

# SOME RECENT MUSIC

No. 3: By MARSYAS

A PLEASANT discovery of the last week, and one I wish I had made before, is that you can get good music in unexpected places if you are prepared to leave your radio turned on, come what may. I happened to tune in to one of the auxiliaries to see whether it had struck eight. I heard two movements of a Haydn quartet, then some Mozart, and something of Schubert if I remember rightly. So I looked up the programme—"Celebrity Recitals" it said. Nothing could have been better calculated to put me off, because I don't care about the performer's name or how big a salary he gets or what coloured tie he wears as long as his performance is adequate. If he sings "Adelaide" well and happens to be my milkman, so much the better. It was good to find that a programme named "Celebrity Recitals" showed signs of having been laid out with a care to the sequence of composers. Then came a half-hour entitled "Music by Vocal Onsomble" (can't we dodge that word?), in which we had Beethoven, Handel, some others, and then to cap it off, a madrigal by Good Maister Thos. Morley. I took this as evidence that some programme organisers, when confronted with the simple responsibility of making a selection of "celebrities" or "vocal onsomble," use instead a bit of imagination and produce a sequence of composers that has some sort of unity.

BUT have you ever listened to "In Quiet Mood"? I took the risk the other day, and heard, first of all, the theme of the slow movement of Beethoven's *Pathétique* sonata being done with piano, violin solo, and wordless voice! The fact that words had not been fitted was the only grace, but it wasn't a saving grace; nothing could have saved this session. The whole thing sounded like a new movement of the Oxford Group, a new kind of "Quiet Time." I could just imagine these people sitting round with the lights low, getting close through the medium of their sickly music, calling each other Christian names from the first go-off, maybe writing down their sins on bits of paper and handing them round. I believe that's the way the Oxford Groupers get on when they're having a "Quiet Time." "In Quiet Mood" was just like that. The worst thing about it was that the musicians were people whose names we associate with the performance of good music. But God made us all, and I suppose this is near blasphemy to those for whom the session is really intended.

All the same, what is the object of attempting to "appeal to all tastes" at one moment? Radio entertainment must appeal to all tastes at some time or other, since all tastes are paying for it, but why all at once? The only time when music like that can appeal to all tastes is when all the tastes are bad ones.

FROM 1YA this same week the "Euterpe" Trio (soprano, flute, and piano), were scheduled to do pieces by Beethoven, Scarlatti, Graun, Mozart, Gretry and German. I did not hear whether these came off or were amended at the last minute (you aren't safe to assume that all of what's in the programmes was heard), but the idea was good. When people capable of playing good music are engaged, then they should be paid to play good music. There is plenty of the other stuff from the opposite shop.

THE best thing in the latter half of the week was to hear the 1YA studio orchestra getting under way with its guest conductor Thomas Matthews. A guest conductor is a refreshing influence at any time, but when he comes straight from leading the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Beecham, he is especially useful. The orchestra started with the waltz from Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*. The strings got together, and the woodwinds seemed to have made up their minds what to play. But the brass sounded like the baying of Cerberus himself at the gates of Hell. Now I know what the word "Augmented" means after "Studio orchestra." It means that a talent scout has been sent round the brass bands.

After that, we had the Beethoven First Symphony. I'm keener on Beethoven than I am on Tchaikovsky, so I probably forgot all about how they were playing in my enthusiasm for what they were playing, and from this distance, with plenty of interference, the symphony sounded as if it was being well played.

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(Continued from previous page)

## Clues Down

1. Alf and me in the fire.
2. Quite an old-fashioned object.
3. V.A.D. in peril?
4. Amy is permitted to.
5. Use a dog to irritate.
6. Suitable material for a Mexican abode.
7. A muse whose name appeared on Page 38 of the March 6 issue.
11. I can't (anag.).
13. Dismiss—this looks in favour of a scoundrel.
14. No brief for a garden conflagration.
16. Big darn (anag.).
18. Salem offers refreshments.
20. Output.
21. This girl is upset at the end of 23 across.
23. Palindromic animal.

(Answer to No. 92)

D	E	P	O	S	I	T		D	O	G	M	A
O	O	A	A				E	U	C			
R	E	S	T	F	U	L		C	I	N	C	H
M	E	E	O				A	W	I			
Y	O	R	K				I	N	U	N	D	A
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S	E	N	I	O	R		S	E	V	E	R	E
Y	E	U	A				R					
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M	I	L	E	S			E	M	E	R	G	E

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