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Radio Review

ELEGANT EXTRACTS

[ENJOYED James Bertram's selection from the Oxford *Anthology of New Zealand Verse* more than any poetry programme for a long time. For one thing, it's always a pleasure to listen to Mr. Bertram himself; for another, most of the poems he chose were particular favourites of my own—and I don't mention that merely to praise his taste, or mine. Hearing a poem for the first time on the air you're often busy trying to catch the sense to hear the sound, or vice versa; but a memory of the poem helps you to absorb what only a voice can add to it. I thought he gave a balanced view of the book, which is much more various, and at the same time and possibly for the same reason, rather less powerful than Mr. Curnow's anthology. The variety was splendidly shown by the readers. I had a few doubts—I thought the reader of M. K. Joseph's *Secular Litany* took far too literally what Mr. Bertram said about the hate in it. But every reading had been individually thought out, and we got right away from the poetic drone. Except, possibly, with the younger writers, and that may have been because Mr. Bertram's selection from them was more monotonous than that part of the book really is.

No, No, No, No

"AND how, how, how are you." That's Arthur Young introducing his ABC programme, *Romance of Rhythm*, at present being heard on the Sunday National Programme. "So, so, so, so long." That's Arthur Young signing off. I might even forgive this, if he had anything to say about rhythm. Certainly he tells us the surprising facts that Spanish music has Spanish rhythm, old music old rhythm, modern music modern rhythm, and that all music has some rhythm. But the talk is a mere peg to hang the playing on; and as for that, well, I'm not expert enough to judge his rendering of Chicago and bop, but hear him take *Pavane for a Dead Princess* by the throat, and blench. "*Romance of Rhythm* will be heard again at the same time next Sunday," the announcer says at the end of it. "Why?" I ask myself. "Why?" For the reason, apparently, that the Sunday programme is rapidly becoming the repository of these smooth-talking, indifferently-performing musicians. But for really good light music

let me commend *All Day Singing* on Saturday night, in which Henry Walter plays records of American folk music. There's rich stuff here, knowledgeably presented.
—R.D.McE.

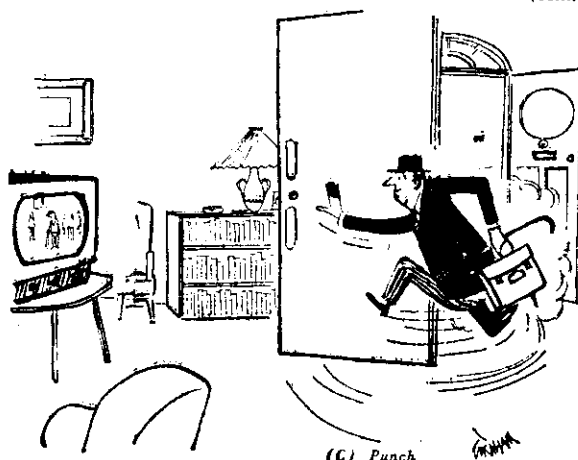
No Stony Ground

[CAN only assume, from what I shall reveal later, that this column is being read, and duly gratified, I wish to record my modest pleasure. I was moved some weeks ago to lament that concert announcers felt impelled to fill the gaps before a concert began with musical annotations hastily swotted up from, I later discovered, Percy A. Scholes. Far from enlightening this reviewer, they moved him to dance with rage. I must now record, therefore, that in two concerts recently broadcast, the announcers behaved admirably; no cosy snippets about this or that composer, merely the name and the date of the composition. Badura-Skoda's Mozart concert was preceded by a brief programme note on his career, and then, blessedly, silence, with faintly off, the expectant hum of the audience. My compliments. While I am on concert broadcasts, I must say that it has been pointed out to me that the orchestral playing in the Mozart concerto which I criticised severely last week, was admirable in the hall, and far from being the worst playing this season, has some claims to being considered the best. All I can say is that I have ears, and to the best of my belief, they are in good nick; musician friends who heard the broadcast confirm my findings, and if this great disparity exists, then it is the technicians, or maybe the conditions of that broadcast, which we must blame. This is a theme to which I shall later return.

Young Midas

BADURA-SKODA again, of course, and what an admirable artist he is! I listened intently to his all-Mozart programme last week, and found much of it purest gold. His control of tone is exquisitely sensitive, yet it rarely goes beyond forte; the range of dynamics he employs from *pppp* to *f* seems vast. The Adagio in B Minor has a superb gravity, and the Sonata in A Major a sparkling lyricism and Viennese charm. And how pleasant, for once, to hear the Alla Turca played, not as a doll's quickstep, but as a march. The great Fantasia and Sonata in C Minor are rarely played together on concert programmes; I cannot recall hearing them since Lili Kraus gave her still memorable account in 1946. Badura-Skoda employed the

(continued on next page)



(C) Punch