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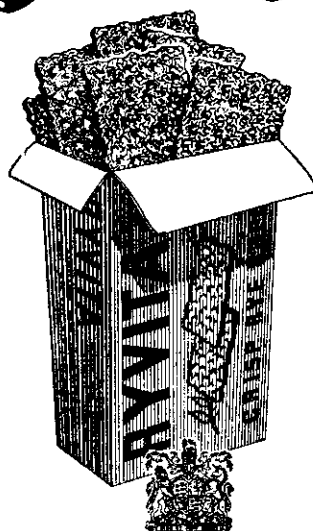
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RADIO REVIEW

Round Too Many Bends

THE two plays I heard this week seemed both the victims of procrustean techniques, though contrastingly. Noel Coward's *This Happy Breed*, chopped down to an hour and a quarter's playing time, proceeded in a series of rapid jerks like lantern slides in the hands of an impatient operator. A more thorough-going adaptation might have made it more of a radio play, but there was enough of Coward dialogue and character-sense left to make it entertaining listening. In C. Gordon Glover's *The Great Moment* (from 2YA the following night) I expected to encounter something more like a radio play. But it seemed rather a greatly elongated and consequently attenuated short story—I felt like poor Alice sadly contemplating the mouse's tale, with the end in sight but a great many bends to be got round. I found it disconcerting that a radio writer of C. Gordon Glover's experience should use such machinery dialogue as "Let me help you into the carriage," "Let me tuck this fur rug round you," and could only suspect him of playing for playing-time. So that my great moment tended to come a little later than the author's. Coinciding, in fact, with the nine o'clock pips.

Medical Listening

I DO admire the uncompromising honesty of the BBC when it comes to titles. *Dead Men's Bells*, the Sunday morning feature from 2YA, was qualified in *The Listener* and over the air by its sub-title—"An Account of the Life and Work of W. Withering," so that listeners hoping for a bit of healthy horror had no real beef when it turned out to be an account of the early use

of digitalis in the treatment of dropsy. Actually, I find these BBC medical programmes good listening, any excess of medical technicality being speedily neutralised by an application of local colour. And one is left at the end with the comfortable knowledge that the forces of enlightenment always triumph. —M.B.

India's Leader

AGAINST the eulogies of H. N. Brailsford in his 3YC talk on Nehru we have to balance the criticism of his Socialist sister, Mrs. Hutheesing, who considers he is developing the traits of a dictator; inability to tolerate minorities and to take advice. Nehru himself, according to earlier statements, was aware of the danger of the adulation he received. As a spoilt only son he has in his personal life always been somewhat dictatorial, not hesitating to tell relaxing guests at his home to be "up and doing." Magnified a little, this would seem dangerous to a politically opposed sister. Gandhi, too, may have provided the necessary contemplative centre to all this activity. H. N. Brailsford notes that Nehru is an inspiring leader rather than a good planner, thus excusing his failure to reform the abuses of land tenure very rapidly. Where, therefore, Nehru considers the Socialists irresponsible, they in turn probably consider that anything which does not overtake starvation is too slow, yet one might have to be a real dictator to move any quicker in the "Liberal democracy" which the High Commissioner for India described India as in a talk (3YA). There will be thousands throughout the world who hope, for more than political reasons, that Nehru will remain the wisest leader India could have chosen.

South American Rhythm

IN popular music my preference is with the Guy Mitchell songs as much as with anything else, but Edmundo Ros and his band run a close second. True, I feel that the original, real or imagined, beat of the rain forests has been con-

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

NOW that the excitements of Christmas are well behind us and we have time to take stock of things, one more resolution might be added to the New Year list. That is, to make music at Christmas a somewhat more vital celebration. For it is a fact, as you may have noticed, that a good deal of pre-Christmas music tends to sound, if not a duty, at least a habit, rather than a spontaneous and genuine love. Too often the old familiar carols are treated familiarly, and the gift of something new in music is a rarer tribute than it should be.

Among the programmes to which it seemed some especial thought had been given, was that by the National Orchestra and the Wellington Baroque Chorus with soloists Evelyn Haggitt and Donald Munro (YC link). With Stanley Oliver and James Robertson sharing the conducting, orchestra and singers presented interesting carol arrangements by Peter Warlock and Vaughan Williams. There were, too, five carols by Australian composer William James. Without drawing on mediaeval clichés for his ideas or becoming frantically modern, William James nevertheless avoided the mire of banality. What is more, this was no alien Christmas of sleds and snow, but a real

summery season of the Antipodes. William James's Five Carols will be worth hearing again some time.

A little programme that might be circulated, however, as a blueprint for Christmas music, was happened on by chance in Canterbury Roundabout (3YA). It was given by the Canterbury University College Madrigal Society conducted by Peter Zwartz. The singing made a pleasant sound and was jubilantly tuned to the occasion. Arrangements of English, Welsh, French and Czech carols made up a most enjoyable recital. I would be inclined to put this down as among the best small group choral broadcasts of recent months.

If you're looking for something adventurous in the way of contemporary music but not too frighteningly "modern," keep an eye and ear on the music of Dutch composers circulating on the YC programmes under the aegis of the Radio Nederland transcription service. Heard in the last week or so were Concerto for Violin and Orchestra by Oscar van Hemel, and Symphony No. 3 by Badings. Both were impressive works, the Concerto especially. It was brilliantly played by Theo Olof—of whom I hope we may hear more—and the Utrecht Municipal Orchestra.

N.Z. LISTENER, JANUARY 21, 1955.