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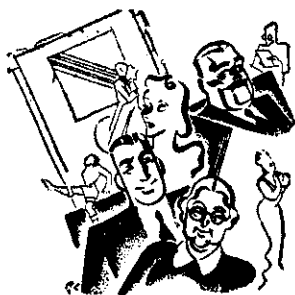
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Musical Blitz

STATION 1YA held high revels in honour of Bach on March 7 in a programme composed of concertos played by Fischer and Schnabel, and the Peasant Cantata given from the studio by the Combined Services Orchestra and Choir (under the direction of A.E.W.S.). Messrs. Schnabel and Fischer have little else to do but practise their Bach, and we expect technical perfection from them; more human interest surrounded the work of the group under the command of Corporal J. A. Blitz, who had put their hard-earned leisure to turning their swords into very creditable ploughshares. The Cantata swung along with a great deal of spirit, the singers somewhat more at their ease than the orchestra. Its pardonable lack of polish gave

RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

an air of startling sincerity to the sentiments expressed by the peasants in welcoming their lord and lady. I hope they will sing it again some day, adapting the words to an occasion worthy of such celebrating—a visit by Mr. and Mrs. Churchill perhaps. I enjoyed this surprising bloom that has grown out of our military organisation, and hope it will not wither in the approaching peace.

* * *

SOME speculation as to the effect of musical undertakings on army discipline, and vice versa, has filled the civilian mind since this performance. Somebody, apparently (but who?), suggests music, and a search is made for the conductor's baton, which turns up in the corporal's knapsack. The field-marshal then submits to a stiff audition and is allowed to creep into the second violins. Does the corporal salute before bawling him out for playing with a flat E string? Some of the possibilities seem rather subversive. On the other hand, musicians have cause for alarm, for high-ranking officers with a taste for music are in the enviable position of the Kings, Dukes and Margraves of old, who kept musicians hopping around in their service. From America recently came a pretty story of how, when the Griller String Quartet joined the Air Force, they were called before their commanding officer on their first night in camp, introduced to an eminent pianist and "requested" to play the Brahms quintet. So far so good—this pianist really was eminent; but if the c.o. himself had been a painful amateur pianist anxious for a chance of throwing around those exciting chords in good company, what then? Another hazard of war, but to the musician perhaps the worst.



to the Bar"; and Frank Sinatra attempting Mendelssohn's "I Am a Roamer." We should then know for certain whether musicians have a sense of humour, whether prima donnas are snobs, and, most important of all, whether Sinatra can actually sing.

A Loathsome Thing, God Wot!

MR. MIDDLETON writes like a sensible man, visitors from England have told me that he speaks like one, and that he is one I continue to believe in spite of evidence to the contrary submitted in a "BBC Personalities" feature from 1YA the other morning. The woman who introduced him and gave a few welcome biographical details mentioned that he was becoming week by week more like a caricature of himself. We were then treated to a record of Mr. Middleton presumably caricaturing himself in a way that may have been very funny indeed to people who know him in his everyday garb. Next, a man with a cinema organ announced that he was going to take us for a walk around his dream garden, a dreary musical monologue to the tune of "Trees" and a few bars of the "Bees' Wedding." Mr. Middleton then made a few more aimless remarks about daisies and trees (background music, "Trees"), and finally the man with the cinema organ gave us another tour of his dream garden, again playing "Trees" and a few bars of the "Bees' Wedding." The great heart of the British public knows its onions where gardens are concerned, and it is not with inanities such as these that Mr. Middleton has dug himself into it.

Graveyard Images

THE authors of most radio biographies (such as 3YA's present Sunday series, "Famous Women of History") might well take a number of lectures from the BBC team who produced the feature "Madame Tussaud," broadcast recently from the station. The backbone of the thing was a monologue by Madame in person, with all her cheerful reminiscences of modelling the heads of the newly-guillotined, which was immense fun because the authors had determined to make a character of her, and thus produced a most entertaining picture of a tough old show-woman—Monsieur Tussaud having been abandoned somewhere in France. One trifling historical error: "It takes a Frenchwoman to make money like that," said Madame, with a self-satisfied chuckle, but in fact the old battle-axe came from Geneva and had a brother killed when the Parisians wiped out the Swiss Guard in 1792: Excellent use was also made of the curious hold which the waxworks, so oddly life-like, have obtained upon the popular imagination. The sound of the caretaker's footsteps, passing alone through the Chamber of Horrors, was singularly effective.

Listening to Learn

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(continued on next page)

Turnabout

WE would all know what to expect from anything labelled "Paderewski at the Piano," but it was with a sense of adventurous expectancy that I tuned to "Arthur Askey at the Piano"—a description too promising to be missed. Askey does play the piano in this record, and plays it himself, as he is at great pains to assure us. It purports to be Askey's Portfolio Method, and the least said about this the better. A sketchy performance of Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C Sharp Minor proves that the comedian can actually play not too badly, but after the solemn introduction he ceases carelessly with the glib explanation that "well, it gets a bit tricky after that." What I should like to hear would be not only comedians performing on instruments sacred to the musical fraternity, but pianists doing ten minutes of what Claude Hulbert lugubriously describes as "funny patter"; Walkyrian sopranos singing "Beat Me Daddy, Eight



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