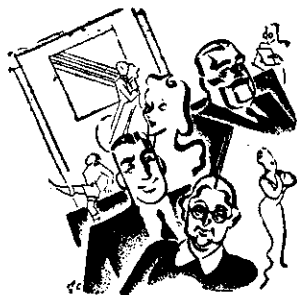




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## Victory Music

DURING the VE celebrations, of course, most of the scheduled programmes had to be scrapped at the last moment to make way for the most exciting news that has been heard over our radios since 1939. In between news items, stations played their entire repertoire of patriotic marches and songs. There has been much music written during this war, good, bad and indifferent; but when 4YA broadcast the Victory Concert from the Dunedin Town Hall it was noticeable that the programme was mainly composed of well-tryed classical music composed long before the Nazi war was so much as contemplated. This proves nothing except the well-known fact that when musicians want to give vent to their pent-up emotions nothing is good enough but music of the highest classical standard if such emotions are to be expressed adequately. It also points to the amazing fact that musicians are bound by no ties of race or creed—that to celebrate victory over a conquered nation it is not regarded as incongruous to include in the same programme works by victors and vanquished. Purcell, Parry, and Elgar, together with Schubert, Beethoven, and Handel, raise together a mighty paeon of thanksgiving. By what other nation but ours would this strange juxtaposition be considered not only fitting but inevitable? This sinking of prejudice in music, if practised in other spheres and

# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

by all nations, may mean that the brave new world of our dreams is not so unattainable as we now imagine.

### Ethel Smyth

FOR every woman composer it is possible to name half-a-dozen executors. Such names as Clara Schumann, Teresa Careno, Eileen Joyce, spring immediately to mind; but the only name to which I would give a firm place in the ranks of composers is that of Dame Ethel Smyth. She is the only woman whose work I find free of that indefinable something called femininity, the only one who cannot be dismissed as a woman musician but must be listened to, and criticised as, a composer along



with other composers, men or women. And as a composer she ranks not among the least, as is proved by the virile overture to "The Wreckers," heard recently from 4YO. Listening to this spirited work, I defy anyone to say that it betrays its composer's sex. It is perhaps unfortunate for Ethel Smyth's music that her personality seems so strong, as revealed in her racy reminiscences; the facts of her amazing career reveal a zest for life and all possible experiences which could not fail to infuse her music with fire and joy. But

so vigorous a personality must overshadow her musical attainments, and we remember mainly her militant attitude as a suffragette, her long fight to gain her rights in the man-controlled world of musical attainment; and although the story of her life would make a stirring radio play, the performance of more of her music would be a still better way of telling listeners more about one of the most remarkable of British composers.

### Some Women

"WOMEN OF HISTORY," a half-hour Sunday feature which has become regular at 3YA, deals with such various females as Marie Antoinette, Sarah Siddons, and Du Barry; but the chief qualification appears to be royalty, which lets in the Empress Eugenie, with immorality (Catherine the Great, Du Barry) a good second. The characteristic common to all is a shiny-magazine historical glamour, represented by the playing of minuets in the background at intervals and by a limp pomposity in the dialogue. This one could endure; but the whole is really false. Many of these ladies were nothing like as interesting as suggested—historians have failed to discover that Eugenie had any character at all—and the quality of all these features represents, one feels, the awed astonishment of the innocent-minded at discovering that these fabulous beings existed and moved against such surroundings. It is like the adulation felt for the more luscious female film stars in the early days of that art.

### Bright But Not Trite

OF all composers who ever put crotchets on a five-lined staff, I suppose John Sebastian Bach must be the only one who never wrote a trite phrase. We can all name those compositions in which the great masters were caught napping; uninspired, insipid, or second-rate works which present the composer at his worst, and which we simply overlook as being inexplicable and of no importance compared with the greater output of the composer's works. But nowhere in Bach's music can we lay a finger on anything of this sort. While not all his works are on the lofty spiritual heights of his great religious cantatas, when he does descend to a mundane plane he is never anything less than delightful, and his secular cantatas, which provide a case in point, contain some of the liveliest, most cheerful music ever written. The "Coffee Cantata," heard from 4YA, has little to do with the beverage itself, nor does it concern itself with the reflections of the coffee-addict as his "Tobacco Song" does with those of the contemplative smoker. It is, as the announcer said, a jibe at the women of Leipzig—as though some modern composer in jocular vein were to compose an airy trifle upon the subject of the modern housewife's tea-drinking. To hear this entire cantata was a



(continued on next page)



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