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the assumption that its listeners are little better than morons, and which thus gives as much stress to cultural and intellectual affairs as to homecraft and cooking, without any vulgarising. Much of the character of *Feminine Viewpoint* seems to me to come from the personality of its compère, Cynthia Dale. The aplomb with which she interviews celebrities, thrusts a seemingly ingenuous remark into a discussion, and offers a helpfully informal comment when a talk threatens to become too impersonal gives intimacy to the programme without a suspicion of "synthetic personality." It also enables her to carry off triumphantly such rare slips as "You have been listening to *The Pleasures of Jensen*," her recent ambiguous back-announcement for *The Pleasures of Music*, by Owen Jensen.

—J.C.R.

Light Heavyweight

THE Emlyn Williams play *The Light of Heart* must be very highly thought of by the NZBS, since it is one of the few permitted to go over the half-hour mark — almost approaching the hour limit previously reached only by plays in the BBC's *World Theatre* series. It was full of nice fat parts for the nicely-trained and very competent NZBS cast, including one minor but meaty one for the Cockney without whom, apparently, no NZBS play would be deemed air-worthy. Yes, *The Light of Heart* is certainly an actor's play, but I am tempted to question whether it was a listeners' play. Once past the opening scene, which was curiously reminiscent of *ITMA* (the Chinstrap of the inebriated Murdoch Thomas and the Sam of Bevin, the kindly Welsh policeman), listeners found themselves languishing amid the alien corn of a plot in which broken-down actors, self-sacrificing daughters, promising young musicians with inferiority-complexes and impresarios manoeuvred for position. It had its moments, of course. The plot, like the characters, was meaty, the dialogue full-flavoured, the situations robust. And seldom has an author used the sword of melodrama to better purpose than Mr. Williams, who invoked its timely aid to apply the *coup de grâce* to a situation that was rapidly becoming intolerable to the audience—though the actors were still enjoying it. There's a lot to be said for complete removal of one angle of a triangle.

Old Rip

SINCE I have not read *Rip Van Winkle* since I was a child, and then possibly only in some Rackham-illustrated bedtime version, I am not in a position to pass judgment on the fidelity of the short radio version of the story I heard from 2YA recently, but I can vouch for its excellent entertainment value. Walter Huston brought a certain Yankee wryness to the part of Rip Van Winkle, and the shrill stridency of Mistress Van Winkle on the rampage threw the emphasis rather on the wisdom of old Rip's escape technique rather than the oddity of it. I suspect that the snippets of somewhat commonplace description of the Hudson and the Catskills were Washington Irving's own, but am tempted to give credit

for the general hilarity of the treatment to scriptwriter Robert E. Lee, who with a name like that should go as far as his steamboat-namesake.

—M.B.

Bastille Day

I AM inclined to think that the Bastille Day programme from 3YC was put together in rather a hurry. It was called *Two Frenchmen*, and the two concerned were Debussy and Rostand. Of their work we heard the rather familiar,



but lovely, "L'Après Midi" prelude, and then love scenes from Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*. These two Frenchmen are undoubtedly very worthy artists, but I cannot for the life of me connect Debussy's cloudy, soft-

lighted music, or Rostand's swaggering, age of chivalry dialogue, with the savage surge of revolutionary France. Two Frenchmen—yes, but not two Frenchmen representative of the storming of the Bastille.

—G. leF. Y.

Miniature

FOR quiet subtlety and those nuances of character, description, and emotional content which, properly used, can turn a simple tale into a work of art, there is no doubt that the short story form offers more possibilities than the short radio play. Possibly I may be drawing a general conclusion from particular cases, but what else is the listener to do when the standard of radio stories remains consistently high, while that of short radio plays (we don't get any long ones nowadays, anyhow), remains, with minor exceptions, somewhere between Fair and Very Poor. Ethel Fielding's *Little Silver Goat*, the most recent story of the NZBS series to come my way, was a delicate miniature finely read by William Austin. It was all over in a quarter-of-an-hour; but I searched the programmes in vain for a play of equal length and comparable felicity.

Realms of Gold

IT seems incredible to one born and bred in Otago that an NZBS programme in the series *History and Harmony in Otago* could contain a character who declares that he has never heard of Lawrence. To the lover of Otago history, geography, flora and fauna, including rabbits, the name of Lawrence brings to the mental eye a romantically coloured pastiche of a picture, in which the gleam of gold nuggets is no brighter than the colour of the autumn poplar avenue. But one forgets that these programmes are for other members of the New Zealand family than those connected by birth or sentiment with the locality selected; and it is pleasing to hear what a fine job the NZBS has done in presenting all parts of our country to all listeners in this type of semi-documentary. Perhaps owing to the richness of the romantic historical background, Lawrence and its environs present a fine field for the arranger of such programmes, and in this programme the best possible use was made of the material.

—D.S.

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