

associated with that polished cosmopolite, Domenico Scarlatti, whom one imagines meeting every situation with easy wit—even his obesity which forced him to give up the hand-crossing tricks of his earlier sonatas. But, as Jane Austen says, "A large bulky figure has as good a right to be in deep affliction as the most graceful set of limbs in the world," and anyone has a right to find passion and grandeur in Scarlatti in F sharp minor if they can. "Listen for the carefree gambolling of the left hand," the instruction before a trifle in G major, fell strangely on the ears of piano students who know what agonies of care go into playing Scarlatti's little gambols. Yet any vicarious anxiety they might be feeling on behalf of Wanda Landowska who has recorded these sonatas would be surely quite misplaced, for she has the situation completely under control.

Remodelled Antiques

THE cult of the antique extends even to music, and in so far as this may lead to the revival of something genuinely beautiful, it is to be encouraged. When, however, the arranger lights upon something whose beauty lies largely in the mellowness of age and modernising it, still calls it old, the practice is firmly to be squashed. One Sunday recently I missed what may have been an enjoyable piano recital from 3YA by Gwennyth Brown, who was advertised—very modestly—to play some Couperin and Rameau, my attention having been drawn to the bolder notice: "A piano recital of 18th century music by Haagen Holenbergg." This turned out to be a collection of the more objectionable arrangements of the nineteenth century virtuosi—Leschetitzky, Sgambati, Saint-Saens; the pieces bore no more than a superficial resemblance to the original. It is true that I ought to have taken warning from the names of the arrangers appearing in the programme but the title "18th century" was misleading.

Vercors

STATION 3YA took its turn last Sunday with the NBS recording of Vercor's "The Silence of the Sea." Although another Viewstreel commentator has already dealt with it, I make no apology for bringing it forward once more; for it seems important that we should understand the implications of this work, written under the Occupation at a time when most Frenchmen were concerned rather with their own sufferings or with violent resistance and the emotions associated with it. The point is that this play is not so much a study of the deception and ultimate disillusionment of a "good German" by the Nazi system as an exposure of the corruption and fatal weakness of even the good German of to-day. Werner von Ebrennac represents much of the best in German culture. His love for France is genuine; but he cannot see that the initial act of violence, in which he has taken part believing that it will bring about the marriage of France and Germany, has made it impossible that that marriage should differ from a rape. Furthermore, it makes his whole idealistic position false. His parable of Beauty and the Beast is the sentimentalisation of an act of violence, and his whole attitude to France, sympathetic and admiring, is that of the conquering male with the streak of self-abasement that makes him present himself as the suppliant barbarian. France, the real civilisation, can wait in silence while he

destroys himself. This is no expression of hatred for Germany in the ordinary sense; but it is important to realise that the meaning of this grave and merciless work is that there can be no place for Germany, as at present constituted, in European civilisation.

That Post-war Home

MANY listeners must have sat enraptured as Eric Miller, A.R.I.B.A., unrolled in his talk from 4YA a glorious panorama containing pictures of every-



thing the average home lover could wish. "House or Home?" was the title of the talk. Beginning in a mild way with the reasonable argument that any hovel may become a home given sufficient leisure and the desire to use it to best advantage, Mr. Miller had almost lulled me into a state of happy acceptance of the house I already possess, draughts, borer, and all. Then he suggested some ways in which a house could be turned into a home (garden, space for hobbies, privacy for each member of the family, and so on). Shortly it became apparent that no mere flat or four-roomed house would be suitable; several houses must be knocked into one and a basement and attic added, the garden transformed from a potato patch into a landscape including fishpond and facilities for a barbecue. And the last succulent morsel on Mr. Miller's proffered dish—that "cosy corner" with its luxurious couches, its built-in bookcases, its panoramic windows, which was to be situated at the back, mind you, of the living-room fireplace, the latter standing plumb in the middle of the room!—that last golden dream of the intellectual sybarite was surely offered by Mr. Miller as a hint that we had better just forget about the whole thing till the basic wage rises to something like two thousand a year.

Call It a Symphony

THERE was a time when you knew what to expect from a symphony: three or four movements, serious even when blithesome, music for its own sake, about nothing in particular; design in sound. Nowadays symphonies may have anything from one to four or even five movements and take from twelve minutes to an hour and a-half. The composer may claim them to be manifestoes of the future, or reminiscences of the past, eulogies of machines or ecstasies of the dance. "Symphony on Marching Tunes," by Morton Gould—who flirts with the "popular" style and aspires to be serious—would have made Beethoven think, have shocked Schumann and amused Haydn. It is a clever bit of writing, but as far from a symphony according to Beethoven or Mahler as a smart cartoon is from Rembrandt. One can only conclude that, sometimes at least, the composer to-day when he has nothing to say writes it for orchestra and calls it a symphony.

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