

new subtleties on the old ones. What will compel me to listen to the later talks with much interest, is to discover if science can contribute anything to music outside the purely technical field. I shall report anon.

Spanish Testament

I WISH I could say that I had enjoyed *An Armistice With Truth*, by Emmanuel Robles, which the NZBS gave us the other night in a valiant production. I thought it much below their best. The play is an overblown, interminably Spanish affair, lasting two hours almost, far too long for its central theme of honour and integrity, developed in a manner almost as baroque in its sinuous movement as a great Spanish cathedral. The opening sounded so bad in translation that my heart went out to the unfortunate actress playing Senorita Ophelia for some of the gummiest lines I have heard for some time. The main protagonists, the General, and Colonel Juarez, delayed their entrance with a fine Spanish disregard for the dramatic conventions. Once launched into the action, each gave a lively account of himself. But the defeat of honour, the climax of the play, was cliché; the action of what was presumably the Peninsular War, too involved and tedious for allegories to be struck on it, and the florid script made tough listening. A splendid performance, however, as the General, from Selwyn Toogood. —B.E.G.M.

French Gravity

HAVING much enjoyed that provocative novel, *Dawn on Our Darkness*, by the French North African writer Emmanuel Robles, I expected something meaty in his play, *An Armistice with Truth*. I was not disappointed. In a setting of the Peninsular War of 1809, it dealt subtly and convincingly, with issues which have been the concern of the French theatre since Corneille and Racine—the clash between personal feelings and higher loyalties, the many-sided character of truth, and the attitude which can transform expediency into the higher truth. The play was full of that kind of debate and logic-chopping which the French love in the theatre, but which tends to make the Anglo-Saxon restless. Hence its special aptness for radio, where the ear can surrender to the dialectic. Selwyn Toogood did a fine job as the tough general, Don Enrique, ably supported by Peter Varley, William Austin and Peggy Walker (save for a somewhat over-played scene at the end). I wasn't



"There's criticism of personality cult during your British power-stations tour"

The Week's Music . . . by SEBASTIAN

ONE of Mozart's finest and most witty concertos, which replaces convention with invention to a degree unprecedented at that time, is that in B Flat, K.450. It sparkled its way on to the air (YC link) with Lance Dossor as soloist and the National Orchestra as all the other soloists. I'm not sure who most deserves the tossing of my bouquets, but I think the woodwind section: while the solo part glittered, it must be very difficult to play it in any other way; but the woodwind obviously appreciated the delicious sallies, the musically cocked snooks and the tender interludes to an extent that would be hard to excel. In the lovely variations the piano stole the show, but in that naughty finale I would place the honours about even. In all a very good performance, with the Orchestra at its best.

Mr. Dossor, who, as you will remember, was here last year, is also giving some studio recitals. The only one I've heard so far (NZBS) was something of a potpourri, though not actually a hash of short pieces: Debussy, Poulenc, a Poème of Scriabin, and so forth. As background music it was very pleasant, but not really weighty enough to hold

the attention, however competent the playing.

There was a recorded recital recently by Jascha Spivakovsky (NZBS) who played, inevitably and not very inspiringly, Bach's Italian Concerto and Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue. I say inevitably because if we want to hear anything in the way of originality we must listen to our local home-grown artists: with a very few exceptions, visitors from overseas seem to have limited repertoires, and their repertoires are all practically identical. You can almost forecast the next pianist's concert programme. The main composers—and there appear to be about six of these—are represented by some two or three works each, while the others, who are relegated to the second half of an evening, have only a multitude of short pieces to choose from: Chopin and Debussy bear the brunt of these. In the name of music, why? Did Brahms write only two sets of variations? Did Bach's clavier works cease with the above two? Did Schubert and Schumann write no important piano works? And above all, has no composer lived since the turn of the century? Such startling lack of initiative cannot win many friends, and promotes too many comparisons. I for one am sick of it.

so happy about the other actors who, in attempting to suggest the tones of the coarse and licentious Spanish soldiers, succeeded only in sounding like English actors playing characters from *Me and Gus*.

Feminine Viewpoint

NOW that Cherry Raymond has had time to settle into the *Feminine Viewpoint* chair vacated earlier this year by Cynthia Dale, I think I may fairly comment on this important session as it has seemed recently. It is perhaps a little soon to expect any significant variations in a well-established and obviously successful pattern. But, if there have been no really startling innovations, there has certainly been no deterioration. One of its most attractive features remains the interviews, which Miss Raymond conducts with all the flair of her predecessor. The various talks remain varied and of high quality. Unhappily, the legacy of *Front Page Lady* remains, but I look forward to happier days when Miss Raymond may be able to usher in some serial a little less banal. In respect to personality, on

which the success of the session so largely depends, Miss Raymond has justified her place. She is perhaps more briskly business-like than Miss Dale, and a trace more warmth and informality, both of which will doubtless come, might add to her present capable management. In the meantime, *Feminine Viewpoint* remains, in her hands, the most interesting and intelligent women's programme I have heard in three countries.

—J.C.R.

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