

beneath an avalanche of Drama, stark and unashamed. After that the rustic idyll seemed a little insipid, the songs a little too self-consciously tuneless. By the last scene I was happily back to my old detached self, giving Leontes a mental push for his slowness in recognising Hermione, censuring Shakespeare's male callousness in fobbing poor Paulina off with a second husband when, by merely deleting a stage direction ("Exit Antigonus, pursued by a bear") and some lines of inconsiderable dialogue he could have restored to her the first.

Back Again

PERHAPS long absence has had a softening effect on me, but the new *Speaking for Ourselves* I found fascinating listening. The questions were sensible, reasonably vital yet apt for some measure of light-heartedness in treatment (thought-up, most likely, in the studio, since this was the first session for the season). The team too, rich in experience and the confidence it brings, and with vocational bloom still upon them, scarcely capable of an "er" or an "um" even when indulging in concentrated cerebration. But what struck me most, I think, was the nice balance of the trio, H. C. D. Somerset with experience shining behind his measured words, A. E. Hurley indulging in Joadian jargon and getting to the root of things, Malcolm Mason apparently pinch-hitting for the women-folk. At least I seemed to detect in the attitude of chairman and team-mates something of the fond indulgence which 2YA panels usually show their female speaker, and in him some of that light-heartedness and *reductio ad personam* technique which women are usually expected to provide. In addition, he was satisfyingly articulate.

—M.B.

For Older Juveniles

PARENTS who fight an unequal battle with the fascination radio serials have for their young, find that their greatest difficulty is the lack of good alternative programmes suitable for the intermediate or early secondary school pupil. The second week of the school holidays, however, provided for Otago listeners at least, two good programmes that could be enjoyed by both the older children and their aged parents, and both were presented at a suitable time. On the Tuesday of that week, we had Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, and on Saturday Benjamin Britten's *Let's Make an Opera*. More programmes between 7.0 and 8.0 p.m. planned with the older children in mind, would (if of this nature) not spoil adult listening, and would be valuable in bridging the gulf between the music taught at school, and the often inferior radio programmes heard at home.

—Loquax

Perpendicular Pronouns

THOUGH we are often warned against the use of the first person in writing there are times when it has a great, almost magical power. This, at any rate, is my own reaction to readings from Lady Barker's *Station Life in New Zealand* just concluded at 3YC. Pippa Robbins seems to have a freshness, a

vigour and a cultivated voice well suited to the script. As I listened on several occasions it seemed hard to realise that the ink had long been dry on these entries, or that if one went for a short drive north, one could not pay this remarkable woman a visit. Yes, remarkable; attaching the reins securely to herself before fainting from the pain of broken bones, sleeping out to see the dawn, but above all being so interested in living that no event was dull, and no hardship too harsh on reflection to find its place in this stimulating diary.

Droll Stories

I HAVE listened twice now to a recording of Algernon Blackwood over 3YC, once on the occasion of his 80th birthday, and once on Human Idiosyncracies. His informal radio technique is of the kind where art conceals art. The whimsical conversational sentences and phrases come out for you alone, and keep you simmering on the edge of laughter throughout. He tells you how H. G. Wells once debunked Blackwood's interest in interstellar space and flight — "What's that to get interested in" says Wells. "If you got to the moon all you'd see would be an awful lot more of the same things, more stars, more stars, our telescopes can't reach that's all, that's all." So Blackwood turned then to the little things: the unaccountable reason why men open their mouths when adjusting a monocle and so on. Listening to him and remembering stories I've heard from good raconteurs I cannot help wondering if a little enterprise would not discover one or two New Zealand Algernons.

—Westcliff

Ingenious Adaptation

ONE of the most interesting things about the 1YC broadcast of the *World Theatre* play, Euripides' *Alcestis* was the ingenious way in which Ford Madox Ford in his adaptation solved (or perhaps bypassed) the problem of the Greek chorus by introducing a nobleman named Chorus to take the burden of the comment and by dividing other chorus material amongst the village women. For the rest this is a vigorous translation, neatly adapted to modern audiences; and played so as to bring out all the romantic, pathetic and comic elements. Grizelda Harvey gave a charming reading of the charming *Alcestis*, André Morell handled the dauntingly difficult part of Admetus admirably, and Valentine Dyall, exchanging his black cloak for an animal-skin, brought gusto to the role of the big-hearted Hercules. The simple plot of the play, and the dramatic high spots, the quarrel between Admetus and his father and the unveiling of *Alcestis*, are so appealing as to make me feel that this production should captivate a much wider audience. Is this not a case where "flexibility" might be invoked to replay it from 1YA, say, on a Sunday afternoon? The introduction by Dorian Saker, however, struck me as being singularly unhelpful, and too elementary, if not naive, for the original 1YC audience.

—J.C.R.



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