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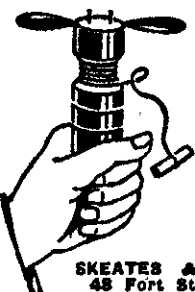
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What Our Commentators Say

Sports Flash

"WE are passing over to . . . The horses are working round at the barrier; the balloon is coming down and the starter's up on his platform . . . Oh! beautiful kick, beautiful kick; found the line fifteen yards past the halfway line . . . That's the end of the over . . . He can't get out, he can't get out . . . fall, fall! . . . That was the end of a ten-round match between . . ." Yes, the New Zealand sports announcer is the tops. We take these commentaries too much for granted, forgetting the knowledge, the skill and the enthusiasm that recreates not only the picture but the excitement too. When the microphone goes over to the park or the racecourse it becomes alive. Yet we miss the opportunities this suggests. If the microphone left the studio more often, left it for the streets, the factories, and the countryside—it could do all these things on occasion—broadcasting would become much more part of our daily lives.

Not Less Than the Dust

A BEAUTIFULLY smooth rendering of a group of Amy Woodforde-Finden's songs was given by Rena Smith from 4YA. These were not the more usual Indian Love Lyrics, but a group of lesser-known songs with Oriental titles. Mrs. Woodforde-Finden seems to have been attracted greatly to the East without quite knowing how to secure, musically, that exotic quality for which she so constantly strove. In the Love Lyrics she made use of prosaic elements, minor keys and imitation temple bells, which are popularly supposed to evoke an Eastern atmosphere, but which remind the listener, instead, of a synthetic travel-talk sound track made in Hollywood. However, in the songs sung by Rena Smith, the composer has merely written straightforward ballad music, and if it were not for the words one could imagine the vocalist to be singing about any of the various themes used for such songs by the Western-minded librettist. As such, these songs stand up very well in contrast with other ballads, and are immensely superior to the rather sentimental meanderings of the average woman song-writer of Amy Woodforde-Finden's heyday.

"It Depends What You Mean By . . ."

WITH some misgivings I prepared myself for the quartet. Half-a-dozen bars had not been played before I realised that it far exceeded my worst forebodings. Never in my gloomiest moments had I believed that music could be so dismal, so ugly, so utterly incoherent. And never in the listener's most prophetic moments could it be imagined that the above criticism applies to a quartet by Arnold Bax and was written, some years ago, by one of the Brains Trust's most humorous and broad-minded members, C. E. M. Joad. The first of a series of modern quartets in 4YA's Classical Hour happened to be Bax in G Major, one of the most cheerful, most easily apprehended, most dexterously fashioned pieces of music it is possible to imagine. The date of the work and the date of the quotation make it not impossible that this was the very

quartet to which Joad was listening when he wrote "completely destitute of either form or design . . . monstrously ugly . . . a series of shocks to my nervous system which left me irritated, miserable and depressed. The effect was similar to that produced by a spell of the dentist's drill." I am not quoting Joad because I agree with him but because I could not disagree more com-



pletely, and I hope that no Dunedin listener was influenced away from this series of modern quartets by similar criticisms of modern music, by Joad or anybody else. In all, we heard Bax, Armstrong Gibbs, Debussy, Bliss, and Walton; and the idea of playing them in a series, one each day, was an excellent one, especially to anyone with the leisure and inclination to listen, for comparative purposes, to all of them.

A Singer of Promise

BRYAN DRAKE, as a competitor so successful in the recent Dunedin Competitions, may well have known that his recital from 4YA would have a large and discriminating audience. It was therefore courageous of him to present a Handel programme both weighty and difficult. Anyone who can sing "Droop Not Young Lover" and "Hear Me, Ye Winds and Waves," and follow these immediately with "O Ruddier Than the Cherry," must be possessed not only of a good voice and the ability to use it, but must add to these the staying power of an old stager. That this young baritone managed these standard works without apparent effort, and invested them with an artistry worthy of a much older and more experienced singer, is proof that his future career will be one worth following.

Background to Scarlatti

SOME brave person, determined to pin down the intangible, has annotated the Scarlatti sonatas now being played weekly from 1YX. A little thing in F sharp minor was full of "passion and grandeur" and an "almost orchestral effect." The orchestral effect, though by no means reminiscent of Stokowski, was perhaps just enough to give the lie to the person who described the sound of the harpsichord as a "performance on a bird cage with a teasing fork." Passion and grandeur are not qualities usually