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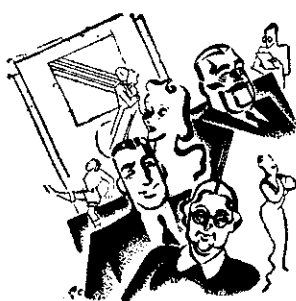
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What a Cow!

THERE was a story current a while back of an evacuated London child who thought the country people pretty backward for getting their milk out of a dirty old cow, instead of out of a nice clean bottle as they did in town. In case Dr. Muriel Bell is beginning to frown at me, I hurry to add that I am fully aware of the necessity for putting water coolers, pasteurising plants, bottle-washing machines and all the rest of it between us and the cow; on the other hand, I don't think you can apply the same system to the world of music and its personalities without losing a great deal. The other day Dr. Malcolm Sargent spent 24 hours in Auckland, and he will know I mean no disrespect if I continue my metaphor and say that I wish IYA had gone out to him bucket in hand, confused and travel-weary as he may have been. Perhaps they did, but the bucket came back empty. Two days later they took out of the cupboard one of those cold-storage programmes in which distinguished persons are processed, devitalised, dehydrated and generally rendered innocuous and indistinguishable. In a "For My Lady" session, against a background of fragments of Boccherini's Minuet, Princess Ida and the Emperor Concerto, we were told a few highlights of the career of the World's Great Artist No. 59: Dr. Malcolm Sargent.

Scheherazade

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV, like all readers of the Arabian Nights, was fascinated by the wealth of picturesque detail contained in this collection of fantastic, adventurous, bawdy, delightful tales. He even went to the extent of writing a Symphonic Suite depicting some of the incidents of the stories, and it was this "Scheherazade" Suite which I recently heard from 4YA. The only fault I can find with the work is that it is almost as long-winded as the heroine herself, who, you will remember, kept a cruel and rapacious spouse pre-occupied with her fanciful stories for a thousand nights and one night. The Suite describes, among other things, Sinbad's ship and his bird, the Roc, the romance of the Prince and Princess, and numerous details such as the Eastern street crowds, fights and quarrels, dancers, palanquins. But for the listener the music cannot compare with the actual pages of the Arabian Nights, nor did I feel curious to hear more when Rimsky-Korsakov, like Scheherazade, observed the approach of dawn, and discreetly fell silent.

Pickup's Hiccoughs

I HAD looked forward with some interest to hearing the American programme from 3YA on a Sunday afternoon, consisting of Beethoven's "Prometheus" Overture, his Fourth Symphony in

RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

B Flat, and his First Piano Concerto in C Major, and though one expects the reproduction of these recordings to be somewhat less than perfect, it is nevertheless interesting to hear a new version, particularly of the piano concerto (in which the soloist was Ania Dorfman). Things went well enough in the overture, and in part of the symphony, but as time and the needle wore on, one had forebodings. The needle jumped forward. Then it jumped backward. One put away one's score, for this was definitely going to be a completely new version. Even the key signature of the Piano Concerto seemed to be at stake. One wondered whether it should be B Major, or C Major, or D Flat. It varied between all three. One was reminded of the lady who didn't believe those Fables of Pregnancy, whose mother, she said, had tripped over a portable gramophone, "But it didn't affect me, didn't affect me, didn't affect me, didn't affect me at all." One's ear had scarcely found the place again before the needle was off, eedle was off, eedle was off, eedlewasoffoncemore. It ought to be someone's business to decide when these apparently short-lived recordings should be finally written off. Station 3YA at any rate was not going to be held responsible. The announcer apologised for "the constancy of retracking," and added, somewhat furtively, "It was no fault of the technician."

Music and Facts

"SYMPHONIC IMPRESSIONS OF FOUR OLD BRAZILIAN CHURCHES" (Mignone) was the main item on an NBC Symphony programme broadcast recently by 4YO; Toscanini was the conductor, and the work proved to be a most interesting and easily assimilated piece of programme music.



The question arises as to how far music can penetrate into the field of literature without becoming artificial. When a work is called Nocturne, Barcarolle, or Berceuse, no listener can go far wrong in making the mental association with night, water, or sleep. But when music depicts actual things rather than emotions or emanations it requires a skilful composer if the work is not to degenerate into a ridiculous nature-parody like The Canary or The Whistler and His Dog. I am not suggesting that Mignone comes anywhere near this category, however far he may be from the stern school of "absolutes." I thought his church impressions masterly and also musicianly, and the impression of church bells was restrained; the only note of parody was the touch where, for a

moment, the furious fortissimo pedalling of the typical church organist was briefly and cleverly suggested.

Serious but Not Classical

IN the same programme Oscar Levant played Gershwin's Concerto in F Major. Most of us know Oscar Levant, the tubby, talented, amazing person who answers the musical questions in the Information Please film shorts. His life reads like that of a madman or a genius. After hearing the Concerto, I incline to the latter assumption, although his versatility has precluded him from displaying his full talent in any of the various spheres in which he dabbles. The Gershwin Concerto, like the concertos of the great masters, is in three movements; but there the resemblance ceases, and any further pretensions to orthodoxy are coincidental. Symphonic works in the jazz idiom are so far removed from the popular hits of the day that the average jazz fan wouldn't recognise them as in the same category; yet they cannot stand even remote comparison with classical works on the same model. A new word should be coined for such works, which alone of all the trash of modern jazz have any claim to be classed as serious music.

Woof, Woof, Woof

UP to a point music can speak for itself, even to beginners, and any remarks about it should be a tentative addition rather than a substitute. H. C. Luscombe in his Pageant of Music series from IYA has the unenviable task of selecting highlights of music, and making appropriate comments. Enthusiasm and knowledge are not enough for this job: it needs a kind of instinct to decide just what fact about a given work is important to a given group of listeners, and courage to omit the rest when time presses. I cannot tell how it strikes the secondary-school children for whom the talks are shaped, but at a point of musical experience about halfway between them and Mr. Luscombe, I feel sometimes that he is adding to the complexities of the subject. Do the illustrations, for instance, of first, middle and last movements of Mozart symphonies need to be fragments from different symphonies, necessitating abrupt changes of key? And if a song is chosen to illustrate the wit and social implications of Mozart's operas, would it not be better to have one that is recorded in English, to save the need of translating it to listeners beforehand? With the time thus saved we might have heard a little more of Gluck than one excerpt lasting less than a minute. Even here there was a little confusion, for we were told to listen to the barking of the seven-headed dog Cerebus, but what we heard was Gluck's orchestra going "Woof, Woof, Woof," for Gluck, like Virgil, thought he had only a three-headed beast to deal with.

Louis Quiz

THE District Quiz at 12B, being one of these telephone affairs, is a game of chance rather than skill. The questions are mostly of a tantalising simplicity, but the odds against making

(continued on next page)