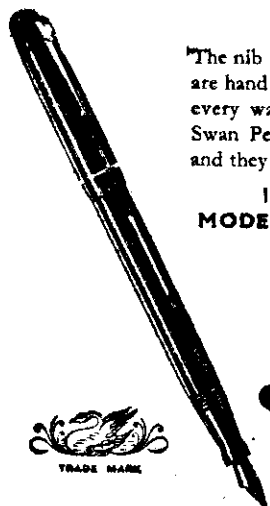
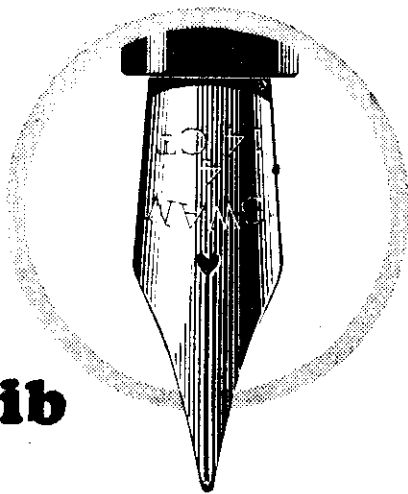


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Radio Review

ANOTHER LOOK AT G.B.S.

HAVING anatomised modern poetry and the modern novel, Professor J. Isaacs has, inevitably, turned to contemporary drama; he is at present well launched on his new BBC series, *Twentieth Century Theatre*, from 1YC. The chief difference between this and his earlier series is that illustrative scenes from modern plays are included. Dr. Isaacs's recent talk on Bernard Shaw began by saying nearly all the obvious things about G.B.S.; but displayed some originality in the selection of the scenes — Mrs. Warren's defence of her "profession" to Vivie, and a snippet from *Heartbreak House*. Listening to Mrs. Warren's speech, I couldn't help noticing, now that the first impact of Shaw has worn off, how he weights his scales, and how sophisticated are the arguments he veils with wit and paradox — and also how dreadfully "period" it sounds. In his final sentence, Professor Isaacs suggested that Shaw's plays, save for *Heartbreak House*, would survive only in fragments. But, frustratingly, he did not elaborate the point, the only really unusual one he made, and one which is provocative enough to merit further discussion.

Predictable Story

DICK CROSS'S *The Fall of Dandy Dick*, as produced by the NZBS, killed an hour not too disagreeably. This rather predictable story of a noblewoman "kidnapped" by a dashing highwayman, and trapping him into marriage of a rather dismal respectability, was carried along by the vigour of Charles Sinclair as the philosophical Bow Street Runner, and some pleasant character-work from Ria Sohler as Lady Sophia, Raymond Griffiths as Dandy Dick, and William Austin, unrecognisable as the deliciously adenoidal Lord Tappertit. The singing of Alex Lindsay's tavern song (very reminiscent of *The Beggar's Opera*) struck me as being neither robust nor noisy enough; and like several other NZBS plays I've heard recently, production appeared perfunctory, and not very imaginative. A couple

of years ago, when the Auckland studios were producing, Wellington's plays seemed to benefit from the competition. But now we seem to be back in the old dispensation when NZBS plays, originating in one city only, have a depressing sameness, and draw on far too limited a range of talent. The wonderful BBC *World Theatre* plays, so meticulously produced, make recent NZBS plays seem rather like a small-town entry in the Drama League competitions. And once they *did* promise so well!

—J.C.R.

Conscience-stricken

ONE MAN IN HIS TIME, heard over 3YA, is a play of considerable skill which works out its idea in terms of a conscience-stricken hero, played by William Austin, who aptly asks the reflection in his shaving mirror, "Was this the face that launched a thousand quips?" But the heart-searchings over, he continues to launch them until, cut short in mid-career, he comes before the Judgment Seat where he pleads guilty of insincerity. Despite the build-up, the sentence comes as a surprise. The portrayal of a witty character imposes exceptional strains on a playwright. Unless he has the mind of a Wilde or a Shaw, he must rely upon jokes that the audience might have heard elsewhere. I thought it noticeable that the playwright cut the luncheon speech to avoid its hazards. Nevertheless the play, both in its serious and entertaining aspects, was a worth-while venture.

Compromise in Art

AS I remember them, nearly all of Eric Westbrook's talks on art were broadcast from 3YC late in the evening, a misfortune not only for myself but also for those country people who would be too tired to listen properly at that time. The talks were, as anticipated, better informed and more competent than most which have been given on this topic. Mr. Westbrook had a more persuasive delivery than was expected in one who had disturbed our own people down here in Christchurch. I was surprised to find that he classed himself as a typical Briton in his belief in a compromise between abstract and representational ways of painting. As though consolidating this statement, Mr. Westbrook shrewdly observed that while there were acres of dead academic paintings there was also a considerable amount of

CAGED BEAST

LION, or whatever it is that walks
the measured cage, is a symbol
surely shorn, made-over: stalks
its own depending shadow like lost evil

savoured once and dreamed again; denied.
No tawny king on terrace of High Tor,
but Samson circumscribed—pride
grinding the mills, brought low to bear

a dim domestic burden. Caged
or whatever it is you call this
indrawn power so monstrous when it raged,
is something analysed from former bliss

to be content and rational: but still
intent, its impulse bids it pace
the inches of restriction—the grey wall—
truss between anger and the master's face.

Lion that was once the menace and the power
strange as free-will; oh, pity them should rise
great winds to smash your disciplinary tower,
release the monarch in your exiled eyes.

—Louis Johnson