

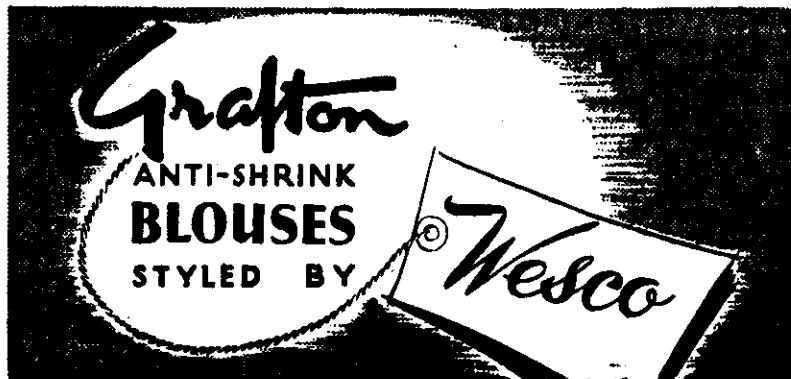
CAN-OPENERS

A light engineering firm in the north of England had difficulty in obtaining the type of steel they required for the manufacture of can-opener blades. An alternative grade of steel was tried which it was hoped would prove suitable if heat-treated, but the results were not satisfactory. The firm consulted I.C.I. General Chemicals Division, who maintain a heat treatment section at Oldbury as part of their service to the engineering industry.

Sample blades sent to Oldbury for examination were first tested for surface hardness and their internal structure was then examined under a microscope. The next step was to heat-treat unhardened blades experimentally in a bath containing molten sodium cyanide. Four different methods of treatment were tried to enable the manufacturers to determine the most suitable. The blades produced by one of these methods proved entirely satisfactory. Demonstrated at the firm's works by an I.C.I. technical service man, this heat treatment process enabled the manufacturer to continue production and maintain the quality of his products.



IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES (N.Z.) LTD.



Radio Review

ONE PERSON'S CHOICE

STATION 1YD, which keeps fairly closely to a lower-middle-brow line, is the most matey of the Auckland National stations. Here the usually remotely efficient announcers let their hair down, and try, with some success, to capture the friendly atmosphere associated with the station since its 12M days. Typical of its special character are the request and listener-participation sessions. In one of these latter, *The Last Six*, a listener has to imagine that he is world cultural dictator with power to destroy all discs save six. Which six would he preserve, and why? The field is wide open for the most esoteric choices. But in the first programme I listened to, a Howick listener chose *The Lord's Prayer*, *Trees*, *Ebb-Tide*, Woody Herman's *Blue Flame*, a rebop job called *Cuban Episode*, and *Bolero* (which, we were assured, Ravel composed in a rest-home!) I can't myself imagine anything closer to purgatory than being reduced to listening to these six records. Yet this (to me) weird group apparently did really represent valuable experiences for one person—which makes me understand a little better the problem of programme-organisers.

American Idioms

CONTEMPORARY serious music from America is almost wholly unknown in New Zealand. The chief reason, I take it, is that there are very few standard English recordings of such works. The gramophile's Bible *The Record Guide* lists less than half a dozen American compositions, nearly all light-weight affairs which do not do anything like

justice to such composers as Barber and Copland. So it is especially pleasing to hear from 1YC a repeat of the fine NZBS series of taped performances of American works from scores lent by the United States Information Services. Not many Americans are able easily to hear the music of Paul Bowles, David Diamond and Charles Griffes. By playing the series twice within a few months, 1YC is giving us a chance to get attuned to their particular idioms. Such pieces as Barber's moving setting of *Dover Beach* and his String Quartet especially, should be played as part of regular programmes until the happy time when there are standard performances easily available from English catalogues.

—J.C.R.

The Distant Scene

SOMETIMES a mere log entry on a ship sets the imagination free to re-create the events of a distant day more than would a ream of detailed description. In much the same way the laconic understatement of Brenda Bell talking of "Sheep, Snow and Stations," over 4YA bring the '70s and '80s vividly alive. How much a session like this, full of dates, place names and prices fetched for hoggets or rabbit skins, might convey to an overseas listener I could not say. Even for myself I did not listen to what the sessions told about different stations and towns, but experienced an evocation of the past in which I saw the bullocks lie down in the fence-high blue grass, or the frosted hair of the woman who thought she'd gone white over night. It has been a kind of pageant in which I have never been able to focus on any thread of narrative, but in which I have stood on a detached eminence surveying the vigorous hill-life of the early colony while a person standing beside me has, in decidedly racy language, almost amusedly, reported upon a scene I could not otherwise have understood.

(continued on next page)

★ The Week's Music . . . by OWEN JENSEN ★

THE highlight of the week was undoubtedly the National Orchestra's first New Zealand performance of William Walton's Symphony (YC link). This must have been one of those occasions mentioned by Warwick Braithwaite in his broadcast talk last week when he finds his players rising right above themselves. They made the symphony the virtuoso piece it is, but seemed to be alive all the time to the subtleties of the music. In fact, detail came through with remarkable fidelity, which is a credit mark to the technicians as well as to the Orchestra.

As a prelude to the National Orchestra programme the YC link gave us the *Serenade Sonata* for Viola and Piano by Richard Walthew, played by Ronald Moon and Gwen McLeod. This, the second of four broadcasts to be given by these artists, was a notable bit of ensemble work. In fact, they made Walthew's tepid romanticism sound much more exciting music than one suspects it is. But you don't have to stick to the YC link or even the main stations to come across musical adventures and fine playing. Filtering through from New Plymouth on 2XP came an uncommonly interesting broadcast by John and Doris Veale in the shape of a clarinet and piano sonata by Hindemith.

Canterbury University College Music Department's John Ireland Festival inspired the 75th birthday broadcasts of

the composer's music, affording a welcome opportunity for a reassessment of his place among 20th Century musicians. After listening to Ernest Jenner playing the Piano Concerto with the National Orchestra, Glynn Adams and Maurice Till the Violin Sonata No. 2 in A Minor, and Winston Sharp singing some of Ireland's songs with Dr. Vernon Griffiths as pianist, it can be said that John Ireland has been most fortunate in his exemplars. The music, it seems to me, dates. Its spirit might be summed up in the title of one of the song cycles, "The Land of Lost Content," a gentle post-Elgarian lyricism written mostly when it was still fashionable to flirt with a Debussy-like impressionism and possible to be boldly optimistic in such sentiments as John Addington Symonds's "These Things Shall Be." I hardly think John Ireland will ever be remembered as one of "the greatest geniuses in English music" as his friend John Longmire described him in a 75th birthday talk, but at least he has given delight to many singers and pianists.

Stanley Oliver's talk on "The Story of the Glee" (2YC) revived memories of an almost forgotten music. Admirably set out, Mr. Oliver's story was, as well, a peg on which to hang some excellent singing by the Wellington Baroque Chorus. Our old favourite "Hail Smiling Morn" sounded, as the boys would say, "quite classy."

N.Z. LISTENER, AUGUST 27, 1954