

possibly; that each play he has written marks a technical advance, fair enough; and in his sole failure, *Adventure Story*, the choral play of Alexander the Great, he finds evidence that great plays lie in Rattigan's imagination, waiting to be unleashed on us. We shall see. He finds *The Sleeping Prince* a masterly *pièce d'occasion*, agreed; he thought it well played here. I beg to differ. He finds no single memorable line in Rattigan, but he ascribes this to be poverty, generally, of his themes. Given a great theme, he infers, you will get memorable language. True or false? False. I think. There is nothing enormous about the themes of *Love's Labours Lost* or *Twelfth Night*, yet their language is memorable. The truth is, surely, that speech is no longer primary in the theatre, is no longer its basic instrument. If it becomes so again, we can then expect memorable language of high import.

Cafe Concert

"WON'T YOU COME IN?" asked Bill Austin. "It's a cold night. Come in and get warm." Shivering, I bounded into his hospitable parlour, shaking off my wet things. Bill proved an excellent host, and his coffee is delicious. I took a note of the blend. Unfortunately, I found his records so absorbing, I let it get cold. . . I can almost believe in this little fantasia of my own devising, so seductively does Mr. Austin make you at home. The clicks at coffee time, however, are not so convincing this year. I recommend a sharp blow with a sterling silver spoon on the best Crown Derby. The records last week were, as always, fascinating. To hear Lloyd George himself speak of "orins and widders" was a joy, and I learned to my amazement that Jack Warner was the brother of Gert and Daisy. Quelle famille! His song, about his profession as a rat-hole bungler-upper, was a treat, and Conchita Supervia singing "O No John" was a musical curiosity I would have braved a cold night to hear. I find this whole programme a delight. I shall be there next week. I don't take sugar, by the way.

—B.E.G.M.

Marcel on Radio

THE broadcast of the NZBS production of *The Funeral Pyre* (IYC) was something of an event—the first time, I think, that one of Gabriel Marcel's plays has been presented on New Zealand radio. Marcel, although the first modern French existentialist, and in dramatic interest at least the equal of Sartre and Camus, has never had the vogue of the other two, perhaps because, as Christian existentialism, his drama lacks the acidity and gloom of atheist existentialism, which chimed in with the immediately post-war mood. Yet, as *The Funeral Pyre* showed, his existentialist theme that real life cannot be reduced to abstract thought, is embodied in arresting terms, implying a deep knowledge of the human heart. Davina Whitehouse, as Aline Fortier, who, by consecrating her whole life to the memory of her dead son, distorts the personality of his fiancée, Mireille, gave a strong, mature performance. Paddy Turner as Mireille and Kenneth Firth as André, the weakling she marries, were more than competent. Only Roy Leywood seemed to have too young and vigorous a voice for M. Fortier. I found this most satisfying intellectual drama, marred only by the compression of Cyn-

thia Pugh's adaptation, which somewhat impaired both the rhythm of the play, and its ending.

Roadhouse Resurgent

WITH both *The Goon Show* and *TIFH* in recess, *Radio Roadhouse* holds the field of comedy shows virtually alone. The current series, despite some weak spots, is the best *Roadhouse* has given us. I feel that this feature has now come to be accepted by listeners without any of the patronising, "Not bad for a New Zealand effort" attitude, that it has its own widening circle of fans and that its removal would leave a yawning gap. I still believe that 9.15 p.m. on Wednesday is not a good listening time, and that a Sunday spot would give the *RR* the larger audience it deserves. The interludes featuring the Arrises and friend Charley seem to me to be more Cockney than Kiwi; but, for the rest, there is an agreeable strain of unforced indigenous humour. Barry

Linehan gains in stature as a radio comedian from session to session, surely the first real specimen of his kind New Zealand radio has produced; and Noeline Pritchard, Eddie Hegan and Mervyn Smith have all established themselves as individuals. The perceptible movement away from overseas patterns, shown in the stronger intrusion of topicalities, indicates a confidence by the *Roadhouse* gang in their own competence, one shared by most of their listeners.

—J.C.R.

Full Strength

THE conductor of the National Orchestra, James Robertson, has announced that the Orchestra is now at its full strength of 70 players. The latest appointment is a sixteen-year-old bassoon player, Peter Musson. In the past the Orchestra has fluctuated between 60 and 70 players, with an average number of 65.

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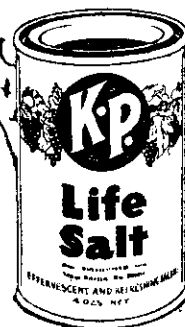
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