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A NEW LINE

ORIOLE Records are now available in New Zealand with some bright discs of satire, intimate revue, music for dancing and some interesting bypaths of the musical classics.

Most significant among this list is *The Investigator: A Political Satire in Documentary Form*. Written by Reuben Ship, this is a brilliant satirical commentary on some 20th century inquisitorial methods. The central character—whose name is not mentioned—would seem to be a caricature of Senator McCarthy, of the United States. Killed in a plane crash, this character is emigrated to "Up Here," where he soon has himself appointed chairman of an Investigating Committee which proceeds to re-examine the credentials of "subversive" elements. These include Socrates, John Milton, Thomas Jefferson, Beethoven—in fact, many of those who have stood out for the principles of liberty. The performance is excellent. The machinations of the Committee make amusing, but, more important, thought-provoking listening. You should not miss *The Investigator* (Oriole MG 20006).

Monarchs in Melody (Oriole MG 10008) deals with history a little more lightheartedly. I'm not sure what age group this disc aims at, but if for some reason or other you have a yen to bone up on the Kings and Queens of England from William I ("William the Conqueror, 1066, put everyone in a terrible fix . . . whose wife Queen Matilda came over too, but having ten children had too much to do") to Henry VI ("son of Henry V was only just one when he came to the throne . . . started a school called Eton, the gateway to fame")—well, this is the painless way to do it. History is put into song which has a distinct resemblance to the music of Edward German.

If you enjoyed the New Zealand Players' successful production, *Salad Days*, you will no doubt wish to recall your enjoyment with a selection of its songs (Oriole MG 20004). And if you enjoyed *Salad Days*, you'll probably lend a ready ear to *Twenty Minutes South* (Oriole MG 20007), a little tripping in song and dance between London and somewhere twenty minutes south. The idea is a bright one and the cast carries it off, but for my taste there's a little too much of suburbia in the music of this suburban entertainment. Translate this into American and you have *Plain and Fancy* (Oriole MG 10009), something of the same sort of thing over in Pennsylvania with a few platitudes thrown in with the sentiment. All the three productions are presented as complete entertainments which makes each a good L.P.'s worth of listening.

Divers Dances

That brings us to Oriole's excursions into the dance. *Braziliana* (Oriole MG 10006) is a lively collection of Brazilian songs and dances, with some attrac-

New Recordings by OWEN JENSEN

tive singing by Nelson Ferraz, effectively presented and well recorded. *Alibi for Drums* (Oriole MG 10011) provides opportunities for Thurston Knudson to demonstrate his prowess on various kinds of native drums. When Mr. Knudson devotes himself to Pathan dances and Tahitian and Caribbean Voodoo chants, the drumming is exciting enough, but the reverse side of the disc which introduces more conventional pop tunes begins to cloy somewhat.

Then there's *University Jazz* (Oriole MG 10010) in which a number of the English universities vie with each other for an honours degree in jazz playing. Listening to this jazz is like going to a college game after the more serious business of a test match—except that this was a test. For what it's worth, Cambridge were first, Oxford second and Leeds University came a good third. Some of the playing is first rate, and even the less good has the merit of spontaneity.

Perfect for Dancing (Oriole MG 10007), with Tommy Kinsman and his Band, is just what its title indicates—perfect for dancing; and that's more than can be said for a lot in the jazz line.

More Serious

Issued also by the Oriole people are two Masses by Palestrina—*Missa "Iste Confessor"* and *Missa Sine Nomine*. They are beautifully sung by the Welsh Choral (Allegro ALX 3016). The same detached contemplative beauty comes out with instruments in Purcell's *Fantasias in Three, Four and Five Parts*, played by the Aeolian String Quartet and the London String Trio (Allegro ALY 119). This particular disc carries the four-part *Fantasia*.

To those who have not heard it before, Purcell's music to *The Fairy Queen* may come as something of a surprise. Gracious and lyrical music, there is depth and breadth to it, too. The performance by the Cambridge Festival Chorus and Orchestra with

(continued on next page)



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N.Z. LISTENER, NOVEMBER 9, 1956