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RADIO VIEWSREEL What Our Commentators Say

Music in the Morning

AS a penance for my sin in picking the profession I did I am sometimes at home in the mornings during the week. The printed programmes are frequently not very precise about exactly what music is being played in the mornings, but a fairly wide experience of them has led me to be a regular listener to the 9.4 a.m. 3YA session. There one may always hear some



really interesting music, though no system seems to operate in the arrangement of the programmes, which are quite varied as to composer, performer, and period. Nor are unusual works offered; old friends may be met every morning. If I am away all week, and home on Saturday, however, I look in vain for this half-hour. Instead of it I find a session called *Dusting the Shelves*, a resurrection of discs which have died, usually of sheer musical debility. It seems as though 3YA's programme organiser, who has a high opinion of the musical taste of listeners during the week, thinks it slumps badly on Saturday.

Wasted Opportunity

I FOUND the two recent Home Science talks from 2YA *What Is Colour?* somewhat colourless. I should have welcomed something a little more philosophical, something a little more scientific, even something a little more entertaining. There was no attempt to answer the question posed in the title and the two talks merely concerned themselves with relating a few broad facts about the history of various colours. (Brown was the earth-colour, sacred to Ceres, hence worn by peasants and subsequently landgirls. Green had camouflage value in forests, hence was worn by outlaws, e.g., Robin Hood, and so considered unlucky and even to-day not very popular.) I felt very strongly that it needs no grad. from the Home Science faculty to tell us this. And I mourned the opportunities lost for learning what colour is. I should even have been grateful to learn where the colours in my paint box come from, quite apart from the theory about the eye of the beholder. Then something quite practical about spectrums and home-decorating would not have come amiss. And the whole, for entertainment's sake could have been garnished with informed comment on The Red Menace, The Wearing of the Green, Blue-stockings, Brown Studies, and Mood Indigo.

Dido and Aeneas

WHETHER seeing an opera actually performed (*Carmen*, I need hardly specify) has quickened my interest in opera, or whether *Dido and Aeneas* is

especially delightful, I certainly enjoyed my hour of opera from 2YA last Sunday. Possibly the comparatively simple and well-known plot makes *Dido and Aeneas* particularly suitable for broadcasting, since it reduces commentary to a minimum; and then again there is a lot to be said for an English opera which has not had to pass through the paws of translators. In spite of its locale *Dido and Aeneas* has little of the Mediterranean flamboyance, the typically Southern vehemence, of Bizet's *Carmen*. It seems wood wind to *Carmen's* brass. Its passion is sensed more remotely, and the audience listens as Wordsworth listened to his Highland reaper. I was struck throughout by the objective quality of Purcell's music, the discipline that makes the composer sacrifice dramatic verisimilitude to the tyranny of tunefulness. A Stravinsky or a Shostakovich could have let loose fearsome discords to herald the powers of darkness, Purcell's witches express themselves in cascades of sweet sounds not unbecoming his shepherdesses, and the Demon Ballet is conjured up to music which a church organist would not scorn to play as a voluntary.

Music at the Fair

FOR musical entertainment which comes under the amorphous category "light," and yet has good intrinsic value as music, the BBC-produced features take some beating. *Britain in Music*, an example of this type of programme, consists of traditional airs played and sung by the BBC Theatre Orchestra and Chorus, with a narrative of very slight thematic import connecting the various items. With a good orchestra and chorus, and one or two tuneful solo voices, a well-produced feature has been made out of what would otherwise be disconnected songs. I'm not sure that simple traditional airs need all this "atmosphere"; at least as far as the musician is concerned, they can stand alone as concert items without loss of beauty or effect; but the reason for tying them together with a descriptive narrative evidently was to present a connected picture of "Britain in Music" (in this case, a country fair and its surroundings). This was a picture of a Britain which, musically speaking, must largely be a thing of the past—more's the pity. There may be out-of-the-way hamlets where gaffers chant "Green-sleeves" over their pints of ale, but such anachronisms must be rare. I imagine the average citizen of Britain, like the average New Zealander, is more familiar with the latest and crudest hit from Tin Pan Alley than with any of the lovely traditional airs which are the heritage of both countries, but which remain alive to-day mainly owing to the efforts of collectors like Terry Sharpe, the Kennedy-Frasers, and Percy Grainger.

Inwardness

STATION 3YA broadcast a recording of a most stimulating talk by Thomas Mann on Sunday of last week. Mann, who would be the despair of the Hollywood moguls if they had ever

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