



8. SOWING THE RIGHT SEED

Selective breeding can apply to trees just as to any other stock. Provisional research has shown promising results in increasing the growth rate of native trees. Encouraging progress has been made in selecting seed strains and, with careful culture, it is hoped that Kauri, Rimu and other first rate native timber trees may grow more quickly than before. The New Zealand Forest Service is intensifying research and field trials in an effort to hasten the approach of indigenous forest management. Under the long term policy of the Forest Service the day is visualised when plantations of native trees will be cultivated with economic rate of growth to supplement the vast exotic forests as productive areas. Limited supplies of such famous and acceptable timbers as Kauri, Rimu and Totara may again become available in the distant future as a second crop through New Zealand's policy of planned forestry.

Forestry is forever

*Inserted in the interests of forest protection by the New Zealand Forest Service
... Soil Conservation Council.*

RADIO REVIEW

The Good Book

OCCASIONALLY a radio session emerges to which my first reaction is "What a fine idea! Why hasn't somebody thought of this before?" So with the daily Bible reading from the YA stations, which I find wholly admirable. The three or so minutes each takes is about the length of a rock 'n' roll record; even the most stubbornly secular-minded could hardly begrudge such a space for a daily recognition of the Creator. The scheme of using different translations is excellent, for, while the more familiar versions have the appeal of traditional sonorities, one is often startled into a new awareness of meaning by the directness of Knox, Moffatt and Phillips. The only slight quarrel I have is with some of the readers who seem to me to strive for a lush poeticisation of certain passages, which rings falsely in my ear. At first thought, the time, 5.45 p.m., may not appear the most appropriate, but as the reading immediately follows the children's session, it may catch a family audience before the knob is turned to net some music. Perhaps, however, we may look forward to the day when the session is repeated, after the 9.0 p.m. news, for instance, for a still wider audience.

Back to Virginia

SOME 15 years ago, I greatly admired Virginia Woolf's novels. I still respect her artistic integrity and the sensitivity of her style. But on being re-read, her books seem to reveal such intellectual snobbery and emotional preciosity, so limited a view of human nature and so inadequate a vision of reality that they have lost most of their appeal. They proceed from a narrow little world, the end of which may be symbolised by Mrs Woolf's suicide. I could endure only an hour of Louis MacNeice's précis of *The Waves* (LYC); fatigue at trying to discern a pattern behind the thought-processes of her characters and at the monotony of outlook forced me elsewhere for a

mind-rinse. The following evening, introduced by George Rylands, nearly all the survivors of Bloomsbury paid tribute to her "beauty" (a description which always baffles me), her wit, integrity, genius and sensitivity. This *Portrait* was, I thought, more interesting than *The Waves*, for its concreteness and for three particular things—Marjorie Fry's admission that Virginia Woolf often did less than justice to human beings, a description of her snobbish deflation of earnest young men, and the reminiscences of the Woolfs' cook, who, among all these high-brows, struck the most human and spontaneous note.

—J.C.R.

Edwardian Maugham

THESE plays of Somerset Maugham's nonage which the NZBS has been giving us are not recognisably Maugham to a person knowing only his later writings or even his earlier novels. They are not Maughamish in the way "Three Fat Women of Antibes" is, that sardonic short story I heard some months ago, in which Ngaio Marsh did a virtuoso performance, nor as that grimmer piece, *The Lotus Eater*, which has also been going the rounds this year. *Penelope* was, nevertheless, very accomplished and elegant post-Wilde, pre-Coward, in ways not merely chronological. The plot of a woman regaining her husband's straying affections by ceasing to be the perfect wife could be found nowadays in any glossy woman's magazine, though it might have been more original, and more daring, in 1912. But—"she says she hasn't told it very well, but when George told her it was exquisite. Because George has a gift that way and when all is said and done it's not so much what you say as how you say it, is it," to quote Ogden Nash, and if *Penelope* is not exactly exquisite it is certainly stylish, and Roy Leywood and his team gave it a stylish production.

The Void

IT'S not so long since a radio programme which lasted as long as half an hour was unusual. Nowadays even the ZBs have their occasional hour-

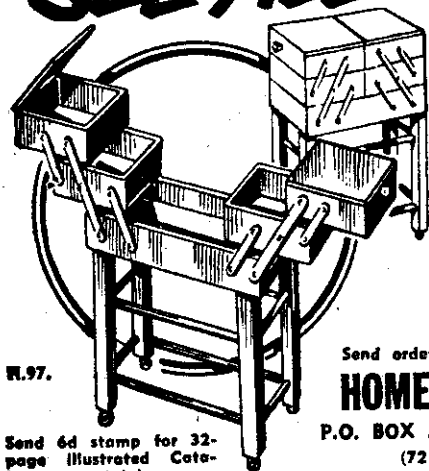
The Week's Music . . . by SEBASTIAN

THIS week brought a Grieg anniversary, and we heard a pleasant celebratory programme (NZBS) that revealed at once the man's power and his limitations. The short pictorial piano pieces were not represented, but a larger work was played by Lola Johnson, the E Minor Sonata, which intersperses the charm and lightness of the short pieces with a near-symphonic thunder. Clear in outline and repetitive in nature, it still demands a good deal of insight in performance, and this it received, though with rather too much cloying nuance. In contrast, a selection of songs from Honor McKellar's sweet soprano breathed the air of simplicity, and was effective without being affected. This was the composer in his element, and at his most expressive of personal and national feeling. Finally, the Malcolm Latchem Quartet played the G Minor Quartet, a work of beauty but sometimes of tedium as well. Hung upon a single theme, the felicitous mutations of melody are often offset by Grieg's naive methods of transparent sequence and repetition, satisfying at first, but tending to pall with quantity. Still the lyrical qualities, which made him the Schubert of the North, domin-

ated the performance as well as the work, as they did throughout the programme.

It is with dry eyes that I look through the list of recitals that were to have been played by Claudio Arrau. I don't think we missed very much; he, in common with most visiting pianists, had obviously decided that we have a humid musical climate. Look at those programmes—the old war horses in close array, the little trifles that are everyone's encores, that budding pianists struggle with. This, from a man who boasts over 70 different memorised recitals! He would never get by in America with such selections, and the implied attitude is condescending in the extreme. It is all very well for second-rate pianists, who must have an "audience-catcher" programme, to perform these works again and again; but for an artist of Arrau's calibre, surely people will go to hear the man, even if he plays "difficult" music. You have only to hear his recordings of Weber to know what he is capable of musically. Perhaps it is as well that Arrau has not come; yet the next visitor may do exactly the same. Enough of spoon feeding! Let us be treated as adults.

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