

Auckland Entertains, was a kind of round-up of often-heard players and singers—agreeable enough, but a thought stodgy after Purcell.

—J.C.R.

Grand Manner

WHAT sort of a man was Ferdinand Magellan? Why was he killed? I remember how this ripple of curiosity went through me whenever I came across the tiny paragraph in our history books telling of his voyage. It seems strange now that an event so startling should have been so negligently—one book said he was killed in the Spice Islands instead of the Philippines—and slightly recorded. Naturally, then, the BBC feature *The Voyage of Magellan* heard from 3YC gripped my attention. Conceived as a verse chronicle by Laurie Lee and opening with the majestic Requiem Mass for Magellan it continues with one of the 18 survivors recounting his strange adventures to a blind beggar in Seville. Bernard Miles, the "Ancient Mariner" of the story, has the kind of voice which makes poetry out of ordinary speech and which by the same token gives to verse the reality of conversation. Set in an age when men gave greater rein to their emotions and mirroring the life of heroes chosen by Magellan from the criminal riff-raff of the day the story allows scope for what Dorothy Sayers would describe as a "thundering piece of theatre in the grand manner."

—Westcliff

Cautionary Tale

THE ANT WHO DIDN'T LIKE TO WORK was a banal little story, a pious tale, that had the freshness and charm of a Disney cartoon. The story concerned a lazy ant who was given his freedom but who found (to his amazement but no one else's) that it is much happier to work with one's fellows, however senseless their activity may be. The moral was on the superficial level: conformity is all. Yet the piece had undeniable charm well expressed by the simple gaiety of Michael North's music. This play was written by Gordon Grier and produced by the BBC. Regrettably, 4YC presented it at 10.0 p.m.; at 8.0 p.m. it could have been appreciated by a wider, and younger, audience.

For This Relief

THE holidays provided a wealth of radio entertainment—not only the cricket and racing commentaries always with us on our holidays, but also considerable relief in the form of well arranged musical programmes, documentaries and plays. Among so much richness it is difficult to select a single programme for comment—perhaps the Brahms programme on January 2 (*Tragic Overture*, *Violin Concerto* and *Third Symphony*, all beautifully performed) or the Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* or the Elgar programme. But this is to disregard the excellent music heard from 4YA on Christmas morning and 4YC at night. The *Morning Stars*, too, seemed of particular beauty. Best of all was the recognition that we do not die mentally from a surfeit of lamb. "Book Shop" did not put up its shutters, Professor Musgrove continued his series on the English poets, Owen Jensen, The

World of Opera, Musical Notebook and the Canterbury Tales appeared in their places with much-appreciated regularity.

—Loquax

Contrast

DURING the holiday season a very beautiful relationship appears to exist between the programme arranger and the average listener. Lulled by holiday food, mellowed by seemingly conviviality, kept indoors by holiday weather, the typical holiday-maker tunes in gratefully to the strange radio as to a familiar friend, and his touching dependence is not abused. A couple of be-crackered TIFHS, and excellent variety show *You're Welcome*, and some shiversome racontage from *The Man in Black* provided all that I, at any rate, could have desired by way of holiday listening. But holidays are short, art is long, as I was forcibly reminded when, after a week or two of lotus-eating listening I was brought slap-bang up against *The Face of Violence*, an hour-and-a-half's strenuous fighting through overgrown by-paths of allegory to a foregone but nicely-expressed conclusion to which I feel there must have been a more straightforward route. Perhaps it is a programme I shall appreciate more when time has had a chance to knit up my ravelled intellectual fibres, but I am certainly not going to be masochistic enough to ask for a repeat.

He Didn't Snore

LISTENING to Gerda Eichbaum's programme of *Good-Bad Verse* I was both entertained by her selections and impressed by her moderation. For this was no sniggering attempt to put down the literary mighty from their seats (worse could have been found in Keats than *Meg Merrilees*, Tennyson's *Exhibition Ode* was a creditable piece of bespoke tailoring, and few even of our much lauded Wellington boys have as little to be ashamed of as Byron at 19 even if today his *The Tear* would undoubtedly be described as wet). She contented herself with noting that Homer sometimes nods, a less fastidious commentator could have made him snore. But for all that there was enough grim warning implicit in the selections to make our literary figures thankful that they live at a time when the W.P.B. is in much higher regard and even the most devoted literary executor believes in selected works rather than collected ones.

—M.B.

Hymn Programme

IT has been said that the hymns a congregation sings have a greater influence over what they believe than the doctrines preached to them. The Wesleyans, and other evangelist and revivalist movements working among the poor and uneducated, found the hymn the ideal medium not only for building up a feeling of fellowship within their congregations, but also for teaching their doctrines in an easily understood and remembered form. This was particularly the aim of Dr. Philip Doddridge, a Non-conformist minister and hymn-writer of the early 18th Century. Some of his hymns have, in the words of Dr. Percy Scholes, "woven themselves into the very mental texture of English-speaking Protestantism." Last year was the bicentenary of Dr. Doddridge's death. To commemorate it a programme of his hymns has been recorded by the Durham Street Methodist Choir of Christchurch, and is being heard from all National stations.

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