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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Non Pew and Dry

**T**HERE is an element of suspense about 2YA's Friday evening session "At Short Notice—Music that cannot be announced in advance." Anyone who may have suspected that the records for this session are actually assembled well in advance and that the secret is artificial will have all such doubts dispelled if he will listen in to the summary of programmes for the evening, given as late as 7.0 p.m., when the announcer is still unable to disclose the contents of the session. Indeed, one could easily believe that the whole thing is sprung as a surprise on the announcer himself, for the other evening, faced with naming a new and horrible Nelson Eddy record of "Non piu andrai" from Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* (sometimes sung in English as "Now your days of philandering are over"), the announcer bravely sailed in with his literal translation and called it "Thou shalt not go there any more," emphasising his words with the steady determination of a schoolboy trying to conceal the fact that he hasn't prepared his Latin translation.

### Two Pounds for Atonality

**T**HE 12B musical quiz presumes a most eclectic taste in those taking part. Questions range from the identification of the voices of crooners to those demanding an encyclopaedic knowledge of the ins and outs of classical, romantic, and modern music. Prizes not won are added to the next night's list but whether the amount of the prizes is in proportion to the importance of the question as well as to its accumulated difficulty, I do not know. Familiarity with Verdi's *Rigoletto*, for instance, earned thirty shillings, and unfamiliarity—understandable—with Beethoven's only opera lost an even larger sum. The prize question so far must, I think, be the one asking for a definition of "atonality" and the competitor—a post entry—whose ignorance of musical matters was so complete as to be refreshing, need not have been ashamed of his inability to give an answer. In fact the announcer, after what seemed several minutes, did not seem to have reached the essence of the question, and atonality, worth two pounds, was passed in.

### Pickwick Polka

**T**HE experiment tried by the BBC in its recorded readings from *Pickwick Papers*, heard from 3YL on recent Sundays, of having musical accompaniment to unashamed and unqualified prose, seems to me unjustified. It is a confusion of the genres, specially deplorable because English narrative prose does not conform to or parallel the musical structure, with the result that the two kept falling over each other. "Mr. Pickwick's Ride to Muggleton" was thus punctuated with the cheerfully monotonous tooting of a coach horn, and his altercation with Mr. Tupman at the ball in Dingley Dell was conducted against a background of "Sir Roger de Coverley"—not that this mattered much to me, because I generally find dance music hostile to other forms of human activity, and it was easy to imagine Mr. Pickwick shouting freezing remarks

above the all-obtrusive tinkle of the band. I wait with some trepidation for the next in this series, to find what is considered suitable music to characterise "Mr. Pickwick on the Ice." I am so far hesitating between the Ride of the Valkyries, A Night on Bald Mountain, and The One Hoss Shay.

### More Regimentation

**T**IMES have changed. There is an English Wassail Song arranged by Gustav Holst that is quite a favourite with the programme organisers, in which the line occurs "May God send our landlord a good crop of corn." This was no doubt all very well when we all went a'wassailing, but there is another little song, and a very fine tune it has too,



which is more in keeping with our times. It is called "Our Village," and has been heard on 2YA's breakfast session. It comes from Soviet Russia, and in it you will hear all about "... our Co-operative Farm, and we see no harm in boasting of its charm. Come and see how well we've got our village planned," etc. The tune, it may be repeated, is very fine—charming in itself, and a refreshing change from some of the stuff we get for breakfast these days.

### The Orpheus Group

**A** TYPE of programme to be commended was that given by the Orpheus Group from 1YA on Saturday, September 1. Theo and Eric McLellan—pianist and bass—combined with Constance Manning, soprano, Dorothy Stentiford, contralto, Bernard Keam, tenor, and Errol Allot, violinist, to present a half-hour of French music. The result was a pleasant well-balanced programme from Bizet and Saint-Saens to Debussy. For the most part the music was well done, the clean phrasing and impeccable intonation of the violinist being most notable. Also notable was the fact that one could leave the radio untouched for half-an-hour and sit back for enjoyment without interruption from unrelated or incongruous items.

### Radio Things to Come

**I**N a recent talk on electronics by J. S. Coombs, M.Sc., Lecturer in Physics at Otago University, many of the applications of this branch of science were mentioned, from radar, diathermic apparatus in hospitals, X-rays, and fluorescent lighting, to that proof of man's mistrust of his fellow-men, the burglar-alarm. The developments which most interested me were those connected with radio, and I listened for details of post-war wonders. I was disappointed. The speaker held out no hope of radical changes in the near future. As far as receiving sets are concerned, we are