

better cast, surely, was ever assembled for a radio production, nor any two actors so suited to their parts as those who played the composer and playwright; third, the script was so well managed that it might be offered to anyone wishing to learn the secrets of a successful radio production. I am aware that other commentators have already praised these productions, but I must express my own interest and pleasure in a series so dramatic, humorous, and exhilarating. I awaited each episode with the anticipation of any serial-fan, and didn't miss one of the series—and I think this is a record for me, as far as the process of following up a radio series is concerned. The listener who wrote to praise *Gilbert and Sullivan*, as an antidote to carping criticism, need not fear that any commentator will fail to recognise either the genius of Gilbert and Sullivan or the expertness of the production dealing with their great partnership.

### Warm, But Weak

I AM always willing to sample a new brew, but I found that *Afternoon Tea with Eleanor*, from 4YA, wasn't as well-made a cup as I could have wished; however, I judged it from one sip only, and future tasting may reveal a different flavour. Eleanor's session is labelled "For the Scottish Housewife"; it is introduced by some lively modern music with a Scottish-airs sound, and the speaker's voice has a charming hint of Scotland also. The programme which I heard consisted of two extracts with a similar background—an account of the woollen goods and hosiery turned out in a Scottish town (this piece was nicely calculated, with its descriptions of tweeds and woollen materials of delightful colour and design, to arouse the envy of the majority of New Zealand housewives), and another equally interesting account dealing with a Scottish worker in metalcraft and woodcarving. It was a pity that Eleanor didn't put her good material and her rather "different" voice to better use. Instead, the rattling of pages and her rather flat delivery, with a few hesitant slips, revealed the fact that she was merely reading her notes and gave the session the suggestion of a lecture-room. Had it been presented with the impromptu gusto of some other sessions addressed to women (sessions whose sole merit, often, is the informality with which their announcers impart a great deal of practically useless information), this particular tea-cup session would be of appeal to women whose intelligence demands something more than recipes for sponge cake and beauty treatments.

### Film Music

WHEN I listened to "Music in British Films" from 4YA, the programme happened to deal with the 1939-41 period, and inevitably the main feature of the session was the Warsaw Concerto. Even the brilliant playing of Louis Kentner couldn't disguise the fact that this is mere background music, of greater appeal to those who have seen *Dangerous Moonlight* than to those, like myself, who haven't. But this programme, and similar ones which I have heard over the air, continue to prove the fact of the vast and rapid expansion of the field of film music. Remem-

ber the old days when the long-suffering pianist, coldly stationed in a dark corner down by the front stalls, was obliged to manufacture entire scores for the silent films week after week? And the days of theatre orchestras, when most feature films were ushered in with "Light Cavalry" or "Morning, Noon and Night?" Nowadays music is tailored to fit the film, and put together by experts. When composers like Ireland and Vaughan Williams are pleased to write for the films, the result bears little resemblance to the patchwork cutting and hacking of existing scores which previously did duty for all manner of silent and early talking films. But a doubt creeps in when music by not-so-expert composers is played too often on the radio. The listener sometimes feels that certain works would have been better left on the sound-track for which they were originally intended. It is only a composer of first rank who can write a work to order, to illustrate a particular film, and yet ensure that the same work will be able to hold its own without benefit of visible illustration in the concert-hall or on the radio.

### Balanced Singing

A GROUP of well-balanced and well-trained singers, introduced as the "4YA Studio Singers," recently gave a very pleasant half-hour programme consisting of Celtic Songs and Tales, the most effective of which, I thought, were the Hebridean folk-songs. No amount of repetition seems to stale the freshness of the appeal of these lovely melodies. These programmes from 4YA, of small choral groups in a series of recitals, have previously been most successful, and under the direction of Bertha Rawlinson and Meda Paine some programmes of great interest and high standard have been given. The Celtic programme was directed by John T. Leech, and I hope that it may be the first of a new series. I have always wondered at the musical mentality of those who like Massed Choirs, Massed Bands, and so on, as though the larger the group, the greater the effect. Large choral groups can be most unwieldy and seldom repay the conductor with any detailed nicety of singing. Especially are such groups ineffective on the radio, where difficulties of broadcasting from a large hall combine often to give a ragged and unsatisfactory effect. Station 4YA is to be congratulated, therefore, on the encouragement of compact groups of singers who can perform under studio conditions, whose voices can be chosen especially for blend and quality, and whose programmes can be especially arranged to fit the schedule of the evening's broadcasts.

### Raw Materials

ACTING is an odd and mysterious art. The materials of the actor's craft are not, as in the other arts, paint or stone or music, but his own body and face and voice and personality.—Norman Marshall in the BBC series *The Theatre in London*.

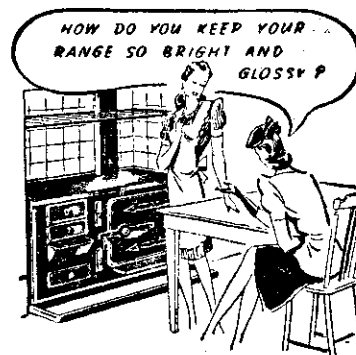


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