

so public, so loud. For artists to woo their muse on the air might be too much like having their most intimate words to their lovers relayed over a loudspeaker at an A. and P. Show. It may be that approaches from one side or the other have in the past been fruitless for this reason. I don't know. It isn't my job to know: I know only what I hear or don't hear on the air. But since the Broadcasting Service and its listeners are the greatest losers when nothing is done, I hope that in this matter it resembles a contented cow less than the hound of heaven. Only not so heavenly, one hopes, that bribery is excluded from its armoury.

—R.D.McE.

Ole!

I USE the traditional Spanish term of approval to salute the much-heralded, eagerly-awaited soprano, Victoria de los Angeles. There is no doubt in my mind, after hearing her sing with the National Orchestra last Saturday, that we are privileged to have with us one of the great singers of our time. Her voice has an exquisite smoothness, a delicious, bland ripeness; never opulent or fruity, it is always wonderfully pure. She does not offer the tang and bite that an artist like Conchita Supervia has led us to expect from Spanish sopranos; coolness, grace, refinement: these are her qualities, and she possesses them to a degree surely unrivalled. The Mozart Motet, *Exsultate, Jubilate*, was perhaps less exultant, less jubilant, than a more robust instrument would make it, but it was sung in the finest, most delicate taste, and the phrasing was superbly shapely. She threw off the intricate passages in the *Alleluia* with splendid assurance, and her last eight notes were glorious. Many of us have heard her recording of Turina's *Canto a Sevilla*, with its ripe Debussy harmonies and subtle Iberian flavours. Here, her voice became at once richer and rounder, a beaker, if I may say so, of the warm south.

Mixed Grill

ZB SUNDAY SHOWCASE offered strange bedfellows last week, *Echoes of the Golden Age of Opera* somewhat mysteriously linked with the first canto of Byron's *Don Juan*. The operatic snippets, recorded between 1901 and 1903 at actual performances in New York, had a tinny, scratchy splendour, if only because, amid the crackle and fizz of the execrable recordings, one could descry, tarnished by time, the unmis-

The Week's Music . . . by SEBASTIAN

WE appear to have been smitten with a sudden desire to celebrate important composers with feature programmes of their own, and if their works are commonly neglected, so much the better; masterpieces are exhumed for our benefit, and then interred once more. Honour has at least been satisfied. This may account for the Bliss-krieg of the past week, when much of Bliss's major work has been heard, some of it refreshingly unfamiliar, some resurrected for no obvious reason. The Festival Overture "Edinburgh" contained fine music, occasionally trite, but always striking, and its inclusion of familiar themes made a first hearing easier without detracting from the originality of treatment. To judge from this and the Violin Concerto which followed (BBC), the composer has mellowed towards a more traditional vein of expression than much of his earlier stringent utterance. Needless to say, the performance, conducted by the composer and with Campoli as soloist, could hardly have been bettered.

Our own contribution to this life of Bliss comprised chiefly a programme (NZBS) of shorter works, of varying styles as befits an arranged recital, and performed chiefly by National Orchestra members. The Clarinet Quintet, with Frank Gurr in the title role, was most

satisfactorily smooth, and ingratiating as far as such music can be. So was the Viola Sonata, with Glynne Adams and James Robertson; in fact, the whole series was well conceived and executed.

The lyric tenor, to my mind, is one stage above the operatic tenor as far as artistry goes, but frequently a stage lower technically speaking. I heard the Australian tenor William Herbert (YC links) putting Schubert's *Maid through the Mill*, and though his high register was very pleasing, the deeper passages seemed to evoke an uncomfortable wobble. Perhaps it was only emotion, but it spoilt an otherwise tasteful rendering of this demanding cycle.

The Alex Lindsay Orchestra started their new series of programmes (NZBS) featuring the Concerti Grossi of Corelli, with great élan, and the warm tone that we now expect of them as a matter of course: it remains only to be seen whether the series is as successful as their earlier one of Handel. As before, each programme includes a modern work, the first being Alan Bush's cycle *Farewell Earth's Bliss*, whose music belies its rather depressive title. The soloist was Donald Munro, who sang his difficult part feelingly and as far as I could judge, accurately. If the other works to follow are as attractive, then it would be a shame to miss any of the programmes.

takable outline of an Age of Gold. As Melba executed a phenomenal trill, and flew from it to rest securely on a long top D, the salvos of applause reminded me that great singing then occupied much the same area of public esteem that all-in wrestling does now. James Robertson compered this fascinating programme with the high styliness that he can do so well. I enjoyed his sly digs at operatic conventions, conveying in his piquant way that the operatic world is at once dotty and sublime. As for the Byron, I thought it very tedious. Byronic humour consists, it seems to me, in a conscientious bathos, the assembling of a string of portentous images, which are then ruthlessly punctured in the last two lines of the stanza. To bring this off with precision demands an exact sense of style which eludes Tyrone Power. And I don't wish to sound snobbish, but I found his intonations most wearing. "Nowadays," said Oscar Wilde at his most wilful, "the English and Americans have everything in common: except, of course, the language." Amen.

—B.E.G.M.

New Work for Strings

"IT is of sound craftsmanship and is a very pleasant work," said Alex Lindsay when discussing a new suite for strings by John Ritchie which his orchestra will be playing next week. Specially commissioned for the present series, this suite, as well as Douglas Lilburn's "Diversions," will accompany the current programmes of Corelli Concerti Grossi. John Ritchie, who was music lecturer at Canterbury University College, recently left New Zealand to study composition in America. He has previously written choral works and incidental music for the theatre. (Tuesday, October 16, YCs, 7.0 p.m.)

Douglas Lilburn's "Diversions" was written in 1947 when it was performed by the visiting Boyd Neel Orchestra. Since then it has earned itself a place in the repertoire of string groups. Its title suggests that it is music in a lighter style and fairly free in form. It is in five movements. Several more new works will be performed in this series, including works by David Sell, Max Saunders, Larry Pruden and Ashley Heenan.

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE Executant Diploma in Music

Applications are invited for admission in 1957 to the three-year course for the College Executant Diploma in Music.

The course will comprise:

- (i) Individual practical tuition in any one of the following subjects:—Singing, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Harp, Organ.
- (ii) Ensemble Training, including Chamber Music and Orchestral Playing.
- (iii) Theoretical Classes, including History and Literature of Music, Harmony and Aural Training.

The composite annual fee will be £45, plus the usual College and Students' Association fees.

Six Government bursaries, each valued at £150 per annum, tenable for three years, will be available through the Internal Affairs Department. Further details of the course, together with forms of application for admission and forms of application for Government Bursaries, are obtainable from the Registrar, Auckland University College. Both applications (on the prescribed forms) should reach the College not later than Monday, October 15, 1956.

J. A. KIRKNESS,
Registrar.



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