

RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Talent from Auckland

SOME excellent recitals have been given recently from 4YA by the visiting Auckland pianist Tessa Birnie. One recital consisted of the Mozart Sonata in C, K.330. This performance was brilliantly clear and scintillating, and revealed the pianist as perfectly sure of her technique; Mozart is one composer with whom no liberties are permissible in performance, where the slightest flaw will show with undue prominence, but Miss Birnie managed the sonata with artistry and ease. Her Chopin recital was also brilliant, which came as a surprise—although there are many of our pianists whose technical equipment is equal to either composer, it is unusual to find one whose catholicity of taste provides for the interpretation of two composers as diverse in their appeal as Mozart and Chopin. Miss Birnie performs Chopin with fire and dash, but does not spoil the more romantic passages by an over-sentimental use of that dangerous and two-edged tool, *tempo rubato*. I should like to hear this pianist again, and will watch for her future recitals.

Well Made, N.Z.

I WAS unfortunately prevented from hearing the first episodes of *The Story of Words and Music*, and so was unable to commend this programme until it came to its last appearance. This series was produced and written locally and was heard from the 4YA studios. It owed its success to many factors, not the least of which was the careful choice of a small but compact and balanced group of singers, capable of fine solo work where necessary. Bertha Rawlinson achieved splendid results in the formation of this group, the Studio Singers, and it is to be hoped that they will be heard again soon. Gil Dech was the accompanist, and the narrator was Roland Watson. The theme *Long, Long Ago* opened the session, preparing listeners for the general atmosphere of the programme, which consisted mainly of traditional British airs interspersed with ballads of a rather nostalgic and old-fashioned type. Let it not be thought that I despise the ballad, the best examples of which can be invested with glamour by a good singer; but I much preferred the choir's renderings of traditional airs, especially of the genuine folk-songs, which never go out of fashion because of the intrinsic beauty and taste of their spontaneous melodies. *Words and Music* was an example of a really good light programme, put together with careful attention to detail. More of the same sort will be welcome.

Unconvincing

A RADIO play set in a court room has a very good chance of success. The dramatic element is prefabricated, and whereas monotony may threaten the film of the stage play from the single setting and the stress on saying rather than doing, these are positive advantages in the radio version. But even with all this help from prefabrication the result can still be jerry-built and "Libel" the *Radio Theatre* play which I heard from 2YA on a recent Friday,

seemed to me somewhat shakily constructed. The early part of the play was definitely exciting. Brick by brick the evidence was piled up against Sir Mark Lodden (Gent. or impostor? was the question asked by the *Evening Mail*). By the end of Act II. or equivalent it was obvious that he could only get out of it if the long arm of coincidence was stretched till the joints cracked, but even this would have been preferable to the expedient resorted to by the author of allowing all the witnesses against Sir Mark to be presumed suborned. (Two of them were purely temporary gentlemen in His Majesty's colonial forces, as opposed to the innate gentlemanliness of Sir Mark). The hero, leaving the courtroom without a blot on his escutcheon, was accorded a tremendous ovation, but I was too busy searching among the jettisoned evidence for some shreds of substantiated fact round which I could build up the picture of what actually happened to signify my approval in the usual manner.

No Cure for Colds

NEVER SNEEZE AGAIN, an NZBS production, proved, as the title suggested, to be a light and bright play about a young experimenter who found a cure for the common cold. At least, listeners were led to believe it a cure until the last few minutes, when even the inventor of it falls victim to a fit of the inevitable sneezes. The cast made a fast-paced and entertaining thing out of this comedy, and it was not their fault that the end of the play fell a little flat. Indeed, no players could have made a convincing effect of that ending, with the heroine suddenly adopting leap-year tactics while the hero is merely permitted to sneeze. I thought the author could have made something more out of the theme. I don't mean that I wanted it treated as one of those Dramas of Medicine, but having introduced the big bold Financier, why not do something really dramatic with the situation, instead of allowing it to fizzle out as Scientist Wed's Financier's Daughter? I suppose it is unfair of me, however, to criticise the play itself for being a different kind of play from the one I wanted it to be! But I felt that, in making the new Cold Cure a flop in the denouement of the play, the author had neatly side-stepped a problem, the further treatment of which might have yielded richly satirical results—namely, what the patent-medicine combine would really have done had the cheap and available Cold Cure been a success instead of a failure.



Feet of Clay

J. C. REID'S last talk in his *By-Paths of Literature* series from 2YA was as full of shocking revelations as the front page of *News of the World*. His subject was "Plagiarism in High Places" and to the satisfactory thud of the mighty falling was added the raspberry of the windily virtuous being forcibly deflated. For, if we are to believe Mr. Reid (and he has never given us cause to doubt



"D'ya feel uncomfortable, mum...I hope?"



BABY: Remember now what it's like to be a baby, Mum!

MUM: Whew—what a life babies do lead! People doing this to you—that to you—and so many things to make your skin scratchy and irritated!

BABY: My complaint exactly, Mum. Guess now you're in the mood to listen—when I yell for Johnson's Baby Cream and Johnson's Baby Powder!

MUM: You bet I am—just ask me!

BABY: Please may I have some nice, pure Johnson's Baby Cream, to smooth over me and help prevent what my Doctor calls "urine irritation"? And, please, some soft, smooth Johnson's Powder, for times when chafes and prickles bother me?

MUM: Lamb—from now on, I'll do right by you!



BABY: You and Johnson's, Mum! Just wait till you see how those smoothers-uppers agree with my pink pelt!

Safe for Baby—Safe for You

Johnson's Baby Powder
Johnson's Baby Cream
Johnson's Baby Soap

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