

# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

of good spirits and enjoyment of their work. Whichever it is, one hopes it has left its mark on our own service.

### And So We Leave. . .

THE travelogue manner in commentators, made familiar by many grim experiences at the movies, proves insidious. An excellent programme (3YA, Sunday 10th) on the work of the Friends Ambulance Unit in Ethiopia was marred



by this characteristic fruitiness. The sun was restrained from Sinking Slowly in the West, but its baleful influence was none the less apparent. I have become completely numb to certain travelogue adjectives like "beautiful" and "purple" (of mountains). If, as sometimes happens, no

attempt is made to give the character of a landscape, laudatory adjectives are completely pointless. But the feature was otherwise impeccable, and I particularly liked the interpreter bellowing hygienic instructions in Amharic to the assembled populace—only one kept trying to guess which was the most frequently recurring word.

### Thanks for the Lifebelt

I HAVE a friend who attributes a relapse after appendicitis to the malign influence of a man in the next hospital bed who forced him to listen to an entire evening of Debussy on the radio. Professor V. E. Galway, in his "Masterpieces of Music" from 4YA, was definitely not trying to convert such Philistines as this when he presented Debussy's Quartet in G Minor; but even lovers of Debussy's music would be thankful that the thematic illustrations are always so directly helpful in these programmes. After a fairly strict adherence to the Classical masters this year, it would have been difficult for listeners if Professor Galway had suddenly plunged them into the miasmic whirlpools of Impressionism and left them to sink or swim; but not he—here is the lifebelt! he cries, and throws us a couple of themes and a whole-tone scale. After a few gasps we find we are quite at home in the new element, and may even begin to enjoy ourselves. And for those, like myself, whose acquaintance with Debussy is mainly confined to his piano music, this quartet would be a revelation of a hitherto disregarded aspect of a unique composer's music.

### The More the Merrier

OF the three choral recitals from 1YA in the past eight nights, I have thoroughly enjoyed only that of the Dorian Ariel Singers. But even though radio and gramophone (mine at least) seem not to have learnt to deal so kindly with a large number of voices in unison as they do with other types of music, and even though the laws of logic, arithmetic and probably aesthetics, too, are all against me, I would still rather hear a group of people singing not so well than hear only one person singing

not so well, for one can't help feeling that much more good is likely to come of it—and if not, they are at least all having a very fine time.

### Mid Pleasures and Palaces

THE features entitled "Men and Music," presenting the lives of composers of well-known songs and the like, are a curiously mixed lot. On Sunday 10th for instance, 3ZR had one on Sullivan, while 3YA's specimen depicted the progress down the last century of that greatest of all tear-jerkers, "Home, Sweet Home." But the early 19th century atmosphere went sadly to the producer's head; everybody was called Emily or Caroline or Adolphus, and one could almost smell the plush. There was also another specimen of that curious tribe, the BBC Yankee—habitat, 19th century America, speech a dialect akin to Northumbrian. It was noteworthy that even the ghost of Sir Henry Bishop, the composer, seemed mildly surprised at the survival of his brain-child; and I fear I share his sentiments.

### Tilting at Windmills

"If it must be Richard, let it be Wagner; if it must be Strauss, let it be Johann!" I forget where I found this quotation, but it means, in other words, that the speaker won't have Richard Strauss at any price. There are many people who decry this composer's works, but who haven't listened to any of his major compositions, and therefore aren't entitled to express an opinion. Knowing only a few of his songs, which I find inspiring, I decided to listen to 4YO's presentation of his "Don Quixote," played



by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. I found myself less entitled than ever to express an opinion, after it was over. It is programme music entirely, and seems to require in the listener not only a detailed knowledge of music but a detailed knowledge of Cervantes. Although I listened with a fascinated ear, seeming to hear windmills and the clash of dilapidated lances, I wondered afterwards what sort of imagery the music would have conjured up for me had I not known its title beforehand.

### People to People

THE most striking of the BBC recorded programmes now being broadcast by the Christchurch stations is *Transatlantic Call*, produced jointly by BBC and Columbia; a highly informal series aimed at presenting various aspects of British life to America in the voices of the people themselves. This is

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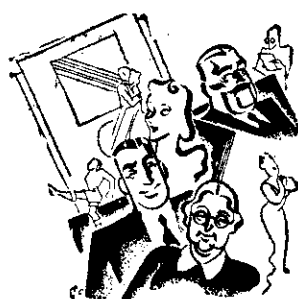
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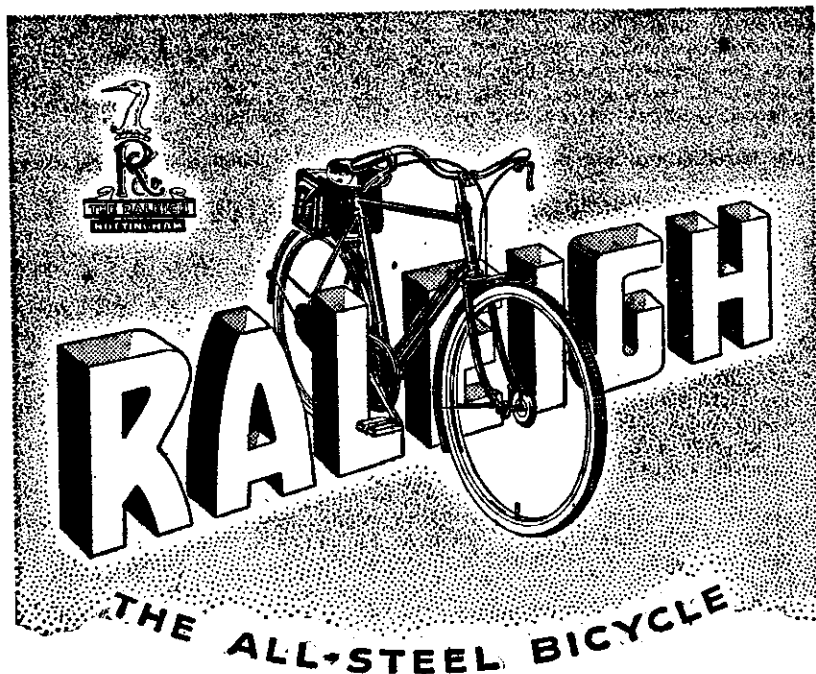
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### 1ZM, Noo Zealand

IT has been an adventure and an education to listen to 1ZM in American hands, administered not with any pretence of consulting our tastes, but with the sole object of keeping American servicemen in touch with their home, and giving them the kind of entertainment to which they are, presumably, accustomed. Most of us have tracked down a few regular features that appealed to us, and these we shall miss now that 1ZM is restored to our own hands. But more interesting than the features themselves have been the vim and sparkle with which the station has been run; the announcers have spoken with confidence, warm friendliness, and flashes of seemingly extempore wit which lured us on to listen to sessions that would otherwise have been intolerable. This kind of efficiency may be an acquired skill, forced up by the terrific pressure of commercial competition between broadcasting companies in America, or it may be a natural result



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