

and the practice of these arts by contemporary New Zealanders, linked together and given solidarity and intimacy by the work of Douglas Lilburn, who contrives in these 15 minutes to give us a cross-section of recent achievement: this was a programme of importance, worth hearing, remembering, and—may I add?—repeating.

So Twice Five Miles of Fertile Ground . . .

STATION 3YA's current BBC feature *English Architects* is, there is no getting away from the fact, dull. The producer has gratified the BBC love of historical anecdote, flavoured with a faint period pomposity, without giving us (as many earlier biographical series have done) the story, unified and possessing point, of a man's life. There is a sorrowful lack of point and the dialogue is singularly unconvincing. And the opportunities which are offered and missed should cause every several listener to grind his every several tooth. To treat of Wren, Nash, Vanbrugh, the brothers Adam, surely demands of the producer that he should show something of the architect's relation to the society of his time; who were his patrons and clients, what the ideas and culture of the building classes were, and how all this affected his work. Vanbrugh, for instance; all we are told is that he wrote a Restoration comedy (we are not invited to read it, and very properly so), and built houses, and was expensive, and had a feud with Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. What is important about him is nothing of all this; the point is that he lived in an age when the Whig aristocracy, freed from the Stuarts and their standing army as from all ideas that the landlord had a responsibility and a function in the community, were able with their vast wealth to build themselves residences that were neither castles nor manors. So arose gigantic erections like Blenheim and Knole—really private palaces, like those of late-classical Rome or mediaeval Florence, emblems of a class become almost too powerful for the community. Hence also someone's "Epitaph on Sir John Vanbrugh, architect":

Lie heavy on him, earth, for he
Laid many a heavy load on thee.

Would it not be better to hear such things than two mildly bleating voices, the Duke and his architect, and one angrily clucking one, the Duchess, disputing the building of Blenheim in the intervals of totally irrelevant music?

Lyric Choir

I WAS pleased to see in the programmes a studio recital from 4YA by the Lyric Choir, conducted by John T. Leech, and to find that the items selected were many of those performed a couple of weeks ago at the choir's 26th Anniversary Concert. The concert itself was an innovation, as several of the items in it were arranged for ballet and danced by the Lily Stevens Dance Group, but a broadcast of the actual concert, owing to the placing of choir, piano, and dancers, would not have been a success. On the radio, as on the concert platform, I thought the Beethoven and Mozart the most impressive; and the Elgar part-song for women's voices, "The Snow," was delightfully sung (at the concert it may have been regarded by a majority of the audience merely as background for the ballet). Why was it, though, that a new and interesting group of choir and solo works were omitted

from the broadcast, the group from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*? I hope these are being kept in reserve by the choir, for radio performance at a later date.

Athenian

RICHARD SINGER, whose talks on *Great Figures of the Bar* I have commended before in this Viewsreel, has displayed another praiseworthy trait in following up his Cicero with Demosthenes. This great Athenian is best known for his speeches urging the citizens to resist the encroachments of Macedonian aggression—someone recently emphasised their Churchillian quality by publishing long extracts with "Germany" substituted for "Macedon," "Britain" for Athens, and "Czechoslovakia" for the unlucky buffer state of Olynthus. But Demosthenes was also a practising pleader in the Athenian courts, and Mr. Singer enumerated cases of his concerning legacies, watercourses, and rights of citizenship. Mr. Singer's virtue is that he does not apologise for classical knowledge, as do too many to-day, vaguely fearing that their listeners may be right in condemning it as unprogressive; he speaks unashamedly of the conflicting views of eminent scholars; he dares to assume that his public know something and will be interested to know more.

Demosthenes—the name means "strength of the people"—is a disputed figure in history, as Mr. Singer did right to remind us. He defended the localised, in a sense parochial, civilisation of the Greek cities, against the expansive, far-reaching military empires, of which the Macedonian was the first and the Roman last, who carried that civilisation as far as arms would take it, to Britain and the Indian borders, at the cost of breaking its political freedom and cheapening its greatest qualities. Which was in the right? Should civilisation limit its geographical scope and heighten its qualities, or go forth and convert, if necessary lowering its standards to do so? The question remains unanswered.

Manuel de Falla

SOMETIMES an accidental arrangement of programmes produces unanticipated results. Station 4YO's programme featured "Spanish Composers" for the night of November 15, and by strange and appropriate coincidence, this programme happened to be on the evening when the press announced the death of Manuel de Falla, one of Spain's most vital composers. The Spanish idiom, known to most listeners only through popularised versions of dance tunes and rhythms, is no new influence in music; even Scarlatti is said to have come under its influence while on Court service in Spain. Audiences who know Falla only through various piano virtuosi's renderings of his "Ritual Fire Dance" (and every visiting pianist seems to have it tucked away in his or her sleeve, awaiting the final encore) will do well to widen the scope of their knowledge by listening to all this composer's works whenever they are on the radio. The programme from 4YO was a good example of representative Spanish music, including as it did, Falla's "Nights in the Gardens of Spain," and music by Turina, Nin, Albeniz, and Cascado.



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