> Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting*, 256.

<sup>22</sup> C. A. Lewis, 'G. B. S. Lectures the B.B.C.', *Radio Times*, 14 Nov. 1924, 357.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> 'Shakespeare by Wireless', *Belfast Telegraph*, 29 May 1923, 5.

<sup>26</sup> Dame May Whitty, 'The BBC Plays', *Popular Wireless*, 23 Jun. 1923, 688.

<sup>27</sup> 'Broadcasting', *The Stage*, 24 May 1923, 8.

<sup>28</sup> 'Broadcasting Shakespeare – "Twelfth Night" by Wireless', *Daily Telegraph*, 29 May 1923, 12.

<sup>29</sup> R. C. W., 'Shakespeare in Modern Dress – How "Twelfth Night" was played for wireless', *Daily Herald*, 29 May 1923, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Whitty, 688.

<sup>31</sup> The formal roles of 'producer' and 'director' had not yet been established, however the descriptions of Nesbitt's work on this production and others suggest she took on the roles, having 'arranged the whole production' ('Broadcasting and Drama', *Wireless Constructor*, Apr. 1925, 508). Professor Tim Crook from

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Goldsmiths, London, also describes Nesbitt as ‘the first Radio Shakespeare dramaturg and a real pioneer of British radio drama’ (private correspondence).

<sup>32</sup> Whitty, 688.

<sup>33</sup> ‘What it feels like – Actor’s impression of play to invisible audience’, *Daily Herald*, 29 May 1923, 7.

<sup>34</sup> ‘Broadcasting. Programmes To-day’, *The Times*, 15 Jun. 1923, 12.

<sup>35</sup> ‘The Old BBC’, *BBC Year-Book 1930*, 156; Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting*, 253.

<sup>36</sup> Burrows, *The Story of Broadcasting*, 100.

<sup>37</sup> ‘Broadcasting – Performance of “Twelfth Night”’, *The Times*, 28 May 1923, 10; R. C. W., 7.

<sup>38</sup> *BBC Year-Book 1930*, 164.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Topical notes and news – Voices Well-balanced’, *Popular Wireless*, 9 Jun. 1923, 609.

<sup>40</sup> Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting*, 256; Cyrus Andrews, *Radio Who’s Who* (London: Pendulum Publications 1947), 250.

<sup>41</sup> Lewis, *Radio Times*, 357.

<sup>42</sup> Glyn Dearman, ‘Something old something new’, *Radio Times*, 30 Sep. 1982, 80-7 (80).

<sup>43</sup> ‘The Deputy-Director of Programmes. By one who knows him’, *Radio Times*, 19 Oct. 1923, 118.

<sup>44</sup> *Belfast Telegraph*, 5.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> ‘Broadcasting News’, *Wireless Weekly*, 13 Jun. 1923, 114.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Broadcasting. To-day’s Programmes’, *Daily Telegraph*, 18 Jul. 1923, 12; ‘Forthcoming Events’, *Wireless Weekly*, 18 Jul. 1923, 40; ‘Broadcasting. To-day’s Programmes’, *Yorkshire Post*, 6 Sep. 1923, 8; ‘“Merchant of Venice” by Wireless’, *Dundee Courier*, 7 Sep. 1923, 5; ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’, *Radio Times*, 9 Nov. 1923, 233; ‘To-day’s Wireless Attractions’, *Dundee Courier*, 16 Nov. 1923, 9.

<sup>48</sup> Nesbitt, *Love and Good Company*, 157.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> ‘Wireless Programme—Friday’, *Radio Times*, 8 May 1925, 306.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Broadcasting flying lesson’, *Western Mail*, 13 May 1925, 6.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Overheard flying lesson’, *Daily News*, 16 May 1925, 7.

<sup>53</sup> ‘London – Special Transmission’, *Radio Times*, 6 Mar. 1925, 494.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Shakespeare’s Heroines – No. 4’, *Radio Times*, 21 May 1936, 331.

<sup>55</sup> A search for “Cathleen Nesbitt” on the BBC Programme Index offers 179 results:

<https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/search/0/20?order=first&q=%22cathleen+nesbitt%22#top> .

<sup>56</sup> ‘Broadcast Brevities – Lady Announcers’, *Wireless World*, 28 Apr. 1926, 635.

<sup>57</sup> A. Corbett-Smith, ‘Women and Wireless’, *Modern Wireless*, Nov. 1928, 471-72 (472).

<sup>58</sup> Kate Murphy, *Behind the Wireless: A History of Early Women at the BBC* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) 241; ‘BBC’s Woman Announcer’, *Daily Telegraph*, 17 Oct. 1933, 8.

<sup>59</sup> Cecil Lewis, *Never Look Back* (London: Hutchinson, 1974), 81.

<sup>60</sup> Playfair reported in Norman Edwards, *Broadcasting For Everyone* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1924) 219-20.

<sup>61</sup> Edwards, *Broadcasting For Everyone*, 220.