

Man of Stratford

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, eldest son of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden, was born at Stratford-on-Avon on April 22 or 23, 1564. In the coming programme week the NZBS will commemorate his anniversary with a re-broadcast of the BBC *World Theatre* *Romeo and Juliet*, also with a special NZBS production, *Muse of Stratford*. For those who toy with such calculations as delighted the late W. R. Ripley, it would be interesting to discover just how far the books on Shakespeare would reach if placed end to end. It seems as though the fount of criticism and comment is inexhaustible. Samuel Butler, author of *Erewhon*, who had an ingenious theory that Homer was a woman, also cast doubts on the normality of Shakespeare. Then there are the camps that attribute the plays to anyone, even the most unlikely candidate, so long as it isn't Shakespeare. But all the diverse theories give recognition, if only tacit, to the stature of the man who, more than three centuries ago, lamented over "Art made tongue-tied by authority."

Shakespeare's source for *Romeo and Juliet* was a narrative poem called *Romeus and Juliet*, published in 1562 by a now almost forgotten poet called Arthur Broke. The first English version of an Italian prose story, Broke's poem was written from a moral point of view,

OVER THE HUMP

I FALL ON GRASS, based on the novel by Ian Gordon, represents something new in entertainment from the ZBs and 1XH. The adventures of Chris Lyle and Oliver Sturges, two ex-R.A.F. men engaged in ferrying planes over the "Hump" from India to China, will be told in a short serial of four half-



hour instalments, beginning on Monday, April 23, and to be heard on the three following Mondays.

In Calcutta after the war, Lyle and Sturges set up in the import-export business. They meet Ranjit Singh, another former pilot who emerged from the war with one arm. However, Ranjit has perceptibly gone up in the world since then and offers them the chance to make money ferrying planes. Not till their plane crashes in Burma do they realise that Ranjit is incidentally paying off an old score, because it was on a patrol with Lyle that he lost his arm.

Lyle and Sturges are played by Roger Climpson and Walter Sullivan, and the sinister Ranjit Singh by Guy Doleman.

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and in his "Address to the Reader" Broke describes the lovers as "thrilling themselves to dishonest desire, neglecting the advice and authority of parents and friends." His view was the view of "authority" and Age; Shakespeare retold the story from the point of view of

Youth, and Romeo and Juliet have become even to those who have never read a book or seen a play, synonymous with love and lovers.

With Peggy Ashcroft as Juliet, Tony Britten as Romeo, Gwen Ffrangcon-Davis as the Nurse, and Marius Goring as Mercutio, *Romeo and Juliet* was produced in two parts by Donald McWhinnie who also adapted it for radio. It will be broadcast from 1YC in two parts, on April 24 and April 26, from 3YC and 4YC on April 27, and from 2YC on April 29.

In a YC link on April 23 the NZBS programme *Muse of Stratford* will be heard. This is a special NZBS production on Shakespeare as a poet. The evaluation of the poet by various authors, Keats, George Bernard Shaw and others, will be presented, together with readings from the Sonnets. This programme was prepared for broadcasting by William Austin, and the readings are by William Austin and Peter Varley.

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