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Home Service. Thus does the BBC deal with a new work which it believes to have more than ordinary value, and to be worth concentrated re-hearing.

The score works magic with its handful of players. Not without the latest tricks; for instance the flautist has to flutter his tongue in Polly's song "The turtle thus with plaintive crying," and underneath "The Charge is prepared" the timpani do *glissandi*! (The taps being turned before the note dies). And there is a synthetic deathbell which as Mr. Stuart says is "a triumph of orchestral chemistry."

There are also older and more venerable devices. Canon and ground bass work in new ways, and Britten's solution to the problem of the scene in the condemned hold overcomes the seemingly impossible with self-evident logic; in this scene, according to the text, Macheath must run through 10 little fragments of tunes, mere bits and pieces, with only a line or so of lamenting between them. Britten has bound them all together into one composition with great ingenuity, but something more than that too; by making the scene sound like a *passacaglia*, with interludes, he has given it great emotional force.

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NOT the least of the pleasures attending the first appearance of a thing like Britten's new *Beggar's Opera*, is the fun of watching the squabble afterwards. Dyneley Hussey, music critic to the BBC *Listener*, said he felt Britten's counterpoints often got in the way of the tunes, and that possibly English ears, to which these melodies are as woodnotes wild, cannot attune themselves to Britten's notions of propriety in the harmonisation, "which appear to be based on arid foreign theories."

Well, perhaps the counterpoints do get in the way of the tunes; but the tunes, if they had to be always clear, might well "get in the way" of Britten's composition, which is a thing with a life of its own, and a life by no means unrelated to what John Gay intended. However, this was not the answer made by Hans Keller, a correspondent writing from remote S.E.24, who began by saying he hoped to be allowed to comment on Mr. Hussey's criticism "despite the fact that I have not seen the score" and then offered a spectacular display of what one might call the seeing ear. Here is an extract from his letter—a letter by a writer who had not seen the score:

"'Tis woman that seduces all mankind' is in a markedly traditional B flat major, and 'Cease your fanning' pursues an undisturbed F major course. The same can be said of the C major of 'Youth's the season,' unless Mr. Hussey considers its G-A-B flat A-figure (an inversion of the tune's second motif) a destroyer of its diatonic delicacy. . . . Mr. Hussey's remark on 'accompaniments in different keys' is also misleading. The accompaniment to 'Let us take the road' is clearly in B flat major, and the whole point of the simultaneous horn calls in D flat major is that they are not part of the accompaniment. . . .

In the *Radio Times*, too, the fight wages, though with blunter claws. Here, the plain man expresses himself as well as may be, calls the four broadcasts "a waste of time," or thanks the BBC, according to camp.



"DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION"
Grant Wood's realist painting is scheduled under "Critics of Society"

ART IS MANY THINGS

GONE, it seems, are the days when Auckland had one art exhibition a year, under the umbrella of the Society of Arts—an annual bean-feast at which the dead level of conformity was relieved only by the work of one or two timid "revolutionaries." We are becoming more used to the idea that art is diverse; and we are beginning to realise the need for the formation of groups with common sympathies, as well as for the maintaining of the central meeting-ground provided by the Society of Arts.

Within the past month or two there have been five shows in Auckland. First there was the Rutland Group annual exhibition, which as usual contained a substantial body of good work. There is no doubt about the talents of the Rutland painters, nor about their achievement, which has been considerable. Collectively, they have advanced the standard of painting in Auckland many notches ahead of that which obtained twenty years ago. In their

recent exhibitions, however, a certain sameness has become evident, a tendency to be repetitious.

In October a new constellation appeared in the heavens—an association of ten artists calling themselves the "New Group." Their first show was held in the Auckland Art Gallery. Here again there was evidence of very good talent, working this time within fairly circumscribed limits. The emphasis was placed strongly on draughtsmanship—and, to be honest, when I took a first glance round the walls I had the impression of being in the senior life class of a first-rate art school. It is a good thing that some emphasis should be placed on solid draughtsmanship; and the "New Group" will supply a useful element in the pattern of diversity that is (one hopes) being established.

Opportunities and Dangers

Some of the members of this group are on the threshold of their careers. Others are painters of many years' experience. If the Group can help a young artist of such remarkable promise as Peter Brown to develop his talent,

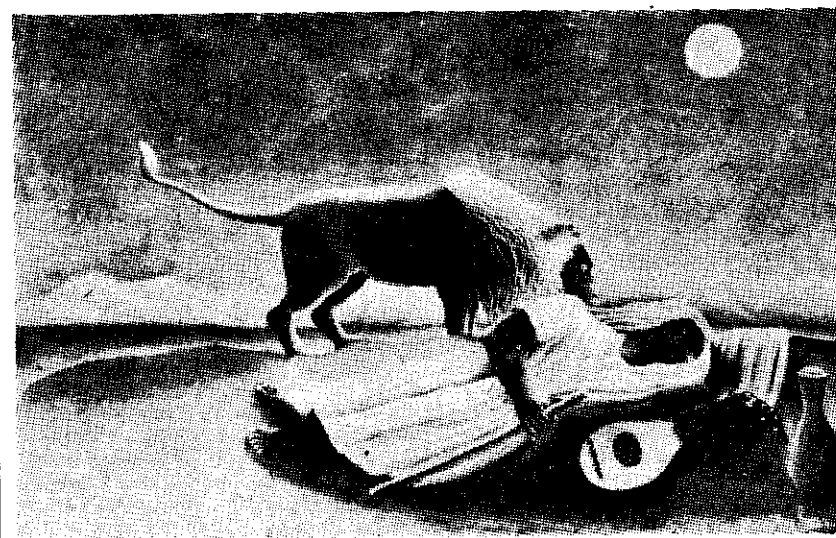
Some comments on five recent Auckland shows written for "The Listener" by
A. R. D. FAIRBURN

it will justify its existence. Brown is, I think, a painter of quite outstanding ability. If, however, the "programme" of the New Group is allowed to harden into dogmatism and produce a rigid orthodoxy, it may easily catch some young painters as flies are caught in amber. The formation of other groups, with equally serious intentions, but with quite different aims, is necessary if this danger is to be avoided.

It is unfortunate that the Fellowship of New Zealand Artists, another group exhibiting at present in the Auckland Art Gallery, shows such little promise of fulfilling this function. Some painters with natural talent are to be found among the members of the group; but the works shown are for the most part dull and inconsequential. There is a great deal of sentimentality in the choice of subjects, and very little evidence of any understanding of the nature of art. I cannot imagine the Fellowship providing a seed-bed for any new and important developments; nor can I imagine that any young artist will gain by attaching himself to it. Of the paintings exhibited I remember most clearly a large portrait of a bullock (head only), which seemed in a vague way to be a symbol of the whole exhibition. However, if people like painting pictures, and exhibiting them for the benefit of their friends, there is no earthly reason why they shouldn't do so. We must be tolerant. I think the policy of the director of the Gallery, in throwing it open to exhibitions of all kinds, is entirely praiseworthy. (Kipling, you will remember, somewhere "thanks God for the diversity of his creatures.")

Talent and Vigour

Another show that has aroused some interest is the one held by D. Knight Turner in the Society of Arts rooms.
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"MYSTERY and Magic"—Rousseau's "The Sleeping Gypsy"