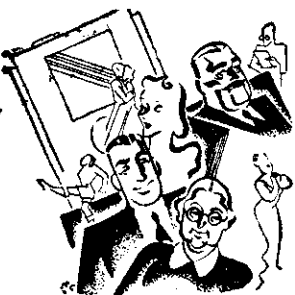


RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say



Walpurgis for Strings

THE interesting Mr. Spike Jones and his City Slickers, who were the subject of a recent *Listener* article read with impatience by many and by a few with something approaching awe, have been on the air from 3YA. They are members of a perfectly recognisable, though esoteric, tradition—that of entertainment by lunacy. It is said that the 16th Century gentility used to make up parties to go out to Bedlam for the afternoon and have a good laugh at the lunatics. Similarly, many professional entertainers of the present—especially in America—arouse mirth in their public by methods of unreason bordering upon nihilism. Of such are the Marx Brothers, the Hope and Crosby type of

humour, and Olsen and Johnson's "Hellzapoppin." The last has a further feature in common with Mr. Jones; a slightly sinister, uproarious and murderous destructiveness. It was Olsen and Johnson who, discovering the nominal hero and heroine embracing at the end of a film, shot them down with a tommy-gun and marched over the bodies declaring, "This is gonna be one picture wit'out a happy ending!" Mr. Jones and his henchmen, in the same way, start a sentimental, an old-favourite, or a latest-hit number a little more than straight—and then with a whoop straight from the Pit, start in with saws, hammers, shotguns, the human voice, and digestive processes, to deal with it in their own way. This deliberate diabolism and premeditated assault is characteristic of a certain type of ultra-modern entertainment, and the redoubtable Slickers have only carried it several stages further.

The Fiddle and the Bow

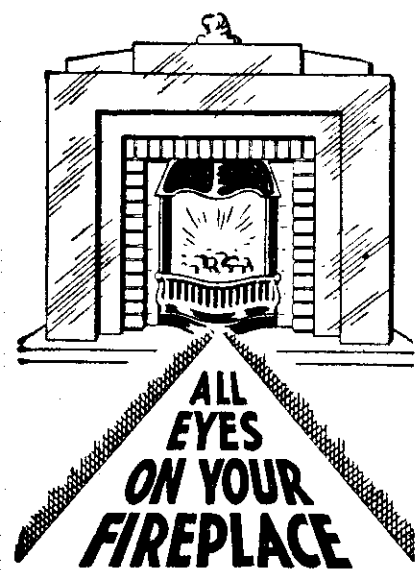
VIVIEN DIXON, broadcasting from 1YA on April 18, gave us some very satisfying violin playing. Eighty-four

parts, so I am told, go towards the making of a violin. Wood, gut, some metal, and a hank of hair. There it lies, Strad or factory fiddle, dormant, maybe beautiful to the eye, but soundless. Fingers on strings, hair drawn across, the wood springs to life and dissolves into disembodied tone. More than any other instrument, more even than viola or 'cello, the violin reflects the heart and mind of the player, "his alone to choose, whose fingers take the dead wood, and make his singers." Vivien Dixon's playing is silver, the tone unmarred by those scratchings and scrapings when the wood "is wounded with the sense of mortal things." Phrasing breathless but articulate, rhythms alive. The pieces were trifles, but the playing, especially in Debussy's "En Bateau," gave them a new significance.

Real or Romantic?

"REAL ROMANCES," the title of a serial newly heard at the ZB stations, seems at first sight to cast some doubt on the reality of the many other

romances heard each day from the same stations; on the other hand, there are probably listeners who hold that the true purpose of a romance is to be as unreal as possible, and these people are usually very well provided for. In this case, "Real Romances" are self-contained stories in which episodes are linked by one of the principal parties as narrator. They are stories of the kind of thing that happens at the present time — the young woman who does not know how to deal with the war neurosis of a husband returned from naval service, or the wife who learns after a hasty war marriage that her husband has a criminal record. The subjects are worth fuller and more subtle treatment; as it is, they travel quickly and hysterically through their theme. Yet if they are crudely worked out, they are by no means unreal or fantastic; they will probably start a useful train of thought, and they are specially to be recommended to any listeners who have hitherto held a grievance about the lack of real romance in their own lives.



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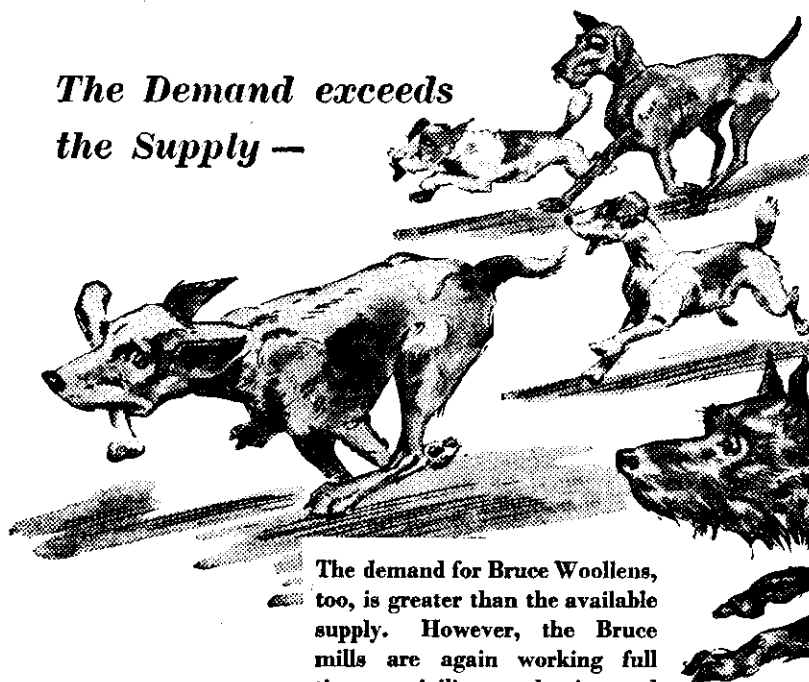


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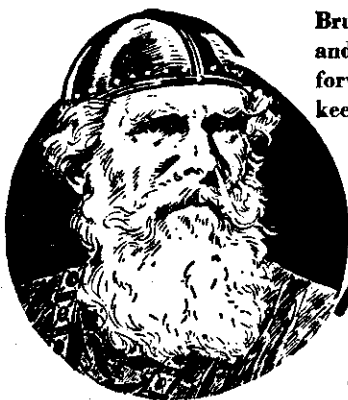
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