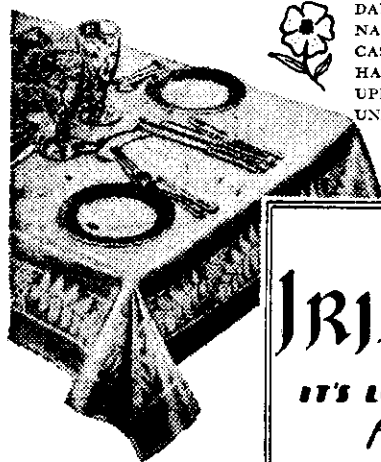


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RADIO REVIEW

Not the Whole Truth

SOMERSET MAUGHAM originally, I suspect, derived some of his power from the desire to shock. Reviewing his coolly cynical stories one feels that he is saying that there is good in the most outrageous of us and bad in the most conventional. The particular kind of honesty which he employs made a diverting comedy out of *The Constant Wife* (3YA), where the wife, shown her husband's unfaithfulness, accepts it in a matter of fact way, herself arranging to take a similar course once she has established her own economic independence. The husband is horrified to see the conventions—for they are only conventions for this couple—swept away once the hitherto tacit understanding about their own relationship is brought into the open. As an expression of ideas the play is possible, as a picture of human beings, paper thin. But the point which strikes me about Maugham and other honest realists is that there is not much tension in their characters between the ideal and the real. The truth, yes; nothing but the truth, yes; but the whole truth comprises not simply the fact that "men are beasts" but also that they aspire to be angels. To remember that such is the case is to add a dimension to thought and a just richness to the human situation as reflected in drama.

Comedy Grown Stale

I SETTLED down to enjoy 3YA's "Indispensables of Comedy," which dealt with the "straight" man of famous comedy partnerships. The point is, of course, worth grouping a programme round, but once the session opened most of my attention was absorbed as it was meant to be, not by the sobersides in

the various pieces, but by the fun of the thing itself. How many, I wonder, though, will have found as I did that John Henry and Blossom, Clapham and Dwyer, and Flanagan and Allen no longer sound as funny as they did years ago. Then you simply laughed, now you hear the laborious machinery of the joke turning over like the engine of one of the world's first cars. Richard Murdoch and Arthur Askey still held their own in the uproarious scene where Askey, after a great deal of palaver, buys a swim suit to wear in order to pull his wife out of the river. And although I have listened again and again to Syd. Field being taught to play golf, and know every phase of that game with English idioms and golf language, it makes me laugh in anticipation as well as at the moment of impact.

—Westcliff

The Unfortunate Jury

I ASKED my verdict on the NZBS play *Gentlemen of the Jury*, I should unhesitatingly answer Guilty, guilty of gross irrelevance. *Gentlemen of the Jury* purports to tell us how juries came to enjoy their present right of presenting their verdict without fear of judicial wrath, and draws most of its material from the famous trial of William Penn, the Quaker, in 1669, in which the jury brought in a verdict of Not Guilty and the judge used considerable pressure to persuade them to reverse it. But William Penn hogged the greater part of the programme (the possessor, incidentally, of such an annoying voice that one sympathised with the villainous judge who kept shouting "Silence that man!") and it was not until he had buried his father and reformed his sister that we were able to get back to the unfortunate jury, left languishing in prison ever since the trial.

Distinguished Visitors

I APPRECIATE the way the women's programmes people keep their eyes peeled, their ears to the ground and

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

BACH on a Sunday afternoon suits me fine, especially if it's from the "Forty-Eight." Of course, it depends on the Sunday and how you are using it. This was a February afternoon in November with nothing to do but let the music frame as beautiful a New Zealand landscape as you could find, and no other sound but an occasional distant car and the almost inaudible murmur of a group of school boys being read to, lazing under the trees, sleeping or just lazing. In this contentment the imagination and ear, curiously, become more alive. Bach, the Prelude No. 24 in B Minor, fitted the occasion, particularly when it was so satisfyingly played by Stanley Jackson from 1XH.

Mary Pratt and Maurice Till have been giving us some very pleasant recitals but I rather felt Mr. Till let us down a bit in the programme of November 16 (YC link). It was surely an anachronism to include in a recital of such distinction the Liszt piano arrangement of Schubert's "Hark, Hark, the Lark," and Gieseking's superficially florid adaptation of the Richard Strauss "Serenade." This is the sort of thing for a more lightsome occasion, when no singer of Mary Pratt's calibre is about, or no singer at all. There's a time and place for everything. Song arrange-

ments for the piano come off second best when the genuine article is at hand.

Summer must have arrived, for the National Orchestra is hibernating. But, confined to its summer studio quarters, the Orchestra is no less lively. In fact, sometimes, its broadcasting den makes the music a little too lively. This was an advantage, however, for the *Rosenkavalier Waltzes* (YC link) which came off brilliantly. The studio added richness, too, to the strings in the excerpts from Schubert's *Rosamunde* music and brightness to Dora Drake's Mozart arias.

Was it accident or design that John Gray in his excellent monthly *New Records* (YC link) began with George Malcolm's harpsichord playing of Scarlatti and finished with, of all things, a mandolin concerto by one Giovanni Hoffmann? George Malcolm's fiery harpsichord playing gave the impression that he might have had a grudge against Scarlatti. As for the mandolin, all I can say is that it sounded remarkably like a harpsichord. Maybe I should draw Mr. Gray's attention to that little-known work by Gustaf Semolina for two toasting forks and an eggbeater. It is a concerto molto grosso half Handel and half Bach.

N.Z. LISTENER, DECEMBER 3, 1954.