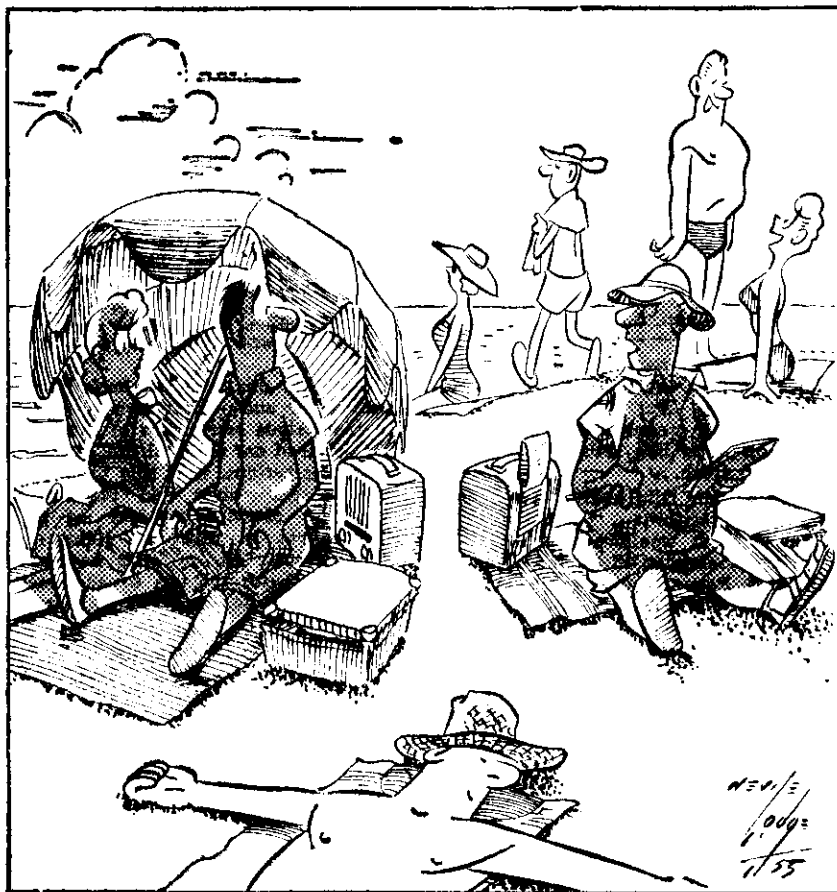


Lodge Listens . . .



"I wonder if you'd either shove off, switch off, or synchronise while I'm trying to get race results"

are so faint on this recording that, without some refresher, one has little chance of remembering what it is all about. Surely it would be worth while recording the poem to be heard occasionally before the music is played? Would it not add something to both the poem and the music if Meredith's *The Lark Ascending* were read before Vaughan Williams's composition? Or to Finzi's *Dies Natalis* if we were reminded of Traherne's words, or to *The Afternoon of a Faun* if we could hear Huxley's translation of Mallarmé's poem? Announcers are not always competent to read such pieces, but if the poems were on tape like the *Poetry Interludes*, programme organisers should not be too heavily tasked to relate poetry and music, and it might save others like myself that mad scramble for the right anthology when music inspired by poetry is played.

—J.C.R.

Lost Among the Facts

GRAHAM MILLER'S talk on James Edward Fitzgerald in the 4YA series of *Parliamentary Portraits* gave the greatest amount of historical data in the shortest time. For the printed word I should say the script would be excellent, being not without certain graces in the way of metaphor and blemished only by the negative construction "not inconsiderable" and the like, used at least three times in quick succession. For the listener the talk was too full. James Edward Fitzgerald slipped through our fingers as we made huge grabbing movements at these facts which were, in any case, being given out too quickly. What

is wanted is a sketch of the person and of the incidents surrounding his career, should he care to draw on this knowledge. I think the key to a subtler, more leisurely technique lies here, not in straining after perfection but simply in a strong visualisation of the audience and its limitations.

The Last Romantic

DYLAN THOMAS wrote a handful of poems which are snowy summits towering above the plain of literature and equalled only by poems as great as *The Ancient Mariner*. By means of the radio and his own wonderful reading voice he had won for himself an exceptional following for a modern poet. His early death, the death of the last romantic, has meant the shoring up of all that he did, these things assuming an importance they might not have had had he gone on writing "for the love of man and in praise of God." This, at any rate, is largely the way I interpret the enormous success of *Under Milk Wood*: a play for voices, which we have now been able to hear over the ZBs. Whatever my final reaction, because I want to hear the play again, *Under Milk Wood* is not in the same flight as Thomas's best and most lucid poems, where the walls of the flesh dissolve to disclose the wash of a mystical sea. In the play the flesh is so evident that the BBC has thought fit to cut whole pages from the original script. I say this modestly both because of the repute of the play and also because nothing could have pleased me more than for Westcliff's "famous last words" to have been a tribute to Dylan Thomas.

—Westcliff

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