

THE MELODIC LINE

COLIN HORSLEY has come and gone; his playing here is now but a memory. What do those of us who heard him over the air find is the most lasting impression made on us? There were broadcasts of several piano recitals, and all the concertos (Brahms, Mozart, Ireland and Berkeley), the latter two from both Auckland and Wellington. Every chance was given the radio listener to become acquainted with the works and the player.

At least we must say that Mr. Horsley was one of the few visiting artists to play any large scale contemporary music. He remarked that New Zealand audiences "took to" these contemporary works very well, and that those who have grown up in the last two decades seem to have an instinctive liking for the Berkeley work, more so than for the Ireland.

It is of Berkeley's music in general that I wish to write. On the evening before he left Wellington, Colin Horsley gave a recital previously heard in the BBC Third Programme. This consisted entirely of Berkeley's piano compositions—Six Preludes, Scherzo, Three Mazurkas, and Two Etudes. I felt it was a real misfortune that this broadcast was not given before the concerto was played. The latter work may be of larger stature, but the piano music seemed to express Berkeley so typically, and gave many a clue to the concerto. Who could not like, even at first hearing, the Preludes and Etudes?

Trying to analyse what made this music so immediately attractive, I came to the conclusion that Berkeley is never afraid of simple melody, and has a commanding sense of rhythm. The tunes often have dissonant accompaniment, but even in the dissonances one feels that he employs mostly those that satisfy, and does not attempt to hurt the ear for hurt's sake. I maintain that any composition that is not basically melodious, and that continually annoys one with unmusical sounds is still-born; however technically adequate, it is just one of those clever things which ultimately no one will want to hear again.

What is melody? There we have room for endless argument, but it is surely obvious that some composers have a greater melodic gift than others. Puccini, Verdi, Beethoven, Brahms, Strauss, hardly wrote anything unmelodious, although their musical stature is very different. True, much of *Salome* is deliberately ugly, to fit the revolting story; but often (as in the Prophet's theme and *Salome's* closing aria), melody abounds, and page upon page of his songs and tone-poems carry the loveliest melodies.

Many great tunes are simply variants of the natural scale, which in itself would hardly be called a melody. Play the notes EFGABC in that order, and the result is not melodic, but simply make the B a short note and melody results. EFGGFE gives rather a monotonous sound, which is hardly a tune; alter it to EFAGFE and it is better; make the last F a short note and a fine melody results. It is the instinctive feeling for these minutiae which the real melodists in music have—which Berkeley has, for example, in

common with Mozart, from whom he differs so enormously otherwise—and which is, alas, conspicuously absent in many of our dry-as-dust technical wizards of the present time.

—H.J.F.

The Game and Commentator

I DON'T know how many bouquets are presented annually to Joe King. IYA sports commentator, but he certainly gets one from me. Aided by his resonant and rhythmical voice, I always imagine I can fairly exactly picture a number of games which haven't greatly interested me since my schooldays. And one appreciates his asides: for example, at the Empire Games, when an invitation race was run in heavy rain on a water-covered track—on such a day



Mr. King found it hard to understand how anybody could be willing to accept an invitation to anything. But what thoroughly distinguishes him is his enthusiasm for the game first, and the players second. It is human no doubt to wish your own side to win, but that is something very difficult to infer from Mr. King's comments: instead you feel his sympathy for the keenness of the players on either side: and this I seemed to notice particularly in his broadcast of the last Rugby Test played at Auckland. If anybody distinguished himself he was immediately named; but if anybody was off-side his name wasn't mentioned so far as I can remember—unless the listening public would know in any case from what had been said a moment previously. But no matter how much Mr. King interests me, I can't say that his comments on the last Test convinced me that I have been altogether wrong in not being greatly interested in Rugby since I left school.

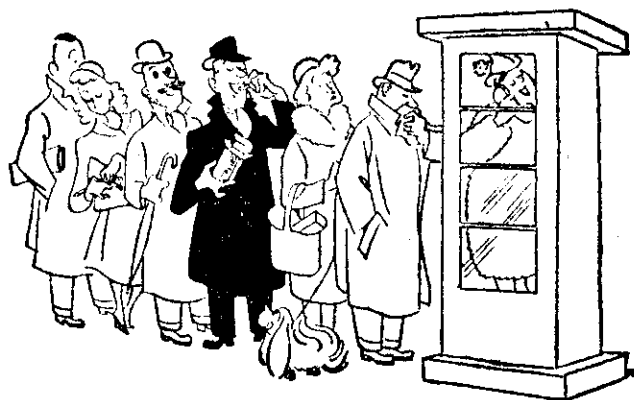
—F.S.

Korea on the Air

APART from the title there was little of Ouida in the first UN Radio programme I have heard, *Under One Flag*, a dramatised discussion on United Nations intervention in Korea. Once again we have that familiar figure I always feel so much sympathy with, the man-in-the-street who doesn't know what it's all about, and who is allowed—nay, encouraged—to give tongue to remarks which are at their best doubting-Thomas and at their worst downright cheap sneers, such as, "Well, you didn't manage to stop the war in Korea, did you?" and "Wasn't it a bit illegal, when Russia wasn't there to vote?" remarks which you or I would possibly be too mealy-mouthed to voice in the hearing of one of the United Nations higher-ups, but which this particular UN advocate pounces on and demolishes with the zest of a cinema psychiatrist dissecting a complex. But the programme had a sound ear for drama as well as for dialectics. This was manifested in the title (it could have been

(continued on next page)

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