

"Well yes, Henry, I suppose you could say your 'plane has broken the sound barrier

may say these little tricks have nothing to do with music. Fudge: it all adds to the fun; it puts the audience into the hest of spirits, and the orchestra responded to it. And Mr. Robertson's closing speech was admirably brief and witty, Altogether a delightful season.

## A Tale of Two Cities

| FOUND Dennis Arundell's introductory talk on Arthur Benjamin's opera immensely helpful, but I was unprepared to find on first hearing a new opera so moving and exciting. The main characters are all there, Sidney Carton, Lucie and Dr. Manette, and Charles Darnay. but they are all subsidiary to Madame Defarge, who is the chief character. Marjorie Westbury gave a marvellously vulpine performance of an enormously difficult score. The prologue wonderfully conveys the smouldering tensions of the period immediately before the Revolution: oboes and bassoons pursue aimless but most artful cadenzas, over which Madame Defarge sings in a voice of piercing satisfaction: "Our Time Will Come." Come it does, and the final scene around the guillotine is quite remarkably horrifying. As an aristo prepares to go under the knife, the chorus sings in tones of the utmost tenderness a kind of litany to the guillotine; then the orchestra, by some ingenious orchestration exactly reproduces the sound of the knife falling, and the air is rent with exultant yells. —B.E.G.M.

### Nice People

IF you enjoy a play with a good plot and heart-warming characters you can't do better than listen to R. C.

Sherriff's Miss Mabel, the whole 90 minutes of it. The characters are all nice people (the only nasty one's dead) and the nicest of all is Miss Mabel herself, played with engaging charm by Sinclair Ronald. How then, you may ask, can we produce that conflict which is the essence of all drama? Miss Mabel manages to, but I'll leave it the author's secret. There are three good climaxes, after the second of which I folded my hands in content and waited for the dismissal music. When the play continued I suspected the author of letting his plot go off the boil. But I was wrong. There was plenty more thickening to go in, and a most satisfying simmer was maintained. A nourishing and sustaining brew resulted, with a lump or two of DA1490 Praeludium and Allegro (Parts 1 and 2) moral gristle for those of us who like to chew the fat.

### Drops of Humour

THERE wasn't much in C. Gordon Glover's play Dear Appointment (2YA, March 8), except what seemed like the entire musical and technical resources of the NZBS. On the other hand, credit where credit is due, and I find the intentionally banal original music by Terence Vaughan much more worthy of notice than the arch machinations of the banal plot it embellished. A good example, however, of how a dried-off cow can be milked of a few more drops of humour by experienced handling and good timing. And, of course, all that music in the milking shed.





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