

THINGS TO COME

A Run Through The Programmes

NEXT Sunday afternoon (February 7), the members of the Wellington Dickens Fellowship will present "A Tribute to Dickens" from 2YA. This programme will include a sketch of the life of Dickens, and extracts from his writings as well as some of his less known comments on topical questions, such as England's relations with America. It must be remembered, however, that Dickens was feeling sore at his inability to get American rights over his books, and that the American public was also feeling sore at what he said about them in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Nevertheless, his remarks on Anglo-American Co-operation read well to-day. He believed that the two English-speaking nations should go ahead hand in hand or even hands in pockets—each other's, of course.

Who Wants a Name?

We do not know as we write this paragraph what "My Lady" is going to be told from 1YA next Wednesday morning about namesakes. We almost do not want to know, since names can be life-long torture. Think of all the victims of romantic parents who have slunk through the world as Caesars or Lincolns or Hannibals or Haigs, doomed before birth to ridicule. Yet the name problem can be so easily solved. An American Serviceman who gave evidence in one of our Courts recently was able to say that he had no Christian names at all—only two letters from the alphabet. The reform has endless possibilities, and if some of these are not offered to "My Lady" at 10.20 on the morning of the 8th, we shall suspect vested interests.

In 1939

Though most people know all they want to know about the mind of the Nazis to-day, some people still cling to the generous-hearted, soft-headed delusion that the Nazi was not a Nazi till the world made him one. Before the war started, they say, Hitler and his associates could have been made into good neighbours if their own neighbours had shown more patience and imagination. Well, here is H. J. Laski's idea (borrowed from Santayana), of "Hitlerism in Two or Three Lines": the irrational in the human turned repulsive and terrible, as we see it in the maniac, the miser, the drunkard or the ape. And if you think that a fantastic and repulsive libel, tune into to 2YA at 11.0 a.m. on Saturday, February 13, to hear what a New Zealand woman has to say about her experiences in Germany in 1939, among Hitler's early victims.

Peter in the Grate

Somewhere in the East End of London two wretched down-and-outs sit over a fire lit with wood that they have scrounged. As they warm themselves and eat their fish-and-chips, listeners are carried through the flames and back 350 years to the house of John Evelyn the diarist. Here Peter the Great of

Russia and his boon companions roister and smash furniture and behave in the traditional manner of the early Tsar under the influence of liquor. But none of this is seen by our slum couple, who look in the flames and see Peter Mihailov



carved on the wood and wonder who the dickens Peter Mihailov could have been—happily oblivious that they are warming themselves with a valuable museum piece. You will learn why if you listen to the play, "Flames of Gold" at 9.30 p.m. on Sunday, February 14, from Station 4YA.

RECENT MUSIC

(No. 48: By Marsyas)

LAST week I discussed a miscellaneous programme called Classical Music, broadcast by an auxiliary station. Had I known of it beforehand, the following quotation from William Glock (the London Observer's music critic), would have served a purpose on that occasion: "We have now reached a stage at which we must stop treating the music of the past as one glorious lucky dip, and try to summon enough intuition to see exactly what attitude will help to produce the right conditions, and especially the right audience, for the future." He goes on to assign to the BBC the leading part in fulfilling this responsibility.

"One glorious lucky dip" is one glorious description for a programme which ranged over the classicism of Bach and Haydn, the sickly sentimentality of Rubinstein and Gounod (to which the confections of Albéniz and Granados were no antidote), the ineffectualness of Roger Quilter (after which Elgar's *Light of Life* gave a deathly pallor to one's hopes for English music), and the honest poesy of songs by Schubert and Schumann, which had the effect of making pieces of Delibes and Moszkowski (excellent things in their own place), look undeservedly ridiculous.

The question arises: Will an attitude which is probably the cause and certainly the product of such "lucky-dip" programmes "help to produce the right conditions and especially the right audience, for the future?"

OUR greatest musical ambition is to have great composers. "To have great poets," says Whitman, "there must be great audiences, too," and it is not less true of composers. But great audiences are composed of people who can and do give to any one piece of

Sixty Minutes' Worth

Those of us who have experienced immortal hours in the dentist's chair, the examination room, or even in a New Zealand Railway department waiting for a travel permit, will not appreciate the idea of time standing still. But in Rutland Boughton's opera *The Immortal Hour*, King Eochaidh had no such misgivings, and searched for "the immortal hour of unworldly joy." This attempt to out-Wagner Wagner on British soil enjoyed a considerable popularity when it was first produced in London. Music from *The Immortal Hour*, *Hassan*, and *Koanga* (the last two by Delius), will be heard from 3YA this Sunday evening, February 7.

Mr. Wm. Birde

"Since singing is so good a thing, I wish all men would learn to sing," wrote William Byrd, the English composer, whose tercentenary has been commemorated with a recording of his Mass in Five Voices, to be heard from 3ZR at 9.30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 10. The chief clue to the year of Byrd's death was in his will (made in 1623), where he described himself as "nowe in the eightieth year of myne age." The choice of the five-part Mass for recording in his memory is recognition of the fact that Byrd's church music contained his greatest achievements.

good music that intense concentration which is essential to its full understanding—a mental effort that differs very little from the effort with which the composer conceives and the performer executes; intelligent listening is a creative thing. And the intelligent listener is no better equipped to switch rapidly from one extreme of state-of-mind to another, than is the composer or the performer. In fact, they are all three of them specially provided with mechanism to prevent its happening.

The question so readily resolves into one of mere physical powers that it becomes directly comparable to its equivalent in terms of food. Ten weeks ago, I attempted to translate it into terms of the drawing-room furniture and effects; in terms of food it is even more repulsive to contemplate: Mushrooms, strawberries, asparagus, seed cake, sardines, passion fruit, bread-and-cheese, crayfish, banana custard, all on one plate, touching one another, their flavours mingling!

It is obviously impossible to apply any decently critical standards—or discriminating, if the other word offends—to things which seem to have been assembled in such a sequence as to offer the maximum of opportunities for misjudgment (as in hearing Moszkowski close to Schubert, Elgar close to Haydn, Quilter close to Bach).

And as long as it is so hard, the audience will not be able to formulate standards, will not become a great audience, and will not give birth to great composers.

Fortunately, it is not *always* so hard. These lucky-dip programmes are not general, not the rule. They have been fairly regular in certain quarters, as a casual glance back over old *Listeners* will reveal, but not everywhere. Still, the job of "summoning enough intuition to see exactly what attitude will help, etc." will not even have been begun until they are totally excluded.