

American Bard

TO hear Vachel Lindsay reading his own poems was a remarkable revelation. Despite the imperfections of the primitive recording, which made Lindsay sound at times as if he were speaking through a woollen blanket at the height of a blizzard, the well-known "The Congo" and "General Booth Enters Heaven" came across with a vitality they have never had before for me. Elocutionists' "renderings" of "The Congo" have reduced it to the level of a trick-effect piece. But the author's interpretation showed it to be a profoundly original work. Chanting, gabbling, droning, and even singing in places, he projected a sense of elemental terror, poetically incarnating the dark forces lurking beneath the veneer of civilisation. His voice, ringing from the dead, made it clear that he had been reaching towards a fresh conception of the music of poetry, towards a new bardic ideal. As he growled, spluttered, frizzled, smirked, glared, roared and sang through the crackles, I was reminded by turns of the father of Dada, of Dylan Thomas and of modern American minstrels. In these unusually interesting recordings, a neglected poet of the past disclosed his still-vital intentions.

In the Groove

FOR those genuinely interested in jazz, and allergic to both "pops" and dance music, 1YA these days is offering generous consolation. On two or three

nights a week, the last half-hour, sometimes the last hour, before the news, is given over to some of the most agreeable and vivacious jazz. The extremists of the so-called "progressive" schools, and the buzz-saw and tin-can heretics, seem to get short shrift, but the exponents of the classic styles are well represented. Although I haven't yet heard any of the real old-timers on the labels treasured by jazz discophiles, I have found it most acceptable to be able to turn from Delius and Mahler to the Oscar Peterson Trio and the Gene Krupa Quartet, and the excellent sessions of the BBC *Jazz Club*, heard on Tuesday nights. The style of some of the British musicians will be a revelation to those who still believe that the only really good jazz comes from America. But it is interesting to note that, on the *Jazz Club* sessions, styles considered outrageous 20 years ago have something of the same nostalgic flavour as the waltz did for our grandparents. I find it hard to imagine that the same will ever hold true for Rock 'n' Roll or "progressive" jazz, in their respective fields.

—J.C.R.

Wit's Beginning

"WHEN, O, when, will we be prepared to laugh at ourselves? Perhaps this year? Who knows?" So one of my colleagues, surveying last year's broadcasting. Well, now we know. Thanks to Bruce Mason, the wonder boy, and his intimate revue, *Wit's End*, we have now laughed, and I have laughed and

laughed. The best thing about *Dr Poop* from Radio BEGM was the singing commercial, the *genre* unmistakable, the words incomprehensible; but the eternal quadrangle of mature emotion had the virtue of surprise. Then the French cabaret star, Brumasson, sang two pleasant songs; and he was followed by Herr Professor Apfelstrudel, speech trainer, whose labial mobility wouldn't have disgraced Danny Kaye in his prime, but whose diaphragm control proved fatal. So to the *pièce de resistance*, little Wolfy Mozart's *Kitchen Symphony*, in which Mr Mason did a Florence Desmond act with Aunt Breezy, the shy and retiring L.D.A. (kinder names, these two, than in the original revue), Manly Allover and Seldom Doogood, and, marvellously sustained, with Robert St James, who told how he found the MS in a barnacle-encrusted baby's bottle on Paekakariki beach. The symphony itself knocked the *Toy* into a cocked hat. "I love a cadenza!" breezed Aunt Breezy. I loved *Wit's End* and hope it's only a beginning.

Early Bird Misses the Play

THERE are those who go to bed early and there are those who go late. I don't suppose the early birds are exclusively YA listeners and the night owls exclusively YC, but the NZBS seems to think so, since with few exceptions YA plays are put on early and YC plays late. As an early bird who likes to hear an occasional YC play I object to this. It would seem that the placing of YC plays is the responsibility of the

local programme people, and they can fit them in only at a time when there are no interruptions from national links, which are mostly music, and occupy some part of the early hours of most evenings. It may be that Head Office ought to see that time is left, and used, for YC plays at an hour which will not force listeners to stay up until eleven. But that is not my province. It is not my job to tell the NZBS how to give me what I want, but merely to say what it is I do want. So I repeat: I want some at least of the YC plays put on at an earlier hour.

—R.D.McE.

Memorable Concert

AS soon as the National Orchestra began their first concert under Nicolai Malko, one knew that one was in for an evening of music. The Beethoven *Leonora* No. 3 is one of the most played of all orchestral overtures, and we have heard it many times since the Orchestra was founded. But it would seem, last Saturday, that we had never heard some of it before. Dr Malko obtained from the band a tone at once springy and ripe; he made one hear some of the detail in the opening as never before, and the later passages fizzed and crackled with splendid *brío*. I did not care much for the orchestral arrangement of a fugue from a Beethoven quartet: why? I missed the point. But the Haydn Cello Concerto was marvellous. Guy Fallot is surely one of the finest cellists ever to visit us; the purity of his intonation and his exquisite phrasing had a piercing beauty which stilled the mind. His

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