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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Bendemeer Bing?

THAT Regency Sinatra, Tom Moore, was the subject of 3YL's latest "Lives of the Poets" broadcast; how he sang his songs in melting and yearning accents and how young ladies fainted before him in heaps and rushed into his cabin to kiss him—who said anything new ever happened? Nor, I am afraid, are his songs very much superior to those of his latter-day successors. You can turn on the wireless any day and hear Mr. Sinatara, Miss Shelton, Miss Lynn, old uncle B. Crosby and all singing songs which are fully equal to "I never loved a dear gazelle to charm me with its soft brown eye, But when it came to know me well and loved me it was sure to die." Examine this, or "Believe me if all . . ." or "Bendemeer's stream," in cold blood and it is impossible to deny the comparison. And the broadcaster declared that it was really Tom Moore who started the Romantic Revival. ("In the eighteenth century there was really very little of what we should call poetry. The stately classical style of Pope . . ." It is really time somebody was burnt at the stake for propounding this doctrine to an innocent public.) Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron and others merely followed in his wake. Well, the dates may—though I doubt it—bear this out; but the programme concluded with an incidental verse addressed to Moore by Byron, and the contrast afforded by the vigour and virility of Byron was startling. In spite of this rather vehement grouching, I enjoyed the broadcast; it gave a clear picture of Moore's life and the anecdotes, especially that of the duel, were excellent.

Listeners' Own

EVERYMAN'S selection may be no man's programme. 12M's "Listeners' Own Programme" sounds as though the items are presented in the order in which the requests are received. Without any selection the programme tends to have no order at all. Even in the unsophisticated walks of popular music the coherent elements of unity and variety are important. A string of unrelated items narrows the interest to admit few more than those who are expecting to hear their own choice and the attention of each of these may flag when his selection has been played. "Pistol Packing Momma," "La Golondrina," "The Old Music Master," "Over the Rainbow": a few minutes' pleasure to the few as against an hour's enjoyment to the many from a well-planned programme, sifting but not necessarily omitting any of the requests sent in.

Murder in the Bach Country

AS Edmund Wilson has by no means succeeded in scolding me out of a weakness for Ngaio Marsh, I dived happily into *Died in the Wool*, only to find that it is not a book in which a Views-reel commentator can escape from occupational worry. During the hour of the murder the most promising suspect was heard practising the piano—would it be Liszt's Rigoletto Paraphrase to harmonise with the *corpo in sacco* motif of the crime at Mount Moon? No, of all things, Bach's *Art of Fugue* and then

some Chopin. Alleyn easily busts this highbrow alibi by finding that an unspecified radio station, well received in the Mackenzie Country, turned on just then An Hour with the Masters, featuring at 8.5 the *Art of Fugue* and at 8.25 a Chopin polonaise, so that the suspect was able to slip away from the piano, leaving the radio to deputise for him. But does the NBS own a piano recording of the *Art of Fugue*? I rather think not; indeed, I doubt whether one exists. A studio recital? I can't think of any New Zealand pianist likely to submit the *Art of Fugue* as a broadcast offering, and if I could I am sure he would be as shocked as I am at the suggestion that he would compress into 20 minutes Bach's last and most complex work (which should last well over an hour) and then burst into a Chopin polonaise at the end of it. Yet, according to Miss Marsh's hypothesis, on January 29, 1942, unknown hands played the *Art of Fugue* from some station or other (probably an NBS premiere) and it was butchered to make a Mount Moon alibi. Whodunit?

The Shepherd's Song

A PROGRAMME, locally organised and presented, of distinctive boldness, originality and interest, was a recent 3YA broadcast by R. R. Beauchamp and company, based on the twenty-third psalm ("The Lord Is My



Shepherd"). The first half and the conclusion took the form of the singing of the psalm, both as a psalm and in several metrical versions—including that one from the Scottish psalter, which, I suppose, achieves more regularity of metre than any other body of verse in the language. In order to get my brick thrown at the beginning, I wish to aver with some violence that the bleating of good Nuzillund mutton as the background to pastoral song is an idea more blessed in the conception than in the reality. But the purpose of the programme was an analysis by Mr. Beauchamp of the words of the psalm and its allegory of the sheep and the shepherd, in the light of the methods of the Syrian or Palestinian shepherd—how his flock is small, each member known to him individually; how he uses no dogs, but is followed by the flock throughout the day, leading them to pasture and drink, and back to the fold at night. This was of particular interest, and the manner in which the speaker fitted each image into its context in the shepherd's routine was particularly clear and informative. It might be well, indeed, if