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RADIO VIEWSREEL
What Our Commentators Say

Face to Face with Genius

"DO you believe that I am thinking of your miserable violin when I am talking to my God?" said Beethoven when Ignace Schuppanzigh, leader of the first famous string quartet and pioneer of Beethoven's last quartets, complained about a difficult passage. The NBS String Quartet, playing Opus 127 in E Flat the other night from 2YA, probably understood Schuppanzigh's feelings and sympathised with him. The last quartets are difficult enough in the matter of mere notes, but these are difficulties that technique will solve. It is the problems of interpretation these quartets propound that makes them so uncommonly elusive. Enigmatical, disdaining all convention, Beethoven has poured into this music unfathomable thoughts that sum up the philosophy of a lifetime. I should like to hear the NBS Quartet play Opus 127 again, for I am sure they too must have discovered that genius parts with its secrets reluctantly. Incidentally, I think both listeners and broadcasting service take the NBS Quartet a little too much for granted. More recognition of their work, and the organisation of their programmes into series, with appropriate commentary, would extend their listening value enormously; and as a matter of interest, as well as a courtesy, could we have the names of the other members in addition to that of the leader?

Skittish But Good

CECILIA WORTH and Diana Wall, who collaborated enjoyably in a Mozart violin and piano sonata from 1YA on May 15 are, I am sure, still young. Youthful fingers itching to be away over the hills, and an exuberance chafing at restraint, were evident in the fussily fast allegros and the rather self-consciously played slow introductory movement. These sonatas are the purest of chamber music, unadulterated by the excitements that accompany concert-hall performance. The interpretation of them demands impeccable technique, an assured grip of the broader aspects of phrasing and an unerring instinct for the balance between rhythm and tempo. Youth has steady fingers, but only maturity can approach Mozart with a steady heart. Cecilia Worth and Diana Wall will some day play Mozart with that detachment and tranquillity he needs. In the meantime Mozart does not suffer much from youthful good spirits, and he gains somewhat from youthful enthusiasm.

Darwinian Detection

BY the time this paragraph appears in print, 3YL's listeners will be aware that Madame L'Espanier and her daughter Camille were torn in pieces, thrown out of the window and stuffed up the chimney by no human hands, but by those of a large orang-outang who, like the far more convincing specimen in Kipling, had too much Ego in his Cosmos. This four-episode dramatisation of Edgar Allan Poe's cheering little story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" has

not got very far towards presenting the essence of this early bird among English-language detective stories. It seems to miss both the horror, the characterisation, and the satire—being content in its action to display nothing more than excitement, represented by rushing about with low cries. The story of how the Englishman said it was a French voice, the Frenchman said it was an English voice and the Dutchman said it was a Swedish voice, when all the time it was the gibbering of an incensed anthropoid, is a good one; but if the compilers of the serial were aware of this they have not put it over. Introductory remarks seemed to promise us a series of radio versions of Poe's stories. I do not quite know if this can be successfully done. Poe's horror formula was far too subjective to admit of serialisation. A good reading might do wonders with the temperature of the public's spinal cord; but the dramatic method does not sound promising.

Fela Sowande

IF Fela Sowande's picture in *The Listener* is a good likeness, we might well follow a current, ridiculous Hollywood trend and call him "The Face," for I have never seen a more delightful face, or one more calculated to turn your morose ill-temper into a good-



natured chuckle. It seems, by the way, that he is pronounced something like Schwanda. Since the announcement of 4YO's programme merely said "Negro music," I came to the mistaken conclusion that Fela Sowande would sing, and was surprised to hear the vocal parts of the programme done by a woman; I couldn't catch her name, but the voice sounded like that of Ethel Waters. The surprise item was Sowande himself, who turned out to be an expert on the full organ (the genuine brand, not that musical monstrosity known as a Theatre or Hammond variety). The music was Fela Sowande's own arrangements of Negro spirituals, and anything more unorthodox than "The Battle of Jericho" as here arranged, I cannot remember hearing. After I had conquered my surprise I found the programme impressive, and will look out for more by the same artists.

Edwardian Fairy Tale

KIPPS, by H. G. Wells, is apparently sub-titled "the story of a simple soul." It is also partly autobiographical,