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played by the best combinations; let the "light" music exclude the sickly sentimental, the vulgar, the raucous; let the drama be well acted and the dramatists chosen from the highest ranks; let the talks be delivered by those who are best informed and best able to broadcast their information in an interesting manner; let the humorists be such as Tommy Handley, who like Donald Duck appeals to all heights of brow. So long as each section of radio entertainment represents the best of its kind, and each section of the listening public gets a fair share of its own particular entertainment, there is little need to dread, with Mr. Priestley, the dictatorship of the third-class mind.

Voltaire in the Round

ONE of the most interesting speakers in the 4YA Winter Course series, *The Man, the Times, and the Theory*, was Dr. Silver on "Voltaire." Dr. Silver, professor of Modern Languages at Otago University, has an easy delivery and avoids the fault of many Winter Course lecturers, that of sounding dry and pedantic; also he possesses something dear to the heart of the Dunedinite, a pleasant trace of Scottish accent. (Strange how the possession of this natural grace immediately predisposes the fellow Scot to believe in the speaker's intellectual infallibility.) Out of the mass of facts and arguments contained in Dr. Silver's talk it is scarcely possible to select anything for repetition; nothing would suffice but the entire talk. What emerged was a fine and liberal portrait of a remarkable human being; indeed, no facet of Voltaire's multiple personality was omitted—his ability to seize and propagate new ideas, the fecundation of his intelligence by his stay in England, his prodigious outpourings of writings on all imaginable subjects, his intolerance of injustice and his fight for freedom of expression, his attitude to revealed religion (the latter fairly and ably summed up in Dr. Silver's exposition). At the same time the speaker made no attempt to gloss over any of Voltaire's failings, and the result was a portrait "in the round," rather than the silhouette which might have resulted had the speaker shown bias one way or the other. I am looking forward to hearing Dr. Silver again, and I hope that his next subject, whatever it be, will afford him as magnificently wide a scope.

Studio Recital

IF one has been listening to singers in local studio presentations over a period of years, it is interesting to trace, or imagine one can trace, the development of style and technique in a particular performer. This is something that the flying visits of overseas artists and the too short sojourns of most of our own, together with the stabilised versions recorded, all usually deny us. So probably we are ill accustomed to this sort of criticism. I think, however, it is not imagination or weakening of the intellect which has led me to find in Gerald Christeller's recitals from 3YA lately maturer quality and more sureness than previously. This singer has a very pleasant light baritone voice which he uses well; but in his choice of songs he appears sometimes a little over-ambitious. One of the most delightful of his recent recitals was of 17th Century Italian songs; both music and language in these were treated with admirable clarity and comprehension. But

more recently still, a programme of songs by Handel (airs and recitatives), was disappointing in almost every way. It is difficult for us, and hard on them, to judge these performers on their short groups of songs presented at irregular intervals. I would very much like to hear more of Mr. Christeller, particularly in his presentation of Mozart. But one would not, on the other hand, advocate full-length concerts for every warbler that exercised in front of his local microphone.

Engine Trouble

IT is not often that a story laden with technical details and entirely dependent on them for its plot is a popular success, so I was a little surprised at the choice of George Mulgrue's "Watch Below," read over the air recently by Dermot Cathie. This story is distinctly technical (although easily enough followed), and is that rather rare thing, a play specially for engineers. If you know all about bearings and pyrometers, and can tell a big end from a little end (or was it a bottom end?), then this play is for you, sir. And if you didn't, it was still very pleasant to sit back and let the terms flow over your head, to listen to the (imaginary) throbings of the ship's engines, and to picture the little greaser running round dosing all the bearings (or the big ends) with castor-oil to keep their temperatures down. Moreover, it really was castor-oil, he specifically said so; apparently it's good for big ends (or bearings). The play was inconclusive enough, being the story of a young engineer who experiences all the terrors of being alone in charge of the engine-room when things begin to go wrong. He finally saves the situation but not the plot by reducing the fuel supply to the dangerously overheated engine. And I have it on excellent juvenile authority that he went quite the wrong way about this—I forget now, but I rather think he attacked it from the bottom end instead of the top end. Or maybe he just lost his bearings.

Fairy Tales

IT seems to me that the younger generation is very well catered for over the air these days, in play as well as in work. There is *Just William* for the boys, and *Anne of Green Gables* for the girls (though I have a sneaking suspicion that many of the boys and girls prefer the more orthodox thrills of "The Grey Shadow" and his confederates); Bryan O'Brien tells a pretty tale; the story of *Silver Wolf* at present being broadcast is reminiscent of Jack London's "White Fang," and almost as good. But the prize, I think, for juvenile entertainment goes to the Great Gildersleeve for his fairy tales. These are the good old stock tales—"Puss in Boots" was the last I heard—but with a difference: they are told in the current American idiom. So when the Princess, for instance, asks Papa if the miller's son may ride in their coach with them, the King says: "Sure, my dear. Shove over!" This is not, however, done to excess. The original story is still all there, and there is an element of spontaneity in the telling which appeals particularly. The modern child, so familiar with the American idiom from comics and films, will have little difficulty in appreciating it. And, after all, they still live happily ever after.

Boston Pops

ARTHUR FIEDLER, whose name has been linked with that of the Boston Promenade Orchestra for nearly 20 years, was formerly a member of the Boston Symphony and has himself played the violin, viola, celeste, organ, and piano. In 1929 he organised the now famous free outdoor concerts which attracted thousands by their informality. He will be heard with the Boston Promenade Orchestra in a short recorded recital from 2ZB on July 15, at 9.30 a.m.

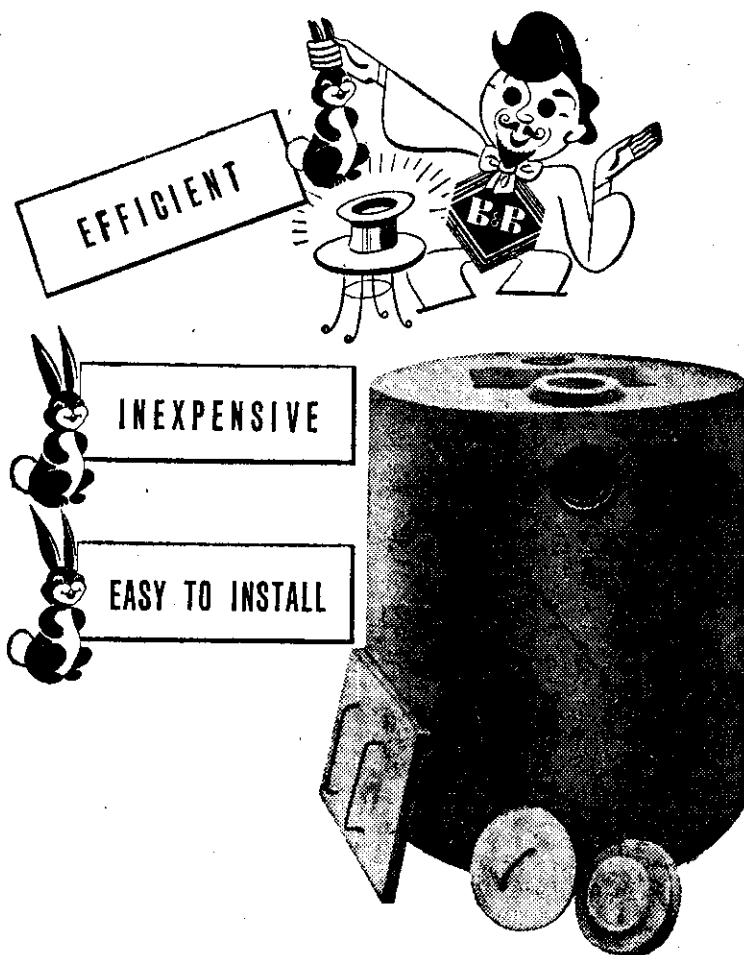
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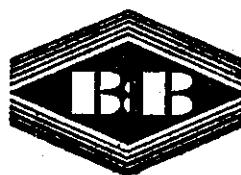
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