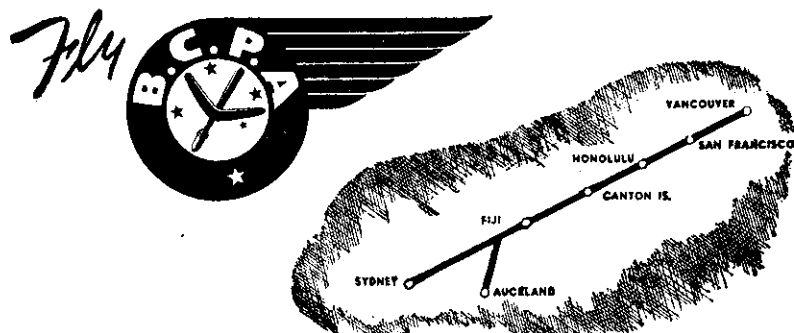


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RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Good Work By All

THE 4YA broadcast of the whole of Bizet's *Carmen* from the stage of His Majesty's Theatre, Dunedin, was a highly exciting affair. In the first place, Janet Howe as Carmen and Arthur Servent as Don José were both strong in their roles. Mr. Servent portrayed Don José with subtlety, reaching, in the final scene, heights of impassioned drama. Miss Howe, as Carmen, gave the outstanding performance, her every entry being infused with fire and animation, and her creation of the Gipsy coming over the air with fervour and vigour. Certainly the production owed a great deal to the presence of these two overseas soloists, but had they not been supported by strong local effort the effect of the presentation would have been top-heavy. As it was, no such discrepancy was noticeable. The local soloists were a very firm support; especial mention must be made of Bryan Drake's performance as the dashing and romantic Escamillo, a role out of which he got every ounce of bravado, and of Dora Drake's sensitive and beautiful portrayal of Michaela. The chorus, trained by John T. Leech, was fine in volume and balance, and sure of its music. And of course, from the listener's point of view, the work of the National Orchestra was one of the most impressive features of a performance which came over the air with splendid brilliance and colour, in spite of the fact that the radio audience is denied the help of visual aid. The Dunedin season of *Carmen* has drawn packed audiences, but until we are informed of the financial outcome it is too soon to say whether the venture could pay for itself. Let's hope the enthusiasm over this short operatic season will mean a continued local interest in the performances of operatic music, and that if it can be done once it can be done again. In spite of the obvious difficulties of a local performance, and the admitted fact that a local performance, however good, is still not Covent Garden, yet the obvious enthusiasm of audiences does indicate that more such ventures would be welcome and well supported.

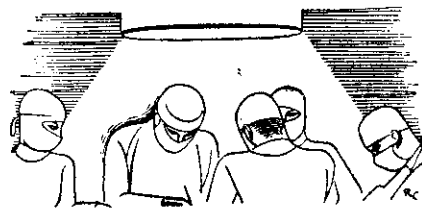
Authors and Critics

FINE stimulating entertainment is to be found in a session, *The Reader Takes Over*, a BBC discussion, of which I heard two different examples from 4YA and 3YA. This programme introduces a group of four; one member is a professional critic, who is supported by two non-professional people, and these three are confronted with a selected author. As can be imagined, the conversation is enlivening. In the 4YA programme, the author was Louis Golding, author of *Magnolia Street*, who had the dubious pleasure of hearing his critics inform him of his faults and virtues, of their reasons for liking his work, and what type of author they thought him. Golding, besides replying to all the criticisms, also provided listeners with a penetrating analysis of the mind of the author in general, and of the particular type of author which he considered himself to be. He did it all with excellent good nature and a consideration as calm as though some other writer, and not he

himself, were the focus of attention. In the 3YA programme C. E. M. Joad, as the author, proved equally good-natured but not so calm, and his volatile rebounding to the attack caused this discussion to wax fast and furious. After hearing both of these programmes, I had a delightful but I suppose impracticable vision of the extension of the principle of critical discussion to other fields of creative endeavour, and I wondered what would happen should any of our local radio performers, for instance, be selected to appear before the microphone, facing the concentrated attack of three critics at once!

Story of Anaesthetics

THERE was inspiration in Mrs. Freed's choice of topic "The Story of Anaesthetics" for her new morning talk series from 2YA, for there is just



sufficient of the medical flavour about it to lure listeners and, once lured, they will find it hard to get away, even though Mrs. Freed has been unable to produce first-hand accounts of "My Operation—Before and After." Instead we have Messrs. Wells, Morton and Jackson, treated as biographies rather than case-histories, an amputation or two (but strictly in the background), a touching bedside-scene with a repentant Morton proclaiming his discovery to the four winds rather than earn a fortune and humanity's opprobrium, and a delightful character called Ebenezer Frost, Morton's first patient, who came to Morton's door with bandaged face "in that stage of mingled hope and consternation so familiar to all dental surgeons." But I feel the best is yet to come. We are not nearly up to Queen Victoria, and I am looking forward to hearing a detailed account of that physician-turned-theologian, Dr. James Y. Simpson.

Citizens' Forum

THE other night the 4ZB *Citizens' Forum* tackled the vexed and recurring question "Is the Radio Serial Bad for Our Children?" This problem has been a topic of controversy among teachers and parents in the very recent past; and as D. Forsyth, chairman of the Forum, is a prominent member of Dunedin's teaching community, his was an important and well-informed voice in the discussion. He was able, while not being one of the principal speakers, to put before the meeting a few points on behalf of the radio stations which those stations weren't able to voice themselves—mainly the point that the worst of the adults-only type of serials are now scheduled to appear in the programmes after eight o'clock. This

(continued on next page)