

MOLIERE FOR MODERNS

IN an article in the BBC's *Radio Times*, J. C. Trewin, the dramatic critic, described Miles Malleon's *The Prodigious Snob* (an adaptation of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*), as "Molière alive and kicking." This latest essay in Molière for moderns was broadcast in the BBC World Theatre series, and a transcription of it will be heard from 4YC at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 22, and from 1YC at 9.0 p.m. on Thursday, September 23. The radio version was adapted by Felix Felton from Miles Malleon's stage production



MILES MALLESON

at the Bristol Old Vic, with Malleon himself as Monsieur Jourdain and the Bristol Old Vic Company taking part.

Miles Malleon, actor and dramatist, first turned his revitalising pen to Molière some three years ago with *The Miser*, freely adapted from *L'Avare*. "It excited audiences," wrote Trewin, "because Malleon, working in the spirit rather than the letter, had rescued Molière from the starch of so many English versions, and offered a text that was supple, speakable and wholly divorced from translator's jargon." Soon afterward, *L'Avare* was followed by *Tartuffe*, and that in turn by *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Of Miles Malleon's acting of Jourdain in the stage version Trewin wrote: "I remember him looking in the part like a happy codfish with blood-pressure . . . he projected a fellow of panting, pop-eyed splendour, resolved—come what may—to excel in music, fencing, philosophy, and all the arts that make a gentleman."

Not only has Malleon swept away the stilted English of earlier translators of Molière in *The Prodigious Snob*; he has also provided a text that is supremelyactable. The famous passage in which Monsieur Jourdain discovers that he has been speaking prose all his life is a good example of Malleon's method. An 18th Century translation records it thus: "On my conscience, I have spoken prose above these forty years, without knowing anything of the matter; and I have all the obligations in the world to you, for informing me of this." Malleon's text runs: "Well well, well, to think I've been talking prose all my life and never knew it! Really, I'm very much obliged to you—I do feel I've learnt something this morning."

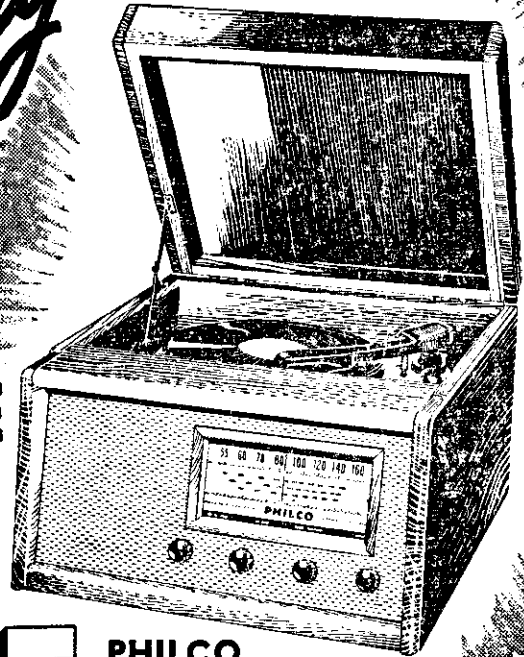
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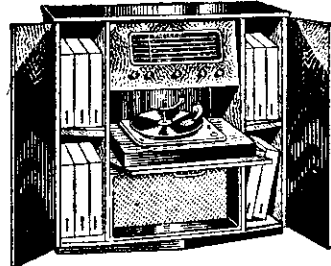
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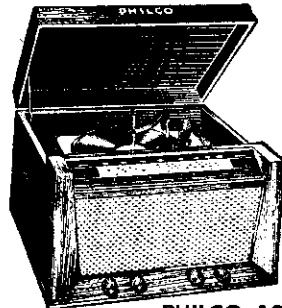
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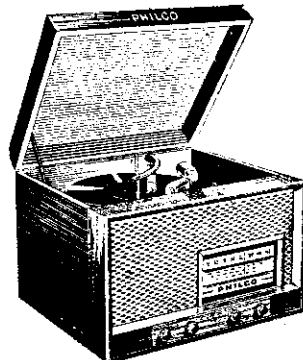
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