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Radio Review

Mr. Goossens's Oboe

THE description of the oboe as "an ill wind that no one blows good" most certainly does not apply when the player behind the instrument is Leon Goossens. Yet the group of short pieces with piano accompaniment broadcast from Auckland were hardly the warmest of introductions to Mr. Goossens's playing in New Zealand. The piano is not altogether sympathetic to the oboe and the mild percussiveness of some of these accompaniments tended to puncture the smoothness of the oboe phrases. Leon Goossens's vibrato, too, which in the concert hall is absorbed into the acoustics of the room, was picked up ruthlessly by the microphone in the slower of these pieces. Nor does this cold-blooded instrument—the microphone, not the oboe—project Goossens's personality which comes over the platform as genially as his playing. This playing came off best when the oboist joined with the Ruth Pearl String Trio in the Benjamin Britten "Fantasy Quartet." The strings had already presented a cheerful little Schubert Trio. In this and in the Britten as a foil to the oboe, they were admirable. The Britten work at first hearing sounds a rather odd, angular piece of music, but it certainly showed off the oboe. A few nights later from Wellington, however, with a quartet by Stamitz, Leon Goossens must have firmly established himself in the affections of listeners as that incomparable player whose music has been described as "one of the supreme pleasures of the present-day world of music."

—O.J.

The Universal Aunt

SOME think of Aunt Daisy as an institution; I personally regard her as a phenomenon. Perhaps, like Katisha, she is an acquired taste; perhaps the fascination of listening to the simultaneous discussion of three unrelated topics, the ecstatic description of everything, from a ballet to a new type of mattress, and the torrential flood of tortured syntax and agonised parentheses would pall if one listened to her too often, for the manner and not for the matter, as I do. But what an astonishing personality she is! The microphone simply does not exist for this Universal Aunt; she leans over the fence of the receiver each morning for a cosy gossip about anything and everything. And if the impression is often uncannily like Mrs. Nickleby, isn't Mrs. Nickleby one of Dickens's nicest characters? I had often wondered whether this was a supreme case of art concealing art, whether the apparent inconsequentialities were not, in fact, calculated. And hearing 1YA's *Portrait from Life—Aunt Daisy* confirmed these suspicions. On the strength of this delightful self-revelation, the 9 o'clock Aunt Daisy is a brilliant blend of technique and personality, of intelligence and warm enthusiasm. The result is unique. Long may she flourish!

Original and Ingenious

WITH *Dagnet*, Mr. Harlequin, the various ZB "soap-operas" and the old mystery play riding the air-waves,

Auckland would seem to be more than well provided for with crime dramas. But the late-night 1ZB feature *Box 13* has some unusual features to recommend it. To some extent, it follows the *Dagnet* pattern, but without the documentary style, the solemnity and the mannerisms which make that feature such a gift to parodists. *Box 13* contains original and ingenious plots, much closer to the "intellectual" whodunit form than to the Mickey Spillane abominations, and flavoured with a very pleasant American wit. As Dan Holliday, the quiet, razor-brained sleuth, Alan Ladd shows himself a better radio player than he ever was a screen-actor (save in *Shane*). Perhaps the absence of his poker face and bared torso helps here. In any case, this programme is very well produced, fast-moving, and manages to treat crime without being either sordid or silly. Altogether it is a welcome addition to what is usually the least exciting period of the evening's listening.

—J.C.R.

Moral Rearmament

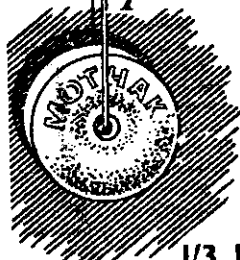
C. K. PRESCOTT and S. E. Turpin, members of a Moral Rearmament team were certainly put through their paces by E. K. Braybrooke in the 3YC discussion "What is M.R.A.?" Mr. Braybrooke asked a number of shrewd questions which the two men answered to the best of their ability. Everywhere in the discussion I myself came up against intangibles. We were assured, for example, that Moral Rearmament tactics had paved the way for a rapprochement between Communists and capitalists in certain parts of the Continent. This has not been the kind of news to reach the headlines, but on the other hand Christ's own ministry and Augustine's conversion, as Professor Butterfield reminds us, though ultimately far-reaching were not sensational events in their own time. When Mr. Braybrooke quoted St. Paul's "We preach Christ crucified" and was suddenly taken up with a "Hear! Hear!" was the jar I felt an irrelevant aesthetic thing? Or is there a genuine moral objection to a certain glibness in sales talk which is so out of keeping with Christ's Passion that it betrays an inadequate grasp of the nature of the tragedy with which it is faced?

Poetry Reviewed

LISTENING to reviews of the *New Zealand Poetry Year Book* and a anthology by New Zealand women poets over 3YA's *Book Shop* and the 3ZB *Book Review*, I felt that the poets were ill served by their critics. The first approach by a man was a genial enumeration of his likes and dislikes, while Sarah Campion's "forthright" expression still gave us little idea why she came to those conclusions. Time is a factor that works against the reviewer on these sessions and possibly the NZBS should see to it that more time is given to an art at once so exalted and as exacting as that of poetry, and which, in addition, has as much if not more relevance to us than even Guthrie Wilson's new novel, more searchingly examined by A. R. D. Fairburn. We do not, however, want an extension of time for the mere expression of intuitive opinion, however accurate, and justice is more important than either frostiness or geniality. The best critic explains why he holds the opinion he does, 'condescends to illustrate the point at issue, focuses not, as sometimes happens, upon his own erudition, but upon the merits of the verse; and in

N.Z. LISTENER, JULY 2, 1954.

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