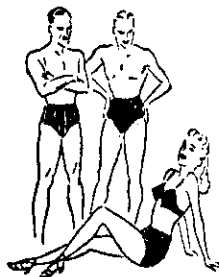


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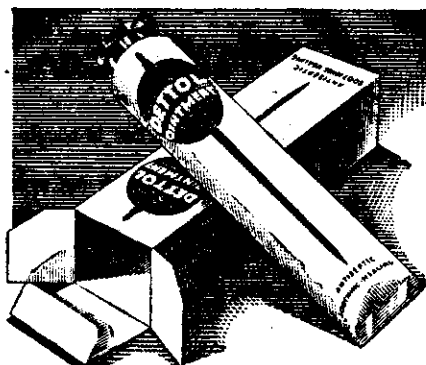
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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

"Fats"

ONCE heard, never forgotten, is the bullfrog voice of "Fats" Waller, a short session of whose remarkable music was heard recently from 4ZD. If you have ever seen him on the screen or in the pages of a magazine, you will not fail to recall his colossal figure, a Negro Chesterton, from the dark and cheerful features of which issue the unique performances which no other singer (a courtesy title) has ever dared to imitate. The voice of Fats Waller was raucous, husky, tuneless, abysmal; it made no effort to sing a melody or keep a rhythm; it just came out with the noise of a piece of sandpaper scraping along a plaster wall, and either you accepted it and loved it, or it set your teeth on edge. "Fats" made up most of his own songs—clever piano-stuff which his enormous hands performed with careless dexterity, often pretty-pretty melodic lines which an ordinary singer would have reduced to sentimental mush, but which Waller's alarming voice turned to acid parody, often intentional. Certain of his performances no other singer should ever attempt to imitate; such things as the incredible ditty about the anatomy of the skeleton, a sort of First-Aider's nightmare, in which we are told that "The foot-bone's connecta to the leg-bone, the leg-bone's connecta to the thigh-bone," and so on through the entire range of rattling horrors. With Fats Waller's recent death, his gargantuan mirth went too, something incredible and irreplaceable.

Music in Literature

IF you are writing a novel and wish to weave a musical aura around one of your characters, it might be as well to retain a skilled adviser. You would not then put your heroine into a small boat and set her drifting down the Nile playing a Tchaikovsky symphony on her cello—a solecism instanced by Professor A. C. Keys in the first talk of his series "Music in Literature" from 1YA the other night. Flitting around a little dizzily as people are apt to do when they feel their subject too vast and fascinating to be covered in a few short talks, the speaker came at one point to



Thomas de Quincey. I was interested to hear that this writer liked to hear singers using a tongue he did not understand, for in this way the beauties of the language struck him more forcibly. It is a controversy that keeps on cropping up and is never settled; I always find myself in de Quincey's camp, but I seem to remember that Addison made himself uncomfortable at the opera in London by suspecting that the Italian singers, under cover of their foreign tongue, were warbling rude and mocking remarks about the audience.

Very Mixed Salads at 1ZM

STATION 1ZM (U.S.A.) used to play very little classical music, but this little was gratefully received since it came in punctual and solid doses. I

remember the announcer once claiming that the session was kept mainly for "the three B's" and apologising for offering us a little Delius. Since a recent complaint in *The Listener* that our own 1ZM is playing classical music in the evenings I have been investigating the matter, and am pleased to report that the accusation is well founded. Classical music, including some quite rare treasures, may indeed be heard during the seven o'clock "Orchestral" hour; but whether it is a Haydn symphony or a major work of Delius, Bax or Walton, one must be prepared to take it side by side with Johann Strauss and Gershwin, or that unfortunate Henry Wood record in which scraps of the Unfinished Symphony and the 3rd Brandenburg make a mixed salad with scraps of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" and the overture to "Raymond." I have no wish to see our stations run on commercial lines, but the necessity which obliges any shop, tearoom, or newspaper, for instance, to give its customers a sense of security by providing goods of stable quality under trustworthy labels is a very wholesome one. If 1ZM were to do this, it would soon have a strong and regular clientele.

Other People's Troubles

ONE has long suspected that Dorothy Dix's columns and other such places where personal problems are aired in public are valued not so much for the guidance they give to the people con-



cerned as for the Roman holiday they provide for onlookers. Striking proof of this is given by 1ZB's weekly session "Personal Problems," where I heard such matters arbitrated upon as (1) whether a young woman who is taken out for the evening owes her escort a few parting kisses, and (2) how, without bullying, a woman may induce her husband to help her with the dinner dishes instead of sinking into an armchair with a pipe. The answers given were in good taste without being witty or profound. But the session operates at 2.15 p.m. on a Friday, at which hour every able-bodied young woman is in an office or factory, and every housewife shopping. Those around the house are only the aged and infirm, or the temporarily bed-ridden (as I was myself when I heard this session for the first time last week). A more innocent amusement could scarcely be devised for us, nor a more futile one for that matter.

Shakespeare Interpretations

BASIL MAINE is the latest artist in 3YL's Shakespeare recordings. I heard a speech of Bassanio's from "The Merchant of Venice" and one by Friar