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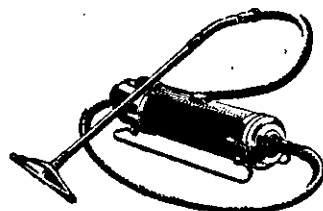
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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Festival at Christchurch

THE non-competitive music festival has long been a feature of English and, even more, of Welsh musical life. The festival brings together people who, ordinarily, might be so busy with their own musical doings that they would never know how the other half sings or plays, and a surge of enthusiasm results. The radio cannot broadcast the personality of working together but, even at second hand, there is a reflected excitement which can be shared widely to stimulate those in far parts. Among the enjoyable music from this week's Christchurch Festival was some notable singing by the Christchurch Harmonic Society under Victor C. Peters. Very often New Zealand choirs, especially in broadcasts, lack that coherence of tone which makes a choir something more than a group of singers. The Harmonic Society's singing was remarkable for its organ-like tone and the beauty of its soft notes. Balance was also good, giving the broadcast a life-like effect. More of this sort of singing—all the music right through the Festival was, by the way, first-rate—and we shall soon have a New Zealand choral tradition.

### A Little Less Than Kind

STATION 3YL's latest literary recording was a lecture on the speaking of verse by the late John Drinkwater, English poet. My sympathy was won at the start by the remark that "there flourished within living memory a race of men and women known as elocutionists," and the observations on the customs of these fauna which vigorously followed. But one point, occurring in the more general remarks towards the end, seems to me worthy of disputation: it is the statement that, supposing a work of art to exist of supreme merit and perfection, there can be only one way of presenting it. Advancing the example of actors in the part of Hamlet, Mr. Drinkwater took arms against a sea of Hamlets, he said that though we might never hope to achieve all that Shakespeare meant by this character there could none the less be only one right way of doing it—to admit any other principle was to turn our attention not to Hamlet who was thus most dreadfully attended. But surely not; the whole point of an ideal—the one perfect and unattainable principle (supposing Hamlet to be such)—is that there can be an indefinite number of approximations to it, all different, all equal or nearly so in merit, all falling short of the many-splendoured thing. If there is in Hamlet something which is all mankind, no actor can hope to achieve it, for the simple reason that "every man hath business and desires." But we may look for what part of that something each several actor can attain; and to look not at Hamlet but at an actor in the part of Hamlet need be no more reprehensible than to look not at the universe alone but at man's part and lot in it.

### "For Universal Exhibition"

IN between "serious" and "popular" music is that indeterminate variety called "light." This is music for entertainment, for relaxation, never subtle

but rarely vulgar. Written sometimes for the theatre, sometimes for the salon and, now and again, for the concert-hall, it is always adaptable. This is ideal music, in a utilitarian way, for broadcasting. It is the staple fare for dinner music, after dinner music, "The Masters in Lighter Mood," in fact for all times when feeling is to be uninhibited by thought. The French have always been particularly good at writing light music: Offenbach, Planquette, Auber, Massenet. Chabrier is in a slightly different class but the composition which made him famous, "Espana," written around Spanish folk rhythms, after a sojourn in that one-time glamorous country, is in the direct line of French light music. Played by Beecham and the London Philharmonic, all its verve and spontaneity emerges with a liveliness that transcends the score. This is music "for Universal Exhibition."

### Big Frankenstein

SINCE we have the backing of none other than the Director-General of the BBC, who has declared the nine o'clock news to be a Frankenstein, it is now possible to protest against this intrusion into regular programmes without being thought an iconoclast. How many studio performers have had their offerings summarily decapitated by the first



stroke of Big Ben?

How few programmes run so carefully to schedule that they finish exactly before the hour? When listening, say, to a symphonic programme, with his mind on the music, the listener is in no mood to agree that the time for silent prayer is in the middle of the last movement of a concerto; nor does he want to be reminded that it is nine o'clock, since Time is the last consideration to occupy his music-focussed attention. Why, therefore, can a change not be made in the programmes? Let the subsidiary stations, which usually broadcast longer works, cut out the nine o'clock chimes altogether, and announce the time after the music is finished, whether it is 9.3 or 9.13 p.m. To hear the time announced before the news from the main stations would be sufficient.

### Let Melody be Unconfined

THE Philip Neill Memorial prize is given each year for an original composition of outstanding merit, and is open to any past or present student of the University of New Zealand; it carries with it a substantial monetary award, but in addition is a means of enabling New Zealand composers to place their work before the public, a matter for which the donor of the prize is to be thanked, since benefactors of such a calibre are rare. The 1945 award went to Mr. Luscombe of Auckland for his Sonata for Violin and Piano, which was presented from 4YA by Ethel Wallace, violin, and Dr. V. E. Galway, piano. Smoothly and competently managed, this composition reveals an original mind at work; the first subject, especially, was both striking and beautiful. Mr. Lus-

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