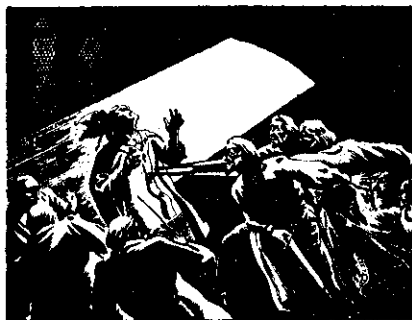


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ing, and are arranged for the different voices, with bold ballads for the basses and many a top B Flat for the sopranos. Listening to 4YA one evening I heard two singers in items from these collections, and thought what a golden opportunity it was for any young singer to discover just how such songs ought to sound. From the studio Mary Pratt sang, in her usual flawless and effortless style, a group which included the graceful Gluck air "Vieni che poi sereno." Later we heard a less classical group in records of Peter Dawson, one of his items being "Vulcan's Song" (Gounod), which dozens of aspiring baritones must have attempted to sing. It occurred to me, in this connection, that one of the stations might assemble, say, half-an-hour's programme of songs for one particular voice, and under some such title as "For the Would-be Basso," the student of singing could hear the songs he is likely to be studying performed as he may some day perform them himself.

### The Turbulent Priest

AN unusual recording from 3YL was the Christmas Day sermon from T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, spoken by the eminent English actor Robert Speaight as Thomas à Becket. I thought Mr. Speaight too close to the sucking dove myself; Becket was above all the warrior, engrossed with a vision of martyrdom more stern and impersonal than most human ideals and, granted that Eliot intended this sermon (an interlude between the two acts of preparation and of crisis) to present Becket's combining of the human and tender aspect with his heroic role, it seemed to me that Mr. Speaight relaxed and mellowed too far and resembled a



very good clergyman delivering a sermon much above the average, but no more. This was not without its value and (as part of the drama as a whole) might have been a necessary relief to an audience, but, isolated, it felt too far. Also, of course, Eliot's Becket is a mystic, that is to say one who has an idea or vision quite incommunicable to other human beings; so what was Mr. Speaight to do?

### Down in the Dumps

I WAS disappointed in 4YA's "Music from Mexico." Indeed, if "Views-reel" may venture to purloin the idea of *The Listener* film critic, the "little man" of music would be depicted slumping in his seat. Every musician has a bete noir, some particular tune which raises his hackles, and in my case it's "Over the Waves." I imagine no more trite melody has ever been invented; to me it is the acme of musical boredom. Imagine then my distress when the first

part of this programme proved to be three waltzes, of which "Sobre las Olas" was one, the others being of a like vintage. I don't know what I expected in "Music from Mexico"—probably something vigorously original, certainly not poor copies of the Viennese waltz at its soupiest. It was as disappointing as tuning to "Maori Music" and getting the staid three-four rhythms of the European waltz tunes which form so much of the average Maori concert. The "little man" woke up at the second half of the programme, which was a fantasia on Mexican Revolutionary Songs, but it was a fireworks revolution staged for the benefit of tourists, and I think the stage directors must have issued the soldiers with blank ammunition.

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