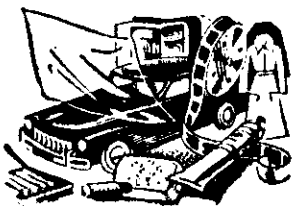


The SHELL NEWS COLUMN

Nearly twenty years ago Shell set up a research programme with the aim of establishing and developing new materials based on petroleum chemicals. The results of this work have been enormous and have had a notable effect on many of the world's key industries. Last month a fresh achievement was brought to fruition when Shell opened the world's first synthetic glycerine plant in the United States.



Glycerine is an industrial raw material of the first importance and is used in the manufacture of very many everyday products. The largest single consumer is the paint and varnish industry, but glycerine is also widely used in cellophane, tobacco, films, paper and soap manufacture. The annual consumption throughout the world runs into many hundreds of millions of pounds. Up till now, however, it has only been obtainable as a by-product of other industries, and because of this serious shortages have frequently occurred.



By providing this new independent supply Shell are now in a position to make a considerable contribution to the correction of this position. During the last two decades Shell had introduced new oil-based chemicals into many fields of industry and agriculture, but the synthetic production of so vital a product as glycerine certainly ranks among its major attainments. Fifteen years ago it was thought impossible that this could be done. But to paraphrase the well-known saying: Shell scientists perform the difficult immediately; the impossible takes just a little longer.

E13.9

Another in the Series
**THE SHELL COMPANY
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THINGS TO COME

Prelude to War

RECENTLY the BBC completed a series of important new radio documentaries on the early phases of the Second World War and the events leading up to it. The authors have had access to sources of information not hitherto available, and they present in these programmes the most complete and authentic radio record of that critical period of history that has yet been made. Listeners to 2YA this Sunday, October 2, at 9.32 p.m., will hear *Prelude to War*. In this programme Terence Tiller, working in collaboration with Professor L. B. Namier, reviews in detail the diplomatic exchanges and developments between the Munich Crisis of September, 1938, and the outbreak of hostilities in September, 1939.



As in previous BBC documentaries of this type, the facts as revealed in official documents are left to speak for themselves and no attempt at dramatisation has been made. In cases where it is considered desirable to put a statement into the mouth of its originator this is done by using an appropriate type of voice rather than by direct impersonation. Terence Tiller, himself an historian, wrote the script, basing it on information collected by Professor Namier, who is Professor of Modern History in the University of Manchester. A leading authority on his subject, Professor Namier has written a number of books on European history.

Brahms v. Beethoven

BRAHMS'S inferiority to Beethoven is not a matter of technique, said a recent biographer, Peter Latham, but rather a question of temperament and character. "Brahms never reaches the highest summits of all, because in the last resort he believes neither in God nor himself. Lacking faith, he lacks confidence. . . . He was an apostle of the middle way. His music lacks glitter, but glitter is no guarantee of solid worth. Cut beneath the sober surface of Brahms and you find true metal all through." Brahms has in fact come to be accepted as one of the great purists, the creator of works chaste, noble, and profound. As a symphonist he is ranged second only to Beethoven himself, and his songs often show a symphonist's breadth and instinct for proportion. He was a great composer of choral and chamber music, but had no taste for opera. The first of a series of programmes called *The Music of Brahms* will be heard from 4YZ at 2.15 p.m. on Wednesday, October 5. The works to be played are the Symphony No. 1, and the choral prelude "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming," from Op. 122.

"O My Blacke Soule!"

IN setting to music the nine poems he chose from John Donne's *Holy Sonnets*, Benjamin Britten had a much harder task than in the *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo*. The two song-cycles together stand for sacred and profane love, but Donne's divine aspirations, coupled with a deep sense of sin and

the terrors of death, do not, according to *The Gramophone's* music critic, lend themselves to lyrical treatment as well as Michelangelo's temporal longings did. Most of the settings are declamatory, and the summons of the first song, "O My Blacke Soule," is reiterated unceasingly in the piano part. The second song, "Batter My Heart," is swiftly and superbly dramatic, the third is quiet and deeply moving, and the fourth is a test of virtuosity in both singer and piano. In the last song, "Death Be Not Proud," Britten rises to majestic heights, and the final page is one of his most splendid pieces of writing. The songs are in effect a religious meditation, and will give most satisfaction to those who read the poems thoughtfully beforehand. Recordings of *The Holy Sonnets of John Donne*, which comprise Opus 35, with Peter Pears (tenor) and Benjamin Britten (piano) will be heard from 2YA at 8.10 p.m. on Thursday, October 6. Pears is said rarely to have sung better than in these songs.

Music From Wales

THE Eisteddfod, or national bardic congress of Wales, is an institution peculiar to the country. It seeks to encourage "bardism" and the general literature of the Welsh, to maintain the Welsh language, and to foster and cultivate a patriotic spirit among the people. The first Eisteddfod of which any account seems to have been handed down was one held on the banks of the Conwy in the 6th Century, under the auspices of Maelgwn Gwynedd, prince of North Wales, but things didn't get properly under way until the 12th Century, when one of Maelgwn's successors, the Irish born Griffith ap Cynan, imported large numbers of Irish musicians who did much to improve the strain of Welsh music. The BBC has now produced a programme called *A Land of Singers*, in which Wyn Griffith gives a vivid picture of Wales and of a people to whom singing comes as naturally as drawing breath. It contains songs and choruses by some of the outstanding competitors in the Eisteddfod, by men's choirs, women's choirs, and children's choirs, and some music peculiar to Wales—"Canu Pennillion"—a special form of singing to the harp. The choirs include the famous Morriston Male Voice Choir. *A Land of Singers*, which occupies half an hour, will be heard from 1YA on Friday, October 7, look you, at 9.30 p.m.

New Series of Plays

AS a film *Nothing But the Truth* scored a considerable success when it was shown in New Zealand back in 1942. It featured Bob Hope as an ill-advised character who vows to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth for 24 hours, and gets into all sorts of awkward situations as a result. *Nothing But the Truth* can now be heard as a radio play. It is one of a new series of 60-minute productions starting from 3YC at 8.0 p.m. on Friday, October 7. These plays were produced in Australia, and other titles in the series are *Fair and Warner* (the first to be heard), *Get Rich Quick Wallingford*, *Smilin' Through*, *The Sign on the Door*, *The Green Goddess*, *The Rat*, *Eyes of Youth*, and *Leah Kleschna*. The

ALSO WORTH NOTICE

MONDAY

1YZ, 8.0 p.m.: Play, "Good Intentions."
3YA, 7.55 p.m.: Caledonian Society's Highland Pipe Band.

TUESDAY

1YC, 9.3 p.m.: Music by Walton.
3YA, 8.0 p.m.: The National Orchestra.

WEDNESDAY

2YA, 8.0 p.m.: Play, "The Seagull Never Sings."
4YC, 9.25 p.m.: "Elijah" (Part 1).

THURSDAY

1YA, 8.0 p.m.: Band of the First Battalion.
4YA, 9.30 p.m.: Schumann's "Piano Concerto in A Minor."

FRIDAY

1XN, 9.35 p.m.: The Berlin Airlift.
3XC, 8.45 p.m.: Talk, "The Making of a Play."

SATURDAY

2YC, 9.0 p.m.: Music in Shakespeare.
3YA, 9.0 p.m.: Aleksandr Helmann.

SUNDAY

1YZ, 5.0 p.m.: "Hannen Swaffer Says."
4YA, 9.22 p.m.: Play, "The Savage Breast."

series will of course be heard later from other National stations.

Tribute to Tommy

ON the evening of January 13, 1949, at the time when *ITMA* was to have been broadcast, BBC listeners heard instead a tribute to Tommy Handley, whose funeral had taken place earlier that day. The broadcast came from the studio which had been the home of the first *ITMA* nearly ten years earlier. It opened with a tribute to Tommy Handley by the Director-General of the BBC, Sir William Haley, and was made up of memories and melodies of *ITMA* linked together with a commentary by John Snagge, the BBC's Head of Programme Operations. Tommy's friends and colleagues in the *ITMA* cast were in the studio and at the close of the broadcast they drank a toast to *ITMA* and the man who had made it one of the best known and best loved of radio shows. The Tommy Handley BBC Memorial Programme will be broadcast from 3YA at 7.55 p.m. on Saturday, October 8.

From Screen to Radio

AN innovation in film making that has apparently proved popular with picturegoers in America and elsewhere appears in the British film *Quartet*. The producers took four short stories by W. Somerset Maugham, each with a completely different cast and a different director, and welded them into one picture which Maugham himself introduces and winds up. *Quartet* is the subject of the latest programme in the BBC series *Picture Parade*, which will be broadcast from 4YA at 4.0 p.m. on Sunday, October 9. Somerset Maugham's voice is heard in the programme, and in addition to excerpts from the four shorts, listeners will hear interviews in the studio with Anthony Darborough, who produced the film, Arthur Crabtree, one of the directors, and Mai Zetterling and Dirk Bogarde, who appear in two of the four stories.

N.Z. LISTENER, SEPTEMBER 30, 1949.