

a pillow. They had quite a time when they'd finished for the year. (Which, of course, rhymes with beer.) All this was sung in the manner of the singing cowboys of the mythical Wild West, and the more concrete Hollywood, with occasional bursts of yodelling. Oddly enough it seemed to fit quite well. Why not, after all? There are wide, dry spaces in Australia, where the climate is not so very different from the prairie country of the U.S.A. Substitute sheep for steers, and there you are; synthesis of two cultures.

—G. Ief. Y.

Film Criticism

ONE of the signs that the film has reached at least the early adolescent stage of development is the amount of serious criticism it now provokes, the growing number of people who attend to this criticism and the fact that even exhibitors are sometimes affected by it. For the ordinary person, the spoken word of praise or dispraise carries, I believe, greater weight than the written one, and hence film criticism on the air should be above all responsible. At present, both 1YA and 1YC feature weekly reviews, of varying quality. The better 1YA reviewer is Wynn Colgan, whose comments show a keen appreciation of film values, are up-to-date and not too "arty." His voice is a shade colourless, and his presentation could be more energetic, but I still find his manner preferable to that of those boisterous, life-of-the-party types who babble nothings to us from other stations. The 1YC reviews, although one of the first in the field, have fallen off in quality recently. Some kind of critical estimate is attempted, but the reviewer's judgment is uncertain. Nearly all we get from him nowadays is a detailed plot-summary—surely the least fruitful way to review anything.

Music and Commentary

A MOST acceptable chamber music programme from 1YC recently included a presentation by the Lener String Quartet of Beethoven's Quartet in A, Op. 18. This station is now giving more annotations to such works, and sensitive ones at that. In the case of the Beethoven work, a general commentary was read at the beginning, and then a brief note before each movement. My first reaction was not favourable, but, as the piece progressed, I became convinced that there is much to be said for this style of presentation. The Quartet lasts for half an hour; to many listeners it would be unfamiliar, and it is difficult to hold all the points in one's head. I suppose one must choose between satisfying those who know the work and who do not like the flow of music interrupted (although I often wonder how many people do listen to chamber music with unwavering concentration from beginning to end), and pleasing the ones who receive enlightenment from spaced comments. Perhaps the problem could be solved by alternating the means of annotation for successive performances of the same work. In any case, let us continue to have the comments.

—J.C.R.

A Fine Quartet

THE most notable chamber music performance from 4YA within recent weeks was given on a recent Sunday afternoon by the Northern String Trio

with W. Griesbach, pianist. The work chosen, the Brahms Quartet in A, cannot be called a popular work, for it makes heavy demands both on performer and listener. I was listening to it for the first time and I think many other listeners would be in the same case. It seems to me it is on occasions such as these, when a seldom-performed work is being played, that listeners would be grateful for a little preliminary analysis. Apart from this, the quartet was a delight to listen to—the balance of the instruments well maintained and the individual performances leaving nothing to be desired. It is unfortunate that we cannot expect to have this pleasure again very soon, since all the members of this accomplished string trio are members of the National Orchestra. But it could at least be made an annual fixture. Especially as it would give us a chance at least once a year to hear Dr. Griesbach, whose Continental experience as a chamber music player is too little exploited here.

Prizewinner

LISTENING to 4YA on September 29, when the winning entry for the Philip Neill Memorial Prize in Music was being performed, I thought how excellent a device the memorial prize is for the encouragement of works of art. We could do with lots more of them. Government Literary Funds are very well in their way, but I am all for more Private Enterprise in Bequests. The air has vast spaces of empty time, and there isn't much chance of it becoming overcrowded with memorials like a school prize list. The idea of performing the prize work on a fixed date (or as near as possible to it) is a good one, too. Charles Martin's Sonata for Violin and Piano, as far as one could judge from a first hearing, was a clear, bright work, full of tunes and without pretentiousness. It seemed a worthy winner. It was performed by Gladys Vihcent (violin) and Maurice Till (piano), and on this occasion a very much better balance had been achieved between the two instruments than when they performed the Elgar sonata, a week before.

The Quiz Kids

THE fascinations of the Quiz for the listening audience have been pretty well examined, and are indeed sufficiently obvious. That it should rise ultimately to the height of an International Contest was only to be expected. But, for me and I suspect for many listeners, the Quiz Kids remain supreme in this field. They have so many advantages. No other members of the community are as practised in answering questions as schoolchildren. What they know, too, they know clearly, untroubled by the doubts of age. And their width of interests puts to shame the adult's narrow grooves. Best of all, there's no nonsense about them, no nerves and palpitations. Barring the odd prig, they are supremely natural. Sometimes I wonder, however, about the effects of so much publicity on these talented children. It isn't the money they win; children like these are better to be trusted with an £80 jackpot, such as they won the other Friday, than most adults. But a ready tongue and a knowledge of miscellaneous facts may easily be over-valued by their possessors.

—K.J.S.



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FACT AND FICTION

THE NIGHTMARE OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY, Edgar Ansel Mowrer, 14/6 posted. An informative study of the foreign policy of the United States in recent years, by the author of "Germany Puts the Clock Back."

THE ROSE AND THE STAR, Iris Morley and P. W. Manchester, 18/6 posted. Ballet in England and Russia compared and discussed by two acknowledged authorities, illustrated with many superb photographs of ballet in both countries.

THE GOD-SEEKER, Sinclair Lewis, 13/- posted. In this new novel of a frontier missionary, though different in mood from his earlier, biting satires, the author adds another notable figure to his gallery of American types.

RAINTREE COUNTY, Ross Lockridge, 15/9 posted. A fascinating 1,000-page story of a dreamer who grew up with the American Middle West, greeted on its publication as "the latest candidate for that mythical honour, the Great American Novel."

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