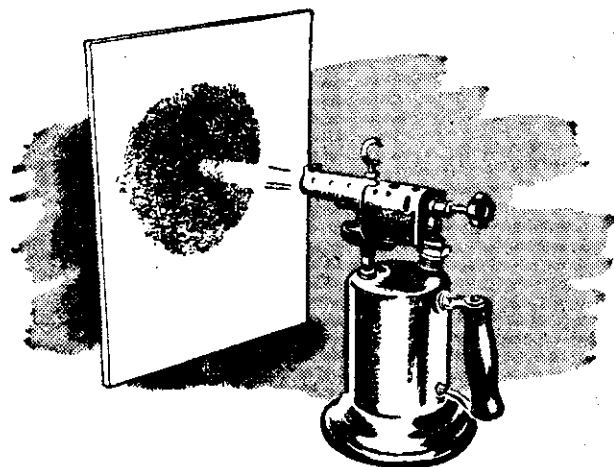


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Radio Review

A GOOD YEAR ENDED

AT the end of the year comes the backward glance at the many hours spent—or mis-spent—listening to the radio. In retrospect they run together, and it is surprisingly difficult to pick out the peaks. The obvious choice for most people would be the Coronation broadcast; but that, as with many of the best documentary programmes, originated from the BBC. Among local programmes, I find the most memorable was the NZBS broadcast on the ascent of Everest, a piece of up-to-the-minute timing that was well-produced. The programme on the school at Ranui was a first-rate documentary, artful in its effect of complete spontaneity; and the series entitled *The Road to Nationhood*, though a trifle noisy at times, proved to be an interesting and vivid reconstruction of our own history, for once given the honours of full production. In music, the mornings have been brightened by regular sessions of classical music from 4YA at 11.35, and although these have tended to become rather unenterprisingly alternated between Mozart and Haydn symphonies and ballet suites, they have made a pleasant oasis in the musical desert. We have had the full series of Beethoven sonatas from 4YC, and the acquisition of long-playing equipment has brought added variety to our programmes. A good year, 1953, on the whole, with some interesting new developments.

Talking It Out

WE have been given various forms of the discussion panel in the last two years, and that the NZBS is feeling its way towards a more satisfactory solution of the difficulties of discussion became obvious with its handling of the question of accrediting for University Entrance. This, it seems to me, was very well done with fluent and logical speakers presenting their views unhampered by the red herrings trailed across their paths by other speakers bent on keeping the discussion live or general. Yet, on a subject like this, one of interest to a large body of parents, teachers and pupils themselves, and taking into consideration the calibre of the speakers, sufficient interest should be aroused to allow the listener the extra mental flight of one forty-five minute broadcast instead of three fifteen-minute talks separated by a week in each case. In one single broadcast the contrasting points of view would have been intensified.

—Loquax

Programmes to Remember

LOOKING back over a year's listening, what I find most firmly fixed in my mind is the profoundly stirring experience of first hearing Vaughan Williams's *Sinfonia Antartica*. With this, I recall certain recordings heard and reheard with pleasure — Walton's *Viola Concerto*, *Daphnis and Chloe*, *Dies Natalis*, *Harold in Italy*, and Haydn in the contrasted moods of the *Seven Last Words* and the *Pieces for Mechanical Clocks*.

Perhaps, too, Alfred Deller showing us how to sing Purcell and (on a different level) Anna Russell showing us how to sing anything. I recall little of drama, but a number of excellent features: *Poet and Child* (the de la Mare programme) for its delicate exploration of poetry and childhood; Cutforth's *Korean Reporter* for vivid indignation; and *The Man in Leather Breeches* (George Fox) and *The Railway King* (George Hudson) for their central figures. In what seemed a good year for talks, I single out Stanley Oliver, Maria Dronke on drama, and Eric Westbrook on modern art. At least two local poetry programmes were worthy of pride—the Campbell-Lilburn *Elegy* and Denis Glover's *Arawata Bill*. And I should like to find a place for Michael Redgrave, whether as King Richard or Captain Hornblower.

The Serious Mood

BY coincidence, what were, for me, two extremes of serious listening during the year came almost 'together, and almost at the end. At the risk of "plugging" *Paroles de France* and the Ravel-Casadesus series, I must say that I found Jean Cocteau's tale of the cat-prince, immediately followed by *Gaspard de la Nuit*, the most purely delightful moment in the year's listening. In contrast, 1YC gave us a few nights later Dyson's *Canterbury Pilgrims*, which—no reflection on the performers—I found monumentally dull. It is, of course, perfectly serious and worthy music, yet misconceived from the start. Chaucer's heroic couplet is, of all metres, one of those most purely designed for speech, and least for singing. It is hardly possible to imagine a music which could, in its own right, match Chaucer's ease and speed and sheer loquacity. But, granted that the attempt had to be made, there is still Chaucer's extraordinary range, moving at ease between sincere piety and worldly wisdom, pathos and buffoonery, nobility and bawdery. One would hardly suspect that this gentle and rather monotonous music had anything to do with the rowdy vigour of the *Tales*.

—M.K.J.

Accrediting

WHEN Mr. M. A. Bull, of Timaru Boys' High School, spoke over 3YA in favour of accrediting instead of an examination to determine the fitness of high school boys and girls for further study at University, I thought the last word had been said. However, once Miss R. I. Gardner, of the Auckland Girls' Grammar School, got away after a somewhat hesitant start she proved a most able protagonist. What most moved me in her argument was that, after duly considering the stresses and strains of the practice, a teacher who has a relationship to the pupil to preserve should not be expected to act as judge, jury, counsellor and executioner all in one. Mr. W. A. G. Penlington, former headmaster of Hastings High School, had the task of summing up a difficult situation. He proposed that both University Entrance exam. and accrediting should be abolished. From an outsider's point of view this does seem the only way out.

Vain Possessions

PEOPLE in our country often worry lines into their faces acquiring things, which, while they add to a sense of

N.Z. LISTENER, JANUARY 8, 1954.