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17.48

RADIO VIEWSREEL

What Our Commentators Say

Well Planned

THE planning of programmes of short pieces must be one of the most difficult things the programme organiser has to do. It is only when one sees an example of really good planning that one realises what a hodge-podge programmes frequently are. A recent 1YA programme was a lovely example of a well-arranged set of items: it revolved around Cimarosa and Telemann on the instrumental side, with two of the finest pieces of recorded wood-wind playing I have heard by Leon Goossens and William Kinkaid (of the celebrated platinum flute). The two singing groups were fitted in to this period like a glove, with Purcell, Scarlatti, Haydn and Bach. The charm of music of this kind is perennial; the hearing of a programme like this is a healing balm.

Fifty Years Ago

FIVE minutes is not too long a time to spend each day in contemplation of the past, particularly of the past that has a bearing upon our present. I am hoping to be a constant listener to the new series from 2YA *To-day in N.Z. History*, which aims at providing a significant date to console us for the everydayness of every day. The series began last Friday with "First-Footing on the Tasman Glacier" and related the exploit of Von Haast and his son-in-law Dobson, the first white men to set foot on the Tasman Glacier, on April 1, 1862. This was followed by a brief summary of Von Haast's career, a few general remarks on the hill-country by farmers of the period (including a quotation from Samuel Butler), and finally a few remarks on the Tasman Glacier to-day, eliciting by implication our gratitude to the discoverers. Saturday featured an earlier April 2's Siege of Orakau, Sunday led us to take a glimpse of the country's early surveying problems, and the career of John Turnbull Thomson, to whom Southland owes its Oxburn, Pigburn, and Cockburn, names put forward in a moment of pique by the surveyor when the Council rejected his list of euphonious Maori names as too hard to pronounce. The columns so beloved of daily papers "Fifty Years Ago in the Clarion" are justly popular with readers. *To-day in N.Z. History*, with its wider field to draw from and a conscientious and scholarly approach by its compilers, should be both popular and profitable listening.



player. A delightful example of how to present light music was recently given by Leela Bloy in a broadcast of violin music from 2YA. Miss Bloy is always a clean and neat violinist, and this time she played a group of light solos with the same care and attention to detail and lack of exaggeration that she had previously given to more serious music. The result was a freshness that put new life into some old bones.

Good-bye to G. and S.

I HAVE just come sadly to the end of the repeat performances of the BBC *Gilbert and Sullivan* programme, now finished from 2ZB, but not I trust to be buried beyond hope of exhumation. It seemed to me that in the series almost as close harmony was achieved between biography and musical illustration as in the operas themselves between words and music—this was one of the few occasions when I did not begrudge the fact that song must yield place while half-finished to biography, since the biography cast such necessary illumination on the song-making. It was a rare achievement also to leave the listener at the end of the six episodes as kindly disposed towards Gilbert as towards the more endearing Sullivan, in a fit state of mind to forgive Gilbert for being in the right (unlike the Good Queen) about Sullivan's true *métier*. It is difficult to depict the quarrels of famous men without making the protagonists a little smaller, but Lesley Bayly managed to make them merely more human, and to leave us feeling grateful that the fundamental differences in character and outlook should have been kept under control long enough for so much good work to be born rather than irritated that such differences ever arose to spoil the unique partnership.

No Soap, Please

I SOMETIMES try to listen to the Sunday Morning Concert at 10.0 a.m. from 2ZB, but though the music always consists of beautiful examples of playing and recording, and the few remarks introducing each little piece are almost invariably well chosen, there is one infuriating characteristic of the broadcast which drives me remorselessly to the switch; while the announcer is speaking



the music is faded in with his voice and continues while he sometimes says three sentences. Then, when he has stopped, one hears the music clearly for the first time after 20 bars or so of the composition have passed. This is the technique of the soap opera, in which

(continued on next page)

The Light Touch

IT is a common mistake to think that serious music demands much preparation, while light music can be dashed off easily. I wouldn't like to say that the reverse is the case, but it is true that much music is of so great an interest as to hold the attention in spite of imperfect presentation. Light music, on the other hand, often shows up with devastating clarity the weaknesses of the



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