



"Where do they think it'll get them... all this modern stuff?"

same with books—the reviewer can express himself with refreshing, strictly personal candour, and the book is there to answer back. But the review of a dramatic performance is in the nature of an obituary on something that can no longer speak for itself. This poses something of a problem for the reviewer, since a policy of *nil nisi bonum* would be dull for all parties. The discussion between Bruce Mason and Ron Bowie on the New Zealand Players production of *Private Lives* was lively, informed and appreciative. One just wishes there was some way of erecting a monument to a performance after, rather than before, one gets to work on it with that pernicky little chisel.

—M.B.

Missing Titles

MY FIVE BEST FILMS—what a poser! Considering all the films the average picture-goer sees, it is not surprising that when six people list their choice many fine films are not mentioned. No one mentioned *Citizen Kane*, whose new technique struck sparks from *The Listener's* critic at the time it was shown. No one mentioned *Pygmalion*. The last speaker, Mary Bubbers, who incidentally weighed her pros and cons with the utmost freshness and care, got around the difficulties of the title of the session by pointing out that the five she chose for this occasion might not be the same as she would choose a year hence. Her own careful discrimination, coming hard upon the heels of Frank Chilton's moralistic championing of the documentary "fact" as compared to "fiction," inadvertently answered his own fears. A point missed by Mr. Chilton is that there is such a thing as a bad documentary. Tinsel we can see, but "indoctrination" might easily come clothed in the sober grey of a "fact" we mistake for truth. Indeed there is no answer to the question except integrity in producers and discrimination in the audience to save us from the pitfalls of the cinema.

Attraction of Liszt

THEY tell me, the great anonymous "they" with whom I have had innumerable interesting conversations, that Franz Liszt is showy and rhetorical;

but ever since I pedalled through the player-piano records, fast and slow, to suit the silent films they accompanied instead of the composer's intention, Liszt has been in my blood. That his music has never become hackneyed for me despite this outrageous treatment points to something a little deeper, a little more solid in it than the fashion of the moment will admit to. In these opinions I would probably be supported by the pianist Louis Kentner, whose fine recording of the "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2" was recently broadcast from 3YA. What I hadn't realised until then was that my liking for the rather vulgar song which begins "Put another nickel in, in the nickelodeon" rests upon the fact that its composer pinched—nothing so dignified as "stolen"—will do here—some of its phrases from the grand old man. I suppose the anti-Lissts will say that it serves him right; but after hearing Anna Russell on Wagner they ought to know that no one is safe any more.

—Westcliff

The Remembered Past

A YOUNG nation may at times tend to over-value its brief history, investigating its roots with the enthusiasm of a young gardener displaying his prize parsnips. Yet there is comfort to be found no doubt in the spectacle of roots now over a hundred years old, and their ramifications as revealed to us in a former NZBS serial *Today in New Zealand History* ministered to our desire for a feeling of permanence. It was an excellent serial, concise, informative and well delivered; it could very well, I felt, have become a permanent feature of our programmes, for only the occasional mental giant would be capable of remembering precisely from one year to the next the information contained in each five-minute episode. After a total disappearance, however, apparently a compromise has been reached, for *Today in New Zealand History* now makes a welcome reappearance from 4YA on Saturday nights at 6.20 p.m.

Her Own Story

THE 4YA morning session entitled *Portrait of a Notable New Zealander: Ngaio Marsh* seemed to me wholly good in its method of presentation. Instead of the fatuous interview one might have expected, with the interviewer goading the subject along a narrow path of mediocrity, Miss Marsh was allowed to tell her own story without the limitation of questioning. Some background to her remarks was filled in by a well-spoken and discreet interpolated commentary. Though most of the success of this programme is no doubt due to the subject, a fluent and interesting speaker, some of the credit must be given to the other speaker, who possessed the inestimable radio virtue of knowing when to keep quiet.

—Loquax

"FOR most of my life I have kept a guilty silence about my enthusiasm for railways. Then I joined a society of fellow-addicts, and finally spoke publicly about the secret passion. It has been most surprising, not to say encouraging, how many people in all walks of life—including a number of women—have thereupon come gingerly into the open and admitted that they, too, were interested in railways, or liked them, or even loved them."—Gordon Troup in an NZBS Book Shop talk.

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