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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### King's English in Parts

A NEW feature has recently appeared in Friday night's light programme from 4YA—*Songs for Sale*, presented from the studio by the Melody Maids. Now I am no connoisseur of popular song-hits, old or new; but I found the Melody Maids very refreshing. To begin with, their voices are tuneful, and blend as nicely as a well-mixed cocktail. They sing in parts, it is true, but never to the extinction of a recognisable melody. Their songs are chosen for melody, and the inclusion of some very old tunes (old, that is, so far as popular song-hits are concerned), is a blessing rather than the opposite. Lastly, these girls sing the King's English, their words being completely audible and pronounced in the pleasant accent of the educated, and it is surprising what a difference this small point can make to any popular song heard on the radio. Possibly, to those who like their songs rendered with a strong pseudo-American flavouring, this session may seem too sweet and sentimental, but to me it seems a pleasant oasis in an otherwise dusty desert.

### A National Theatre

IF I had to answer the question "Should we have a live theatre?" I would say promptly "Yes!" But for a more detailed and less impromptu analysis of the issues involved, a discussion by experts is not only welcome but necessary. The members of the discussion-group which deal with this topic in 4ZB *Citizens' Forum* were well-informed on the subject, and brimful of a National Theatre. The vision described by these idealists showed a future long hoped for by many of us—a flourishing theatre company of our own, playing to packed audiences in town and country alike. But when they came to what sort of theatre we want, whether we should import overseas actors, whether the Government would have to provide a subsidy and to what extent, whether John Citizen would object if he were taxed for it, whether the company would begin by playing to town or country, the members of the discussion-group, being in various stages of disagreement, provided a lively controversy.

### Clarinet and Strings

THE recent performance from 2YA of the Mozart Clarinet Quintet by George Hopkins and the Cambridge String Quartet was a pleasure to listen to. Mr. Hopkins' impeccable tone and suave phrasing set the key for what I thought the finest broadcast of this popular work ever given by local players. His disregard of the disjointed phrasing imposed on the clarinet part by meddling editors gave an interpretation which seemed to be really Mozartian. The strings played well, the viola being particularly good; some weaknesses of ensemble will undoubtedly be ironed out by further playing together. It was unfortunate that the repeats in the variations of the last movement were not taken, for without them the change from one variation to another is too rapid. Moreover, a miscalculation in the tempo of this move-

ment seemed to me evident. A set of strict formal variations of Mozart's time does not admit of sudden unmarked changes of speed from one variation to another. The last movement was started so fast that an abrupt and disconcerting change of tempo had to be taken at the viola variation. Surely it is this variation which sets the tempo for the whole movement?

### Flute Music

I HEARD recently from 1YA the latest broadcast by James Hopkinson, a new flautist of the National Orchestra, who evidently takes his instrument seriously. The flute is a difficult instrument with which to hold the attention by purely musical, and not digital, means, but Mr. Hopkinson succeeds well. It is to be hoped that he will inspire other wind players in the National Orchestra to form groups to give us some of the unrecorded and unheard delights of wind music: there are some glorious Mozart divertimenti crying out for performance. Unusual combinations are not only for keeping warm in the orchestral pit.



### Good Questions, Good Answers

SPEAKING for myself, I liked the *Speaking for Ourselves* session I heard from 2YA on August 23, since all three factors, Chairman, speakers, questions, seemed particularly well adapted to their environment. The questions were concrete—and yet elastic: e.g. "Have any discoveries or inventions been entirely beneficial to mankind?" "Will the world food shortage be permanently overcome?" "Name your favourite fiction writer, past and present, and give reasons." The speakers spoke up like men, and answered the questions in the spirit in which they were asked. There was none of this business of stripping off the flesh in order to worry the bone ("It all depends on what you mean by fiction"), nor any tendency to let the conversational ball roll beyond the limits of listeners' interest or comprehension. And, above all, a sense of leisure pervaded the session. There was no hustling to push on to the next topic (possibly the fact that I had just been listening to 2ZB's *Answer Please* made me the more conscious of this), and speakers and Chairman had ample opportunity to stop and crack an anecdote (one of which I had heard before) as they reclined at ease on the edge of the conversational stream.

### Monday Morning

MONDAY morning talks from 2YA seem to be selected on the Lucky Dip principle, and those strong feminists who object to the W. certificate were possibly gratified by the inclusion

(continued on next page)

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