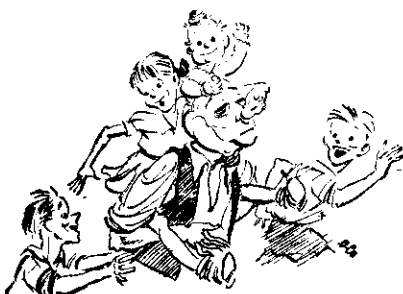


comes not from the tune but from the utter mechanical nullity of the words; if some thought and feeling and ingenuity goes into the latter, something not too far from a poetic statement can be achieved. Secondly, much of this number's success came from its salutary lack of awe towards the classic and great, a refusal to regard the sixteenth century hit as frozen in timeless perfection so that the composer set himself to translate into modern terms and did so. I don't suggest that this should be done often; but I do remove my hat to those who did it once.

#### .... Having People Upstairs

SOME recent listening to 4ZB has convinced me of at least one thing—listeners who enjoy serials never seem to tire of them. How else can we account for the popularity of Doctor Mac, who continues year after year to "administer to the sick and suffering" (as the advertisement has it), without any apparent sign on the part of listeners that he is beginning to bore them. I notice that his adventures get more and more social, and less and less medical, as time marches on. The one to which I listened recently might have happened to anyone, nor did the treatment and cure require anything in the way of BMA brains. A woman was being driven to a nervous collapse by the racket made by upstairs neighbours; a simple solution was hit upon by the redoubtable Doctor, who encouraged a few kids to ascend to the floor above the neighbours and play tag, move furniture, shout and scream until the family responsible for the original nuisance took the hint and subsided. Having once lived for a couple of years beneath a family of what sounded like sprightly elephants, I was interested in the problem; I would have followed the Doctor's plan myself, but



unfortunately the neighbours occupied the top flat with nothing above them but the roof. I recommend Doctor Mac's retributive justice to anyone in need of a suggestion, but would add that, if it is impracticable, a very loud wireless set placed near the ceiling, and left on all day long, may prove as effective.

#### Wherefore Art Thou Opera?

GOUNOD'S version of *Romeo and Juliet* was the most recent "Music from the Theatre" at 3YA; and a more fearful and wonderful mixture of wholly incompatible art-forms I never heard. Large chunks of the original Shakespeare were delivered in the actors' best "ye olde blanke verse" manner by way of helping us to follow the plot; and interspersed throughout were other chunks of Gounod's music, including Mercutio's "Queen Mab" speech as a yodelling aria and incredible goings-on in the balcony scene. Please, may this not happen again? Let us either have a great verse

tragic opera or a (perhaps rather less great) tragic opera, but in the name of Babel, not both. Better still, let future composers of opera not try to translate Shakespearian drama into the strange conventions of their craft. Few and far between are the operatic lovers whose fate matters twopence to an audience who seldom expect any sort of dramatic reality; but the misfortunes of Romeo and Juliet really matter to all men, and they had enough to bear without this. "Tybalt is dead and Romeo banished? Ahhhhh, tiddely-om-pom-pom, che misericordia." No really!

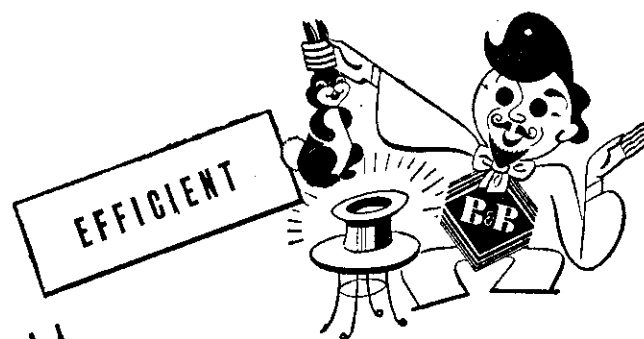
#### The Morning After

THE 1YA Studio Orchestra and its conductor were swept into some of the activity of the fortnight in which the NBS Strings were in Auckland. At the final public concert on November 10 Mr. Baxter conducted the combined strings in a very fine performance. Nobody would have grudged 1YA's strings a furlough after these doings, but as it was they committed themselves to a heavy week. On November 14 they played accompaniments to songs of Bach and Handel sung by Mary Murphy. A certain amount of loving care had gone into these, as indeed the soloist deserved, for her singing in this style of thing is beautiful. There followed immediately the Bach Suite for flute and strings, or parts of it, for the players plunged straight into the delicate Rondeau without stabilising themselves in the two *lentos* and the long, robust *allegro* which should precede it. The result was unfortunate. Two nights later the Studio Orchestra played three numbers, including "The Good-Humoured Ladies" ballet suite (Scarlatti-Tommasini). Here again the work was abridged; the "Cat's Fugue" and the final stimulating movement were omitted, leaving the suite to come to an inappropriate finish with the "Tempo di Ballo" movement. Quite apart from these omissions, it is so hard to find anything kind to say about the standard of what was played, that I think it is time to ask whether it is better that our studio orchestra should be heard for a specified number of minutes each week, or that it should broadcast only what it has had time to rehearse up to a reasonable standard.

#### Saturday Night at 1YA

IN the old days we went round to Aunt Nellie's for a "musical evening" on a Saturday Night. Uncle Bob would sing "The Veteran's Song" and "The Lute Player," and Cousin Alf would know of two bright eyes, or take us to a "Garden of Happiness." Alf was a tenor; he had the tricks of John McCormack, but hardly any of the artistry. Then we would all get together for a "sing." Nowadays we stay at home and turn on the radio. Inia Te Wiata sings "The Lute Player" and "The Veteran's Song" a good deal better than Uncle Bob; in fact, with far too good a voice and technique for such out-worn ditties. William Hickling, tenor, sings "I Know of Two Bright Eyes," etc., with most of the tricks of John McCormack, but very little of the artistry. Instead of a sing we listen to the Florian Harmonists. Except for an occasional wobble and a little too much of the contralto, we liked them. But we think back nostalgically to the times when the singers were in the room and we sang something ourselves.

## A WHOLE HATFUL OF GOOD POINTS



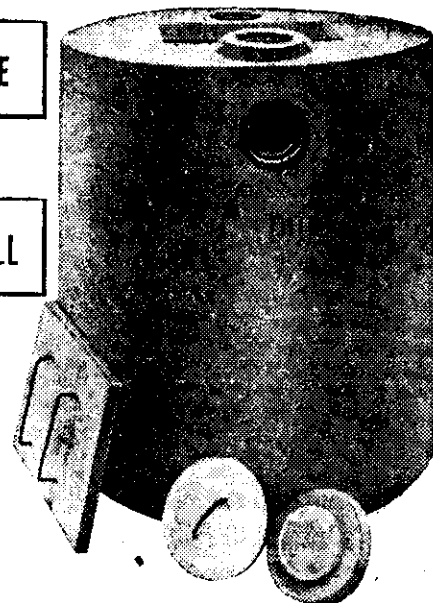
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