

Salute to Eliot

GILBERT HARDING, one of the best-known figures in British radio and television, tells the story of the day he was strap-hanging on the London Underground and was asked several times for his autograph on a morning newspaper. "While sitting below me was Mr. T. S. Eliot quietly reading a book, unnoticed and unrecognised—a much more valuable person and a much more famous one than I shall ever hope to be." Mr. Harding added: "But there you are, he doesn't appear on television, you see."

The work of T. S. Eliot, the American-born Englishman who has been awarded the Order of Merit, the Nobel



BBC photograph

T. S. ELIOT, O.M.

Prize for Literature and honorary degrees from famous Universities, is discussed by the well-known actor Robert Speaight in a BBC programme now going the rounds of National stations. Speaight, who played the part of Becket in Eliot's first full-dress play, *Murder in the Cathedral*, says that his strongest impression from his first meeting was the extraordinary brightness and penetration of the poet's eyes. It was, he says, "as though everything about him was designed to shield the blaze of this intense vision." "But you wouldn't have guessed from a first meeting," he adds, "that here was the author of *The Waste Land*, with its violence and irony, or of *The Hollow Men*, with its stark sense of tragic futility."

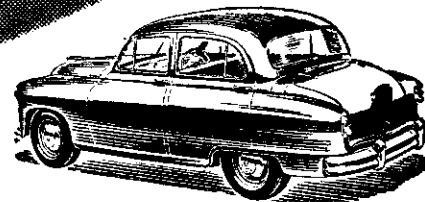
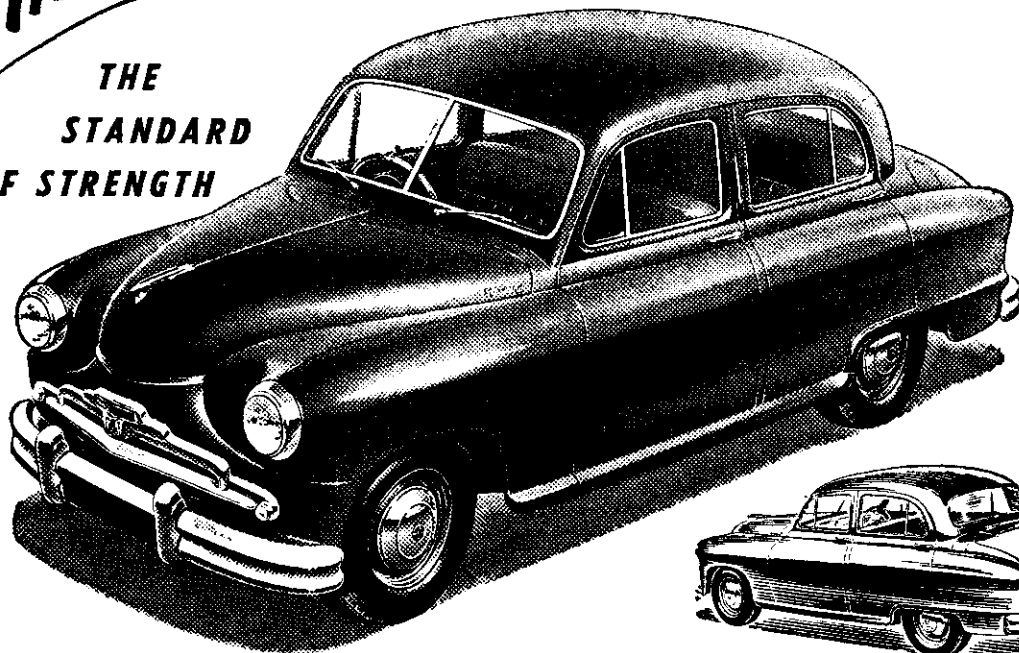
In this programme Speaight reads, as an expression of Eliot's personality, an extract from the most personal of his poems, *Four Quartets*; and, from personal experience, he praises Eliot's theatrical technique and speaks of the generous encouragement he gives to the countless scholars and poets who climb the stairs to his office to discuss their manuscripts over a cup of tea. Speaight concludes that if Eliot now seems respectable rather than provocative, it is because, even in his most private poems, he has known how to speak for his adopted country. T. S. Eliot will be heard from 2YC at 10.0 p.m. on Monday, September 27, and from 1YC at 10.0 p.m. on Wednesday, September 29.

New Zealand Players' Company

Auditions for 1955 will be held by Mr. Richard Campion during the current tour of "The Love of Four Colonels." Would actors and actresses interested please write to Box 5202, Wellington, to arrange an appointment. There is also a possibility of a limited summer engagement for those with special talent in intimate review.

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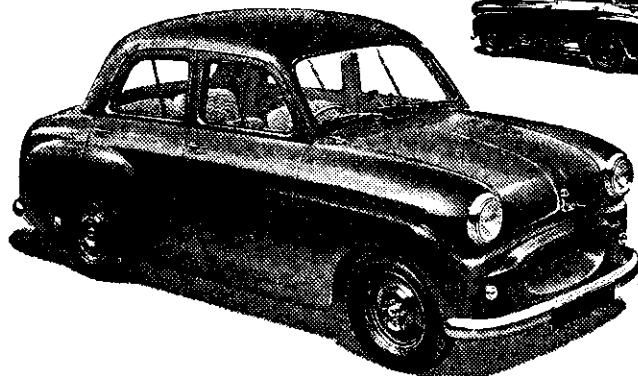


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