

★ The Week's Music . . . by SEBASTIAN ★

THE concertos of Mozart other than those for piano seem often to have been written against rather than for the instrument, in their sheer difficulty of effective execution, the more so when one considers the imperfect instrument-making of the time. The horn concertos are certainly of this kind; though composed with obvious knowledge of the horn's idiosyncrasies, there are still myriad opportunities for the unwary player to drop fluffs and sour notes. All the more credit then to Peter Glen, who with the National Orchestra (YC link) gave a very sound performance of the fourth of these concertos, with a minimum of blues and a nice sense of climax and of humour—the latter being an absolute essential, not only for these works, but I suspect for any horn player *sui generis*. This is a thoroughly light-hearted piece, in spite of its pretence at solemnity in the slow movement, and the playing had the right naively merry approach. The horn overweighted the

orchestra to some extent, but this didn't matter too much—after all, one almost expects this in a concerto.

Robert Hughes's Festival Overture, which opened this programme, was a fairly euphonious affair and bright, and I think would rank high in audience appeal. At any rate, this applied as far as I was the audience. The orchestration was brilliant, the playing good, and the style not too cacophonous for my essentially conservative ear.

The Edinburgh Festival programmes ended with a bang—no whimpers here, but a satisfying performance of the Beethoven Violin Concerto by Isaac Stern, and some fascinating pieces from the Boston Brass Ensemble, a new group that specialises in brass "chamber

music." A Ganzon of Gabrieli showed the combination off finely, with a faintly barbaric sound that matches ill with thoughts of old Italian cathedrals. A typically devil-may-care Sonata by Poulenc and a rather similar Quintet by the American Sanders were the other highlights, and gave the boisterous mood of the brasses free rein.

From the Holland Festival we have had interesting works (Radio Nederland), not only from the standard repertoire but of Dutch composers as well. There was Diepenbrock's incidental music to *Elektra*, music that owed something to French models and to Richard Strauss in its thick, even lush orchestration and sub-strata of romanticism, a rich glowing vein. Then there was the contemporary Symphonic Prologue of Badings, using a theme of Bruckner's in a rowdily good-humoured way; though why not simply "Overture" I can't imagine.

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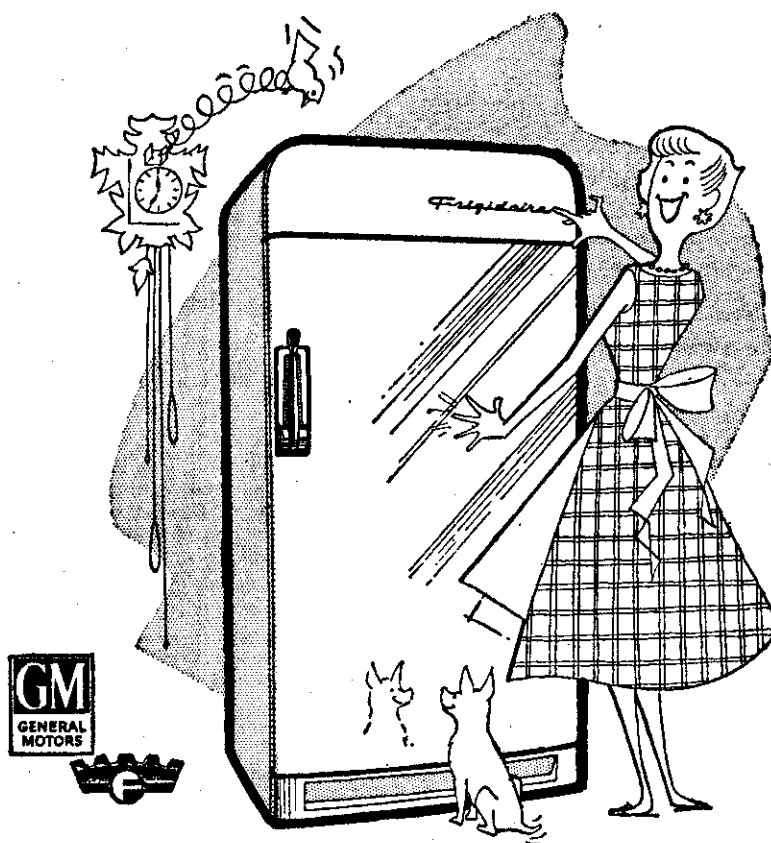
programme, by his robust imagery; describing the English ships as "like to some women in full belly, showing little but concealing much armament." A diary note of the time, after the Armada was scattered and some ships wrecked off Ireland, records that "this day, Saturday, ordered one thousand Spanish survivors to be put to the sword; Sunday, I passed in prayers and thanks to my God." This admirable documentary made history vivid and actual by ignoring the common impulse to make the enterprise merely glorious; if glory is there, so equally are blood, toil, tears and sweat.

—B.E.G.M.

Leave Your Mind Alone?

BECAUSE Freud was born in 1856 the Mind has had a thorough going-over this year. Even the casual YC listener can scarcely help having his head sprinkled with bits of information about Psychology and Medicine, Psychology and Religion, Psychology and Education, and just plain Psychology, not to mention extrasensory perception. They've been good talks, most of them, and cumulatively have shown the extent to which Freud's work has advanced that self-consciousness which is the distinguishing mark of man. But whether this popularising of the fringe of the beginning of a specialised subject is wholly a good thing I haven't yet decided—and I don't mean only that although in some ways this new knowledge of psychology has made us more tolerant, it has also given the intolerant a fine scientific-sounding vocabulary with which to damn the people they don't like. I saw a nice quote from Olivia de Havilland the other day: "Since I have lived in France I have substituted a liver specialist for the psycho-analyst I employed in Hollywood. I feel much happier." She might have something there. Next year, I give you fair warning, our preoccupations will be different. William Blake was born in 1757, Joseph Conrad in 1857. So was my grandfather. Anyone want a talk about him?

—R.D.McE.



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