

down, off for an evening's listening without even a grinding of mental gears. Or that's the way it is with some listeners as you may well know. So it's worth reminding ourselves sometimes that these are remarkable times. Genius is on tap.

Haydn and Mozart together in one programme gives us an opportunity of getting to know both better: especially Haydn. For it has turned out singularly unfortunate for Franz Joseph ("Papa") H. that he lived at the same time as Wolfgang Amadeus. The suavity, elegance and polish of Mozart has made him the white-headed boy of posterity's party. Haydn's home-spun, honest-to-goodness earthiness has left him too often unnoticed.

They were fine friends, these two; and influenced each other's work. They were both superlative craftsmen, and each in his own particular way was inspired by that consuming fire that transmutes talent into genius. Hearing them on the same programme, we will enjoy Mozart no less, but understand Haydn better. Indeed, we will know his music best when we admire Haydn as much as he admired Mozart.

On May 14—over to Christchurch now (YC link)—we may hear one of the most astonishing works of the 19th Century: Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* (soloist: Winifred Stiles). This is no less than a concerto for viola and orchestra, although it goes down in the records as "Symphony in Four Movements with Viola Solo, Op. 16." Due to Berlioz's incorrigible romanticism and his gift for embroidering even the most humdrum episodes in his life, the circumstances surrounding the origin of this composition are still a matter for debate.

According to Berlioz, Paganini, at the height of his fame as a virtuoso violinist and violist, was so taken with Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* that he offered the composer 20,000 francs for a viola concerto of equal brilliance. When Paganini looked in on the first movement to see how things were going, he was no by means satisfied. "Too many rests for the viola," he said, "I must be playing all the time." Although Berlioz scrapped this start, he had already settled for the idea of a work in which the orchestra played as important a part as the viola. So it never became Paganini's concerto. He paid over the 20,000 francs all the same.

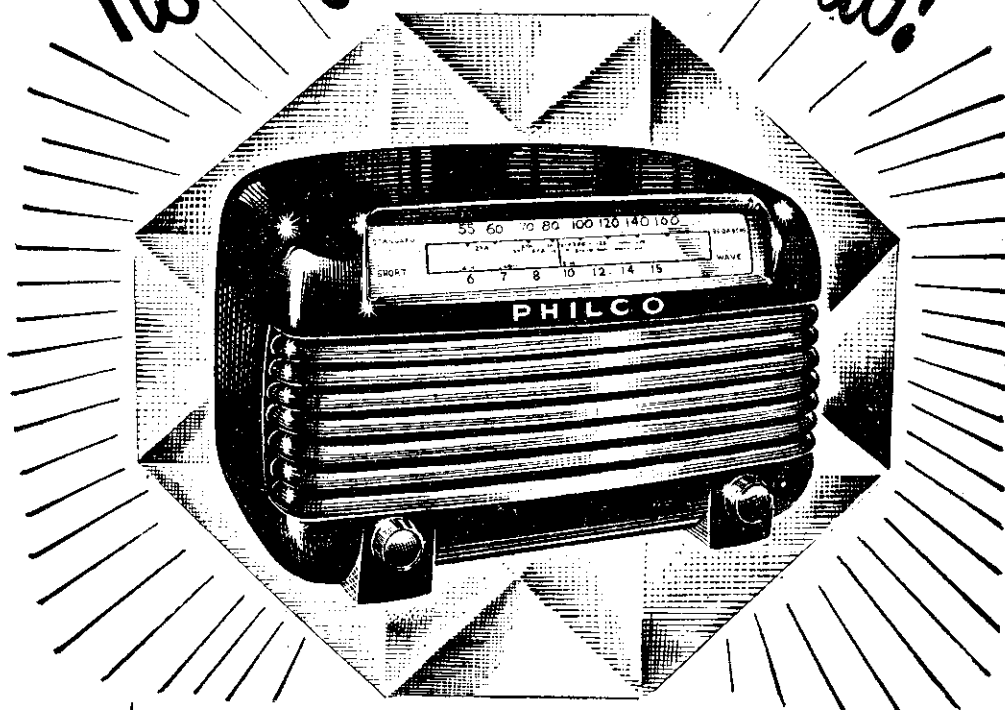
Harold in Italy was inspired by Byron's epic. Having said that, you have paid sufficient tribute to Byron's assistance in the matter. For although the viola represents the "melancholy dreamer" whose wanderings are remembered in the titles of the four movements, there are no obvious connections between the music and the poem. The work is to be enjoyed for its luxurious melodies, its thrilling viola part and the brilliant orchestration. And this, as you will hear, is money's worth indeed.

—Owen Jensen

100 to 1 ...

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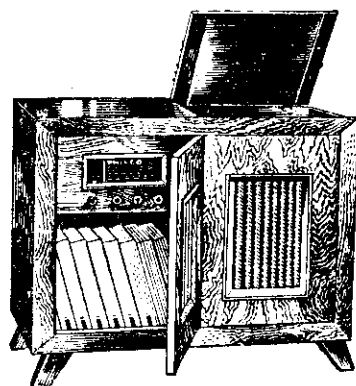
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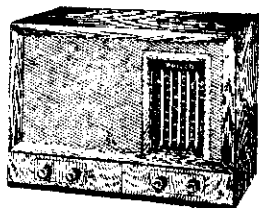
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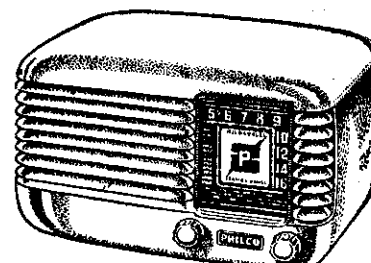
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