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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Cry From the Heart

MY favourite among the Gilbert and Sullivan operas is *Iolanthe*, which I will maintain in the teeth of opposition to be the most sincerely musical of all the G. and S. operas. That is probably why I was very disappointed with the recordings I heard from 4YO. The singers performed pleasantly and accurately, and the words of even the chorus were plain to the ear, but the tearing apart of the score was like ripping to pieces a growing plant. The lovely Invocation to *Iolanthe* was cut, and the highly-susceptible Chancellor, alas! was not to be heard; likewise we missed the noble, if rather unorthodox, sentiments of Lord Tolloller, who stoutly declares

*Hearts just as pure and fair
May beat in Belgrave Square
As in the lowly air
Of Seven Dials!*

I don't think I shall listen to Part 2 of *Iolanthe* when it finally appears on the local programmes; some part of it will be missing, and I shall be in the mood to cry unavailing, "Woodman, spare that tree!"—well knowing that the sawing and hacking were done long before the music ever got on to the record.

Easter Music

I REMEMBER saying, in these columns last year, that the opportunity of presenting suitable music during Easter had been mainly neglected by Dunedin stations. This year, not even the most ardently enthusiastic musician could cavil at the nature and variety of Easter music heard from 4YA and 4YO. On two successive Mondays, Dr. V. E. Galway presented the highlight of the week, the great and glorious *Mass in B Minor* of Bach, a work which listeners have been requesting in its entirety for a long time past. As if this were not enough, 4YO arranged to re-broadcast, from 7.30 till 9.0 p.m., the presentation of the *St. Matthew Passion* by the Choir of St. Paul's Cathedral; several solos and chorales, also by Bach, were listed for Easter week. Minor additions were a group of Easter carols, various songs, instrumental solos, and orchestral works suitable to the season, by Handel and Mozart; and Stainer's hardy annual, "The Crucifixion," to be heard twice on Good Friday, from 4YA by the BBC Choir, and for those whose sets allow of good reception from 4YZ, by the combined Invercargill Choirs.

Local Play Makes Good

CONSTRUCTIVE criticism of radio programmes often takes the form of requests for more good literature, and I have been among the critics who have asked for more plays by standard authors and readings from the world's best books; but it must be remembered that the majority of listeners neither desire nor request this sort of fare. Most listeners, in fact, tune in to a ZB station in the early morning and "remain linked" till late at night. These listeners like, and get, light entertainment in the form of short plays and serials, some

of which are good, the majority of which are worthless. To those ZB listeners (and I know of not a few) who are not entirely satisfied with the standard of plays presented from the commercial stations, I suggest an occasional visit to the august portals of the national stations, to hear some of the NBS-produced, often New Zealand-written, plays and serials, which more than hold their own with the imported variety. Especially good was "The Haslewood Diamond," by Arthur Watkin, heard recently from 4YO; a neatly-constructed and amusing piece of light-hearted frivolity.

Mozart's Wet Canteen

THERE was a comical note about that little flute quartet in A Major of Mozart's (K298) which 1ZM played the other evening. To begin with, the announcer made it sound more than ordinarily interesting by saying it would be played by a trio. (It is—but with an



additional flautist). So when you were just wondering what could have happened to the fourth player, the tune of the first movement began, being the identical notes at first of "The Minstrel Boy." That *could* have explained where the flautist was. But then Mozart plays you a trick. The notes that follow (after the words "to the war") are the unmistakable notes of another well-known tune, "In Cellar Cool" to wit. So that if you allow Mozart's tune to suggest the words that fit its notes, you get something like this: "The Minstrel Boy to the war is gone, upon a barrel resting."

Last of the Tribunes

"RIENZI'S HYMN, by Wagner," follows the usual operatic solo, the climax of which, three-quarters of the way through, must be either agony, triumph or ecstasy—and it hardly matters which. How much do we learn of what Wagner really thought about Rienzi—supposing this to have some importance beside how Wagner used Rienzi to make a musical noise? Echo answers at some length, but little to the point. It is a pity, because Rienzi was not only an extraordinary man, but a test case in how far an artist will let himself be carried away by melodrama. The story is briefly as follows: the inhabitants of the decayed city of Rome in the earlier Middle Ages held themselves to have inherited the empire of the Roman People and to be the true rulers of the known world. From time to time