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RADIO REVIEW

Pale Reflection

OSCAR WILDE is not one of my greatest enthusiasms, but at least there is more life in him than would appear from the Decca long-playing version of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which has been going the rounds of the stations. It is a mere outline of the story (adapted by someone, edited by someone else, from somebody's play) without the literary grace or the epigrams—"the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it," and the rest of them. These not only give the story its colour; they add point to its horror, and to the paradox that the most characteristic literary product of the greenery-gallery period should be this picture of its own damnation. The departures from the plot, where they were not dictated by the need to keep the scene static for a stage-play (an irrelevant consideration on the radio), seem to have been designed to make it both less shocking and more obvious. This version has Dorian Gray killing the painter of the picture because he's threatening to expose him. The book has Hallward threatening to pray for him. The acting is passable, but the quality of the recording as poor as any I've heard.

Children Talking

ONE child said: "I always tell Mummy all my troubles, because Mummy knows best." But a boy said: "My parents don't know half the things I'm playing about with." And another boy broke his aunty's gramophone and told her he didn't want to play any more records. "Was that a good thing?" Keith Smith asked. "No, not really. I felt bad about it afterwards." "So you went and told your aunty?" "No, I didn't tell my aunty." "But you've been thinking

about it since?" "Yes, but I think it'll be all right. It's a good gramophone." Children seldom say what they mean in public, or mean what they say, or know what they mean. They don't know that words can express their own feelings as well as someone else's; or if they do know they see no reason to expose their real thoughts to the treachery of adults. It seems almost in the nature of a confidence trick that Keith Smith has managed to uncover so many peeps at the genuine child for his ABC programme, *A Word from Children* (ZB Women's Hour). I wonder if I ought to be listening and listen nevertheless, as one always does.

R.D.McE.

We Want Peace!

SO said Margaret Garland in her 2YC talk on the hydrogen bomb. I am inclined to think that these three words, spoken by Mrs. Garland in a deep, sincere, and impassioned way, are the most eloquent I have heard for a long time. There it was, simple and profound: "We want peace!" Millions of words are written and spoken about the bomb, some of them barbarous, some of them intelligent, but if, underneath the verbiage, we could always hear these words, "We want peace," spoken, as Mrs. Garland spoke them, from the heart, the main issue would always be kept clear. For "we" are not pressure groups, blocks, or constellations of power, "we" are people everywhere, with minds, bodies, hearts, capable of dignity, capable of love. Mrs. Garland summarised the arguments which view the bomb as a deterrent to war, admitting that its existence would probably prevent war for a little, but not, in her view, for long, since the busy scientific intelligence of the age will soon be able to fashion an instrument of destruction which will not recoil on the user. She gave a splendid example of the futility

(continued on next page)

★ The Week's Music... by SEBASTIAN ★

IT is probably fortunate that a combination of the Pascal Quartet's standing and standard does not come here more often than annually; the critics, whose bread and butter is local talent, would become hypercritical and flay the lesser efforts of our countrymen with too-envenomed pen, spreading dismay and discouragement in every musical direction. Fortunately, I say, this is not the case; but it does illustrate the difficulty of tempering criticism when musicianship is taken for granted, and we are dealing with degrees not of mere intricacies of notation, but the more intangible subdivisions of perfection. In such circumstances, points that anyone may grasp are fewer, and a review becomes a purely subjective matter of one's own opinion and reaction, a thing to be discussed perhaps, but one that does not admit of argument.

Such a preface is necessary before mentioning the Quartet's recitals (YC links), dissecting that which is properly indivisible. This problem was manifest in Debussy's G Minor Quartet, a thing of light and shadow, which might fall to pieces at a touch, yet appears strong as a whole. The Quartet's performance added to the impression of strength, with no concessions to the airy-fairy school of impressionist

playing. Of a somewhat similar character, though more serene and flowing, is Ravel's lovely F Major Quartet, which has long been one of my favourites; I suppose the best tribute I can offer to the playing is that it approached my conception of the work (since it is always easy to offend where favourites are concerned). The treatment was more placid, without the frequent harshnesses that add flavour to the Debussy; but there was nothing insipid about either tone or style.

Again serene, in the more classical sense, was the Mozart C Major Quartet, which is famous for its dissonances—though these are so mild to our ears that they usually have to be pointed out. This was happy playing of a happy work, with impeccable taste and that approach in which wonder is not dulled by familiarity. Less interesting, albeit less familiar, was Mendelssohn's first Quartet, but even here the performance compensated for any deficiencies in the music. If there was matter for complaint, it was the glib announcers' in various centres, reading programme details with a priestly unction that was irritating, especially in places where they sounded bored as well. For the Pascal Quartet, reverence may be excusable, but boredom is tantamount to crime.

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 27, 1956.