

(continued from previous page)

Americans" runs it pretty close. "Ballad for Americans" is not a thing you whistle on the street: as sung by Paul Robeson and an American People's Chorus from 3YA the other night, it ran for about 12 minutes and contained some fairly intricate part singing. The Corwin influence could be felt in the lyric, in the telling use of repetition ("Nobody who was anybody believed it, everybody who was anybody they doubted it") in the occasional sharp phrase, and in the personal appeal to each individual listening, which has been crudely demonstrated often enough in these days of Top Secrecy by the notice "Keep Out: This Means YOU." I know that after hearing "Ballad for Americans"—somehow or other I had not heard it before—I felt I too was involved in the American experiment, and that if the mixture of races which makes up America became intolerant of each other, or of the peoples outside their frontiers, then I too would be in some measure responsible. The idea of behaving responsibly towards one's fellow human beings is not exactly a new one, but when men in high authority are to be heard righteously cutting off UNRRA funds it is cheering to know that the other idea is also being spread about a bit.

## Humanities on the Land

JOHN GREEN, the BBC Director of Agricultural Broadcasts, in his recorded talk "Land Sense" laid a finger on an important split in our development; laid a finger on it, but did not, I thought, explore. His task was a plea for young New Zealand farmers to see their way of life (farming is not just a job) as an art as well as a science. He put his case convincingly, emphasising the sense of the past which European farmers have, and urging us to make use of our part of that heritage. This seems to me admirable but almost impossible. The English farmers who settled in Canterbury at the end of the 19th Century did their best to make another England,

But as the children grew  
It was something different, something  
Nobody counted on.

We aren't articulate enough apparently, to tell each other what we have turned into, nor has the changing process continued long enough for anyone to do much measuring, but in a land of tin roofs and six o'clock closing, with china animals on the window-sill and a subscription to the *Digest* instead of bookshelves, it is hard to see a blossoming of the humanities. There are farmers who read other things besides butterfat prices, and think about more fundamental problems than welding the draw bar of a tractor, but they don't have much time. The five-day cow has not been developed to fit into the forty-hour week; the agricultural revolution has not yet caught up on the industrial revolution.

## Stravinsky and Jazz

ON a recent Tuesday 3YL gave us two hours of what they called Chamber Music by Russian Composers. If the definition of chamber music is any Russian music except philharmonic orchestras and the Don Cossack Choir, I suppose it was chamber music; anyway it was varied and good fun. There was some frothy stuff from Shostakovich,

occasionally inspired groping in two short preludes of Scriabin's, Prokofieff writing for the piano with his tongue in his cheek, some dramatic and apparently suicidal songs sung by Vladimir Rosing, and a rather extraordinary little piece by Stravinsky called "Piano Rag-Music." It seems to me that Stravinsky is at the same time attracted and repelled by jazz; he is drawn by its gusto and unconventional appearance, and then finches back from its crudities, its merciless beat, and perhaps its commercial aspects. "Piano Rag-Music," played by the composer, is a mixture of queer harmonies and varying tempos which does not achieve the relaxed drive of the good jazz pianist, or the subtle command of tone and authority of attack of the classical virtuoso. Whatever Stravinsky thinks of jazz, many of the younger jazz composers and arrangers think highly of Stravinsky, and imitating him, produce the most shattering atonal effects. Surely, with atonal jazz, the end point has been reached in the cult of disintegration, already fully explored in art and literature by Picasso and Joyce. It might be possible to obtain more curious musical effects by inventing an entirely new instrument, or by crossing the bagpipes with the novachord, but there is a good deal of exploring and interpreting still to be done in the musical language of the present before any new hieroglyphics can safely be added.

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