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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Midsummer Night

SHAKESPEAREAN noises came over 3ZB the other bleak night, the sound of Ngaio Marsh and the Canterbury College Drama Society (of Dominion fame) advertising their production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with a short programme of excerpts. The feature took the form of a summary of and commentary on the play, by Miss Marsh the players chiming in with speeches, songs, dialogue or even individual lines, as the course of the summary dictated. Thus Miss Marsh would mention Hermia and the bleak voice of Helena would cut in on mid-sentence saying: "Who was a vixen when she went to school." The programme was ingeniously designed to whet the public appetite; a ferocious quarrel between the four lovers—really, even by romantic standards, how peculiarly dim—broke off in the midst of the full crescendo for four voices, and as the sparks grew pale Miss Marsh's voice was heard mildly talking about something else. The music, as is usual in these productions, was specially composed by Douglas Lilburn and to one ignorant ear sounded good.

Food and Music

SHOULD I be considered a no-brow if

I suggested that we in New Zealand are a little too devout in our attitude to great music? When I went to the lunch-hour recital by Olive Campbell, Mary Martin, and Wilfred Simenauer, I was in an informal mood. I thought that, instead of sitting passively by my radio (this piano and 'cello recital was the second of the concerts to be broadcast). I would go along and listen direct to what turned out to be a cheer-worthy programme. Alas! the rest of the audience was only in a clapping mood, and my "bravo" was choked to death before it was born. Only once in a long history of concert-going have I heard a Dunedin audience cheering. When these concerts were originated in the National Gallery, London, the main thing about them was the informality of the affair—the squeezing of the audience into every corner of the place, the unbounded enthusiasm, the necessity for using the intervals between items for the nibbling of necessary lunches. If the concerts are not for people who have only a limited lunch-hour and no place to partake thereof, for what reason are they given at so awkward an hour? Of musicians I saw a plethora in the audience; of genuine musically-minded quick-diners, not a trace—not a solitary lunch box, nor the corner of even one sandwich. The musically-devout Bach-worshipper evidently deems it a profanation to take food to a concert. A little less of the religious atmosphere at our concerts, and a loosening of the emotional inhibitions in the matter of applause, would do a lot towards bringing audience and performers closer together.

The Meeting House

THE other night Olga Adams spoke from 1YA on the Meeting House of the ancient Maori. This House, she said, fostered the communal spirit of the tribe,

satisfied emotionally their desire for decoration, and was the concrete expression of their sense of continuity of race. At that point I began to lose the thread of her talk, through being preoccupied with envious thoughts of the ancient Maori. We have, surely, the same emotional needs, but we make a poor shot at satisfying them. There is our Town Hall, for instance, and our War Memorial



Museum; one of them appeals to our pride and our aesthetic sense, but neither of them seems to touch us personally. There are the many local church halls of various denominations which we borrow when we want to put on a play, hold a meeting, or run a kindergarten. We are tenants for a few hours and remove all traces of our tenancy when we go. We may live for 20 years in an old-established suburb without finding its heart, its focus, its core, for it has none. Or we may live in a newly planned suburb like Orakei—not the closely knit little Maori village in decrepit houses down by the beach, but the conglomeration of fine houses provided by the State on the hills above—and know that it is not a community and never will be one, for it has no Meeting House.

How English is Delius?

WE have been hearing quite a lot of Delius lately from Dunedin stations, and his "Walk to the Paradise Garden," included in a programme of modern British music, sounded so different in style and thought from the other works that the old query arose as to how much of the English there really was in Delius. The announcer said, before a performance of "Brigg Fair," that it symbolised the delicate and springtime beauty of the English countryside; but how much of this is due to the quality of the folk-song on which it is based, and the fact that Delius was incapable of writing music which was not beautiful? Delius, indeed, seems to have made himself an exile, choosing to live in France; and one of those who knew him well has told us that he frequently declared a hatred of British music and maintained that there were no modern British composers of any note. Delius is a citizen of no musical city. Either you love his unique music or you see no beauty in it at all. For those who don't like dreams, I advise other composers. Delius is the enchanter from whose hypnotic spell it is impossible to awaken unchanged.

Dim-Out

THE delegation that left for Moscow last year was surrounded by an almost unprecedented excitement and a curiosity that has not yet been satisfied. English newspapers and their correspondents have recently become vitriolic about the difficulty of getting news out of Russia, and with this in mind, when I heard that Alexander Werth, the BEC's representative, was to speak on the work