

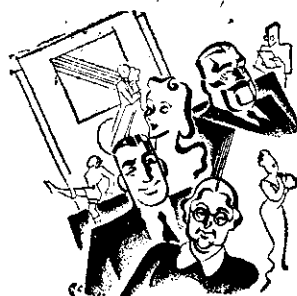
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Normal and Formal

THERE was a time when I imagined that a group of singers who had functioned for a number of years under the intriguing title of "The Choir of the Auckland Commercial Travellers and Warehousemen's Association" would have evolved a few folk songs of their own appropriate to their calling—songs with which they had roused themselves from sleep at the steering-wheel in solitary midnight drives through the King Country; songs that had kept them to the forefront in that wild, bleary-eyed surge for the refreshment counter at Palmerston North station in the pale hours of the morning; and a type of warehouse-shanty born of the task of heaving bolts of cloth and cases of tea. But life has a habit of handing out the prosaic when we expect the romantic, and what I found when I once went to

RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

one of their concerts was a number of normal-looking citizens in formal evening dress singing the sort of songs that any other choir sings. It was a jolly concert all the same, with pleasant, hearty singing, and I look forward to hearing them again from 1YA on Saturday evening, though it is apparent from their programme that these gentlemen have still not found their own idiom.

Mr. Pickwick

LOVERS of Dickens will be well rewarded if they listen on Sunday afternoons to 4YA's "Pickwick Papers." It was not announced who the narrator was, but his voice was just about perfect for the purpose. Dickens, read aloud, can easily be overdone, and the present reader of the series is careful to restrict his "effects" to a minimum. Such small touches as the introduction of "Sir Roger de Coverley" as music for "The Ball at Dingley Dell" is as effective as the host of superfluous noises sometimes used as radio background, which often defeat their purpose by making the words inaudible. I wish, though, that we could have had "Sir Roger" performed by the instrumentalists to whom the dance music is allotted by Dickens himself—namely, "the two best fiddlers, and the only harp, in all Muggleton."



American composer must be more than good to hold his own; I don't think Gershwin is as good as all that. He was referred to as "the late George Gershwin" (imagine the great composers being spoken of as "the late Frederic Chopin," "the late Sebastian Bach"). The work offered was "An American in Paris," which doesn't appeal as music alone, but needs a literary association to put its message over; moreover, the jazz idiom is too restricted, melodically and harmonically, to support a long symphonic movement. Later on in the evening we had "Overture to a Picaresque Comedy" by Arnold Bax, and beside the effectively simple orchestration of this work, the Gershwin seemed forced and over-elaborate.

Unconscious Irony

THE New York announcer in a programme by the NBC Symphony Orchestra (Toscanini), recently broadcast over 3YA, saw fit to fill up a gap between Mozart's "Magic Flute" Overture and Ravel's "La Valse" with an outline history of the city of New York. Whether he was merely grasping at straws to tide him over a moment of silence, or spoke out of hearty civic pride, is hard to say, but the result was startling. After an optimistic account of the building of one civilisation came Ravel's bitter and bewildered picture of the destruction of another—the end of the "Great Waltz" period in the violence of World War I. An effect of warning was thus produced which the compilers of the programme can hardly have intended.

Abundance of Choirs

ANYONE looking at the Auckland programmes for November might come to the conclusion that this city was one of the world's great centres of song, but it was probably just that several choirs were all having their final outburst at the same time. The late editor of the *Musical Times* writing last year about music in wartime Britain, remarked on the recently-renewed strength of choral music, "explainable by the fact that choral singing is the least expensive and the most sociable form of collective music-making, and one which yields quick results to the novice." It is probably true also that the humbler tougher structure of choral singing will enable it to survive storms that will mow down orchestras, and that music shows some strange tendencies to flourish in adversity, but the fact remains that great credit is due to those by whose efforts these societies are kept alive even in New Zealand's easier circumstances.

Not As Good As All That

IN the U.S.A. Symphony Programmes which we have been hearing lately from New Zealand stations, there are generally two or three long symphonic items, followed by some new work, usually by an American composer. In this way we have been introduced to several interesting works which we might not otherwise have heard at all: "A Lincoln Portrait" and "Song of Freedom" among others. I was interested, however, to see Gershwin occupying the tail-end of one of these programmes. Coming after Cimarosa and Debussy, a modern

Four Just Men

TUNING in idly to something labelled "Adventure" from 4YO, I found myself listening to an old favourite, "Four Just Men," by Edgar Wallace. In spite of the quantity of his output, Edgar Wallace always managed to give each



of his novels a typical dash and flavour; he made unique characters out of the people he wrote about, as far as is possible in a yarn where action takes precedence of description and analysis, and with a few deft words he could put on paper the many types he met in his remarkable lifetime. "The Four Just Men" was one of his well-known stories, and promises to be as intriguing on the radio as it was in book form.

Talent Won the Quest

THE 4ZB Talent Quest has been won and lost. I didn't hear more than three or four of the broadcasts, but judging

(continued on next page)



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