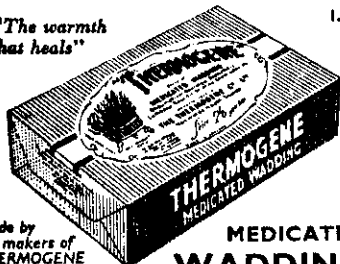


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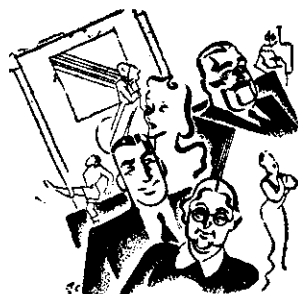


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Pomp and Aspiration

I BELIEVE, although not to the extent of mentioning it in musical company, that "Land of Hope and Glory" is a rattling good tune. The stigma of jingoism has been applied to it, it has been called hackneyed; all of which does not disguise the fact that it has something which numbers of equally popular tunes just haven't got—possibly the fact that it was written by Elgar has something to do with it. But who is the soprano who has dared to make a record of it with the impudent addition of a high descant? (I heard this from a Dunedin station one Sunday morning, but didn't catch the singer's name.) Also, isn't it about time that someone realised that certain words which were added to Elgar's tune don't quite fit in with UNO aspirations? Confidence in the British foreign policy would scarcely be felt by any delegate from another nation who heard our stentorian sopranos declaiming,

"Wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set.
God Who made thee mighty, make thee
mightier yet."

We can imagine a foreign delegate dubiously murmuring, "At whose expense?"

Clarinet Concerto

IN 4YA's presentation of Weber's First Clarinet Concerto, J. McCaw, one of New Zealand's best clarinetists, gave a sterling performance of a little-known work. Although this concerto cannot be said to rank among the greatest, it is still a very interesting and vivacious composition, and contains some lovely melodic passages; the last movement is, perhaps, a trifle too showy to be called good music, but it is just the sort of thing to show off the player's spectacular technique, and Mr. McCaw made it a sparkling finish to a carefully modulated performance. Weber evidently believed in giving his soloist the full limelight, for the orchestral part of the work is mainly "background music"; and the 4YA Orchestra, in providing a discreet accompaniment, reminded me rather of the House of Peers in *Iolanthe*, which "did nothing in particular, and did it very well."

The Barch 'Are and the Bad 'Atter

I HAVE had occasion in these columns to question the propriety of the dramatised (or Slaughtered) version of "Alice in Wonderland" which the National Stations from time to time present; and I therefore listened with especial interest to Mr. Simmance's reading of excerpts from the original. In the first place, of course, a reading possesses far more cohesion than a dramatised five-minute summary. Mr. Simmance dealt

RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

only with the baby that turned into a pig ("it does sometimes"), the Cheshire cat and the March Hare's Tea Party. In the Slaughtered version, you may recall, Alice's dealings with the Cat and the Hatter take the form of songs, which cannot be found in Lewis Carroll, and quite right too. Mr. Simmance with time on his hands to do the thing properly, gives us the actual conversation unfolding in its full logical grandeur. The book, after all, is a conversation piece far more than a series of events—though one might not say the same of the "Looking

Foots Carlisle, and Shoeless John Jackson. Though Philistines and F.B.I. officials may feel that "Turntable's" sleuth-like ability to track down his man might be employed to better purpose, constant listeners to the session will disagree; without his competent guidance they might find themselves lost in that musical demi-monde where negroes are jim-daws and white men are ofays, and the Great Duke refers neither to Marlborough, Wellington, nor even Windsor.

Insects and Man

IN Auckland the Winter Course Talks have begun with a series on "Insects and Man" given by Dr. W. Cottier of the Plant Research Bureau at Mt. Albert. The facts of insect life are hair-raising even when they are put into the form of a university lecture as Dr. Cottier does it with the items grouped severely, (a), (b) and (c). Indeed I think that this formal and undramatic treatment may be the best background to such startling horrors as the distance a man could jump if his legs were as strong as a flea's, or the fact that a pair of flies, starting operations in October, could by February cover the whole earth in a solid layer 47 inches (or it may have been feet, but no matter) deep. Man thinks, plans, questions; insects go straight for what they need, and such is their single-minded persistence and force of numbers that some of them usually win through. The fight, says Dr. Cottier, is still on. We are hearing only man's point of view of course, but it is borne out by the most distinguished literary figure of the insect world who has written:

everything man knows he has had to learn whereas we insects are born knowing everything we need to know for instance man had to invent airplanes before he could fly but if a fly cannot fly as soon as he is hatched his parents kick him out and disown him archy.



Glass." Mr. Simmance's is the true Alice—infinately polite, often worried, sometimes resentful, but always heroically upholding the banner of civilised reason; the Slaughtered version of Alice is a cheeky little puss. On the other hand, Mr. Simmance's reading of the Mad Hatter is nearer to Arthur Askey than I had expected; at least, he endowed him with the shabbiness and the high-pitched didacticism of many of the great radio comedians—there was more than a touch of Harry Tate. But what was it that impelled him to give the March Hare the intonation of a costermonger with adenoids? I suppose the shape of the creature's dose gave him the dotted.

Rhythm on Record

I DO not recommend "Turntable's" Friday night "Rhythm on Record" sessions to those who prefer to regard swing as something affecting bobby-soxers and zoot-suitors only. For *facilis descensus Averno*, or as Benny Goodman might have it "it's a quickstep to the hotspot," and after only two sessions I find myself in danger of becoming a Constant Listener. There's a double fascination. First, the music itself. It's worth listening through a desert of run-of-the-mill boogie-woogie to find something with the haunting sophistication *Lament for a Lost Love* (subtitled *Solace*). But equally fascinating is the commentary. "Turntable" is a master of his subject, and we are only just realising how involved the subject is. For it seems necessary to give a short history of all the more memorable clarinetists, trumpeters, and alto-saxers in the swing world, and as these change their instruments, their pseudonyms, and their combination (singular) for every recording, the task is not an easy one, particularly as the characters involved have, to begin with, names such as Specs Lanaghan,

Lavender and Old London

THE introductory remarks to Vaughan Williams' "London Symphony" (heard from 3YA) quoted at some length the views of "the composer's friend Butterworth" on the various sounds and pictures of the sovereign city which the composer, like other composers, had incorporated in his work. Mr. Butterworth gave a longish list, of which I can at the moment only recall "the cry of a lavender-seller." This rather random recollection is indeed a comment on one aspect of the work, and indeed a criticism of most musical treatments of London. The lavender-seller may be taken to symbolise the old-time rural background of London—the days of the walls and markets, when country-folk wandered in and out to do street trade and the smell of flowers mingled with the other and more metropolitan odours of the day. All this, I submit, Eric Coates, Vaughan Williams and others emphasise a deal too much. Their Greenwich is Greensleeves and their Woolwich might as well be Wenlock Edge. The

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