

talks on Australia's Literary Pattern and Playwriting in Australia has been the ease and lucidity of his exposition. This virtue of the spoken word which enabled Mr. Palmer to get across to the listener of average intelligence and literacy is by no means as common to New Zealand scripts. Indeed, after listening to Mr. Palmer dealing with the problem of the artist in slowly coming to terms with the early colonial environment, I found it possible to use his terms to more fully explain certain passages written by a New Zealand critic of some distinction. Not only does Mr. Palmer avoid words of which one is a little uncertain, but he finds it natural to use homely images to illustrate his theme, where our own writers, continuing in a world of abstractions possibly true enough, do not make a really strong effort to bridge the gulf between domestic culture and John Citizen which they nevertheless deplore.

Father Damien

THOSE men gripped by a single over-mastering passion are so much the despair of their fellows that we tend to explain their lives in terms of some unusual power. To say, for example, that it was piety which took Father Damien to Molokai explains nothing. After all there must be thousands, perhaps millions, of people trying to live the good life and yet their light does not shine before men with the same brilliance. With Father Damien it was different. Inexplicable, and completely certain from the moment he felt the call to the Church until he died of leprosy at Molokai. Even admitting the difficulties of his temperament, brought out in a dramatised BBC script, presented from 3ZB, these seem irrelevant alongside the splendid trail he blazed and which brought hope to those who were condemned to the "death before death." In him the more usual tussle between good and evil seemed as if in abeyance, he appeared not so much to have chosen as to have responded to an unequivocal command. And yet the pattern of human life, even of ideal life, as reflected in the Gospels, does not allow us to draw these comfortable, and somewhat evasive, conclusions.

Stream of Music

THE first two of Owen Jensen's programmes on *The New Look in Music* which I heard over 3YC, were very interesting. At times I felt like saying "Hold hard, there," because he raced beyond me. Writing may be re-read but in a talk a little amplitude, a little reiteration or further illustration help. The way in which Mr. Jensen related modern trends in music to the anarchic expressionism of the Romantics like Coleridge or Shelley helped those who are not predominantly interested in music to follow the argument. Mr. Jensen has an easy conversational style of presentation which effectively bridges the gap between the specialist and the listener. But if only to show I gave close attention to his talks there was an apparent contradiction between the way he described the long-windedness of Wagner (compared with Schubert) in the first talk; then, in the second, having suggested that the modern descended from the Romantics, illustrated the terse mod-

ern approach by first reading from Dickens and then from a modern writer. Either modern music is mixed, some being terse and realistic, and other pieces being in the Romantic tradition, or the whole of it is Post Romantic. But perhaps subsequent talks will clear this up for me. —Westcliff

The Little More . . .

I HAD been satisfied with the Adolf Busch and Boyd Neel performances of the Brandenburg Concertos until 4YC recently presented a new recording of the fourth Brandenburg by the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra conducted by Karl Munchinger. I had heard the purists bemoan the use of a piano in other recordings but had regarded their complaints as perhaps a little pedantic. The purists were right. This new recording is first rate, and the use of a harpsichord gives a tang to the orchestral tone that the piano lacks.

I Spy

STATION 4YC has a rather irritating habit of playing hide and seek with its *Sonata Hour*—a habit all the more irritating for the excellence of the session once it is located (if it can be located, since every now and then, presumably to make the game more interesting, the programme is omitted). However, one recent Saturday night made this listener at least feel he had hit the jack-pot. A recording of a Mozart Sonata by Dinu Lipatti was followed by Menuhin and Kentner playing Bach, and then Solomon played the Beethoven Op. 2, No. 3 Sonata—an excellent programme, and one to arrange one's social life around. Station 4YC announces another *Sonata Hour* at the same time the following week; dare one hope this station has forsworn its whimsy?

Good in Parts

A RADIO audience is a blind audience, and if a radio programme is to be successful it must provide its listeners with eyes, its vivid brevity of description presenting an immediate visual impression. That the producer of *Calling Taiaroa*, a locally-made documentary on the signal station at the entrance to the Port of Otago, appreciated this fact was obvious from the quality of his introductory remarks which gave a dramatic background of time and place to his subject. The prefatory music and sound effects, too, were unusually well chosen. Why, then, did he allow his programme to lapse so disastrously into the bathos of an (apparently) unrehearsed interview? How could he expect the untrained broadcaster with his tools of trade lying visibly about him, to translate them into city living rooms? My sympathies were with the victim, coping valiantly with the banality of some of the questions asked him, and the complexity of others, while the atmosphere of rather studied informality froze all originality or humour. This was not a bad programme; it was disappointing in that it was so nearly very good. The producer showed intelligence and appreciation in his approach to his subject; it was a pity that later he got bogged in the morass of the interview.

—Loquax

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