

# All for Love

**FRIENDS:** we are going on a little journey. Come with me to Krasnia, where the King is feeble, not to say impotent, and the singer Militza Hijus (?) is not only the real power in the land, but the toast of the populace. Enter, from it seemed, the BBC, an English inventor called Anthony Allen, impoverished, stifled by the massive indifference of the world. Militza befriends him and lends him £1000. Here the story becomes a thought confused. There is a plot to depose the King. Militza rushes on to an ocean liner, but Mr Allen is in her cabin. So she sings, to allay her vexation. There is a stowaway called Cleo Wellington, from the Deep South, no less, and she and Militza sing at the ship's concert. During Militza's song, a knife is thrown at her. It misses. Boom! The ship blows up. Next thing Militza finds herself on a mudbank surrounded by her trunks and Mr Allen. "What do we do now?" he quavers. "I want you to kiss me until I tell you to stop," she replies in a clear voice. Music. They rush off to her native province of, as far as I could judge, Dzsprentontovic, and are married in quaint old gipsy style with their wrists slit and blood mingled. Back to the capital. The King's life is in danger. Barry Linehan is about to kill him. Bang! Mr Allen saves him. "Militza," says the King, "be my Queen." "I will, Sire," replies Militza. But what of Mr Allen, her old bride-

groom? He leaves, with tears in his eyes, knowing that there is some corner of his stout heart that will be for ever Militza. Krasnian National Anthem. This is a digest of Ivor Novello's *Glamorous Night*, than which I have heard nothing more sickening ever from the NZBS. Pamela Woolmore warbled away prettily, and the strings made some nice gipsy noises. But for the rest? O God, O Montreal!

## Epilogue (BBC)

**I** HAVE carefully made it clear that it is not the NZBS *Epilogue* I am reviewing. Some weeks ago, I listened to *The Epilogue* and had harsh things to say of it, the Authorised Version in basic English and a soupy organ. A correspondent wrote to this journal and pointed out that it was the NZBS version I had heard, not the BBC, which is far superior. Duly grateful for this intelligence, I listened last Sunday to the BBC *Epilogue*, and the correspondent is right. To hear what I took to be part of a Motet beautifully sung in the spacious 16th century style at the end of a gruelling day, is a refreshing experience which I counsel on all who are weary and heavy laden. To my great delight, the excellent English speaker read "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,"—the very passage which I had heard so inexcusably mangled by the NZBS speaker some weeks ago. If these two are representative each of their own styles, my advice is: look for the label. BBC is genuine. NZBS, so far, anyway, counterfeit. —B.E.G.M.

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

**I** WAS uncertain at first whether to come out in favour of the Smetana Quartet or not: they have an enthusiastic full-bodied way of presenting their music, not without finesse, that is poorly served by their earlier recordings. These seem to have been rather unreliable, because the sound of their broadcasts (YC links) was quite different. They have a very telling staccato, a dry humour, and commendable restraint that makes moments of power more powerful. I liked their playing of Beethoven in the early C Minor Quartet, with its whimsical-tragic ideas and brilliant finale. I don't think I could love the episodic Janacek for all his feeling, but this group's performance made an emphatic plea on his behalf. On the other hand, their warm accord with Smetana made a beautiful thing of his E Minor Quartet, with the best of Slovak music implicit in its intimate utterances.

The seasons change, and we heave a sigh of probably ill-founded relief as we reach for our thinner clothes and our holiday timetables. The prevailing atmosphere has even affected the NZBS, and we have been treated to a set of programmes variously celebrating the onset of spring—however premature the celebrations prove to be. Fortunately the

flowers and loves of this time have inspired plenty of poets and musicians, so there was no dearth of material.

Anita Ritchie, with Margaret Nielsen at the piano, gave a recital of songs on the seasonal *leitmotiv* (YC link), ranging from Arne to the moderns. These were all well done, with a sunny mood predominating, and with a pleasant range of bright tones. A larger tribute was that heard in a choral and symphonic programme (NZBS) in which Stanley Oliver conducted the Schola Cantorum in the late E. J. Moeran's *Songs of Springtime*. These lovely but difficult settings of Elizabethan words were given with an alternate joy and tenderness that savoured more of the chamber group than the full choir, and was the more effective so. The National Orchestra played the bitter-sweet rhapsody *A Shropshire Lad* by Butterworth, and followed it with Ronald Woodcock as solo violinist in Vivaldi's happy concerto *Spring* from the Four Seasons; Delius's First Cuckoo sang its placid message, and the Carnival Overture of Dvorak made a rousing finale to the concert. Now, having paid homage, we can wait a year before celebrating again—we can do without any homage to winter.

## Low Fever

**COMING** to on the morning of one of the whitest frosts of the year I heard the breakfast session warbling that

spring would be a little late this year. You've said it, I said; but the sunshine and the peach blossom outside the window denied it. Ambivalent feelings also (continued on next page)

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