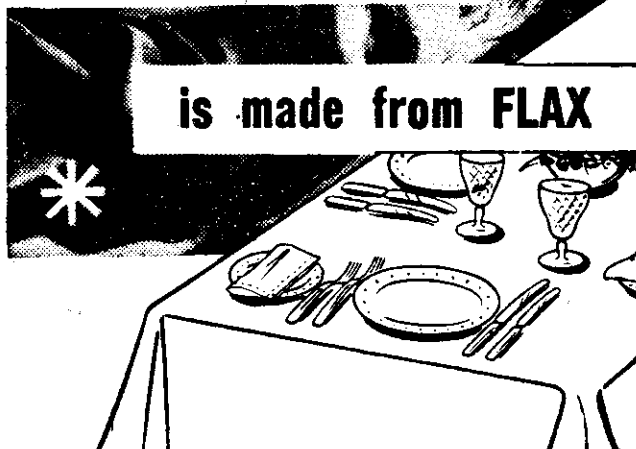


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Radio Review

FRACTURED ENGLISH

SOME weeks ago I had occasion to point out certain weaknesses in the pronunciation of foreign words by announcers on the YC network. I was chided for this by a Dutch friend who told me that I was affronted only by errors in the languages with which I have some slight acquaintance, "French," he said, crushingly, "of which you know little, and Italian, which you know less. Have you heard of the painter . . . ?" and here followed a name which I heard for the first time. "Never," I said. It proved to be Van Gogh, which, pronounced correctly, is unintelligible to me, and no doubt to most of my countrymen. This gave me pause, and I know he was right. What we need less than scrupulous exactness in pronunciation, is an acceptable convention, which will inform the listeners of what they are going to hear, without too grossly affronting the cognoscenti. So be it. But I cannot leave without a blast in the ear for those announcers who commit sins unforgiveable on their own language. I transcribe phonetically what I heard last week: "In the second half, the soprano . . . will sing early French myorsic. . . Milton, thou should'st be living at this hour!"

that the Greeks were as fond of sport as we, but that they revered the arts and philosophy even higher. His speakers have so far varied from the astringent and provocative to the flat and inane. I have suggested it before, and I will again: make it a public affair, and give the Philistine his turn. Let him say that the National Orchestra is pretentious, expensive noise; then let someone talk him out of it, if they can. Make a living issue of these things, and the arts will live.

—B.E.G.M.

Second-rate Queen

I'M quite in favour of directing Holmes fans to Baker Street, and I would like to see New York patrolmen primed with a penthouse address downtown so that they could perform a similar service for patrons of Ellery Queen; but I am not in favour of installing Ellery Queen in a Sydney studio to act as a custom-built compère for his own stories—it out-oscars Oscars. The material is certainly not first-rate Queen, even if Manfred B. Lee did select it—its storyline wobbles, its solutions leave one dazed with indifference, and one has to pick one's way through many a wet patch taken up by secretary Nicky's plaint that Her Heart Belongs to Queenie. But the thing that embarrasses me most is seeing those modest Notable Australians harnessed, like Tamburlaine's captured kings, to Ellery Queen's chariot. Especially when he makes it so obvious that he can pull the thing better himself.

Fortnightly Review

THIS amiable session has now been heard three times, and it is amiable because Mr. Anton Vogt is chairing it. He is urbane and quick-witted; he never talks down, but contrives adroitly to suggest that a programme on a fortnight's work in the arts is nothing more, nor less, than a real family show. He acts as genial middleman between concert hall and family hearth, between football field and art exhibition, by the use of homely yet ingenious connections, such as his reminder last Friday

Happy Ending

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE (I heard the BBC version on Sunday) is, romantically speaking, a nice play, with three sensible girls getting the men they've had their eye on from the beginning, and all of them with a fair chance of living happily ever after. In so many of the other comedies, I am disconcerted by what seems like an artificial pairing off of the characters which sacrifices psychological probability to biological neatness—poor Hero

(continued on next page)

★ The Week's Music . . . by SEBASTIAN ★

COLIN HORSLEY is paying us another visit, and enough of his recitals are being broadcast to give us a fair programme coverage without undue repetition. His first recital (YC link) was probably a good guide to what we can expect in the others. In particular, his encores should be held up as an example of what encores can be—works of art rather than mere appendages. As we know, Mr. Horsley is an advocate and exponent of Lennox Berkeley's music, some of which finds its way into each programme; in this concert we heard one of the Concert Studies, and three interesting Mazurkas, written by way of homage to Chopin. Here we might attribute the rhythms to Chopin and the ideas to Mr. Berkeley—not such an unfair division as it might appear, since after all the rhythms are the driving and characteristic force of the Mazurka, and the notes themselves must derive largely from those rhythms. In performance, the combination of styles was unexceptionable, set off by the brilliant playing that we can expect of Colin Horsley.

Such works by Arthur Honegger that we are able to hear are of variable quality, as evidenced by his very good quartet, and a patchy Fifth Symphony (1951), which is being heard as an FBS transcription. It is surnamed "the three D's" since each movement ends on that as a concession to tonality. For a poly-tonal work I found it clever but uninspired; composers used to put their musical eggs into the basket of the first movement: more recently the finale has been the receptacle: but in this symphony there seemed too few eggs to distribute at all. Contrasts there are in plenty—machine-made, facile contrasts—and a certain inventiveness; but Honegger's gift of melody has deserted him for the moment, and his orchestral colours have mislaid their variety. Too much muted brass is as bad as too much fat—the effect is a trifle bilious. I'm not sure, but I think I would put some good Stan Kenton on a higher musical plane. I have no criticism of the performance, which was undeservedly well done under Charles Munch.

N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 13, 1955.