

the spacious musical feeling and sense of drama combined, without which the work cannot live. Over the whole performance, there lay nothing stunted or tentative; an authentic largeness both of mind and feeling came over to us. We need size in New Zealand; my salutations to all who made it possible.

Victorian Set-pieces

I HAVE listened to two episodes of the BBC chronicle of the lives of Gilbert and Sullivan, which take one as far as *Pinafore*. And I am reluctantly forced to conclude that G and S, for all the temptations which may draw biographers to them, do not hold in their lives the stuff from which lively drama can be made. I recall the disappointing film, which failed to generate any creative feeling for them as persons. The truth is, surely, that both were pillars of Victorian respectability, and there is nothing dramatic about that. Gilbert's satire, though edged to the point that Queen Victoria refused him a knighthood throughout her reign, is, for all its finish, minuscule, compared with a really ferocious talent like Dickens's, and Sullivan, for all his technical skill and piquant talent, is very small beer beside his European contemporaries. Separately, they were undistinguished, together unique, and it is the baffling fact to which biographers should cling, for the drama of their partnership lies in it. Perhaps I am judging too early in the series, but so far I find them dull coves. There was, however, one delicious vignette in the best Victorian style, where Sullivan's high-minded fiancée abjures their troth for the sake of his career. As mannered as a piece of petit-point, almost Wildean in its bathos, the episode left me hoping for more like it. I shall therefore listen again.

—B.E.G.M.

Children's Schism

IN the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, or it might be the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, or perhaps both, pilgrims may find several services proceeding simultaneously, according to the rites of the several orders which share the building. Barbarous behaviour, of course, unless you happen to take an antiquarian's delight in that sort of thing. But not so different, in its way, from some of the things we do in religious broadcasting in this country. For example, the children's song services on Sunday, where the speakers change regularly once a month like the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. There may not be anything to choose between the speakers, but the one must go and the other must come, in order to maintain the mathematical equality of denominations according to the number of their adherents. I don't know what children think of this arrangement, because I don't know any children who listen to the song service, which may in itself be their reaction. I can imagine what would happen to the weekday children's session if the compere changed every month. At present the song service has little hope of building and keeping an audience, however much the denominations taking part strive to improve their contributions, as I know they do.

Dangerous Ground

THIS is treading on dangerous ground, but I can't help noticing that in some of the towns Selwyn Toogood visits with *It's In the Bag* competitors

The Week's Music . . . by SEBASTIAN

THE column may read like a catalogue this week; but with a glut of good things it is difficult to single out or discard any of them. The Auckland Festival's variety was immense (YC links), ranging from opera to light songs, the programmes being carefully planned and well presented, with the National Orchestra forming a solid background for a galaxy of soloists.

With members of the Orchestra, the National Opera Company presented the *Impresario* of Mozart and Menotti's *The Medium*, two utterly contrasted operas which yet made a satisfying programme. We are becoming quite familiar with the company now, and expect it to give us convincing opera; that it never fails to do so is the remarkable thing. This particular evening was good from the broadcasting point of view as well, since the usual "fading" effect as the singers moved about had been adequately combated, and no voices were lost in the limbo of the footlights.

Then we have the singers who have no staging or décor to assist them, who rely on vocal chords alone. Glenda Ray-

lap up his questions and produce the answers at a tremendous rate, while in others they're mostly like the man who thought Dachau and Belsen were the names of famous doctors. This situation calls for a whole series of sociological investigations. First, we must know if in all the towns the same cross-section of the community comes to answer Mr Toogood's questions; secondly, whether he asks questions of equal difficulty in all towns; thirdly, whether intelligence and the possession of general knowledge necessarily coincide. Then there must be a correlation between the results obtained in different districts and other factors operative in those districts, such as (1) ratio of cows to sheep, (2) consumption of Coco-Cola, (3) consumption of *The Listener*. Then some conclusions might be drawn. Meanwhile, Mr Toogood is treading on even boggy ground than the bloke who said Auckland children have higher I.Q.'s. I wonder his sponsor allows it.

—R.D.McE.

MUSIC FOR JULY 4

ON the Fourth of July as everyone knows all good Americans celebrate Independence Day, in memory of that day on which their forefathers adopted the Declaration of Independence. To mark the occasion, 3YC is presenting a programme of American music, both the old and the new. The old is directly represented by some traditional songs arranged by Aaron Copland, and indirectly appears in Virgil Thomson's *Acadian Songs and Dances*. This lilting suite, originally written for the film *Louisiana Story*, is based upon traditional Southern tunes. Anita Ritchie opens the programme with eight modern songs written by Samuel Barber.

Aaron Copland has written film scores and other orchestral music, but perhaps some of his most popular works have been the ballets *Billy the Kid*, *Appalachian Spring* and *Rodeo*. This last is in the programme, which will end with Julius Katchen playing Sonata No. 2, by Ned Rorem, a younger American composer with a growing reputation.

mond paid a return visit and was outstanding as usual, with a wide range of songs and arias that brought out her fine coloratura technique and pure tone; even the bearded device of the flute obbligato seemed worthwhile in this context. Andrew Gold and Pamela Woolmore produced a pleasant recital of short songs; and in yet another recital Kathleen Reardon's mezzo was heard in some smooth singing, particularly a group of Brahms lieder.

The National Orchestra itself was in very good voice, and presented us with a notable assortment. Lilburn's "Birthday Offering" was played again, and I think improves with acquaintance; and

on a larger scale, *Petrouchka*, which is probably as taxing a work as they will meet, was clear and accurate, with effective characterisation and dramatic impact. Mr Robertson's point duty must have been up to expectations, because there were rarely any hints of accidents in the heavy orchestral traffic.

The veteran pianist Jascha Spivakovsky joined the Orchestra to play Beethoven's fourth Concerto, which in his hands was sparkling but diffuse—"fizzy" would be the word—with a few obvious errors which rather spoil the total effect. In a solo recital, however, he was in his element with a lovely Dounka of Tchaikovsky, and the plaintive third Sonata by Kabalevsky, which has real insight behind its performance. After this the inevitable Chopin encores could only be anticlimax.

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