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RADIO VIEWSREEL What Our Commentators Say

Awe-inspiring

[I might not seem that the genesis of an engine could prove good broadcasting material, or that such a broadcast would appeal to listeners not of an engineering turn of mind. However, when the particular engine is the jet engine, that remarkable product of man's ingenuity and skill, then even the average listener finds the subject of fascinating interest. It doesn't require any special method of presentation to make such a subject compel attention — the bare facts of the engine's development do that of themselves. But the BBC, which excels in the documentary, has here explained a technical matter in terms any layman can understand, and has, with practised restraint and careful understatement, also given listeners some idea of the years of painstaking work and the heartbreaking hopes and fears before the inventor's final success. The heroine of the production, of course, was "Turbo Jet" herself; representing power in leash, frightening in potentiality, completely awe-inspiring.

Panic

SOMETHING happened in a *For My Lady* session the other morning that I found a little touching. Usually the session goes with a suave if rather flat smoothness. This time a pleasant deep voice (just a trifle bored) began to tell us about the Russian composer Alexander Dargomijsky, and stumbled over the name. That was no bad fault, but having done so once, she panicked, and did it not once again but twice. She also made a bungle of "Notre Dame de Paris," muffed an ordinary English word, and then gave us "Rimsky-Korsakov" with the exaggerated slowness and care of a badly-frightened candidate in an elocution examination. As we seemed to be listening to a record I could not help wondering why the thing had not been scrapped and re-made.

These Russians!

[I isn't often that a technical hitch is appreciated as a source of humour. But it can happen. A voice of rather forced gaiety was telling us, in 4YA's *Musical Comedy Theatre*, about the elaborate preparations for the wedding of Katinka and Boris. The tables, apparently, were laden with wine, food, and vodka—and here, as if to reinforce the effect of such lavishness, the record began to repeat, *Food and vodka! Food and vodka!* until someone at the controls stopped it. We were then told that Katinka didn't really love Boris, whom nevertheless she was about to marry. No, her heart was engaged elsewhere. In secret, she really loved—*Feod and vodka! Feod and vodka! Feod and vodka!* repeated the record exuberantly. After this, unfortunately, somebody really did get at the needle, and ensured that it



continued to run in the orthodox groove till the end. But it is not often that a broadcast is enlivened in such bibulous and delightful fashion. These Russians!

Children's Own

UNCLE ERNEST and Aunt Pamela of 2YA deserve their midwifery certificates for their assistance at the birth of the very bright *Our Very Own* children's session on Saturday nights. The children not only choose what they shall have but administer it to listeners themselves; and in spite of the fact that the three-quarter-hour programme contained three quizzes it did not seem ill-proportioned (Stout work here by Uncle in the background). The session on a recent Saturday opened uncompromisingly with a noises quiz, which the uninformed listener might have mistaken for static, so ear-offending were noises subsequently revealed by the proud comper to be as different as crumpling paper and tearing paper, gargling and eating apples. (Note: We must at all costs discourage our regular announcers from eating apples at the microphone. A sports quiz, a general quiz, a little music (Arthur Askey and Spike Jones) and a recitation made up the session, summed up by Uncle Ernest with, "Well, we didn't have a talk on worms, but it was very nice all the same." What I found most impressive about the session was the complete confidence of the children who took part. This, allied to their intelligence, would seem to indicate a bright future of quiz-kidding for them when they feel the need for rewards more material than the word of praise.



You Can't Run on All Fours

AM I alone in thinking that the standard of amateur piano playing from some of the stations is very low? If beginners on the air were to confine their attentions to lesser-known (and frequently less difficult) works all would be well, but many of them attempt major pieces of music which they can only maltreat. If players not up to standard were to appear on a special "local hour" they would then be judged by a different standard from that applied by listeners who now hear them play in programmes, the other items of which are of high standard. It seems to me at present that many of them are attempting to soar before they can crawl.

More About Birds

THE thing that marks Bryan O'Brien out among radio commentators is his child-like enthusiasm for his subjects and his ability to communicate it to his hearers. His latest programme *Kapiti Island Sanctuary* was first-rate reporting, though I thought Mr. O'Brien's talent showed to better advantage when he was actually taking his roving microphone through the bush and establishing first-hand contacts with the birds than in the introductory part of the broadcast. Perhaps I was stung by Mr. O'Brien's

(continued on next page)