

RADIO REVIEW

SOME radio speakers are just radio speakers; others follow the personality line to the borders of irritation. A rare few have the ability to project a presence, and to lend the authority of character to whatever they say. The late Cecil Hull was one of the foremost of these latter, and her recent death deprived New Zealand radio not only of one of its first broadcasters, but of one of its most stimulating. Even those who may have questioned her approach to the language in the *King's English* series would, I think, agree on her capacity for provoking thought and making such topics interesting to a large audience. A sincere, dignified and exceptionally well-phrased tribute to Miss Hull from Dorothea Turner in a recent *Feminine Viewpoint* session brought out the qualities of warmth, quick response, interest in life and human understanding in Miss Hull's character, all of which came across in her talks. I particularly liked Mrs. Turner's point that Miss Hull only revealed she was not of our generation by returning borrowed books promptly,

rarely speaking of herself and not venturing an opinion on a topic on which she was not well-informed. And she made it clear that one of the chief reasons why Miss Hull was such a good talker was that she was an exceptionally good listener.

Rubbra's Genius

AMONG contemporary British composers, I have a special respect and affection for Edmund Rubbra. This is partly because he is not one of the Bright Boys of the Boulanger Bunch, and because he has never cultivated eccentricities of style or courted publicity; but most of all because he has the gift of ardour in economy, of producing deep emotional effects through austerity. So little of his work is recorded that 1YC's recent half-hour of Rubbra was, if I may coin a phrase, right up my sinuous musical alley. Kathleen Reardon, a contralto with great interpretive gifts, sang three beautiful Psalms, which showed Rubbra's genius for religious music of integrity and sincerity, as well as demonstrating an interesting use of the piano interweaving contrapuntally with the voice. This was followed by a recording of the Second Violin Sonata, to my mind one of the loveliest short works of modern British music. The perceptive introductory note suggested to me the hand of

Owen Jensen, notably in the reference to Rubbra as "something of a dark horse in contemporary music." Perhaps some day we may hear Grieg referred to as "a Norse of a different colour!"

Eliot Examined

WE were indeed privileged to hear Martin Browne speaking on *The Work of T. S. Eliot*. Quite apart from his exceptional knowledge of Eliot's dramas through his close active association with the poet, and his own acting ability, Mr. Browne showed that he has the right words and the right manner for a broadcast. I have seldom heard a subject as complex and as discussable as Eliot's dramatic development and philosophy presented with such cogency and pith—no woolly preliminaries, no "drama from Gorboduc to Shaw," no "Eliot versus Fry" or the establishment of a defence in depth, but a plunging *in medias res*, and a crisp summary of Eliot's purpose, outlook and technique, with the most pertinent of illustrations for each point. Henzie Raeburn's changes of voice and manner to suit the various roles was another memorable feature of the broadcast. But that hard-to-find instinct for the right phrase, so suavely delivered—that impressed me most. "The almost inarticulate noises" of naturalistic dramatists, "Eliot's restoring a

nobility to the human spirit"; "Acceptance' is the key-note of Eliot's message, not negative submission, but positive acceptance," and the like, remained to illuminate questions which the broadcast left unanswered.

—J.C.R.

Ballads

STATION 4YC is at present giving us repeat performance of an excellent series originally heard in Broadcast to Schools, entitled *Tales that are Told*. The emphasis is on the telling, background being given by only a brief introduction—all that is necessary to such reading as the excerpts from *Beowulf* or *The Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens*. The latter was particularly well done by an anonymous reader who gave his lines with gusto that added the full beauty lacking in cold print. Ballads are rarely heard over the air, though this is the verse form that is most easily comprehended at a single listening, and having appreciated *Sir Patrick Spens* more than I had thought possible, I should like to hear programmes of this nature oftener.

Stranger Than Truth

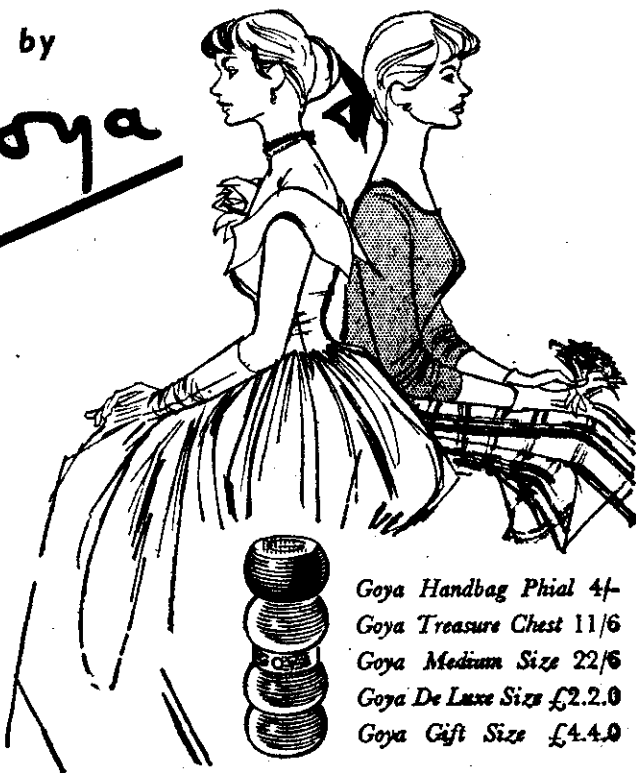
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