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RECENT MUSIC

No. 22: By Marsyas

THEY are now, under favourable conditions, almost up to recording standard" was the lavish praise bestowed on our local orchestras by a fairly recent correspondent of *The Listener*. It contains an idea that is perhaps too common, and which needs to be opposed: namely, that recorded music sets the standard we must ask for here. Performances which I have mentioned in this column — a Mozart programme given under Andersen Tyrer, some of Thomas Matthews' Auckland programmes, and now particularly these very fine performances by the NBS String Quartet, have reminded me of that remark, and have demonstrated how irrelevant is the comparison with recorded music.

The recording companies aim, for obvious reasons, at performances that

are utterly flawless. But however "perfect" a recorded performance might be, there is no escape from the fact that it is precisely the same every time you hear it. This may seem to be all right until you come up against the fact that, in a local performance, the very influence that causes the slips—silly little mistakes and big blunders—is also the very thing that produces the master-touches—little glimpses of perfection, and broad visions of greatness. The man who said that architecture was "frozen music," however mistaken he may have been as to the nature of architecture, has perceived the essentially fluid quality of music, and no doubt knew the importance of finding something fresh in a piece of music with each new performance.

A CURIOUS thing happens to a performer when he has an audience. The knowledge that the music must go on, whatever happens, brings into operation a set of controls that are not in use at rehearsal time.

In this way, the strange things happen that make a fresh local performance preferable to a familiar recorded one (given intelligent sincere musicians, of course), whether it is "under favourable conditions" or not.

Recording standard is set by men who have played fiddles, clarinets, or horns all their lives, whose fathers and brothers did, too, perhaps; who have not had to drive vans, keep ledgers, serve customers, or snip tickets, in order to live. It is not desirable that our kind of musician should be expected to do what the other kind can do. What is desirable is that one day it might be possible for our musicians to live in the same way as those others.

* * *

BY invitation of the Czechoslovak Consul I listened to a programme called "The Music of Czechoslovakia." It came from 2YC, and conditions were so favourable that I heard it a good deal more plainly than plenty of things I've listened to over 2YA. Shortly before 8 p.m. I tuned in, and began to wonder

(Continued on next page)

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Here is shown a reproduction of the "comforts coupon" which is a special feature of the campaign for Patriotic Funds described here

Radio Co-operates In Drive For Patriotic Funds

THIS week and next there is to be a general campaign throughout the Dominion to raise funds for the National Patriotic Fund. So far the money raised this year has fallen sadly short of expectations, and more funds must be raised before the end of the financial year if the work of the board is to continue unchecked. The aim of this week's drive is to raise a considerable sum so that the provision of recreation huts, scarves and gloves for cold weather, and cigarettes and parcels for all seasons may be continued.

The NBS is co-operating with the board throughout the campaign by featuring talks and spot announcements. In these talks a number of popular misunderstandings will be cleared up. Your boy may go to another hut, Salvation Army or Y.M.C.A., and you may say, "Why should I support the Patriotic Fund when these other bodies are doing so much more?" If you listen you will find that the National Patriotic Fund

finances or subsidises all these other organisations in their work with the troops in New Zealand and overseas.

A special feature of this campaign will be the selling of comfort coupons. You may buy your coupons for whatever you wish to send—2/- (or more) for cigarettes or chocolates, or £2 for more extensive parcels. Or you may decide to give £200 for hut equipment, or indeed £2,000 for new recreation huts. There is no limit.

Every night it will be announced over the air how much money has been raised and what the total has reached. On the final night, Saturday, August 15, there will be a special Patriotic Funds Appeal programme featuring a telephonic link-up throughout the Dominion which will make it possible for you to telephone your contributions. The totals reached by each provincial district will be announced at intervals throughout the evening, and this will be your opportunity of showing what your district or home town can do.