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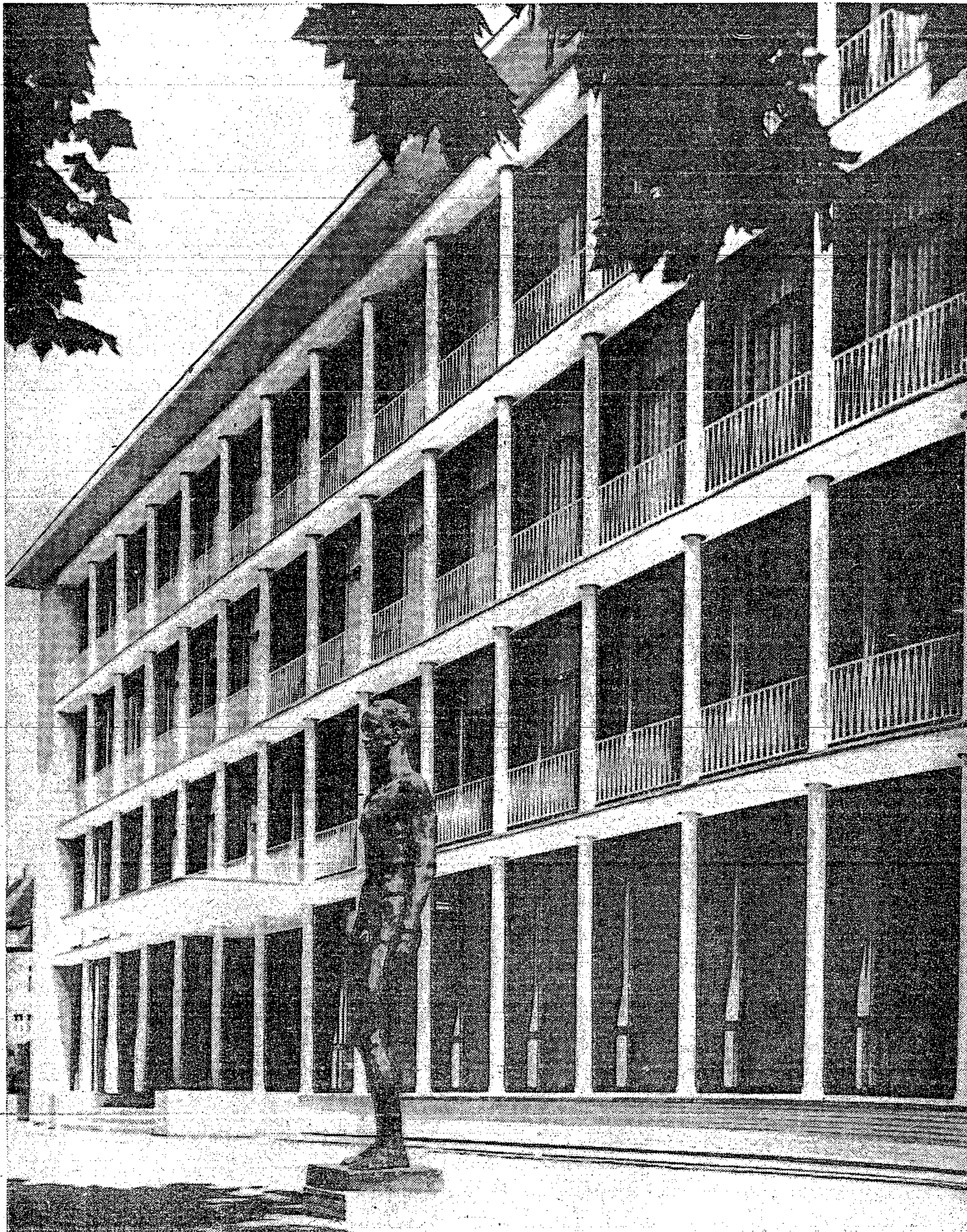


A modern office building in Düsseldorf, designed by Helmut Hentrich and Hans Heuser with a sculptured figure by Georg Kolbe (see 'Thoughts on Modern German Architecture', page 378)

In this number:

Towards Socialisation in India (Geoffrey Tyson)

Anton Chekhov: an Essay (Thomas Mann)

The Royal Graves of Ur (C. J. Gadd)

CRITIC ON THE HEARTH

Weekly comments on B.B.C. programmes by independent contributors

Television Broadcasting

DOCUMENTARY

A View of France

AS A PROGRAMME intended to give us some impressions of present-day France, 'We, the French' last week was like that portrait of Verlaine by Carrière in which the painter showed sufficient of the poet's face to indicate the character which he saw there and left the rest in obscurity. In the television programme the obscurity was confined to one or two recorded voices, which were hard to hear. Visually, the programme was admirable, especially in its sequences of rural places where the life of the Republic continues in unchanging disregard of the capital, though that indispensable centre of the European scene may be no more than fifty miles away. The film camera was used with imaginative discretion, bringing many well-composed pictures to our screens. There was none of the languid formality of 'About Britain', for example, in which the picture quality was rarely first-class. 'We, the French' had a purpose. Its approach was refreshingly specific and direct.

The purpose was put to us in an introduction by ex-President Auriol, whom one could imagine, despite his social eminence, being still beset by the prejudice which for the Frenchman makes the commune rather than the government the repository of his deepest allegiance. He was there, he said in effect, to give his blessing to a course of re-education in which the English people would learn that, far from being a broken reed of world comity, France is developing new social and economic initiatives by which she is recovering her self-respect and meriting the respect of others. If the accents were those of propaganda at the loftiest Quai D'Orsay level, the facts were striking enough: that, for instance, in a couple of decades or so France will be a nation of young people. I do not suppose that I was the only viewer for whom that was news or who mentally equated it with the actuarial expectation that within about the same period we shall be a nation of old people. Perhaps we should cherish Wilfred Pickles more. His exceptional talent for creating sympathy with the aged may make him an ideal future British Ambassador to France and our greatest gift to Eurovision.

Sharing M. Auriol's hope that 'We, the French' may assist Franco-British understanding, I hope, further, that these programmes will lay bare some of the differences of mental comprehension between the two peoples. Not long ago an editor friend of mine wrote to a Frenchman asking whether he 'felt able' to write an article on a subject of which he has special knowledge. The effect, reported to me by a friend of the Frenchman, was to make him tear the letter to shreds and beat his chest in rage: 'He thinks I am not capable!' As the editor had thought precisely the opposite it seems that the process of re-education will need to be more penetrating than this television project is likely to be. Moving from the petty to the sublime, will the series recognise that we English incorrigibly respect the aristocratic principle which the French abandoned 160 year ago? It largely explains the indifference to French ideas which is the inspiration of these programmes.

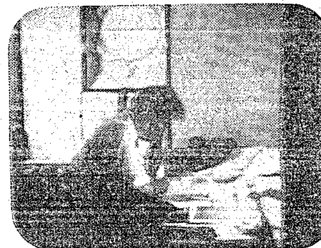
'Dancers of Tomorrow' on February 21: Dame Ninette de Valois with pupils of the Sadler's Wells School

B.B.C. viewing time being limited to about thirty-five hours a week, arbitrariness is inevitable in deciding programme lengths. 'We, the French' was given half an hour. 'Dancers of Tomorrow', immediately following, received a full hour. Justifying that arrangement would presumably bring in overhead factors of no interest to viewers and possibly not impervious to expert inquiry. I take it as a good sign that B.B.C. television is prepared to flout its normal smattering activities and to require of us the self-discipline of a more sustained attention. Not that 'Dancers of Tomorrow' made exacting demands on our powers of concentration. The subject was of itself engaging: the training and progress of a child dancer at the Sadler's Wells ballet school. The programme's merit was in its thoroughness. Every ballet dancer we see from now on will have an extra depth of interest, thanks to the capably written script and firm, deliberate production of Naomi Capon, the film camera *finesse* of A. A. Englander, and the unruffled self-possession of various functionaries of ballet education. This hour's programme had not a single dragging minute. The background music was appropriately and happily incidental.

The youth club population is unlikely to be of overriding importance to commercial television. It does not represent enough purchasing power. B.B.C. television has staked a well-merited claim to its continued loyalty in 'Teleclub', an intermittent programme series which expresses the hopes and fears and aspirations of the under-twenty-ones in a modest compilation of dance, quiz, demonstration, interview, and the rest. It grinds no axe and makes no case except, by implication, that the civilities should be practised and that the Teddy-boy way of life was *démodé* from the start. Last week it discussed National Service from the point of view of its own age-group, illustrating the argument with extracts from a film of jungle war in Malaya. The commentating young subaltern who has been there faced the camera as if it had no terror for him at all and he was most successful in his small expository role. A not wholly irrelevant piece of information had been given me at lunch that same day, namely, that the greater part of the large circulation of one of the leading 'juvenile' papers is among National Service men.

The Schweitzer film was given a 'trailer' the night before it came on our screens and expectations were roused which the film did not fulfil. That is to say, the legendary doctor was a minor figure in the record of a voyage which was taking him back to his African home, when we had thought that at last we should see him face to face. An apologetic foreword to the film itself warned us that this was not to be, that we should be vouchsafed only profile glimpses and mid-shots of him at work. As it turned out, the note of contrition was a little overdone. We

As seen by the viewer: 'We, the French' on February 21: M. Vincent Auriol, President of the Republic of France from 1947 to 1953, who introduced the series, and (right) a French agricultural worker



'Return to Africa' on February 25: Dr. Albert Schweitzer at work in his cabin during the voyage from Europe; and (right) a young patient in Dr. Schweitzer's hospital at Lambaréné

Photographs: John Cura

saw Dr. Schweitzer several times. Apart from these snapshot moments, the film succeeded in conveying its message of a faith and self-sacrifice which, that same day, had brought its principal character one more of the world's high honours, admission to the Order of Merit. Background music was judiciously used.

REGINALD POUND

DRAMA

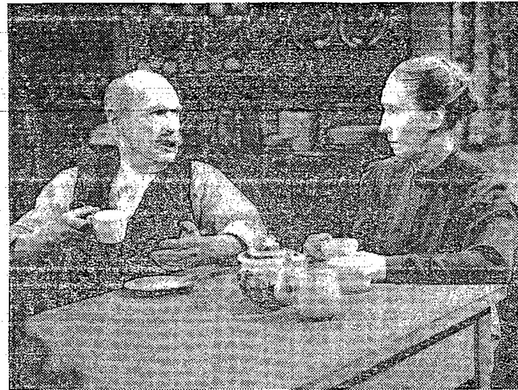
Grandmas on Parade

THE GROVES are on my mind again. Not so much Gran this time, though last Friday's episode showed her actually *watching* television—need I say, 'Children's Hour'?—which was promptly faded out on the old grouse, much to Dad Grove's annoyance. No, my complaint is with Mr. Pertwee who seemed to be blacklegging the union somewhat this week. I mean he used up an idea which any Scandinavian dramatist could have worried for three and a half hours in something under fifteen minutes.

Now, among us penny-a-liners, that is hardly playing the game. The unspoken compulsion is surely to pull it out as long as possible. Thus if an infant is called, say, June, it is the accepted thing that you call it 'Baby June', or better still, with three words, 'Little Baby June'. The plot of this Friday's 'A Matter of Principle' could surely have been stretched to cover a month of Fridays. Far from the flat anxiety of the Dales ('I wonder if Bob *will* get that cold in the head?') the Groves went head over heels into the ultimates of moral perplexity. Thus-wise: you remember, of course, that sonny had had a watch given him by his uncle? Well, as Mrs. Dale would say, after Gran had watched Children's Hour, back comes the little urchin from school with an album of stamps under his arm. 'How come?' says Dad. 'Swapped them with another boy', says the lad sheepish-like. For what? Why, for seven dee and, and . . . (he casts down his peepers) his new watch! Ooo, says our Mum, in effect, you, you . . . ungrateful, how could you do such a wicked-awful thing? But the nipper is unrepentant and is sure the stamps are worth heaps and heaps of dough, so there. Dad gives his view they aren't worth a tanner or why should young Alf have traded them in?

Alfie boy, by the way, is known to be the son of the local bookie, a sharp-mannered man name of James. So our Dad gets on the blower. 'Don't think you can get away with your boy swindling my lad out of his watch what his uncle give him', is the burden of his fateful words over this instrument. Mr. James tells him where *he* can get off, if you take my meaning. So off goes Dad Grove, just as Mum was bringing tea ('I'll keep it hot for you, love', cries this admirable helpmate) and takes the fatal album round to old Mr. Coke who deals in that kind of thing and is a fine old boy in his rather crotchety way; who, putting on his gig lamps, immediately pronounces the stamps worth hundreds and thousands. Now, as they say, wot?

Well, I regret to report nothing very much: no real philosophical dilemma. The police turn up shortly after Mr. James has learnt from the united family that he has got the ugly end of the stick. Then we discover that young Alf had pinched the lot. The culprit is hauled off and that, believe it or not, was the end of the episode. Too bad! Now, as the late James Agate would say, this is precisely the point where Ibsen would have *begun* the story: but, see the Groves tempted, shall we ever? Come to that, did you ever . . . ?



'Barnet's Folly' on February 22, with Jan Stewer (author of the play) as George Growsell and Beatrice Varley as Hannah Mudge

No Gran materialised in the flesh in 'The Laughing Lady', a robbery drama for children. But she hovered in the distance. When John Welsh and Gwynne Whitby (this story's Dad and Mum) were summoned by telegram to the bedside of Gran it was really a hoax to get the house left in charge of Colin Campbell, Caroline Denzil, and James Doran. But just as the parents were being seen off by the solicitous shop-manager, Gordon Phillott, bless us if he, too, didn't produce evidence of an old mum of his own: 'over ninety years of age and still going strong', we learned, hearing also the wise saw that 'it is surprising what old people will get over'. He ought to see Gran Whiteoak!

In this pleasant piece by Wendy Cooper there was, on the whole, not quite enough plot to go round (unlike the Grove situation). A picture was quite ingeniously stolen and the youngest of the family was able to give Superintendant Colin Douglas the missing clue. But we had to have a demonstration of police methods with identity parades and mobile-squad car work before the picture was recovered: rather a lot of library stock film inserts. Shaun Sutton produced. No bad dreams are likely to be traced to the piece, which is no doubt a positive virtue. The play, with its many close-ups of burglar proofing, will come in handy when next a commercial firm of safe makers wishes to inoculate the younger generation. Of commercial *children's* television not enough has, I think, been said as yet.

And so once more to 'Jalna', with myself getting quite hopelessly confused. This chap Renny, why is he always someone—so to say—else? (Henry James would have made very heavy weather of it, no doubt!) In this episode we had reached 1924, and the next quarter of a century should pass in the twinkling of an eye. *Radio Times* told us 'Eden is talented, charming, idle, and utterly selfish'. While telephoning the Conservative Central Office, I saw my error. This Eden is Gran's boy and married to American Alayne, who had our sympathy, being, as the synopsis says, 'taken aback by the uninhibited Whiteoaks, perpetually quarrelling, loving, and hating each other'. Great muddle with faintly adulterous sisters-in-law this time; Gran's hundredth birthday; and some gruesome love scenes, in which Elizabeth Maude and Donald Gray had our special pity. Miss Cadell, Robin Bailey, and Petra Davies were others. Only fair performance. Smeterlin's Chopin followed like rain after drought.

PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE

Sound Broadcasting

DRAMA

Question and Answer

NONE OF US would be surprised by a call to a will-reading at midnight in a lonely house by the Hudson River. This is quite a normal practice. No will can really have a useful First Reading in any other circumstances. (One takes for granted the presence of a West Indian Negress, babbling of evil spirits.) Moreover, if the will insists that the beneficiary shall spend the night in the bed where the testator died, who can reasonably grumble? If it is twenty years to the hour since the testator's death, that makes it all the more usual. Sentimentally, I was glad to be in the familiar Library and Bedroom again, though I doubt whether they impressed newcomers—juveniles who may not remember the famous jingle, 'If you like this play, please tell your friends, but pray don't tell them how it ends'. In those days, the roaring 'twenties, 'The Cat and the Canary' was called 'the world's greatest thriller': one questions that now, but it was amusing to find the old piece in 'Saturday-Night Theatre' (Home), a 'Repertory in Britain' programme.

'Jalna' on February 27 with (left to right) Jean Cadell as Adeline ('Gran') Whiteoak, Donald Gray as Maurice Vaughan, Richard Caldicot as Nicholas Whiteoak, Elizabeth Maude as Meg, and Arthur Howard as Ernest Whiteoak

It is a repertory company's task to be protean, to jump from Ibsen to John Willard (author of 'The Cat'), and from 'Macbeth' to topical farce. They do this at the Nottingham Playhouse which, under its lively director, John Harrison, has more than local fame. This week,

I believe, the cast of 'The Cat and the Canary' is engaged upon Jacobean tragedy, and there could hardly be a deeper gulf than between the verse of Ford and these curious high jinks from the nineteen-twenties. Not that I objected to the jinks, well managed by all concerned; but I cannot say that—in two senses—it was a sound idea to broadcast a piece whose excitements are necessarily visual. We wanted to see the corpse fall from the cupboard, the 'claw-like hand' through the darkness, the panel-work, the powdery-green light—all the thriller-man's gallimaufry.

Some of us could set the scene in imagination from earlier productions; novices must have found it hard to summon the atmosphere. Here John Willard's dialogue does not help; it is the thinnest stuff, and there is little that a radio producer can translate to the air. Nottingham playgoers would have been happier: I gather that Mr. Harrison had a good time with his lighting effects, 'mouldering, slatted' décor, and the fashions of the 'twenties. On the air we had to make do with Mr. Willard; by himself he was just not enough, though we were sure that Nottingham had every reason to cherish its company. I liked the voice of David Aylmer and the parakeets of Barbara New and Jill Showell (when I met her last she was a Young Vic Portia). And now let us hear Nottingham in something rather more radiogenic.

I am quite certain that nothing whatever would stop the people in Gabriel Marcel's 'Increase and Multiply' (Third) from arguing. Put them down in a Hudson manor at midnight or (as we meet them first) in a large, overcrowded drawing-room in Paris, and they will be at it immediately, affirming, protesting, striving. Bang a door on them, or drop a curtain; the talk will proceed, and all of it, in effect, on a single topic, admittedly an inexhaustible one: love and its complications. Though the talkers have often pregnant things to say—the epithet, I fear, is inevitable—it is not a very exciting piece (all those questions and few absorbing answers). Even so, we have to thank Raymond Raikes and his cast for their unfaltering attack. This was most distinguished radio playing, and I cannot pass without a salute to Olive Gregg as Agnes, the overburdened wife (a French Roman Catholic), Joan Duan (who has an uncommonly sympathetic voice), Godfrey Kenton as Agnes' husband, and David Peel.

Most people would have known the answer to every question in 'The Cruel Sea' (Light). Having, remarkably, missed novel and film, I listened with sustained interest—if not with excitement—to a document-play, quick and unpretentious, that took us along a few of the outlines of the war at sea. The corvette, H.M.S. *Compass Rose,* could not have had a captain more gallant than Jack Hawkins. Later, the first instalment of a feature based on Edward Young's 'One of Our Submarines' (Home) was a lucidly factual war record, full of detail but acted rather stiffly.

So to 'Death in Athens' (Home), a murder trial from 412 B.C. in which Mary Fitt (dramatist) and D. G. Bridson, the producer, re-created a tense hour in the outdoor Court of the Areopagus. I was firmly persuaded of the innocence of Diocles, who stood his trial; and the sound of Arthur Young's voice as he delivered the oration for the defence is likely to linger with me. A strange occasion. 'Let us leave the guilty to their consciences, vengeance to the gods'.

The only question I can ask about the most recent 'Take It From Here' (Home) is, simply: Why go back to Hollywood? Do let us forget the place for a while.

J. C. TREWIN

THE SPOKEN WORD

Highways and Byways of Poetry

IT IS NINETEEN YEARS since Alida Monro closed down the Poetry Bookshop which was opened more than twenty years earlier by the poet Harold Monro in the grubby little Devonshire Street which ran south out of Queen's Square, Bloomsbury. Last week Mrs. Monro gave a lively account of its career and activities, full of delightful anecdotes, admirably broadcast and illustrated by readings of poems by Monro and other poets, some of them recordings by the poets themselves. She spoke, too, of the initiation by Monro, Rupert Brooke, and Edward Marsh of 'Georgian Poetry', the five volumes of which were published by the Poetry Bookshop between 1912 and 1922. In recent times critics have spoken, if at all, with contempt of 'Georgian Poetry' while treating with respect poets such as de la Mare, W. H. Davies, Edmund Blunden, Robert Graves, and D. H. Lawrence who contributed to it—a curious phenomenon which rouses some speculation.

'Thomas Hardy by his Friends' followed Henry Reed's broadcast on Hardy's poetry in the previous week, and it was Mr. Reed again who was editor and narrator of this programme. The plan was that often used by W. R. Rodgers—a selection, linked by narrative, of reminiscences by a number of friends. This programme, which included reminiscences by Lady Cynthia Asquith, Walter de la Mare, St. John Ervine, Robert Graves, Middleton Murry, Leonard Woolf, and several others, left in the mind a vivid and most attractive portrait and character study of Hardy in his old age.

Another broadcast later in the week presented the work of a younger poet. In recent years Patric Dickinson has given us many programmes of the poetry of other poets in 'Time for Verse': it was a selection from his own poems that was read in 'Contemporary Verse'. This programme proved that he is a poet well able to furnish an impressive one-man show. I often find, when I look into a new book of verse, that the first thing that catches my attention is the poet's epithets. Shop-soiled epithets rouse instant misgivings, though other ingredients may bring some reassurance. Mr. Dickinson's poetry was not entirely unknown to me; none the less, the first thing that struck me when listening to this programme was the absolute freshness and appropriateness of his epithets. I don't say aptness, because an epithet can be too apt, too clever by half, the product of intellect rather than imagination. What delights me in his epithets, and in his similes and metaphors too, is the way they reinforce and light up both mood and meaning. His poems are the work of a poet whose imagination has fed not only on the past but on modern thought and knowledge. The readers were Nicolette Bernard, William Devlin, and David Lloyd James. The first and last were, I thought, more in sympathy with the quality of the poems than Mr. Devlin: fine reader though he is, his reading seemed to me a little too dramatic. In the first poem, for instance, he treated the repeated line of each stanza more in the tone of a dogged reassertion than of a musical echo which, I felt, it required.

The third and last of 'The Lonely Virtues' was on 'Fortitude'. The speaker was David Atterbury, who was injured by a tank twelve years ago and became paralysed from the waist down. He spoke of his long struggle to readjust his mind to his terribly changed conditions, of how by practice he learned again to drive a car and so regain something of his lost mobility, and—still more wonderful—of his attainment of a peace and happiness greater, he believes, than would have been his if he had not suffered the accident. It was a fine and heartening talk.

On Thursday I passed through the ordeal of listening to two discussions, one following hard on the heels of the other. The first set out to discuss the problem of 'Making the Railways More Attractive'. There were three speakers, two of them authorities on transport and traffic, and I expected to be stirred to anticipatory excitement about the delights of future train-travel. But, alas, incompatibility of temperament raised its ugly head at the outset, we listeners were left out in the cold, and the rosy visions I had hoped for didn't appear. Seldom has a discussion left me so empty and so bored. Even Jack Longland, the chairman, could do nothing to vivify the proceedings. Luckily the second discussion, 'A Reasonable View of Obscenity', with its four unguided, but far from misguided, speakers was so vigorous, expert, and absorbing that it worked as a tonic on my jaded spirits. The difficulty with the question is that nobody, not even the experts, knows what exactly obscenity is.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

MUSIC

The Great B minor

THE ARRIVAL OF LENT was signalised by two performances, in the Third Programme, of Bach's Mass in B minor. But this was not, in the usual sense of the words, 'lenten fare'. When this great masterpiece is even moderately well done, it is a refreshment of the spirit. On this occasion it was superbly done. Indeed, I think that, taking it all round, I have never heard a better performance.

King's College Chapel seems to make an unusually good broadcasting studio, neither too resonant to allow the strands of Bach's polyphony to be heard, nor too deadening to its aureole of sound. Then, though the Cambridge University Madrigal Society was stated to be 'augmented', the choir seemed to be of exactly the right size, large enough to produce a full volume of tone without lumbering, and with boys' voices to add their sweetness and bite to the sopranos. The soloists were first-rate, singing their arias with easy phrasing and unconstricted tone. If I mention in particular Miss Pamela Bowden, the contralto, it is because her name is new to me and she sang confidently and steadily the beautiful music Bach wrote for his favourite voice.

The orchestra was the Philharmonia, led by Manoug Parikian, which means that the accompaniments, including the *obbligati,* were in the best possible hands. Again I must single out Dennis Brain, who played the horn-part in 'Quoniam tu solus' with absolutely flawless tone and phrasing, at both performances. And there was Thurston Dart to play the harpsichord in the continuo—he might have been better served by the microphone—with Raymond Clark as violoncellist, and Hugh McLean at the organ.

All the ingredients, then, were of the first quality. But it is to the chef, the *chef d'orchestre,* who blended and seasoned and served them up, that our loudest applause is due. Boris Ord has given many admirable performances in the Chapel over whose organ he presides, but he has never done anything, in my experience, to match this, if only because the B minor Mass is the greatest music he has undertaken. Not only was it a beautiful performance which brought out the grandeur, the profound religious emotion and, at times, the humbler human feelings enshrined in the Mass. It was also, as befitted the place of its performance, a scholarly performance, yet without pedantry. I particularly liked the use of a bassoon in the continuo for 'Et in Spiritum Sanctum', thus supplying the natural instrumental bass to the two *oboi*