



4. WOODLOT FARMING

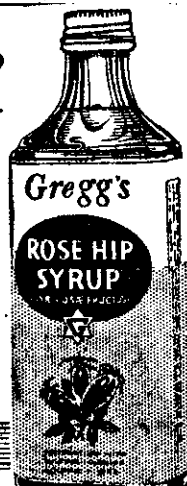
Increasing numbers of farmers are coming to realise the wide benefits of trees on farms. Not only in their accepted roles as shelter for stock and farm, the provider of firewood, fencing and building materials but also as a profitable cash crop returning dividends from what otherwise may be unusable farm land. As part of their service to the public the New Zealand Forest Service assists with advice on the establishment and tending of farm woodlots. Informative brochures are published by the Service to help in siting, choice of species, planting, culture and the marketing of timber produce. Sound forestry can contribute to the prosperity of a farmer and the welfare of a whole district — a contribution in which the New Zealand Forest Service is very pleased to assist.

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RADIO REVIEW

Easter Parade

EASTER is a curious festival on the air, during which we are supposed to be sportive and religious on alternate days. I suppose this is a reasonable compromise between the two obvious preoccupations during the season. Whether racing people are content with the arrangement I can't say; but Christian listeners have little cause to complain.

We began, this year, with Lent, and the Lenten talks entitled *Availing Grace*. Owing to circumstances beyond my, etc., I heard only two of these. They were good, clear, basic stuff, well put over, and I'm told the others were as good. Nearer Easter came the *St. Matthew Passion*, as usual, if Bach is ever as usual, especially with Dr Loft-house to introduce him. On the Saturday, breaking the pattern, Henry Walter devoted the second of his welcome return season of *All Day Singing* to American folk hymns. He began with one which has survived almost intact from Elizabethan times, and descended to revival hymns of more recent years. Not wholly descended, either. Some of these were surprisingly moving.

Unfamiliar Easter carols—why unfamiliar?—made an interesting contrast with familiar hymns in the *Easter Festival of Nine Lessons* from Christchurch Cathedral. The whole ceremony was beautifully done, as was to be expected, though to my ear the use of professional readers was a mistake, giving it too much the air of a concert performance. At night there was John Masefield's mystery play set to music by Martin Shaw, an attractive little work well produced by the NZBS, though I'd have found it easier to follow if the dramatis personae had been announced at the beginning.

I found none of the new spoken programmes as memorable as Flora Robson's reading from Charles Peguy last year. *The Holy Land*, from the BBC,

was a reverent pilgrimage making effective use of local sound. Gordon Daviot's *The Little Dry Thorn*, an Australian production from the ZBs, told the story of Abraham and Sarah as cosily as a soap opera, with Sarah a familiar English upper middle class matriarch.

Finally, *The Heart of the Matter*, with Edith Sitwell's eloquent voice and exciting visions. And Benjamin Britten's music—but before that had properly started, this reviewer, after so much Easter listening, drifted shamefully to sleep. Still, it had been a passably good Easter on the air.

—R.D.McE.

Off the Rails

FROM 1Y2 recently, I caught Frank Baker's *Last Train Home*, which I had missed on its Auckland broadcast, and which I wanted to hear because of its use of members of a visiting theatrical company. Although, in smallish parts, local actors more than held their own, it was pleasing to meet some new voices as a change from the NZBS Stock Company. I was especially struck by the playing of Jessica Noad as a nun, and of Diana Perryman as a distraught wife. Yet I felt that John Meillon, as a wanted murderer, overacted, particularly in the final scenes. Surprisingly for an experienced radio actor, he seemed to slip into stage melodrama technique. The play itself was yet another variation on the time-worn situation of various types holed up somewhere and confronted by a gunman—in this case, in a waiting-room expecting a storm-delayed train. But it spun along interestingly enough, under Earle Rowell's incisive direction, until a banal climax and a fatuous epilogue threw it off the rails. My final impression was that, even as light-weight melodrama, the play was hardly worthy of the cast and producer.

The Heart of the Matter

SUPERBLY appropriate to Easter meditation, the hour-long session of Edith Sitwell's poems, read by herself and sung by Peter Pears, was an unforgettable experience. Dame Edith's deep,

The Week's Music... by SEBASTIAN

EASTER has passed us by without anything tremendously exciting in the musical department—except the complete absence of Stainer's *Crucifixion*. Now we have the Parrenin Quartet (YC link) which, we are told, is rapidly rising to a position of eminence among European chamber groups: though its widening spheres of influence have brought us no gramophone recordings yet. I must admit that they seem to be a first-rate combination, at least as far as their synchronisation goes; for any four people to think as one is a prodigious feat in any case, and when they can agree on such an insubstantial pageant as the field of chamber music, it is little short of miraculous. Small wonder that good quartets have such a high reputation among musicians; they must sink their individualities in that of the composer, losing their identities through his music—a self-effacement that few artists can attain. As you can see, the idea inspires awe in me.

This quartet being a French one, you would expect that they would be more at home with Gallic music, and so in fact it seemed. They gave Ravel's F Major Quartet a sensitive performance, perhaps more energetic in the first

movement than one usually hears, but with a real expression—not the mawkish sentiment that often is excused under the auspices of an "espress." direction. The slow movement was a masterpiece, and the irregular rhythms of the remainder were given a rare brilliance that was convincing—though by this time I was already convinced.

A little set of variations by the contemporary composer Jean-Louis Martinet employed the twelve-note method, which here was the vehicle for a close-knit piece of reasoning that in the hands of these players seemed almost capable of emotion at times. I wonder how much of the ovation that followed was for the music, and how much for the fine playing: I have my suspicions.

In contrast to these were the other works; the Prokofiev Second Quartet was lively but controlled, with some lovely pizzicato effects, but to my ear it fell a little flat for want of variety in mood. The joyous Quartet, Op. 168, of Schubert, on the other hand, was warmly felt and delicately handled, with nuances of tone that could never be imagined by mere perusal of the score. The string quartet is certainly the perfect instrument; and this one approaches closely its own brand of perfection.

N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 10, 1957.