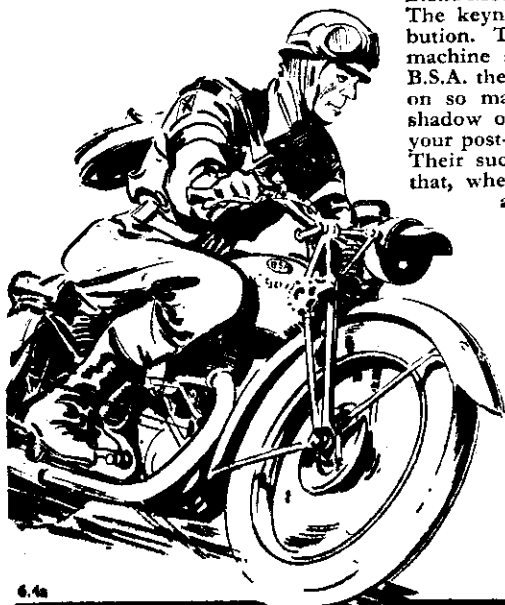


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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Music for Remembering

CHRISTMAS is a time of reckless spending, both of money and goodwill, a time for handshakes and slaps on the back, for drinking and eating, for carolling and wassailing—but it is also a time for remembering. Fauré's "Requiem" which 1YX broadcast the Saturday before Christmas is music for remembering, for contemplation. This is not religious music in the ceremonial sense; it transcends creed to achieve a universality which is fundamental. What someone calls "its gentle confidence, its tender and tranquil expectancy" is the expression of a genuinely human grief not to be translated into any other language but music and the meaningless, meaningful words of the form of Mass. Universal yet private, this is grief without sadness, sorrow without tears.

Church or Studio?

IN a Listener interview last September the Rev. G. A. Naylor gave some of the reasons for his belief that the broadcasts of religious services should be made

direct from the studio and not from the church itself. On the Sunday before Christmas he broadcast an evening service from 1YA, and the result was effective enough to reawaken interest in his experiments. Few speakers are at their best when they have in mind two audiences, one seen and one unseen, and it is possible, too, that the presence of a microphone in a church may destroy for some of those who are there that feeling of privacy and unity they need for their worship. By broadcasting direct to those who were listening at home, Mr. Naylor was able to adjust the tempo and the method of his service to suit their needs alone. Mr. Naylor has the advantage of being an accomplished reader with a fine literary discrimination. As I had anticipated, he selected for the most part Luke's version of the Christmas story; in thought, in utterance, and in length, his sermon seemed just what a sermon should be. The question of music for such a service is a difficult one. Recorded music seems at the moment the only practical solution, yet it should not perhaps be accepted indefinitely and unreservedly. In this case it was chosen well; there were, besides Christmas hymns, choruses from *Messiah*, "God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen" (beautifully sung), and as a retiring voluntary Bach's organ Toccata and Fugue in D Minor.

Scrooge and Nero

BOTH the plays selected by 3YA for Christmas broadcasting were American recordings. I wish I could say that either was successful. The first was a version of Dickens' *Christmas Carol* with Ronald Colman, whom ordinarily I heartily admire, as Scrooge. This failed in many different ways: I fear that Dickens is too essentially the Londoner to go into an American accent; nor is "Christmas Carol," the crowd scenes and descriptive passages of which are so much the soul of the book as at times to overshadow the plot, really suitable for radio-dramatisation; the idea of Scrooge recounting his own redemption would fetch Dickens roaring out of the grave. The other play was Norman Corwin's "The Plot to Overthrow Christmas," which gives the impression chiefly of opportunities lost. It was a noble idea to depict a congress of fiends plotting the downfall of the festival, but so rich a collection of individualists as Ivan the Terrible, Haman, Simon Legree, and Nero should have been endowed with a far greater diversity of personality and not presented as a collection of retired bootleggers. And Nero's final conversion to the side of the angels by the eloquence of Santa Claus was singularly unconvincing.

Carollers

IT was something of a mild surprise that I realised "Viewsreel" is over a year old, and that certain programmes recur with the seasons. Of last Christmas the pleasantest listening that I remember was the programme from 4YA of the Coventry Carollers, and I looked forward to hearing them again this Christmas. Their programme was excellent, and contained mostly lesser-known items,

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