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RADIO REVIEW

The Old Man

ALUN RICHARDS deserves praise on more than one score for his series, *Talk of the Devil*. For one thing, it takes an unusually agile mind to devise several talks on a Personage who, however seriously he may be taken by philosophers and theologians, is associated by most "men in the street" only with cartoons in "magazines for males." For another, the cunning with which Mr. Richards had planned his talks was admirable. In the first three, by tracing the ancestry of Satan to various ancient myths, and by showing how much the popular conception owed to artists and poets, he seemed to be demolishing the very concept of the Devil with something of the iconoclastic delight of a 19th century Higher Critic. And yet—and yet—there was that element of doubt suggested throughout which kept the listener in suspense from week to week almost as with a detective story. All doubts were dispelled when Mr. Richards in his final talk offered us the orthodox view, but given new freshness, point and vitality by his skilful clearing away of accretions. Why, indeed, should the devil have all the best tunes? It is warming to my old orthodox heart to hear the traditional defended with some of the wit and vivacity of modern heterodoxy.

The Friendly Station

IT is hard to say what the distinctive character of 1YD as a popular station really is. Yet distinctive character it unquestionably has. It is more than commercial radio without soap-opera, commercials, matey announcers, children's choirs and shopping reporters. Although it deals generously in brass bands, dance music, and the more presentable "pops," it also offers the Listeners' Classical and Grand Opera

Request Sessions. Rex Sayers' engaging North American Diary, much light classical music, the occasional spoken word programme, and so forth. Often, I have found that when 1YC is especially dull and 1YA is doing some National Station chore or other, 1YD offers something soothing, palatable and really entertaining. I suspect that 1YD succeeds so well in its field by beaming its material towards the middle-aged, rather than the young, and thus maintaining the spirit of old 12M. Certainly this station brings out the best in its announcers, who are friendly rather than chummy, chatty without being smart-alecks, and considerate rather than patronising. The atmosphere is of a family station of a kind associated with a smaller town than Auckland. We are fortunate to have it as an alternative to the slicker and more emetic kinds of radio.

—J.C.R.

Unhappy Conclusion

THE ROAD TO THE CHARTER, a UN Radio feature commemorating the organisation's eleventh birthday, was a survey of attempts to achieve international order through the ages. It told a familiar story—rather too familiar—of steady evolution through rudimentary and unsuccessful experiments to the final consummation in the United Nations. Certainly it broke new ground even for UN Radio by beginning the story in China, but it soon moved to Greece and Rome; after which, it told us, the darkness descended over Europe until the new stirrings of thought in the 15th century. Surely it's rather late to repeat this clap-trap? To any survey which went beyond the obvious the period of Christendom would be of the greatest relevance. But UN Radio seems incapable of going beyond the obvious. Its producers know all the technical tricks, but the necessity to offend nobody, to say only what most people at present believe, seems to have

(continued on next page)

The Week's Music . . . by SEBASTIAN

THE National Orchestra is on tour with its subscription concerts, and Sir Bernard Heinze as guest conductor, and we have heard some good music from the combination (YC stations). Sir Bernard's conducting style is very neat indeed, his rhythms forceful, and he treats tempo in a manner quite free but always controlled. The players responded well, and the result was even more assured by the programmes which contained no really modernistic works but a well-planned attraction of opposites.

Most charming of the pieces was the little Symphony K.200 of Mozart, which for its naive delight should be heard more often: a decimated orchestra played it with grace, and an incredible unity in the breathless finale. On the other hand, César Franck's lovable symphony received the "full treatment," and its high points were noble and broadly painted. There was some lovely cor anglais work, though occasional members of the wind section were unfortunate in their solo work. For the most part, however, there were no accidents—which will happen even in the best-regulated orchestras—and the wild rejoicing of the finale's close was triumphantly successful. This, one of the most romantic of romantic works, seemed to suit the players' present tem-

perament: I can't think of a symphony which is so deservedly popular.

At least as popular is Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, possibly because of its wealth of attractive tunes, too many of which we know with sentimental words grafted on to them—a graft which unfortunately takes rather well. As a symphony it makes a good patchwork quilt, its gaudy sections sewn together neatly, the most brilliant pieces being displayed with appropriate prominence. The wonderful orchestration—"opulent" is an overworked word, but will suffice—was successful in full measure in this performance, and, in fact, I think the only faults in it were attributable directly to Tchaikovsky.

The other recent major work was Schumann's Piano Concerto, nicely enough managed by David Galbraith. I always feel the orchestral soloist should be co-starred here, since without their best efforts the pianist will find himself participating in a resounding flop. I was happy to find that no fatalities of this nature occurred, and the concerto was carefree if not faultless. After all this, the gem of this particular programme was the little movement in Haydn's Serenade in D, almost sung rather than played, with great finesse and delicacy. The miniatures are always successful—I don't pretend to know why.

N.Z. LISTENER, AUGUST 10, 1956.