

## More "World Theatre" Next Week

FOUR famous comedies are included in the new series of *World Theatre* productions to be broadcast in coming weeks from the YC stations. Since it began seven years ago the BBC's *World Theatre* has lived up admirably to its aim of presenting radio adaptations of great plays of all ages by the most distinguished casts available in Britain, and this year listeners will be able to hear Molière's *Tartuffe* and Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme (in a new translation by Miles Malleon called *The Prodigious Snob*), Turgenev's *A Month in the Country*, and a new production of Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*. Besides these comic masterpieces there will be Chekhov's *The Seagull*, Strindberg's *The Father*, and Gordon Daviot's celebrated modern drama about King Richard II, *Richard of Bordeaux*.



MILES MALLEON

First to be heard is Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* — from 3YC at 8.15 p.m. on Saturday, January 30; 1YC and 2YC, at 8.40 p.m. on Sunday, January 31. John Mills, the film star, has the leading role of Young Marlow, Charles Leno is the oafish Tony Lumpkin, and Marjorie Westbury plays Kate Hardcastle, the young lady whom Marlow makes violent love to in the mistaken notion that she is a serving wench. An earlier *World Theatre* production of it, with Hubert Gregg and Reginald Beckwith, was broadcast here in 1950, but such is its perennial comic virtue that no one is likely to regret this second version.

In the following week the YC stations will broadcast *The Father*. The translation of Strindberg's famous tragedy is by Max Faber, and the leading parts of the Captain and Laura, his wife, are played by Robert Harris and Kathleen Michael. Other well-known names in the cast are Gladys Young, Richard Williams and Ivor Barnard. *The Father* was one of the three or four plays by Strindberg which invited the charges of sensationalism that were, at one time, indiscriminately levelled at him. In these particular plays (*Comrades*, *Miss Julie*, etc.), Strindberg allowed his own emotional bitterness to guide his pen, and it is generally conceded that *The Father* is very largely the outcome of memories of his disastrous first marriage and its effect upon his mind.

In an article in the BBC's *Radio Times*, J. C. Trewin, the dramatic critic, described Miles Malleon's *The Prodigious Snob* (*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*) as "Molière alive and kicking." This *World Theatre* production was adapted by Felix Felton from Miles Malleon's stage production at the Bristol Old Vic, and has Miles Malleon himself as Monsieur Jourdain, and the Bristol Old Vic Company taking part. (Miles Malleon is an expert on Molière, and has also translated *L'Avare* and *Tartuffe*.) The second of these translations is used in the production of *Tartuffe* in this *World Theatre* selection, with Donald Wolfit as Tartuffe and Miles Malleon himself as Orgon, the rich merchant into whose home the arch-hypocrite insinuated himself. Miles Malleon is well known, in addition to his work as playwright and stage actor, for his supporting roles in a number of English film comedies, which have included that of Dr. Chasuble in *The Importance of Being*

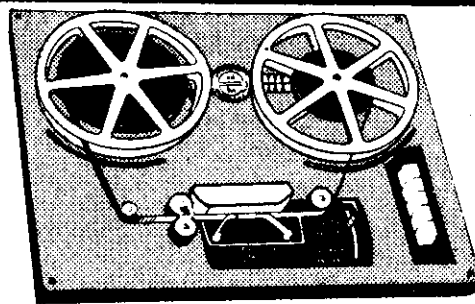
*Earnest*, the hangman in *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, and the affable uncle in *Trent's Last Case*.

*Richard of Bordeaux*, by Gordon Daviot, was one of the outstanding successes of the London stage in 1932 and 1933, and in this *World Theatre* production Sir John Gielgud plays the part he made famous in the original stage presentation. The play marked a notable step in the progress of the costume play from cloak-and-dagger transparencies to a genuine attempt at historical reconstruction and character analysis. Gordon Daviot is the pen name of Elizabeth Mackintosh, games mistress at a girls' school in Scotland. She sent the manuscript of her play to Gielgud, who saw its possibilities and gave it a cautious try-out at a theatre club with two performances. Its reception privately confirmed his belief in the play, and it was put on for a triumphant run at the New Theatre.

Of the two Russian plays in this series the most famous is Chekhov's *The Seagull*. It has already been preceded in *World Theatre* by *Uncle Vanya* and *The Cherry Orchard*, and many people may prefer it to either of these. It was the first of the four great plays which were produced at the Moscow Art Theatre at the end of last century, and which established Chekhov's lasting fame as a dramatist. (The fourth, besides those mentioned, was *The Three Sisters*.)

In this BBC version the production is by Val Gielgud and David H. Godfrey, from a translation by George Calderon. Arcadina, the talented actress, is played by Fay Compton; Constantine, her unhappy son, by Derek Hart; and Nina, the woman he loves, by Ursula Howells. The worthless Trigorin is played by Val Gielgud himself.

Turgenev's masterpiece, *A Month in the Country*, for broadcasting, adapted from Constance Garnett's translation, features Margaret Leighton as Natalya Petrovna, Nigel Stock as Alexey Nikolayevitch Beliyev, the Russian tutor, and Peggy Bryan as Vera, Natalya's ward. The play is a comedy of a Russian holiday, telling of the rivalry between a married woman and an unmarried girl over a young tutor. When a woman nears the end of a youth which has brought no real romance, says Turgenev, then she tries hard to find what she has lost. So it is with Natalya Petrovna.



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