

evening of good music. From 4YA, a lightish programme from 7.30 till 9.0 was contributed by studio recitalists interspersed with light orchestras (Constant Lambert's "Horoscope" being one of the more interesting items). After this, 4YO continued the good work with Handel from 9.0 till 10.0, at which time came the *pièce de résistance*, the first four of Bach's 48 Preludes and Fugues, played by Edwin Fischer. It would have been well worth the waiting just to have heard these, but to know that the series is to be continued each Saturday, preceded by music to which the music-lover can listen without feeling a martyr, is to call down blessings on the head of whoever gave the order for this change in our week-end programmes.

### Hunt the Kiwi

J. D. MACDONALD has managed to crowd so much into the first of his six fortnightly talks from 2YA, "What Is Typical of New Zealand?" that we wonder where he will get material for the other five, but perhaps his opening one can be regarded as a menu, indicative of good things to come. We would like to hear more of "that great Southern sports meeting, Maori versus Muttonbird" and the medicine-drinking marathon, in which one and a-half million New Zealanders consume annually five million bottles of the not-so-dinkum oil. We admire Mr. Macdonald's crisp turn of phrase ("the rash of local



bodies"), his happy irony ("In New Zealand both rabbits and bookies are underground, and trade union secretaries multiply faster than either"; "Our inveterate use of Christian names is our chief claim to be regarded as a Christian country"). But hand in hand with our admiration for Mr. Macdonald's verbal brilliance goes respect for his moral courage. It is not every compiler of New Zealand typicalities who would dare to re-introduce those hardy perennials, the starry clematis and the glowing rata.

### Four Russians

A RECENT evening of Russian music from 4YO included Tchaikovsky, Arensky, Khatchaturian, and Rimsky-Korsakov. There was a time when I took all Russian composers (save Tchaikovsky) as being by nature enlisted under the nationalist banner but, having just read M. Calvocoressi's invaluable "Penguin" dealing with the subject, I am now in a position to differentiate a little more than formerly. And I am sure that this author (who seems to have studied his subject to some purpose) would scarcely lump together the composers mentioned above under the generic description of Russian composers. Tchaikovsky, influenced by Western methods of composition; Arensky, owing his slighter talent to the influence both of Tchaikovsky and of Rimsky-Korsakov, his teacher; Rimsky-Korsakov, accused by the critic of ruining Moussorgsky's music by his re-arrangements, and supposedly less nationalist in effect than the earlier Russian writers; Khatchaturian, born in 1904, a composer who is regarded in Soviet Russia as one of her most truly and fully representative composers, with "a strong national feeling and an inborn sense of melody, colour, and instrumental treatment" . . .

It would seem that a programme dealing with the music of four such original and opposed temperaments would require, as a preliminary to listening, a full history of the nature and origins of Russian music, from the earliest times down to the present day. And I should dearly love to hear more music by Moussorgsky, the composer who, it is agreed, represents most fully and lovingly the soul of ancient Russia.

### Warhorse Parade

JAN RUBINI'S fiddling from 1YA on Saturday night was the work of an expert. Clean fingering, lush tone, always in tune even in the ostentatious double-stopping. Jan Rubini gave you the impression that manipulating a violin was, to him, mere child's play. To demonstrate this luxurious virtuosity, a sort of musical marshmallow, Mr. Rubini trotted out a field of spavined warhorses, from some gipsy music by Hubay and Massenet's "Thais" Meditation to the "Flight of the Bumble-bee." As all these same steeds are regularly paraded on records with Mr. Kreisler, Mr. Heifetz or some other displaying his equestrianism, Mr. Rubini was hard put to it to add any new graces to their paces. Acting on the principle that it is better to be sweet than sorry, he liberally sprinkled each piece with sugar. The violinist himself introduced the music, and most agreeably too; but to his final "And now I'll say good-night to you—to you—and especially to you"—I could only make feeble mental reply: "Good-night, especially to you, good-night."



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