

Incumen In"? No, none of these. The freezing works employee who broadcast from 2YA in the session "I Know What I Like" made a simpler if more eclectic selection — "Maid of the Mountains," minuet from "Berenice," "Waltzing Matilda," "Devotion" of Schumann arranged by Liszt, and "Lord Randal." True, he made it clear that he had no reason to believe himself representative of freezing works employees in the matter of music, which brings us to the point: Can you tell a man's tastes by his work these days? Time was when you knew a sailor by his shanties, a ploughboy by the tunes he whistled, and even poachers had songs to sing. Nowadays the sailor has a portable gramophone in the fo'c'sle with anything from Bing Crosby to Sibelius, the ploughboy is secretary of the local choral society, and the poacher probably writes arrangements for a swing band. This is the result of education. Our freezing works employee made a good job of his session and brought out at least one important point. His choice, he told us, was based on past associations. In other words, not only did he know what he liked but he liked what he knew; and that is important.

I Never Loved a Dear Gazelle . . .

THE fatal attraction of the early nineteenth century for BBC playwrights was again illustrated by a recent 3YA broadcast in the Men and Music series. The hero was Tom Moore, described by the narrator as the man who made moribund Irish folk music immortal by writing for it such well-known poems as "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms," and "Bendemeer Stream" — if that sort of immortality is desirable. If the folk music was as moribund as suggested, it may be that the original words had been lost; otherwise one would be inclined to suspect Moore of a persevering gilding of the lily. For nobody, I take it, would regard the words of these drawing room ditties as anything more than mildly pleasant survivals of Regency romanticism. Nor have many of the tunes Moore selected for his favours any great appeal; most of them are nostalgic for nothing in particular, evincing that curious desire of the Irish poet (even Yeats, even Colum, even Gogarty) to be somewhere other than where he is, wherever he is. They are of the sort that impelled Chesterton to his unfortunate remark that "all their wars are merry and all their songs are sad."

Spare That Tree

THE evening before Arbor Day, R. L. Thornton spoke from 1YA in his very best style, and it is a thousand pities that the talk was not listed. His plea was mainly for native trees. No other country had such rich capital in its forests, and no other country set out to spend it with such fierce and reckless extravagance. When he pointed out that almost any native tree we plant this week will make good timber within 100 years, it struck me that it is a sign of our youth that 100 years seems far too far ahead to worry about. We have little of the spirit of the diligent farmer in our Latin grammar book, who planted trees whose fruit he himself was never likely to see. In the towns this neglect has meant mainly an aesthetic loss, but in many country districts it is now bringing the economic disaster of floods and


erosion. It is no use nagging the over-worked individual farmer about a problem that has grown too big for him to deal with alone. There would seem to be a case, though, for reinstating soon the public holiday of Arbor Day which lapsed in 1916, and keeping it as a period of national effort in which we all take some responsibility for a matter on which our prosperity depends. "Trees can do very well without us," said Mr. Thornton, "but we can't do without them."

In the Groove

EARLY performances of Liszt's First Piano Concerto brought forth a storm of criticism, not only because the composer had departed from the accepted style of concerto writing—although it is divided into four sections this concerto is actually a one-movement work—but on account of the orchestration, which, in addition to all the usual instruments from flutes to trombones, included, of all things, a triangle. "Triangle Concerto" it was dubbed by the critic Hanslick, and Liszt was moved to speak in its defence. "In the face of the most sapient proscription of the erudite critics," he wrote, "I shall continue to make use of percussion instruments and I believe I shall derive from them effects which are as yet undreamed of." If he could but hear some modern uses of percussion instruments he might be tempted to add: "If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep." The latest performance of this Liszt concerto by Oswald Cheesman and the 1YA Orchestra also had its interest. According to a *Listener* interview, here was Mr. Cheesman ("Oswald when he's 'long hair'") a swing pianist turned classical. How would he fare? This was a good broadcast; clean, virile piano playing supported by an orchestra (augmented for the occasion even to the triangle) playing much above itself.

The Human Voice

"SINCE singing is so good a thing I wish all men would learn to sing." So wrote William Byrd some four hundred years ago. There are a good many to-day who might disagree with this unless the emphasis were on the word "learn," for the human voice can be the most disagreeable of instruments. It is so cheap to come by, so economical to use, so impressive at times in its volume, that its owners are easily led to follow the advice of the advertisement to "use often and freely." Yet, for those who take the trouble, the voice may become indeed a thing of beauty, qualifying for another opinion of Byrd that "There is not any Musick of Instruments whatsoever, comparable to that which is made of the voyces of men, where the voyces are good, and the same well sorted and ordered." Listeners to the Lyric Harmonists Choir from 1YA one Saturday recently would most likely have subscribed to this. It was good to hear a choir singing unaccompanied part songs with creditable intonation, clearly-articulated words and lively rhythm. Even if the tenors—rare fellows these days—did sound a bit coarse at times and, on occasion, wandered from the strict path of musical virtue, any roughnesses were compensated for by the evident spontaneity. Without being so extravagant as to place the Lyric Harmonists alongside such famous organisations as the Fleet Street Choir, it would still be true to say the voices were good and the same well sorted and ordered.



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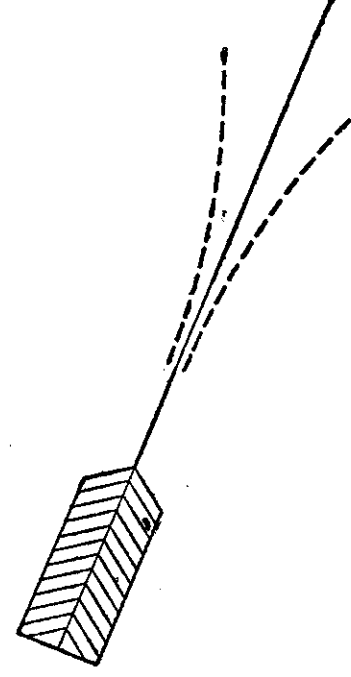
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