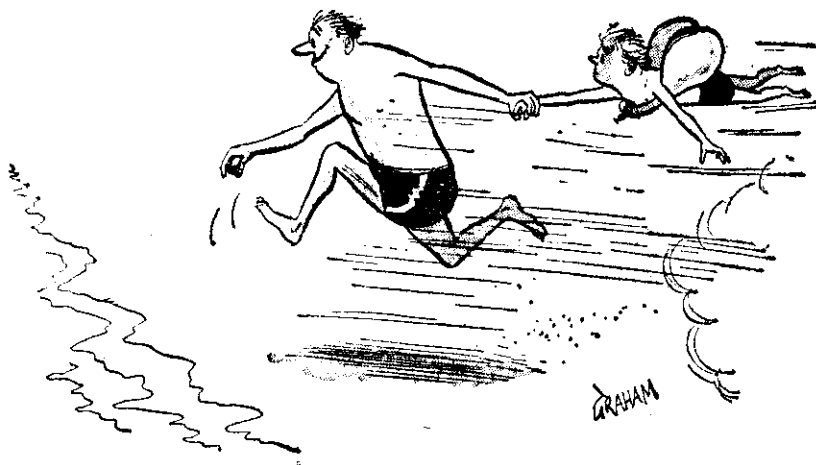




(continued from previous page)

panied her. The NZBS has given us the prize of the season. All I can hope is that they will soon do it again.

—B.E.G.M.

Don Oegin

IT was a rather strange coincidence which brought together, on successive nights, anyhow, a canto of Byron's *Don Juan*, read by Tyrone Power in *ZB Sunday Showcase* and a BBC dramatisation of Pushkin's *Eugen Onegin* from 1YC on Monday. For *Eugen Onegin*, at least as it appears in Babette Deutsch's translation, is a very Byronic affair indeed, a satirical narrative blending the cynical with the sentimental, with much incidental beauty and all kinds of witty digressions. Dramatised, however, it lost much of its charm, and sounded more like a Somerset Maugham play than one of Russia's great literary works. The rejection of the self-centred Eugen by the mature woman he had himself rejected as a girl was treated as a gimmick rather than as the ironical climax Pushkin makes it. By contrast Tyrone Power's spirited reading of *Don Juan* revealed the wonderful narrative flow of Byron's poem, its urbane humour and gaily sardonic view of human nature. A somewhat unexpected choice for Sunday night, this, one which I hasten to applaud. But I couldn't help wondering how many listening ears were burning at Juan's boudoir exploits. *Plus ça change*—as I believe they say.

Super Suppe

VON SUPPE is a name I associated with a couple of overtures (need I name them?) which I first heard on a pianola and seem to have heard since played only by brass bands. I had thought of him merely as a kind of Viennese Sousa or Teutonic Ketelby. But the YA link presentation of his operetta *Boccaccio* disclosed a quite new von Suppé, a composer in the true Viennese tradition of Lehar and the Strausses, with a gift for gay melodies, sweet melodies, vigorous melodies—above all, melodies. This special genre, not quite opera, yet a cut above what we call "musical comedy," seems to belong to an earlier age, but dates rather less than musical comedies of a few years ago. *Boccaccio's* libretto, centring, naturally, round the author of the *Decameron*, seemed rather more literate than usual, and the Vienna Folk Opera Chorus gave a sparkle to the work which suggests it would be quite engaging on the stage. *Theatre of Music* has a habit of pulling out a plum every two or three

programmes, and I'm quite willing to endure one *Blossom Time* for one *Boccaccio*.
—J.C.R.

(C) Punch

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