

## The Investigator

BEFORE I go on to the larger aspects of this most distinguished piece of radio, a few cavils. It seemed odd to me that characters such as Judge Jeffreys, Cotton Mather, Torquemada and Titus Oates should be Up Here with the elect; if they slipped through the immigration committee, an investigation was overdue. And when Chopin dropped out of the celestial quartet for writing the Revolutionary Study, I was pained that Beethoven, of all people, the composer of the Eroica Symphony, if of nothing else, should support the candidature of Otto Schmink. There were too many Karl Marx jokes, or perhaps they were not sufficiently speedy to keep up the tone of heady surprise which the programme almost consistently maintained. With that, my grouches are done. *The Investigator* is a wonderful achievement, the more so, in these cautious days, for being a programme authorised and produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Commission. Questions were asked in the House at Ottawa, and well they might be, since the satire is deadly, and the character of the Investigator which emerges, poisonous. The serious heart of the piece is concerned with that detestable side of human nature which regards the scotching of the Devil as a superior activity to the unitive love of God which, if practised persistently, will always defeat the Prince of Darkness anyway. But the lower road has proved a seductive pathway to some of the most energetic talents in history, and their careers

have been marked by the anguish of thousands. In time of madness, such as societies periodically experience; their activities can command large public support, with what melancholy results we have in these last few years witnessed. I have the deepest admiration for the wit, perception, courage, and essential humanity of Reuben Ship's magnificent piece, and the story of its reception in America is most heartening. *The Investigator* is a superb *reductio ad absurdum* of all inquisitorial techniques, and the basis of this one in psycho pathological promptings was cleverly and subtly stated. How far humour can prevail over organised dictatorship is uncertain: not far, perhaps, but that it did so in the less constricted atmosphere of the United States is a tribute to this brilliant writer, and hardly less so, to the American people.

—B.E.G.M.

### Galicia

I DON'T know who Nina Epton is, nor how it came about that her two programmes on Spain, illustrated with recordings she had made there, were evidently compiled in New Zealand. All I can say is that is our great good luck. The first, on Galicia, was quite the most unexpected radio pleasure I've had for a long time. There were remarkable contrasts in the sounds she brought us. The mixture of Spanish, Moorish and Celtic elements in the population gave us dances that sounded like Spain, other dances played on the bagpipes which sounded like Scotland in the sunshine, Orient-ish songs accompanied on a tea-tray, choral singing that might have been Slav. And

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

A YEAR or so ago we heard some Japanese piano music which, if not actually plagiarised, was certainly a derivation from conventional Western styles. The latest Japanese print to arrive was in a *Music from Oversea* programme (YC link) in which the violinist Ryutaro Iwabuchi played, in a nice piece of dual recording, Ogura's Sonata for two violins. Again there was nothing very individual in the musical style; no mysterious East, no delicate traceries of lines, but a full-bodied fairly ordinary texture with plenty of rhythm was evident; while the playing was very good, with some superb timing. Much more of what we might imagine as proper to the Orient was heard in the Variations for piano and orchestra by Matsudaira, a work which had some success at one of the Contemporary Music Festivals. A dark foreboding theme, some gossamer piano work, a little involved development like one of those impossible wooden puzzles made up the main ingredients: and if the variations were not all crystal-clear, at least they were not unintelligible. There was sensitive playing both from the soloist, one Joshie Kora, and the NHK Radio Orchestra.

The Alex Lindsay Orchestra is back in harness again and is pulling some modern plums out of the European pie. Bartok's Divertimento (NZBS), for instance, is a pleasant piece of music, more carefree than much of the composer's work, and with much of interest for players and audience, in its twining parts and lilting rhythms. A similar recipe produced Hindemith's Eight Pieces Op. 44 which though dating from the same period as *Mathis der Maler* were much more simple, brief and direct, similar in general type to Bartok's little duos and piano pieces. It is a fact that when the contemporary composers are deprived of their brass and percussion, when limited by voices or strings, they roar as gently as any sucking dove: perhaps the sweep of strings softens them to a less militant utterance. The clashing discord that forms so large a part of the modern vocabulary is all but banished, though the lively rhythms and concise brevity are still a hallmark of the style. At any rate the players here sounded happy with the pieces, with excellent tone and unanimity, and even a ponderous performance of Sibelius's C Major Romance did nothing to detract from them. More of this type of work, please, and the devil's trill take the hindmost.

she gave us other sounds, too: the shriek of a Galician ox-cart, the babble at a beach picnic which was also a fertility rite. Her own script was witty, observant, informative, and admirably

delivered. The whole had the extraordinary effect on this untravelled Pig Islander of making me homesick for a country so unlike home. I suppose one

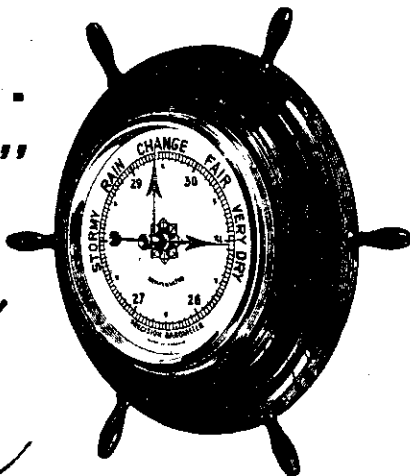
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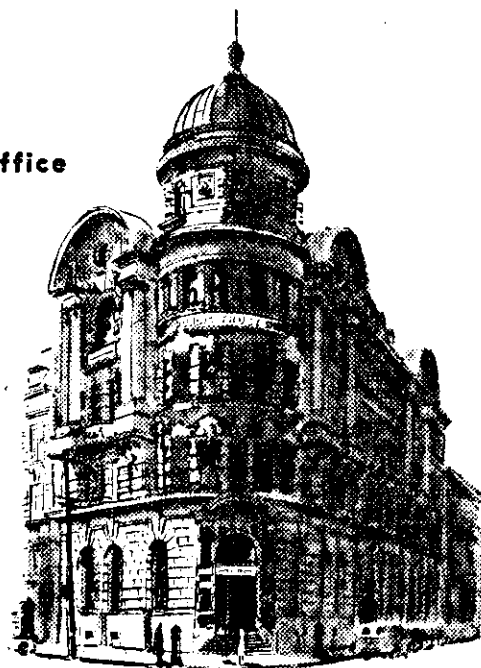
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