



"Then it says quite clearly, 'Plug it in anywhere'"

(C) Punch

Music of the Night

TO me, Manuel de Falla's well-known "Ritual Fire Dance" is an interesting but unsuccessful attempt to gate-crash into the strange exciting world of primitive ritual. I approve of the attempt to use new material but do not feel that the end justified the means. With the Concerto for Harpsichord in B Minor, which I heard from 3YC, I had reason to take a new interest in Falla's work. The harpsichord was accompanied by violin, oboe, clarinet and 'cello, and the piece began with a slow sequence of strange and arresting chords unlike anything I had heard before. I no longer stood aside puzzled but seemed to hear in the heavy driven columns of sound a record of the inevitable passage of time, the slow marches of the night; a joy disturbed, made piquant, by the thought of its perishable nature. The sound died away into each interval with a heaviness and a savour that made it last in the inner ear. If one might tune into the night then this, surely, would be heard in the slow heavy pulse of the earth swinging beneath the stars with its great burden of souls.

Old Bodies, Young Minds

RONALD HAMBLETON, who interviewed Bertrand Russell, Laurence Housman, Gilbert Murray and Walter de la Mare in "The Experience of Age," a BBC feature heard over 3YC, was something of a sobersides himself, but perhaps the quiet judicious approach was necessary to the job. There is not much evidence of "dotage" nowadays, and most certainly not here, where the voices were remarkably youthful. All four men admitted to a slackening off of their faculties and staying power, though the mental burnishing of a lifetime leaves them considerably in advance of most of us. It was surprising to hear the word "useful" coming into the speech of Bertrand Russell and Walter de la Mare. Possibly their desire to remain "useful" gives us a clue to their alertness and continued enjoyment of life, yet it had an odd mundane ring, more especially in the mouth of the poet whose work, if it is useful, stretches the meaning of the word beyond its customary limits. Heretical as it is not to like

the word, I don't. There are men who spend their old age like lizards in the sun. They are less articulate, less the successful figureheads of civilisation, and an interview with a few such men, while difficult to engineer, might prove equally interesting and a good deal more provocative.

—Westcliff

Attractively Irish

"THE SAINT AND THE STORY-TELLER," a BBC feature heard one recent Sunday from 4ZB, proved to be attractively Irish, by which I do not mean whimsy in a Celtic twilight, but humour and imagination stiffened here and there by a grim touch of realism. The saint of the title was St. Patrick, and the programme told some of the stories about him (related as if he had lived about the time of our grandfathers) and the legends they spring from. There was a touch of irreverence about some of the tales, but it was an irreverence that never questioned the heroic stature of the subject. Irish voices lend themselves easily to broadcasting, but the charm of the speakers in this programme was eclipsed by the interest and originality of its material.

Uncertain Progress

A LONG and rather painful series of talks from 4YA entitled *Handy Housewife* has at last come to an end. The idea behind these talks was good, and the speaker possessed a genial personality; he also no doubt knew a great deal that would be useful to the housewife. But none of these added up to even tolerably good radio. It sounded at first as if the speaker was giving an impromptu address, but a subsequent talk in which he confessed to having lost his place temporarily, proved this theory wrong. Why, then, was he allowed to stumble on, only too aware, as he frequently said, of the need for television to illustrate his remarks? This sort of broadcasting should have disappeared with the acquisition of the first tape-recorder in our studios. To allow a broadcaster to go on the air inadequately prepared is unfair both to himself and to his listeners.

—Loquax

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