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'BLISS WASHES WOOLLIES SOFTER, FLUFFIER THAN NEW, SAYS ELIZABETH



'BLISS CUTS GREASE COMPLETELY - LEAVES DISHES SPARKLING' SAYS MRS. DOROTHY M.

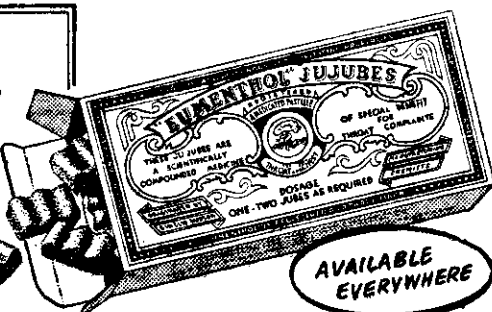


'I GAVE MY HUSBAND A TIP ABOUT CAR WASHING' SAYS MRS. L.B. 'PUT A LITTLE BLISS IN THE WATER AND



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RADIO REVIEW

Snow-bound

IN *The Snow Is a Shroud* (1YC), R. J. Sellar attempted to inject new life into the tired theme of a group of people isolated from civilisation by an "act of God." This time the snow-bound house (how many bad movies has this inspired!) located in a vague future England, contained a professor, the militant enemy of a new crypto-Fascist party, his wife and desperately-ill daughter. On them descends, from a crashed plane, Maximilien Smith, the would-be "Leader" and his deputy, an ex-surgeon, frantic to reach London to seize power. Clash of wills, stern resistance of the professor, change of heart in the surgeon, life-saving operation, collapse of revolt in the absence of the "Leader," platitudes all round. The BBC slickness, and some touches of humour, made it undemanding diversion, but the most expert playing could not disguise the fact that the script was merely a combination of several well-worn novel-ettish formulas. It always seemed to be about to say something, but in the end said nothing—except, perhaps, that if you want to start a Fascist revolt, you must first make sure that you do not get snowed in with a liberal professor.

Dialogue Well Cemented

WARREN CHETHAM-STRODE'S play *Background* (NZBS—1YA) struck me as being especially nicely adjusted to the demands of radio. The problem of the effect of divorce on children and the tragedy of broken homes was worked out strongly, if a shade obviously, and this theme was carried through with a minimum of physical action, and in that kind of dialogue which sounds terribly easy to write

simply because it hasn't been. It was, in fact, almost a series of dialogues carefully adjusted to reveal a small group of characters in changing attitudes towards each other. The apparently incompatible Lomaxes were firmly characterised, and, although the voices of the children sounded a little too mature to me, the player of Adrian, the "sensitive" boy who threatens his would-be "new father" with a gun, turned in a convincingly hysterical performance. However, the most wholly satisfying piece of work came from Maria Dronke as the housekeeper-confidante-cum-chorus, who provided the cement of the piece. This was not a sensational play, in any sense of the word. My pleasure in it probably comes mainly from the fact that it was about something, as so few radio plays are.

—J.C.R.

Well-matched Opponents

THE imaginary conversation or ideal argument is one of the most telling forms of radio—it's amazing how the mere presentation of an historical character as a living person has a most enlivening effect on his philosophy, how the power of an abstract idea to lodge in the listener's mind is increased by having the idea presented with personal conviction. The "Dialogue on Toleration," between John Locke and his pupil, Lord Shaftesbury, was shrewdly done, its matter stimulating, and its presentation (by Maurice Cranston) given something of the excitement of a tennis match, with our ears swivelling from one speaker to the next. They were a well-matched pair. Young Shaftesbury had the dash and resilience of youth, and was quick to take advantage of a weakness in his opponent's defence. But Locke was too experienced to be rattled by his volleying—he stayed firmly on the back line,

(continued on next page)

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

THERE'S no place like the fireside on some of these wintry Sunday afternoons, and what could be better to add a little more warmth than the currently running National Orchestra broadcasts (YA link). To a pleasant programme of Cimarosa, Wolf-Ferrari and Respighi (August 8), Leon Goossens gave further good cheer with brilliant playing of concertos by Vivaldi and—most interesting—Andreae.

I think Antonio Vivaldi would have enjoyed Leon Goossens's playing of his oboe concerto as much as anyone, but he may have been considerably astonished if he had turned to 1YC (August 4) and heard Larry Adler tooting away on one of his concertos with the Vaughan Williams *Romance for Harmonica and Strings* thrown in for good measure. Who would have thought that our old boyhood friend, the mouth organ, would have risen to the dizzy heights of a YC programme; but then, who in those days would have imagined that ubiquitous instrument played so musically?

The Helsinki Sibelius Festival recordings (YC link), broadcast in New Zealand only three weeks after the festival, make impressive listening. These performances confirm again, if confirmation were necessary, that Sibelius's music still continues to shine brightly in the 20th Century repertoire. Sibelius seems to have stopped composing. Maybe there

lies his greatest wisdom, for there is no sadder spectacle than a waning star, whether it be performer or composer. As it is, Sibelius has become a legend in his own time.

Talking about music over the air is not quite so easy as it may seem. One of the problems that faces the speaker is to decide just how much talking will bring the listener and the music together without letting verbosity raise a barrier between the two partners in musical enjoyment. Whether this aspect of the matter occurred to Yvonne Enoch in her *Cathedrals of Music* series I do not know, but certainly it would seem impossible to cram any more information into a half-hour broadcast. One wonders whether it was all necessary. Arthur Jacobs on "Are Conductors Necessary?" (YC link) made no such mistake, keeping very much to his point and summing up his comments on the virtuoso exhibitionist conductor by suggesting that we must "first create a more enlightened audience." This is the solution to many musical problems. It was a solution Warwick Braithwaite had in mind, I am sure, in his excellent down-to-earth Sunday night talk (YA link) when he gave his impressions of music in New Zealand. It is rare to come across a musician who can both conduct and talk convincingly. Warwick Braithwaite at least has shown that conductors are not only necessary but desirable.

N.Z. LISTENER, AUGUST 20, 1954