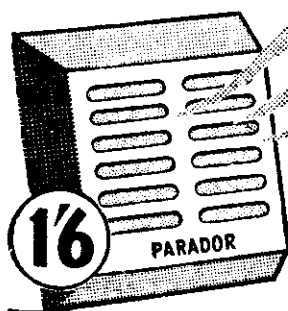


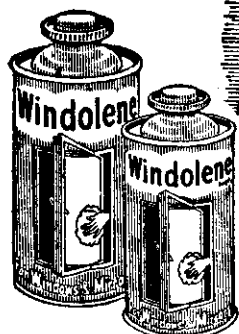
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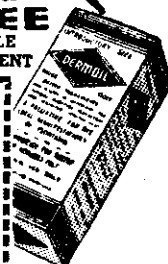
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RADIO REVIEW

Dickens on the Air

LISTENING to Dickens abridged is no substitute for reading him; yet I think radio adaptations of his work are often more successful, in the sense of being truer to the original, than films. Films reveal too much. Pecksniff played by an actor on the screen would inevitably become, to some degree, a man; conveyed only by Donald Wolfit's voice he remains a grotesque. When the voices are as good as they are in this BBC serial of *Martin Chuzzlewit* they can add something to a reader's conception of Dickens, as Phiz's illustrations do. Besides Mr. Pecksniff there's a Jonas Chuzzlewit, who shows the authentic Dickens horror, and Gladys Young's miraculously Gampish Mrs. Gamp. I've heard Gladys Young on discussion panels, and a more comfortable, motherly person you couldn't hope to know. She sounds the same in *A Life of Bliss*. And yet she creates so frighteningly these gruesome females—Mrs. Gamp, the sinister Mrs. Brown in *Dombey and Son*, Trollope's Mrs. Proudie. I know it's naive to associate an actress with the characters she plays, but I can't help wondering of these radically discrepant versions of Gladys Young—which is the player, and which the part?

Talk About the Theatre

FRANK NEWMAN, producer for the Canterbury Repertory Society, produced the first adult play I ever saw. Since it was only five years ago, and I'm not as old as all that, this was an odd circumstance which I haven't the space to explain now; but it left me feeling a gratitude which I'm glad to discharge by saying how much I'm enjoying listening to his talks *On Stage*. In those I've heard so far he's been giving a history

of the theatre, up to the quite recent introduction of the producer. The outlines of the story would be familiar to most people—they were to me—but his own experience in the theatre has been so wide and he makes such good use of it for illustration that his talks have a liveliness and individuality which I missed from the second (I didn't hear the first) of Nola Miller's two talks on the history of the theatre in New Zealand. Mr. Newman's voice is so beautifully expressive that it is perhaps quibbling to remark that he uses it rather as if he were talking in a hall than in my living room—a habit of large verbal gesture which actors are apt to share with politicians and clergymen.

—R.D.McE.

The Mouths of Babes

I EXPECTED much from a programme entitled *A Word from Children*, a series of unrehearsed interviews with children in the U.S.A., the United Kingdom and Australia, by Keith Smith. An international exchange of ideas, I thought as I tuned in, of pungent and vivid comment on the world created by their elders, but which, unfortunately, they will have to inherit: this promised well. I found it quite trivial, and as for unrehearsed, tell that to the Marines, I muttered scornfully, as I heard one pat phrase follow another. And where was the U.K.? Where the U.S.A.? Only the voice of young Australia assailed (and "assailed" is indubitably the *mot juste*) these ears, and on what subjects! The young team, none over eleven years of age, and all, I judged, from outer, Sydney, were invited to give their views on childish destruction, smashing windows and so forth, and women's hats, and whether make-up was a good thing. The most intimate confidences, fortunately anonymous, were made about Mum and Dad; Dad was a fool at fixing things, Dad thought he knew everything, and so on. Should children have to pay for the

(continued on next page)

The Week's Music . . . by SEBASTIAN

A LITTLE while ago I mentioned the visiting pianist Désirée MacEwan, who has now given us a fairly representative selection of recitals (YC links) with which to assess her playing. In general it is neat and precise, with an immense regard for the letter of the law, and often for the spirit as well; but she pleases most in works where the need for emotion is subordinate to the style and form. The posthumous B Flat Sonata of Schubert, for instance, came off very well indeed, and its strivings being implicit in the music, there was no need for the performer to strain after effect.

Her Debussy was also pleasing, but when it came to the Mozart Concerto in E Flat (K.449), there was a certain flatness and lack of sparkle that was not appropriate, even in this concerto, whose themes do not lilt as appealingly as some of the others. This was with the National Orchestra conducted by James Robertson, and with the same musicians Miss MacEwan played Fauré's Ballade for Piano and Orchestra, with more intensity and, I rather think, better tone. Certainly the Orchestra supported with what sounded like a bit more enthusiasm.

These latter two works were included in studio concerts; Samuel Barber's "School for Scandal" Overture figured

also in one of them, an interesting piece with a fair amount of immediate appeal, being by no means radical in treatment, unlike so many contemporary American works: but then, Barber is conventional enough almost to be included in an earlier generation of composers. The same programme also contained Schumann's Fourth Symphony (in an orchestral revision which doubtless improves its audience appeal no end); this was well played, too, with an encouraging certainty of attack and a *joie de vivre* that contradicted the minor key of the work.

We have bid au revoir to Sir Bernard Heinze, but we can remember with pleasure some of the new works and interpretations he has brought to our notice. There was the jolly Ninth Symphony of Shostakovich, hardly of a stature to compete with other symphonies, but well worth the carefree performance it had (NZBS); the quality of Sibelius's Second Symphony spoke of hard rehearsal (2YC). Though the trumpets had been pared from the original forty to three in Handel's Royal Fireworks Music, the effect was never anaemic, for the lamb was tempered to the shorn wind with exciting results. Thus ended another tour; as a conductor, Sir Bernard has been inspiring—as a guest, charming. We look forward to another visit.