

# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Musical Topography

I REFERRED earlier in these columns to the 3YA "Music from the Map" series and suggested that they might be better for a little more plot. Since that, however, doubts have crept in. Variety of the places treated would plainly be an advantage and it seems a question whether these programmes, if given unified treatment, would not revolve round half-a-dozen localities. If we consider the areas of the earth's surface made especially famous by musical allusion and theme, some curious facts come to light. Paris and Vienna; neither having much cause to delight in the picture presented to the world by song-writers Hawaii? Unspeakable. The Western parts of the United States? Devon? and the ports more closely associated with Sir Francis Drake? In each case a rather likable legend is perpetuated in song, but would the originals recognise themselves? Nostalgia is not one of the most admirable or creative emotions. The fact is that certain areas have become musical clichés. Moreover, if a more rigid method of selection should be exercised

and only those pieces of music played which have an individual and interesting relationship with the place concerned, the programmes would have little more geographic or musical unity than they already possess. Nevertheless, the spirit of place in music would make an interesting study—but probably not in a "For My Lady" session.

### As Through a Glass Darkly

I HAD looked forward to hearing Vaughan Williams' Symphony No. 5 in D in the Sunday afternoon contemporary composer series from 1YA. Vaughan Williams has always taken the best from the changing musical scene and used it for his own needs. His genius has ripened with the years. A spectator, as it were, of contemporary developments, his music is more lively and expressive than many of those whose work is frankly experimental. Symphony No. 5, a recently written work, is the expression of to-day based on a lifetime of experience. What would it say? What it said was heard as through a glass darkly. Time and the inexorable needle had but

proved the transience of music on records. Pathetically distorted, the unfamiliar music did not get across. Most of the records in this series which was apparently inherited from the American Mosquito network, have had their day.

### The Elizabethan Theatre

IF the picture of the Elizabethan Theatre in the story of the development of the theatre in England is in any way a true one, both audiences and actors must have been tough guys. Even then the stars probably had their devotees, but the ham actor must have received short shrift. After all if you have



braved the elements, standing in the mud amid the stench of humanity in the mass, you are in no mood for the second-rate. We sometimes forget that Shakespeare in those days was a living drama. Even if the conflict of emotions was wrapped up at times in the trappings of a strange people, it still spoke with the voice of those for whom it was written. We do not make Shakespeare contemporary by playing him in

modern dress, but he will always be popular whenever we present him as good theatre and not as the performance of some esoteric rite.

### Music Soothes the Savage

THE programmes under the heading "Music While You Work" from 1YA have a depressing uniformity. True I often have to work at the time they are scheduled so I do not hear them all; but on those occasions when I am able to listen, they have consisted exclusively of music by the noisier and more discordant swing bands, interpolated all too frequently with choruses shouted by a choice selection of voices patterned on those of the less agreeable fishwives, or professional wailers moaning of the delights of love. A moment ago a voice which, I should think, had been raised on a diet of files was elaborating the statement that "Music soothes the savage." The only conclusion I could draw from his argument was that the savage was indeed lucky to be out of range. Just for contrast, another voice, hardly human, is now lamenting that "Other arms are round you now, some other love has found you now" apparently under the lilacs in the rain. Very uncomfortable I'm sure. But I bet it hasn't stepped up production or soothed

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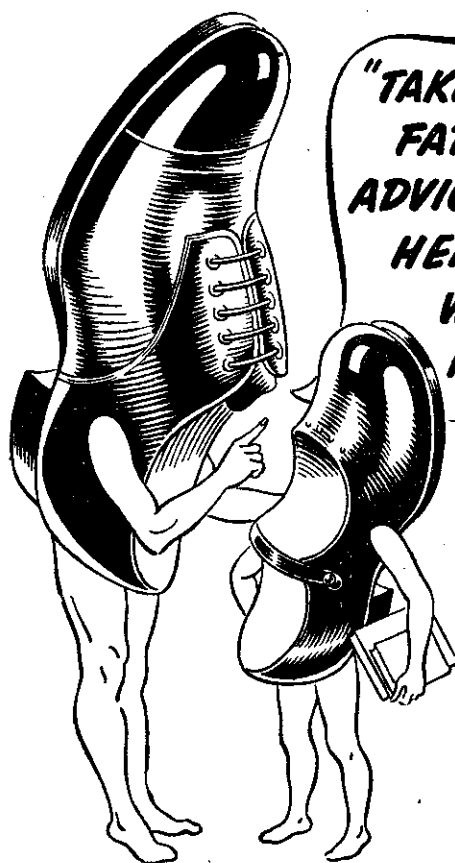
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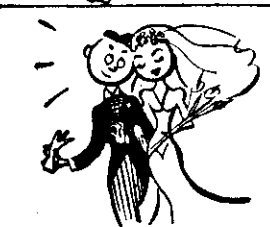
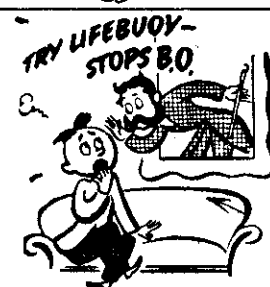
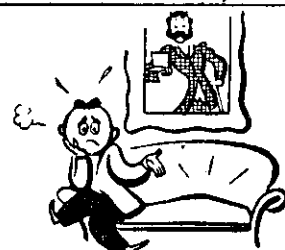
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