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the encyclopedic mind, the steady drip of facts into the world's crock. What we hope eventually to see is a quiz programme which will not only pay the winner 64 dollars for knowing who succeeded Van Buren but will fine him heavily if he doesn't know. Such a programme would not only offer the customer more drama, it would be self-terminating."

Messiah

MESSIAH is still the year's greatest vocal debauch. Handel's sense of the dramatic and his box-office judgment might well be the envy and perhaps even the pattern for de Mille, Cochran and the rest of the entertainers in the grand manner. Sometimes I think both chorus and audience must be living on memories, "the hidden mocking spirit in things," for so often both accept a far lower standard of performance than they would in less familiar works. The Auckland Choral Society's *Messiah* this year, broadcast from 1YA, produced some colourless chorus singing, some indifferent orchestral accompaniment (there seemed to be as many different tunings as players) and some good if uneven solo work. Mary Negus (soprano) and Ramon Opie (tenor) showed promise of better things to come; Mary Pratt (contralto) sang with assurance and understanding; Ken Macauley (bari-

tone) has an appropriate robustness in his voice but he might well remember Professor F. Sinclair's: "Handel begins with the lungs, but by no means ends there."

Carols

THE Dorian-Ariel Singers presented a mixed bag of carols from 1YA on December 5. The carol is a hymn which of all hymns should be a blend of mysticism, austerity, simplicity and subtlety, with, in addition, a certain joy, incalculable and indefinable. The composer who attempts even an arrangement let alone



the original composition of a carol, must himself be a blend of these qualities, and possess a consummate but modest musicianship. Of the Dorian-Ariel group Walford Davies' "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and Holst's "Wassail Song" were most impressive. In Vaughan Williams'

"Fantasia," sung in collaboration with the strings of the Studio Orchestra, the singers never reached a happy understanding with the strings. It was difficult to know whether the incoherence was inherent in the music or wholly the fault of the performers. The Dorian-Ariel Singers are almost back to pre-war standard, but the men's voices do not yet match those of the women in tone quality.

Language Plain

"LANGUAGE is a solemn thing. It grows out of life, out of its agonies and ecstasies, its wants and its weariness." Though the words are the same for all of us, language is personal and hardly susceptible of imitation. Hearing Robert Gibbings read from his book "Lovely is the Lee" I despair, envious of the graceful flow that moulds words into pictures, and tunes the mind to a gentle music. His voice is no polished suave tone, yet its very roughness has character, character that gives intimacy to his speech, makes truth of fancy and clothes fact with the texture of imagination. There is nothing ornate in his style, he does not need to invoke the assistance of the less familiar paths of vocabulary to give his thoughts meaning. His tale follows Cowper's recipe. It is "judicious, clear, succinct; the language plain, and incidents well linked."

Broadcasts of N.Z.E.F. Rugby

FOR those who will not be able to sleep peacefully until they have heard all about the remaining Rugby matches in the 2nd N.Z.E.F. team's itinerary, the NBS will provide relief.

A commentary on the match with the London clubs at White City will be broadcast by Station 2YA, this Sunday, December 23, at 9.30 p.m. and by the four Main Stations at 11.10 p.m. (The play "A Chinese Solomon" from Station 2YA will be presented at 9.45 p.m. on that date.)

On Sunday, January 6, 2YA will re-open at 2.15 a.m. to re-broadcast a full commentary of the match against Wales at Cardiff. Later — at 9 a.m. — all main National stations will play a recording of the commentary, lasting until 10.30 a.m. The same arrangements will apply on Sunday, January 13 for the match against the Combined Services at Gloucester, and on Sunday, January 20, for the game against Scotland at Edinburgh.

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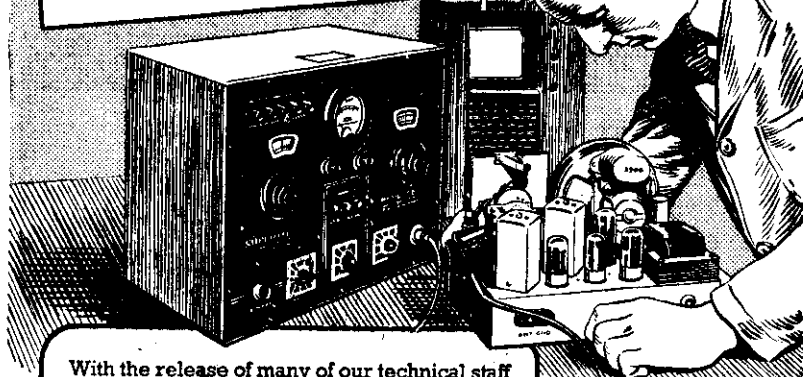


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