through trying to please every possible type of taste within a brief hour or two, and they would gain both warmth and clarity if each were conceived with a definite audience in mind. A musical session at its best can sound like a selection made by a thoughtful host for the pleasure of a friend, and if those who arrange these things were to try the experiment of pleasing in one session after another, various clearly defined individuals or small groups, we might have programmes of new character and vitality. Perhaps for an hour each year each listener would be completely satisfied, and that he would not soon forget; then once a year we would allow the organiser to arrange a session for his own taste alone—he would probably choose a rich silence.

Mice May Safely Laugh

IN a light session from 1YA recently came a joyous piano record of *Three Blind Mice* as it might have been written by various composers. For Rachmaninoff the C Sharp Minor Prelude needed little adaptation, nor for Tchaikovski the 1812 Overture, and Handel, Mendelssohn, and others were present in characteristic clothing. But where were Bach and Beethoven? Were they too reverend to be invited to the party? I should have enjoyed Bach's brisk treatment of the rodent epic along the lines of the 3rd Brandenburg, or in stately minims embroidered with flowing quavers as in "Sheep May Safely Graze," and Beethoven's more tragic approach as in the opening of the *Appassionata* or *Moonlight Sonatas*, or the 5th Symphony. If ever we have special sessions for piano students I hope they will include such recordings as this; parody illuminates, and when our affections are secure, a gentle laugh at their object can liberate us from that bog of seriousness which from time to time paralyses our efforts.

Music of Childhood

I DARESAY there may still be lying about in old chests of drawers a few childish scrawls on manuscript paper which represent the first attempts at composition of some of our mightiest composers. Mozart comes to mind immediately as one composer whose works, written at the age of six years, still survive; but this does not imply that other famous composers didn't also have a shot at it at a tender age. Mozart was merely lucky—he had a fond father who could both read and write music, and who wanted him to be a prodigy. The "Simple Symphony" of Benjamin Britten, played from 4YA, from its Boisterous Bourrèe to its Frolicsome Finale, was reconstructed from material invented by the composer during the ages of 9 and 12 years. The material may be simple, but what the composer does with it is certainly not. I was reminded of Elgar's "Wand of Youth," in which work also the mature composer amuses himself by renovating and refurbishing in a delightful style the musical thoughts of his youth. Themes come to the composer at any age; it is a pity that more composers don't keep them in cold storage until they are technically competent to deal with them.

The Editor's Daughter

FASCINATED by the title of this serial, we asked of one who should know what is peculiar about being an editor's daughter. Well, she told us, you only notice it at breakfast time. If father works on a morning paper he is still asleep, breakfast is *pianissimo* and daughter grows up like Cordelia with a voice ever soft, gentle, and low, and a flair for eating toast quietly; with an evening paper father is present at table in body, but not in spirit, for the birth-pangs of the day's editorial have begun, and daughter learns not to ask then for a bus fare nor to disturb the milk-jug against which is propped the freshly-opened iniquity of the rival daily. Apart from this, life was as normal and unexciting as for the next man's daughter. But in the grip of 1ZB's romance, we decided that our friend had been unlucky, for Editor Foster, like the skipper of the Hesperus, takes his daughter right into the thick of things; he even ferrets out and writes up the scandal of the village for her so that she may make scoops on a New York paper. No doubt small town editors have much more fun than city giants, for they have a finger in every pie; and indeed Editor Foster is so busy arranging his neighbours' private affairs and assisting daughter's career that we are beginning to wonder how his newspaper ever gets published, just as we used to wonder how that old busybody *Doctor Mac* ever fitted in the daily routine of temperatures, blood pressures, and chest noises.

French As She is Spoke

CHARLES MARTIN does not often broadcast from 4YA these days, and it was delightful to hear his short but interesting recital of piano works recently. Included were Scarlatti, Debussy, Moszkowski, and Palmgren, the latter a composer known for only one or two of his works, when there are dozens of lesser-known, charming pieces of his crying out to be heard. Speaking of that lovely imaginative tone poem of Debussy's, "La Cathédrale Engloutie," which was heard in this programme, wouldn't it be a relief if someone devoted a little time, trouble, and research to an adequate translation of its title, so that we could be spared the frequent mispronunciation of it over the air and in musicianly conversation? One announcer recently made an appalling shot at it, and after enunciating slowly but correctly "la Cathédrale"—paused, and stuttered "Enn-glay-gloo-teee!" French scholars (I am not one) tell me, as they do in so many other cases, that there is no perfect translation, such adjectives as buried, sunken, submerged, drowned, engulfed, and so on, being inadequate and unpoetic. Better such substitutes, however, than an entire inability to understand what the announcer is talking about!

Schumann and the Children

SCHUMANN'S "Scenes from Childhood," played by Cortot, was announced from 4YA merely as a "piano solo." In reality it is a series of short pieces of the delicate evanescent type which Schumann made peculiarly his own, and each piece has a definite title, "Hare and Hounds," "Dreaming," "Pleading," "Child Falling Asleep," and so on. Different editions place the pieces in different order, and it is confusing to find, say, the first piece in my copy, "The Poet Speaks," played last on the list. How much more confusing it must be for the listener who doesn't know the work at all when none of the titles are so much as mentioned before or after the playing! One could guess at the intention of some of these little pieces, but such a bumpy morsel of a tune as "The Knight of the Hobby Horse" loses all meaning if the listener doesn't know the title. The composer must have known many children and loved them well to have captured so exquisitely the spirit of their play, their work and their childish dreams.

Insect Music

I EXPECT any musician could quote a page or so of titles of works dealing, in more or less direct fashion, with life in the insect world. True, some of the works would be less "classical" than others. We might, to fill the page, be compelled to include such general favourites as the Glowworm Idyll and the Grasshopper's Dance. But among the works of quite respectable composers we find such titles as "Song of the Flea" and "Flight of the Bumblebee." We don't expect an exact musical translation of the habits and haunts of the inspirations of these works, any more than we expect to feel the sting when we listen to "The Wasps" Overture by Vaughan Williams, which I heard with pleasure from 4YA. Hasn't it some connection with Aristophanes (the only author I can think of, at the moment, besides Karel Capek, to give us an insect-satire?)

Mourning Was Not Confined

ANY tribute to as well-known a humorist as Stephen Leacock is apt to nullify its purpose and become a lament, unless plentifully illustrated with quotations from his writings. In the BBC presentation from 4YA, Leacock's career as university lecturer and economist was touched upon but briefly, and the main part of the programme was composed of readings from his books. It was indeed true that his gentle irony was directed against the things he loved; the poisoned arrows of vindictive satire were not the natural weapon of so lovable a man. But it may not be generally known that he was the author of one rather barbed dart, "God takes care of fools, drunks, and the United States of America." His attitude to life is pleasantly exemplified in the advice he gave to a student who hesitated to marry while still in college—"You can afford a few household articles and a can to go to the corner for beer—what more do you need?" Since most of his admirers have read all of his books, there is no point in quoting them here. It may give a better picture of Stephen Leacock, the man, if we quote the magazine *Time*, which says:

"When he retired from McGill University's faculty, Stephen Leacock thought of returning to his native England, then decided to stay in Canada. Said he, 'Fetch me my carpet slippers—I'll rock it out to sleep right here.' Last week, at 74, he died in a Toronto hospital, after an operation for throat cancer. Mourning was not confined to McGill, nor to Canada."

THUMBS UP!

Hitch-hiking Has Its Own Technique

I RISKED a snub and asked them if they would care for a lift into town. "Thanks awfully," replied the two girls I met tramping along a dusty road during the holidays. And then I learnt quite a bit about the technique of hitch-hiking. They explained that they did not aspire to be "tramps"; they were unashamedly hitch-hikers. They worked in a big city store all the year round, and were out to make the most of a cheap and healthy holiday.

To walk along a dusty, metalled road away from any town, with green hills and surprised sheep on either hand, to hear a car in the distance, watch it appear over a rise and, with a thumb waving in the air and a friendly yet impersonal smile, invite it to stop— that is the beginning of the technique of hitch-hiking, they explained.

The hitch-hiker, I gathered, especially if female, is made, not born. Hitch when the car is too far away and there will be time for consideration and perhaps denial; wait too long and it is past before the driver has time to think, "Jove, they want a lift."

Early morning brings the long walks through fresh and dewy country; 11 o'clock heralds the cream lorry bound for the factory; the afternoon is generally drowsy and quiet, apart from an Army vehicle or two, whose drivers sometimes take a chance and, against the regulations, offer a lift. Chances of a lift at night are not so good. Some drivers fear a hold-up, while others charge straight on, remembering, perhaps, the days when the Home Guard commandeered the nearest car during a practice "alert."

Once in a car, explained the brunette, with your turn to do the talking, the technique gets a bit more difficult. It is not always easy to judge people correctly, especially men. But (with a bright smile) there are no unchivalrous men. They are invariably kind and generous with lifts. Few women will stop, and still fewer couples, unless long married.

There are pitfalls in this hitch-hiking, however, I was told. Suppose two girls, shivering with cold and miles from civilisation, find a parked and tarpaulined car on the roadside and decide to sleep in it, and the owner comes along. Even the best technique is strained at such moments. It's a case of Heaven send an inspiration, and, in the meantime, smile.

—E.R.B.