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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Trial by Jury

THE presentation of *Trial by Jury* from 4YO was the best yet of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. A one-acter containing no spoken dialogue, it needed no hacking to fit it to the Procrustean bed of the NBS timetable. I find the Macmillan volume of the words of these operas an excellent standby when listening to them; with the libretto before me, I miss no part of the humour (even those abstruse musical jokes which the composer allotted to the inner chorus parts). *Trial by Jury* is, of course, a satirical farce dealing with a case of breach-of-promise, in which the jury is immediately bowled over by the beauty of the fair heroine and turns a conveniently deaf ear to the plea of the defendant; when the latter offers to "marry one lady to-day and marry the other to-morrow," the court solemnly agrees in true Gilbertian style that "to marry two at once is Burglary," and the damsel finally marries the susceptible judge. In few countries of the world can one imagine such a treasonable joke as *Trial by Jury* not only passing the censor, but finding among its most ardent admirers those members of the legal profession whose very reason for existence is here so rudely questioned. Truly the British sense of humour is unique.

By a coincidence, on the same evening as *Trial by Jury* with its farcical breach-of-promise case, the 4ZB series "Impudent Impostors" contained the story of one Mary Bateman, who was involved in similar proceedings, and in her case no flippant counsel or love-sick jury came to the rescue, although her case was ridiculous enough to furnish material for any number of comic operas. This infatuated girl persuaded a doting father to institute breach-of-promise proceedings against a nobleman with whom she had never so much as spoken a word; in court her flimsy case collapsed like a pack of cards. It left me pondering on the strange mentality of anyone who imagines financial redress to be panacea for a broken heart. It would seem that all such legal proceedings must contain an element of that incredible buffoonery which is present alike in the true case of Mary Bateman and the imaginary case of those characters of *Trial by Jury*, Edwin and Angelina.

It Was the Dog That Died

A RECENT Doctor Mac session has a dog as the hero—always a safe draw. In this case it was a lovely collie with a strange madness that led him sometimes to bite innocent children. His first victim was his master's little girl, and it needed a good deal of the doctor's time and inimitable soothing to pacify the mother who feared hydrophobia. Later the dog bit another child and then, while his fate hung in the balance, redeemed his reputation in a spectacular though unoriginal fashion: he gave the alarm when his master's house caught fire, assisted Doctor Mac at a last-minute rescue of the children and perished honourably himself in the holocaust. And where were the parents of the rescued children? Where was the woman

who had been so hysterically fearful a few days before about her little daughter's slight ankle wound? Out at the pictures, with the door locked on the sleeping, unguarded children. Doctors see life. Nothing shocks them, not even the most irrational manifestations of mother-love, and Doctor Mac does not appear to ask himself whether it is the woman or the dog that is mad. Even his wife draws only the mildest and least

WORDS AND MUSIC

("They did it," says *Time*, "with deliberate and conscious musicianship."—*The Listener*, March 15.

"A musicianly performance."—Current cliché in musical circles).

*The fellow was a fiddler,
His musicianship was grand;
His attack and execution, it
Was fit to beat the band—
In fact, musicianly.*

*But he had a busted romance,
And he began to pine,
So they called in a physician
Whose physicianship was fine—
To be exact, physicianly.*

*But he never did recover,
And went to his final rest,
So they summoned that mortician
Whose morticianship was best—
To act, morticianly.*

—Gordon Ingham.

ensorious moral from the affair when she sums up in her placid voice, "Well, Robert, I think perhaps Mrs. Hopkins will think twice before she goes to the pictures again and leaves the children alone."

Esterhazy Paid the Piper

IN the series "Symphonies by Haydn"

I don't imagine it is 4YO's intention to broadcast all 125 of Haydn's Symphonies, but seeing No. 67 in the programme, I wondered once more at the prodigious output of the man. Even in a moderate-length work for small orchestra, an unbelievable amount of sheer hard work is necessary in the way of writing down notes and copying parts, before the composer's work emerges from his mind on to the manuscript, and thence by way of performance to the audience. In this regard, such a position as Haydn occupied in the service of his patron, although arduous and irksome in many ways, did at least provide the composer with ideal surroundings for the practice of composition. However much their vaunted sense of freedom may appeal to modern composers who have to struggle to maintain themselves, it seems possible that some of them would agree with van Loon that there are worse things than the interest of a really enlightened patron of the Prince Esterhazy stamp.

Records at Random

ON a certain Wednesday evening I imagine the staff of 4YO must have been unwittingly responsible for a great deal of heart-burning and hair-tearing