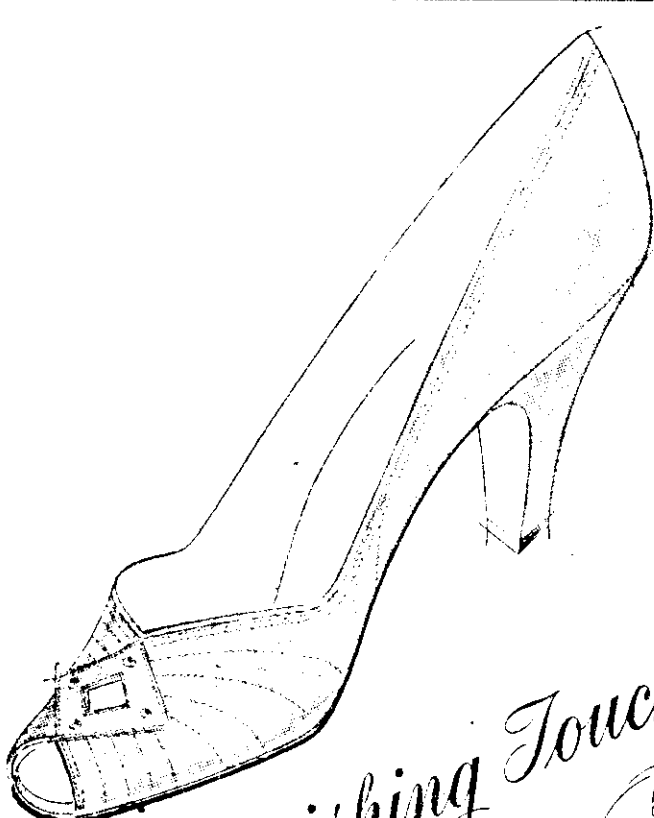




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Radio Review

FREEDOM AND RESTRAINT

K. J. SCOTT'S series of talks, *The Nature of Liberty* (2YC), is the kind that demands to be repeated, and no doubt it will be in time. It just isn't possible to absorb fully a complex argument at one hearing. His scripts are very well written, though his delivery does its best to conceal this fact from the listener. I liked his explanation that Adam Smith advocated *laissez faire* because he believed it would produce a natural harmony in the economy; and that when it produced disharmony instead Herbert Spencer explained that this was just what an economy ought to do. Mr. Scott is concerned with all restraints on freedom and believes that if you cannot do a thing (because you haven't enough money, for example), you are not even theoretically free to do it. He concludes—and the conclusion sounds more commonplace than it deserves when divorced from his preliminary argument—that a partly-planned economy like ours does not necessarily put more restraint on freedom than a free market. This is a comfortable conclusion and I was comforted; but like most of us I inherit the puritan conviction that if one feels comfortable there must be something wrong. Which is why I want to hear his talks again.

Muse by the Tail

RADIO discussions are the complete lucky dip. A good panel with a good subject may turn on a dull performance; on the other hand, who could have predicted that the liveliest *Question Mark* of the season would have been the one, some weeks ago, on the price of potatoes? Some of the entertainment may have been unintentional,

but this made no difference to the listener's enjoyment. I might also conclude that the muse of discussions is a fickle wench who bestows or withholds her favours in a manner entirely capricious and unpredictable, if I did not know that one person has caught firm hold of her and never let go. Marie Griffin's uncommon sense and quick wit have made a success of every discussion I've heard her chair. I wondered how she would survive the change from the Women's Session to the less cosy atmosphere of *Question Mark*. She took it in her stride and in conversation with David Mace on marriage was by no means overshadowed by her famous partner. Hearing these understanding and humane speakers is a good antidote to the harsher voices which so often dogmatise on the subject in public places.

—R.D.McE.

A Craftsman

JOHN V. TREVOR delivered a talk last week on the Art and Craft of Terence Rattigan, recorded in a manner which did service neither to speaker nor subject. Was there a boiler factory close at hand? I could believe so from an insistent buzz enlivened by a mysterious clanking. Further, the sense of his opening remarks was shattered by a skittish gramophone arm, which hopped several grooves, hurtling me from the Restoration to the 19th century with scant regard for historical propriety. Still further, Mr. Trevor elected to speak at a speed which left me hoping he would catch the train so evidently about to depart without him. "That's John V. Trevor, that was!" I gasped at its close. These reservations apart, I enjoyed the talk, and wish to grapple a moment with its substance. Mr. Trevor claims that Rattigan is as underrated as an artist as Maugham used to be,

(continued on next page)

The Week's Music . . . by SEBASTIAN

WHEN Vaughan Williams wrote a violin concerto subtitled *Accademico*, he didn't imply that it was dryly academic, but that its form was of the older type; and, in fact, it is anything but dry, in spite of its minorish key. I must confess I like it, and I liked the playing of it by Ritchie Hanna with the Alex Lindsay String Orchestra (NZBS). Sprightly and contemplative by turns, but always youthful as the composer's forthright mind, it swung along in fine style; the slower and more lyrical section, so reminiscent of "The Lark Ascending" and of Elihu's dance in *Job*, called forth some really lovely solo playing, and indeed from the whole body of strings.

In the same programme, and in strong contrast, John Stanley's Concerto for Strings proved to be an attractive 18th century work; in spite of the introductory blurb, stylistic differences from Handel were not at once obvious, and the concerto suffered not a whit from the similarities. The tuneful tunes, rhythmic rhythms and formal forms of the time make for musical pleasures, however innocuous, and it would have made no difference to most of us had it been announced as a newly-discovered work of Handel—or Avison, or even Boyce. This orchestra itself, I think, is

still improving: the parts are more coherent, poor intonation has reached a minimum and the all-important sweep and confidence are conspicuous. No longer can the listener await the inevitable slips, but hears and enjoys the playing as though it were from a commercial recording. This is as it should be, and I hope the time when it and the National Orchestra can make such generally-available recordings is not too far distant.

Paul Badura-Skoda has left us now, of course, and he has left us with some delightful memories of well-played Mozart. I didn't mention before (because I hadn't then heard it) the Piano and Wind Quintet, K.452, which he played with National Orchestra wind soloists (YC link): this was very beautiful, with some passages of ethereal tone and others of pure mischief, which oddly enough in this context sound quite compatible. The solo part—it goes without saying—would melt even a critic's heart, and the wind players excelled themselves in sympathy. After this, even such lovely playing as the B Flat Violin Sonata (with Francis Rosner), and the E Major Trio, K.542, had to come as anti-climax; but if this is the extent of bathos that you ever have to bear, you can count yourself fortunate.

N.Z. LISTENER, AUGUST 3, 1956.