

THINGS TO COME

A Run Through The Programmes

MONDAY

THE Dutch humanist Erasmus, writing from England early in the 16th century, called the island "a nest of singing birds." Were he able to visit it again after 400 years he might repeat the remark. Choirs and choral festivals as numerous as ever, still justify it. Station 2YA knows it too, and it has never been short of records for its Sunday afternoon sessions "In Quires and Places Where They Sing." Lately another session has been heard on Monday evenings, devoted to recordings by "Famous English Choirs."

Also worth notice:

- 2YA, 8.26 p.m.: NBS String Quartet.
- 3YA, 9.25 p.m.: Trio in C Minor by Haydn (studio).
- 4YA, 8.12 p.m.: The Lyric Choir (studio).

TUESDAY

IT was a mild surprise for the musical world when it became known in 1940 that Igor Stravinsky, composer of "The Firebird," "Petrouchka," and "The Rite of Spring," had written a symphony in the classical four movements, and in the key of C major. Now, in 1944, a recording of this symphony (made by the U.S. War Department at a Boston Symphony Concert, conducted by the composer) has arrived and will be heard from 2YA at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 2. It is, like almost every other work by Stravinsky, unlike any other work by Stravinsky. It shares with the classical symphony the notion that the first movement should be the most interesting at first acquaintance; the second movement is as lyrical as it is in Stravinsky's power to make it; there is a scherzo of which it is perhaps enough to say that it is Stravinsky-ish, and a rowdy finale.

Also worth notice:

- 1YX, 9.0 p.m.: Contemporary Composers.
- 3YL, 8.0 p.m.: Music by Schubert.
- 4YA, 9.33 p.m.: BBC Brains Trust.

WEDNESDAY

"HE was no keyboard composer; music wrote itself on the skies for him . . . neither an imitator nor a voluptuary, he went his own way without bothering to invent a new language, and by sheer personal originality produced symphonies that are really symphonies in the Beethovenian sense, a feat in which neither Schumann, Mendelssohn, or Brahms, often as they tried, ever succeeded convincingly." The writer of these words was George Bernard Shaw, and his subject was Sir Edward Elgar, whose Symphony No. 1 will be heard from 3YA at 9.30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 3. Elgar only wrote two symphonies, and they will both be heard from 3YA (the second on May 10). There might have been more if Shaw had had his way: "If I were King," he said, "or a Minister of Fine Arts, I should give Elgar an annuity of a thousand a year on condition that he produced a symphony every 18 months."

Also worth notice:

- 1YA, 9.30 p.m.: "Telephone Hour" (Jascha Heifetz).
- 2YC, 9.0 p.m.: "Oxford" Symphony (Haydn).
- 3YA, 8.0 p.m.: Christchurch Harmonic Society.

THURSDAY

OF all the provinces (or more accurately provincial districts) in New Zealand, Auckland is the least compact geographically; it sprawls the most, as a glance at the map will show. It stretches from the North Cape to Taupo,



Ye Olde Time Music Hall: 1YA, Thursday, May 4, 8.0 p.m.

and from Kawhia Harbour in the west to Cape Runaway in the east. Its history exhibits somewhat similar qualities. There is not the uniformity of development and of interests that you find in Canterbury, the very name of which calls up a definite series of pictures. Auckland City was not founded by a special settlement, as Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin were; it grew up round the Government. Auckland Province, however, has plenty of history, and some of it is being condensed into 1YA's current series of Winter Course Talks. The next one will be heard at 7.15 p.m. on Thursday, May 4.

Also worth notice:

- 1YX, 8.16 p.m.: "Pathétique" Sonata (Beethoven).
- 2YC, 8.29 p.m.: Quintet, Op. 16, for Piano and Woodwind (Beethoven).

FRIDAY

PROFESSOR T. D. ADAMS, of Dunedin, who for some time has been taking weekly strides along "The Highroads of English Literature" on Fridays, has now come abreast of the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. On Friday, May 5, at 9.31 p.m., he is going to give 4YA listeners some selections from the writings of John Bunyan. Bunyan is not by any means a best-seller at the present day, but he is not altogether forgotten; the BBC produced a radio version of *The Pilgrim's Progress* some months ago, at least one British general takes it to war with him, and a distinguished English composer (Vaughan Williams) has been setting parts of it to music. No doubt Professor Adams likewise knows where to look for passages that address themselves to the world of 1944 with the same force as they had in the 17th century.

Also worth notice:

- 1YA, 8.20 p.m.: Symphony No. 3 (Rachmaninoff).
- 3YA, 7.30 p.m.: Australian Bush Songs (Peterson).

SATURDAY

THERE is something Voltaire-ish about an item to be heard from 4YA at 8.6 p.m. on Saturday, May 6—something that makes us think at once of *Candide*.

Its title is "Whatever Is, Is Best," and in this best of all possible worlds it is impossible to believe that Noni Masters, the Dunedin soprano who is going to sing it, will fail to convince us of the truth of this delightful Panglossian philosophy. Those who can spare the time from cultivating their gardens, then, are strongly recommended to listen in, even if it happens to be an ideal evening for planting by the moon.

Also worth notice:

- 1YA, 8.31 p.m.: English County Songs.
- 2YA, 8.0 p.m.: The Stage Presents.
- 3YL, 8.0 p.m.: Music by French Composers.

SUNDAY

"THE SONG OF THE EARTH," one of the last completed works of Gustav Mahler, will be heard from 4YA on Sunday, May 7, at 2.30 p.m., in the series of special recordings made at concerts by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The bulk of Mahler's music is unfamiliar to British audiences, and its New Zealand admirers, if they are within range of 4YA, will welcome the broadcast; if they are not within range of 4YA, they will presumably be hoping for the transfer of the recording to their own stations in due course. "The Song of the Earth" is an orchestral song-cycle, for tenor and contralto and full orchestra. Its text is a selection of poems by the Chinese poet Li Tai Po, which were translated into German by Hans Bethge. At the opening, the work is happy, singing of the pleasure of life, and then it turns to melancholy, following the spirit of the poems. It has been called Mahler's swan song.

Also worth notice:

- 2YC, 9.0 p.m.: Mass in Five Voices (Byrd).
- 3YA, 3.0 p.m.: Music by Mozart.

Ghosts In The City

FOR a mere second we noticed it.
Nobody spoke.

There was not a bus, nor a tram,
Nor the clatter of metal on rail,
Nor the sound of the wind as it broke
On the tall stone towers of the street.

But only the slant of the rain
And the whispering sound of the feet.

Everything else it would seem
For a single sharp instant was still
And suddenly nothing was here
That was known; but somewhere
Hidden and waylaid by Time,
All this had happened before.

Somewhere there had been the rain
And the whispering sound of the feet.
While a curtain that hung from a wall
Was a weed on a swollen dark tree.
Under our feet had been stone
And the soft milling ooze of the mud.
The rocks that we passed had been brown.

And instead of a tram
Was some slow-moving beast of the soil
But no town.

Only the rain and the sound of the feet.

And no more
Were the heels on the pavement,
The glass in the door,
The van, the machine,
Or the noise and the boom
Of the presses that bore
The cry of the people.
But only the sound of the rain
And the whispering feet
That went on through the gloom
Of some sort of primeval forest
To greet
Some sort of primeval doom.

—Isobel Andrews