

RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Insubstantial Pageant

H. C. LUSCOMBE has resumed his "Pageant of Music" series from 1YA and I am reminded of the three famous arithmetic book characters, A, B and C. You will remember that C was always the unfortunate fellow. His was always the slowest bicycle, the smallest parcel of land, and he was continually being asked to fill the smallest tank with the largest volume of water, the procedure being complicated more often than not by an awkward leak. I am sure that had he given radio lectures, he would, like Mr. Luscombe, have found himself in the position of having to cram a large subject into a short time, with the "News and Commentary from the United States" lurking in the background. Like Mr. Luscombe also, he may have found a satisfactory solution of this problem improbable if not impossible. Hardly had Mr. Luscombe projected his enthusiasm for Chopin into music last Monday, somewhat too soon it might seem, than the quiet soliloquising of the "Berceuse" was rudely interrupted by music that chattered and then a voice that shattered. And "this insubstantial pageant faded."

Oscar's Progress

THE familiar recording of Edith Evans and John Gielgud in the scene from Oscar Wilde's *Importance of Being Earnest* is played again, and one reflects once more, not only that one could listen to this quintessence of irresponsibility for hours together, but that the oddity of such a work from such an author grows on further consideration. Wilde's aestheticism and decadence, his deliberate pursuit of the elaborately sensuous and counter-moral, has always (for the modern reader) something heavy, portentous and even pompous about it, until it seems to have led him in *Salome* to become a monstrously humourless bore; if this is evil beauty it is remarkably lacking in charm. Then one encounters his light comedies, in which for the first time he was not taking himself seriously, and in which for the first and only time his irresponsible flow of contradiction for contradiction's sake achieved artistic permanence. *The Importance of Being Earnest* is, of course, itself a smack at solid values; but only consider what gruesome results ensued when Wilde himself became earnest, about passion or whatnot, and the title takes on yet a deeper meaning.

Perennial Schubert

THERE is a story that Schubert not long before his death contemplated further lessons in the technique of music. This is usually put forward as evidence supporting what some find the insupportable length of some of his music. His sense of form, they say, was weak. On the other hand the story might very well be interpreted as indicating a self-criticism developed through achievement, and there is reason to suspect that the length might be in the shortness of the listener's aural patience rather than in any lack of coherence or conciseness in the music. After listening again to the "Death and the Maiden" Quartet and the "Trout" Quintet this week I was reminded that there is much more to

Schubert's music than mere melody. Indeed the continued popularity of Schubert lies not only in the felicitous tunes but in the apposite way in which the composer weaves them into the design of his composition and the unerring skill with which the dynamic contrasts are brought out.

English Opera

I WONDER what the reaction of a musical foreigner would be if he were to hear, as his introduction to English music, *Hassan and Koanga* by Delius, and Rutland Boughton's *The Immortal Hour*?

Dr. to P. & T. Dept.

I SEE

A tgm to KWI
Has cost me two and three,
And that phone call to GD
Left no change from a quid.
(Business of course.
I think I bought a horse
From a man in GD).

THERE must have been something big
In that tgm to WG
Thirteen and a trey
Isn't exactly hay.
Ratiocination
May recall a substantial negotiation
With someone in WG.

TGMS to HAW
PUK and
RAK,
And a phone call to SPF:
Small time stuff.
Net cost to sender
Four and a bender.

THAT angry man from RR
Thought I should have boughterr
Small piece of the Slaughterr
When he killed twenty head of coo.
The deal fell through.
(Four and two).

THIRTY-FIVE and ten
For rings to WN?
That's a whole heap
But Chloe isn't cheap,
Nor is my sapphire on her third finger.
She talks and I linger
On the wire to WN.

NEXT month she moves to WU.
That suits me too.
Three ecstatic minutes
Talking to WU
Only cost
One and two.

—G. le F.Y.

These were the works chosen for a 4YA programme entitled "Music from the Theatre: English Opera." There is something atmospherically akin in all these works, an ethereal other-worldliness which could be transcribed into music by no other English composers. But I am afraid that our foreigner, after a lifetime of, say, Italian opera, would come to the conclusion that if these works represent English opera, then the English must be a peculiar race. He

would put the English down as imaginative, sensitive, unworldly, and musically spiritual; appreciating what he heard, possibly, as little as a lover of the Can-Can appreciates Debussy's *Pelleas and Melisande*, he would wonder where are those qualities of strength and robust joviality upon which many Englishmen like to pride themselves. Our foreigner must also hear *The Beggar's Opera*, *The Boatswain's Mate*, and *The Wreckers*, *The Mikado* and *Pinafore*, and *Peter Grimes*, and search these diverse works for those qualities which Delius and Boughton lack. Having heard all these and more, however, it is questionable still whether our foreigner will come any nearer to discovering what inspires a British composer. Only a British audience can hope to do that.

Swan Stuff

HAVING a literary programme to fill up at short notice, 3YA seems to have brought together all the Shakespeare recordings available; so that, expecting Mr. Simmance, we got instead the late John Barrymore with Hamlet's "rogue and peasant slave" speech and a soliloquy of peculiar malevolence by Richard III (who sounds like Dickson Carr's Man in Black really letting himself go); and Otis Skinner and Cornelia Otis Skinner doing their stuff with Portia, Juliet, Mark Antony, and the Seven Ages of Man. It is noticeable that, while all three actors are American only the Skinners show it in their accents, and that they have not quite the acting excellence which would make us forget this. As a result, they are happiest with Portia—there is something in the American tradition not incompatible with sententious barristers who are heiresses in disguise—but less so with Mark Antony and his funeral oration, which remind one merely of a peculiar dishonest Senator engaged in blackening the hero's good name. The penetration and fire of Barrymore's acting, on the other hand, override these rather silly national differences and compel one to admire or criticise on an altogether different plane.

Under One Flag

WEDNESDAY night at 1YA is classical night. Between 8.0 p.m. and 9.0 p.m. one will hear music for piano, violin, string quartet and human voice; recordings will alternate with studio recitals, and the only link that binds the items is that the music is classical and intimate—not orchestral. I am always hoping for a stronger link, for some sign that items are being planned in advance to fit in with some central idea for this hour. A successful move in this direction was made on a recent Wednesday when the main idea seemed to be somewhat French. The Debussy string quartet which opened the hour was followed by a "fill-in" record of piano music also by Debussy. Songs in French by four different composers all French by birth or by choice were sung by Hazel Burrell, a local singer who broadcast for the first time last year; she has a good radio voice and treats this kind of song well and gracefully. Recordings of piano music by Ravel, and of songs by Duparc and Delibes completed the programme. Catalogued like this the hour sounds pretty mixed, and so it was, unless one compares it with other Wednesday nights. Towards the end a Liszt Concert Study slipped in, and whether it won its place on the strength of the

10 TESTED
TIMES MORE
EFFICIENT



GET THE BEST
FROM YOUR RADIO

Standard Telephone & Cables Pty. Ltd.
(Inc. in N.S.W.)
P.O. Box 638, Wellington.

TROLLEY WHEELS



Strong iron Trolley
Wheels, two sizes
Price per pair, complete with 18in axle, 4 1/2in., 6/-; 5in., 8/6. Postage on one pair, 1/3; postage on two pairs, 2/-.
Skeates & White
Ltd., 48 Fort St.
Auckland.