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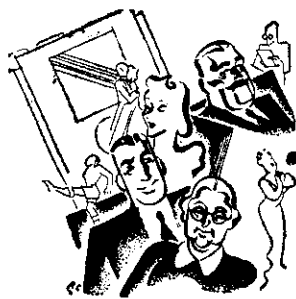


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### Auxiliary?

WHEN the Americans restored 12M to us it was announced that this station would thenceforth function as an auxiliary to 1YA, and we imagined a round-table conference in which 1YA, 1YX and 12M would divide us up and apportion among themselves the task of pleasing us all. But the function of an auxiliary, as often now interpreted by 12M, seems to be to serve up the same kind of fare that 1YA or 1YX is dealing out. On Monday nights, for instance, we have a very light and mixed programme from 1YA, from 1YX at 8.0 "Light Orchestral Music, Musical Comedy, and Ballads," and from 12M "Concert," which was a collection of very sugary songs last Monday. Yet on Thursday evenings at 9.0 12M lists a special series of "Music from the Ballets" (including "Aurora's Wedding," "The Prospect Before Us," and "La Boutique Fantasque"), many of which would appeal to the very people who at that moment are interested in what is happening in the usually excellent Classical Hour from 1YX.

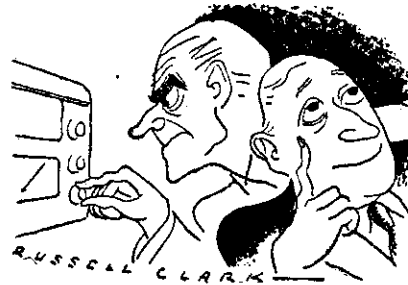
### Not for Social Creditors

"THE SAFEST PLACE IN THE WORLD," a BBC programme, was an interesting instance of the radio treatment of history, good points and bad. The subject was the Bank of England's adventures from 1692 to 1780, during which period it seems a director was killed taking pay to William III.'s troops in Belgium, and the Bank averted

# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

financial panic in the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 and withstood a siege in the Gordon Riots of 1780. The eighteenth-century atmosphere lent itself admirably to the slightly hearty and faintly facetious approach to which the BBC is addicted, but which appeared harmless and entertaining in this connection; although the panic in the coffee house (1745 episode) was far too fruity. Historical accuracy, as far as I could tell, was satisfactory (though I am sure that William III.'s Dutch accent didn't sound like that); there was also the authentic manner of eighteenth-century financial



London, with its incomprehensible mixture of radicalism and oligarchy. And it was dramatic to imagine, up and down the land, the savage clicks of the Social Credit Party switching off.

### Modified Mozart

WE had recently an evening of modified Mozart from 4YA. Out of four items, two only were Mozart in the original form. The "Don Juan" Fantasy, played by Simon Barer, is just another of those colossal Liszt arrangements of other people's music which lovers of the grandiose may hail as a *tour de force*, but which I heard an elderly organist dismiss, after a similar offering by another concert artist, as "just more fireworks." Likewise, if Seven Variations on

a Mozart Air from the "Magic Flute" are, as the announcer put it, "arranged by Beethoven," can the work be classed as "by Mozart"? Not that I don't enjoy this lovely work, but I admit that I like my Bach and Mozart, in the terms of the "swing" addict, straight. Arrangements and works based on Mozartian themes, included with a bracket of Mozart's songs and one of his Serenades for Wind Instruments, do not make an ideal programme, since neither the purist nor the cosmopolitan is likely to enjoy all of it.

### Opus 131

IN Alfred Einstein's new book, *Greatness in Music*, I enjoyed discovering that Einstein had always regarded the Capet Quartet as the most satisfactory interpreters of Beethoven's last string quartets, since for me they have been the only interpreters of the quartets in A minor and C sharp minor. I had rarely heard any other recordings, and had always found theirs profoundly satisfying. Nevertheless, I was more than ready to listen to the Budapest quartet's new recording from 2YA, and found it just about twice as vivid as the old Capet records. It gives you bright colours where you found dull, neutral shades, fruity tones where you found bare chords.

THIS is the quartet for which Dr. J. C. Beaglehole wrote (in "Words for Music"):

*What is this timeless world half-lit  
from out a sky that broods in level silence  
where silent hills ring the untrodden plain?*

In this sombre music, vividness is not always right. But sort out the movements (they are linked by little bridge-passages) and you quickly find the familiar lyrical Beethoven, the impetuous, violent Beethoven, even the witty Beethoven. Only note how the stage properties of a musical joke are transformed in this weird other-world of late Beethoven. Like the fantastic beasts in Matthias Grunewald's painting "The Temptation of St. Anthony" (whose atmosphere this quartet so often evokes), the pizzicato interruptions in the third of the variations would have been amusing in another context, but here they are grotesque, even frightening.

### Gems from Othello

LAST week I wrote enthusiastically about Ngaio Marsh's interview at 12B, and I wish I could feel the same about her appearance there the next Sunday (January 21) when we heard a few brief extracts from *Othello* spoken by the players themselves, linked together by Miss Marsh—a "trailer" with running commentary by the producer. I would welcome almost any attempt to attract people to a performance of *Othello* so moving and so vital as the one I saw the next evening, but this particular form of advertising seems to me to increase the greatest handicap to our enjoyment of Shakespeare on the stage, namely, the fact that so many isolated scenes, speeches, and phrases are all too familiar to us out of their context. It requires a great effort on the part of players and audience to put such a

(continued on next page)

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