



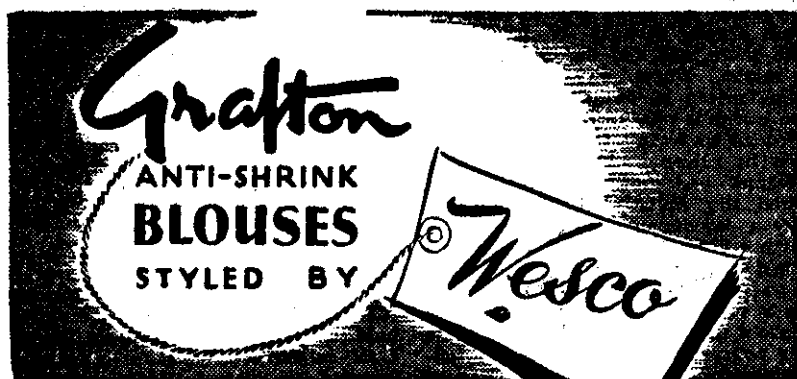
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Radio Review

RANDAL AND RONALD

THAT familiar phenomenon—"when once you hear of some unusual thing it keeps cropping up again and again," or, as I'm sure some American psychologist has called it, "unvalued multiplication of extroverted recognition"—came my way last week. One evening from 1YC I heard a skilful NZBS production of Terence Tiller's *The Ballad of Lord Randal*, in which the variants of this old song were discussed, and some interesting theories of its origin advanced. In the course of this, I learnt that "Lord Ronald" was one of the Scottish versions of the name. And, lo! next evening during the Edinburgh Festival *Ceilidh* (or Scottish musical get-together) from 1YA, the commentator announced "Lord Randal" or "Lord Ronald" as we call it in the North," which was sung to the tune of "Villikins and his Dinah." Ah, the weird world of folk-song! But this accidental conjunction did illustrate the often unexpected ways in which radio can add to our knowledge and enrich our enjoyment of things. The rather tangled argument in the NZBS feature, interesting though it was, seemed just a little unreal, but the spontaneous singing of the song in the *Ceilidh* proved that all the scholarly anatomising in the world can't keep a good song down.

Bits of Stravinsky

ARTHUR JACOBS'S talks "with musical illustrations" on famous composers (1YC) are pleasant enough introductions. However, being more "Light" than "Third" in approach, they seem to me to suffer in their context. For a man of Mr. Jacobs's distinction, the discussions of works and the assessments of composers appear rather elementary. I should think that most list-

eners to such a YC programme would know most of the biographical facts given and would find little to bite on in the comments. Again, the snippets of long compositions offered by Mr. Jacobs are more tantalising than illuminating. In his Stravinsky session, we heard mere fragments of several works, and I know of nothing so disturbing as bits of Stravinsky. I look forward hopefully for the time when 1YC will give us a full-scale analysis of the *Symphony of Psalms* instead of "chat about Stravinsky." For all that, Mr. Jacobs has an engaging microphone manner; his voice is so like that of John Ariotti that I almost expected to hear a cricket-score follow, not inappropriately, the gobblet of *The Rite of Spring*. —J.C.R.

The Man Borrow

ALTHOUGH *Lavengro*, *The Romany Rye*, and *The Bible in Spain* all made a deep and pleasant impression on me when I read them many years ago, I have never re-read them nor formed a clear mental portrait of their strange author. That I listened over both 3YC and 3YA to the BBC programme "George Borrow" indicates how welcome and necessary it was for me. That a twelve-year-old should also have listened enraptured, subsequently to ply me with questions about the man and his work, gives some idea of the universal appeal of the programme. Why such a fine programme should have been so weak in its bibliography remains a mystery. *The Gypsies in Spain* was neither mentioned nor assessed. *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye* were dealt with as though they were one book, and the nine-year timespan given for its creation doesn't easily fit in with what Borrow's own prefaces or the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* state on these matters. Small points like these cannot conceal the worth of the fine spiritual and psychological assessment given of the man Borrow. It is, none the less, irritating when one cannot nail down just what is and is not true.

(continued on next page)

★ The Week's Music . . . by OWEN JENSEN ★

WHEN is a Junior Symphony Orchestra not a "junior" symphony? In fact, when does it become THE symphony orchestra? This was a question brought up by the Auckland Junior Symphony Orchestra's broadcast from 1YC of Beethoven's *Egmont Overture* and Mozart's Clarinet Concerto with Murray Musson as soloist. The intonation, precision and verve of the overture would have done credit to a much more seasoned body of players and the concerto, too, came off well, with Murray Musson showing himself as a soloist of no mean ability. After its six or seven years of training, producing playing like this, the Junior Symphony should have just about paved the way for an Auckland City Symphony. Meanwhile, let's hope the Junior Symphony with its conductor Dr. Charles Nalden will go on from triumph to triumph as one of the more significant forces in New Zealand music.

When it was suggested that the oboe as an instrument did not mix too well with piano, I had not heard Leon Goossens and Jessie Hall play Malcolm Arnold's Sonata for Oboe and Piano (a YC link broadcast). Both musicians made the most of what must have been exciting parts to play, and the general effect was one of scintillating good humour. This Malcolm Arnold is a com-

poser to keep an eye on, and an ear, too. His Oboe Concerto, which Goossens played with the National Orchestra, has inventiveness, adroit craftsmanship, and even when Arnold indulges himself in the English composer's favourite pastime of "folksiness," he manages to make his village green a place of character.

Most depressing note of the week was sounded by the National Orchestra's newly-appointed conductor, James Robertson, in an interview with Andrew Gold in a New Zealand Music Society programme, broadcast by the YCs. Asked about the programmes he had in mind, Mr. Robertson said he believed in giving people "pleasure, not pain," and would be sticking mostly to the "established masterpieces." Maybe he has heard something about the lack of adventure in some of our Rugby, or maybe he is playing safe until he gets to know us. Or perhaps he includes among his masterpieces music like that about which Arthur Jacobs spoke so convincingly in his talk on Stravinsky (or the hundred or more Haydn symphonies we haven't yet heard). But not, please, too much music like the prolix and uninspired John Gardiner Symphony which Mr. Robertson mentioned, and which the National Orchestra played a season or so ago.

N.Z. LISTENER, JULY 9, 1954.