approach may be successfully used, providing the commentator remembers that in a lecture-recital, as against a straight-out lecture, the music is still the thing. The talking is not to inform but to focus attention and interest on the music.

Oh, to be in Reno

THE first of Peter Lawlor's Saturday morning talks from 2YA deals with his experiences at the University of Nevada, in Reno, and thus can have little news value for those who go to the pictures or read their *Juan in America*. The speaker described, with perhaps slightly disapproving enthusiasm, the spacious playing-fields, the lake for skating, the dance-hall, concert-hall and lecture-hall. In this oasis for the unacademic, exams are postponed if they clash with proms; there are as many football-fields as classrooms; and scholarships are awarded to grid stars instead of to scholars. If the foundation occasionally gets a visit from a New York man of letters it is probably because he happens to be spending his six weeks in Reno at the time. In fact, from Mr. Lawlor's account we gather that the University might be described as a glorified night-club school and a hotbed of matrimony. Staunch New Zealanders will be gratified that Mr. Lawlor has escaped safely back to the land of glorified night schools.

Me and Bill

BERNARD MILES will be remembered by many as the Yorkshire petty officer in *In Which We Serve*. He has also played Shakespeare's Iago and has a notable record in Shakespearean and experimental drama. In view of all this it was entertaining to hear from 3YL his "The Low-Down on Hamlet," written as well as spoken by himself: a Cockney summary — how ready his change of accents—of the Dane's misadventures, making a blasphemous and occasionally outrageous burlesque of the greatest of melodramas. "Then there was Rose an' Crantz an' Guild an' Stern —two blokes, yer know." . . . . "So now, when it's all too late, in comes Fortinnbras the King of Norway—'e's back from the Pole—and 'e looks at them all laying dead, and 'Blimey,' 'e says, ''as things been getting out of 'and again?'" It is not altogether a new idea—the Sentimental Bloke did the same for *Romeo and Juliet* most unsentimentally many years ago—but it was a good essay in what is, after all, a salutary shock for Swan-worshippers.

Virtuosity

ONE of the most delightful and unrehearsed performances imaginable was given in a *Brains Trust* recently heard from 4YA, when Dr. Malcolm Sargent was called upon to answer an enquiry about musical instruments, ancient and modern. Why, the question ran, are modern instruments used in performances of old works; who are the modern experts who dare to alter, say, a Beethoven symphony, adding notes thereto which the composer did not write into the part? Very seriously and apparently without an idea of the effect he was creating Dr. Malcolm Sargent rapidly delivered a long and erudite monologue on the technique of instruments in general, their possibilities, compass, and effect, and finished by vocalising a horn passage as it might be played, first on an ancient horn, then on a modern valve-horn. One longed for television to watch the amazed faces of the other members of the Brains Trust, who seemed uncertain whether to giggle or applaud. The question-master dryly summed up by suggesting that "The listener who asked the question will now know, at any rate, who the musical experts are!"

Hit or Miss

A NOSTALGIC note crept into 4ZB's quiz programme *Musical Chairs* with the introduction of the question "Who was the Gibson Girl and to whom does she owe her fame?" At least, that was the gist of the enquiry if not the exact wording, and it was worth three shillings for a correct answer. Can you believe it, the money was paid over for an answer which attributed the creation of the Gibson Girl to a mysterious New York theatrical producer, and which failed entirely to mention the name of Charles Dana Gibson and the fact that he was an artist by profession? Yet the sensational question of the evening, value over ten pounds, was answered so nearly correctly that one felt a pang of disappointment on behalf of the competitor; he was asked on what lake and in what year did the British suffer a naval defeat at the hands of the Americans, and the answer was Lake Erie, and the year 1812 or 13 (I forget which!) The competitor answered Lake Michigan, 1813 (or 12—I forget which!) and of course failed to pocket the prize. To myself, who knew all about the Gibson Girl and nothing whatsoever about Lakes Erie/or Michigan, all this seemed just another proof that quizzes in general are as accurate a test of mental efficiency as an arrow shot in the dark at a target draped in black velvet.

Honey Still for Tea?

WHAT is it that accounts for the deep and continuing affection felt for the poetry of Rupert Brooke, recently presented from 3YA in a BBC *Chapter and Verse* study? The intrinsic merits of his verse do not, I think, altogether account for it; full of charm and entertainment, they never really say anything final about the poet's attitude to life. They are rather incidentals arising from the spirit of a divine amateur; and those who argue, probably justly, that Brooke died young and that the powers would have matured, miss the point that it is that spirit of the amateur (in the best sense of the word), innocent and untouched by bitterness, or, it must be added, any very profound sort of experience, that his admirers love in Brooke's work. "This singularly fortunate young man," a modern commentator has called him, and part of his abiding popularity is thus to be accounted for. He is the poet of the pre-1914 world on which two generations have learnt to look back with nostalgia as on a world of security and comfort and freedom from the constant pesterings and responsibilities of to-day. In 1909 Brooke could sit in Berlin and wish he was in Grantchester; thirty years later dwellers in Grantchester were wondering how to keep Berlin out of their back gardens.

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