

RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Three Masters

SOMETIMES one wonders on what principle, if any, the compositions on the hour's music from the YC stations on Sunday are chosen. On Sunday, September 12, however, 2YC broadcast a delightfully chosen hour of masterpieces not only of composition, but of playing and recording. Mozart's Oboe Quartet is a glorious work, whose playing by Leon Goossens and three of the Lener Quartet is an object lesson in exquisite phrasing and polished style. No less notable is the recording by Kell and the Busch Quartet of the Brahms Clarinet Quintet, though after their passionate treatment of the first movement the speed of the second always seems to me just a trifle on the slow side. To introduce these two works by Evelyn Rothwell playing the oboe in a Corelli Concerto was a happy idea.

Antiquated Newness

I THOROUGHLY enjoyed 2YA's Home Science talk on "20th Century Fashions"—a homey blend of the nostalgic and the commonsensical. Now I am used to common sense from the Home Science faculty, but it is seldom they pick a topic which gives such scope to their undoubted sensibility, sensibility proved by the fact that they pointed no finger of scorn at the quaint figures we cut in the years between the wars. "Do you remember the year we all wore crownless hats?" asked the speaker, and sure enough, I did remember, though that particular Easter bonnet would otherwise never have risen to the status of a memory. When it came to the New Look, however, sense was encouraged at the expense of sensibility. "What is this New Look anyway?" demanded the speaker, and proceeded to analyse it ruthlessly (the longer length of 1934, the Victorian tippet, back-interest from the bustle-era), thus proving herself spiritually akin to Solomon and to Marie Antoinette's milliner, who is said to have said that there is nothing new except what has become antiquated. And the speaker's assumption that her listeners would placidly bide their time till fashion's pendulum swung back was flattering in its assumption that we too were women of sense who would neither leap nor new-look.

Two at a Time

A COUPLE of weeks ago in the Friday night talk from 2YA A. T. Zeigler told me that I Too Could Learn to Appreciate the Drama. He was quite right. Last Sunday found me firmly tuned to 2ZB, where I proceeded to enjoy, first, *No Flowers for Carmen* (NZBS) and *Talking of Tight-Ropes* from the studios of the BBC. *No Flowers for Carmen* was a better-than-average thriller about a prima donna found drugged just before the performance, with suspicion falling heavily upon her dresser, her understudy, and her Don José. The average listener would enjoy having the atmosphere so cunningly built up with the aid of something that the taxpayer in him would be glad to know were recordings of the NZBS *Carmen*. As for *Talking*

of *Tight Ropes* I don't suppose I am likely to hear anything else that brings a circus so far into the living room. The story of Lou, the tightrope "artiste" who loses her nerve, is tragic-comedy, but it is set against an ever-so-slightly burlesqued background of circus life which does for the Ring what *A Bullet* did for the Ballet. ("Put away that gun—it shoots straight," the sideshow proprietor hisses to his mate.) The fact that both plays were heard from the same station on the same evening convinces me that there is such a thing as lavish programme arrangement.

Spectator Sports

ONE speaker in 2YA's Monday night discussion "Are New Zealanders Too Keen on Sport?" had some harsh words to say about the non-participant, the onlooker whose only part is "to criticise those who play, those who administer the sport, and those who referee it."



It was a barb which struck rather too near the nerve for my liking. For what else is the commentator who, sitting cosily by his fireside, knows nothing of the sweat and strain that have gone into the making of a programme, but is merely selfishly concerned with his own enjoyment or aesthetic satisfaction? In fact, he is actually a lower form of life than the befagged spectator lolling on the terraces who shouts "Get a sack" to the flannelled fool, or "Orfside" to the oaf, for the spectator sport at any rate lays himself open to being laid for by supporters of the other team. The commentator, skulking behind his anonymity, risks nothing. It is unfortunate that he is also denied the satisfaction of seeing his barbs strike home.

Plot That Failed

THE British talent for documentary is perhaps allied to the national preference for understatement, the willingness to let the facts speak for themselves without bothering to wring every available drop of emotional stimulus from them. What makes *The Plot Against Hitler* (heard from 2ZB on a recent Sunday), such an impressive documentary is that there are so many facts, almost all of them new ones or at any rate recently discovered ones. Trevor Roper has taken these facts and arranged them skilfully to form a pattern of inevitability. He does not fall into the tempting error of ascribing the failure of the plot to bad luck and bad strategy on the part of the conspirators at the actual time of the bomb placing, but agrees with a fellow-countryman's summing-up of von Stauffenberg as a revolutionary without the support of the people. My chief

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