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# "HOW DID YOU DO IT?"

## "HOW DO BSA DO IT?"

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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Will Ye No Come Back Again?

JACOBITE laments are fairly sure to make up a considerable portion of any programme of Scottish music, not because of the especial merit of this sort of music—is it really better?—but because of its well-known romantic connotations. Yet what is it that the Scot mourns in this myth of a hopeless loyalty? It cannot be the passing of the old life of clansman and chieftain; for that was a Highland and exclusively Celtic defeat, and the Lowlander, by whom and in whose idiom every Jacobite song from "Loch Lomond" to "Over the Sea to Skye" was written, habitually and ancestrally regarded the Hielandman as a dangerous and half-witted savage. Yet Jacobitism as a memory unites all breeds of Scot as it never did when a historical force. The reason is, I suppose, that, faced with Union to a Whiggish, mercantile, and expanding England, the Scot felt the urgent need to preserve his national identity and so set up an entirely ghostly standard on the braes o' Mar, a myth of defiance and loyalty to keep the ideas and customs of independence alive. At the same time he insists on the mutual nature of the Union and becomes violent when the United Kingdom is referred to as "England." Yet his struggle must at times seem hopeless; when, for instance, an American magazine of credit and renown refers to the '45 of hallowed memory as "Scotland's Struggle Against the British."

### Piano Playing as an Art

JOCELYN WALKER'S Debussy and Chopin recital from 1YA on April 6 was piano-playing quite out of the ordinary. I am quite sure that for many of the pianists we hear, the piano is an ideal vehicle (I use the word advisedly) for exhibitionism. Their playing is an exercise in more senses than one, and if poundage was the test of success, most of them would win, hands down. There are the others, of course, who cast out their ballast of eroticism in a thick flow of sentimentality. For all of these the piano is at best a pleasant accomplishment, and, at the worst, one of the seven deadly sins. Miss Walker's playing, one need hardly say, is in neither of these classes. She obviously regards piano playing as an art. One's ears were grateful for the sensitive tonal gradations in the Debussy, the clear note articulation, and the intelligent phrasing.

### Songs for Singing

LISTENING to W. Roy Hill from 2YA in a group of songs by John Dowland, one remembered that in the days of the great Elizabethan lutanist, songs were meant for singing. None of your pretentious quasi-philosophical stuff, these were melodies for the voice. More than this, they were poetry (and good poetry too) to be sung. Very often the composer was his own poet, as in the case of Campion, and even if he did have to look to someone else for his verse the musician always worked with the poet in closest collaboration. Consequently the "ayres" of the Elizabethans are unsurpassed as pure vocal

writing. Words and music are inseparable. These are models that could be more often imitated by the contemporary song writer. This group from 2YA was a refreshing change from the ubiquitous ballad, and indeed from the lieder which are the staple fare of the more serious singer. W. Roy Hill sang them with both heart and mind.

### Laugh and the World Laughs

STATION 1ZB's "Can You Top This?" may have brought comfort to a number of hardened story-tellers. It is always exasperating that the audience for one's best stories is rarely large enough to justify the expansiveness of the telling. It is mortifying to know that, before you have exhausted your own in-



terest in the story your friends will have repeated it so often as to have effectively killed it. "Can You Top This?" gives the story-teller the opportunity of getting his yarn off to the whole world in one fell swoop. And the amazing thing is that there are so many stories which one does not remember having heard before. It is extraordinary too, when one thinks about it in the dispassionate solitude of the sitting-room, the foolishness at which one laughs.

### Eagle in the Groove

"UNCLE SAM Presents," usually for hectic quarter-hour before the 11.0 p.m. news, various orchestras of wartime America—chiefly those of the armed services, but a few of civilian war workers. The music they discourse is much of a muchness, always very fast, highly rhythmic, but—what surely defeats the purpose of rhythm—somehow formless and a little monotonous. The whole tone is too high-pitched—there is I suspect that half the attraction of a sort of shrill, slovenly, pointless urgency, swing and its kinsmen is an ultimate simplicity, to be traced to its negro origin. In any case, good swing, for all its speed, is not hurried, and permits itself a certain depth, colour, and variety which the "Uncle Sam" programmes altogether lack. In this connection it occurs to me that the equivalent of good swing in the words of dialogue is Tommy Handley; but for the equivalent of bad we should have to look for the Tower of Babel.

### Red Square

STATION 3YL recently scheduled a programme of Russian choirs, leaving one to expect the usual Entry of the Boyars and the practically inevitable Don Cossacks. But the programme proved less politically suspect; all the choirs were Soviet, mostly either Red Army or People's Theatre. This was an