

N.Z. CHAMBER MUSIC

THE trio for two clarinets and bassoon, by Dr. H. J. Finlay, broadcast recently by YC stations, reminds me again how much we have lost in the death of this composer. When he took seriously and strenuously to composition he was mature enough to know what he wanted to say on his own account. His mind, which had shown acute intelligence in several other fields, quickly applied itself to this one, and the few chamber music works I have heard have a sure touch.

They have also a definite individuality. One would know in a few bars that this trio is by the composer of the sonata for clarinet and piano which was broadcast last year from Wellington by Ken Wilson and Ida Carless. The manner of writing is economical, and its very precision seems to throw into relief the tenderly romantic mood which often prevails, and the little flurries of humour.

Dr. Finlay's broadcast works have had excellent performers. Besides Ken Wilson and Ida Carless, there have been Francis Rosner, James Hopkinson, Eric Lawson and Shirley Craig to play combinations for other ensembles. Equally sympathetic is the playing in this last trio by two clarinets and bassoon from the New South Wales Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Finlay has made original and entertaining use of an intriguing blend of instruments which could not often be assembled locally, and the recording is good.

The YC stations have been playing the record a second time within the same week, giving many of us an opportunity of hearing it perhaps three or four times, always in a suitable setting. One cannot pretend that enough is done on the air for New Zealand composers. The Australian Broadcasting Commission, for instance, defines a proportion of total radio time which must be given to Australian composers. But the very pleasant handling of Dr. Finlay's trio by the YC stations makes one hope that development can proceed informally along these lines.

—Nanook

Spring Can Be Far Behind

ISN'T spring the silly season any more? Certainly not to the compilers of that heavy-handed programme *Spring-time in New Zealand*, whose only virtue was that it reminded me of an old old *TIFH* joke. (Psychiatrist Edwards says, "I bought this couch in Mayfair," to which Patient Bentley retorts, "Well, you left the spring in Park Lane.") Spring, seasonal and motor, was almost equally far behind here. Lambs at play? No, an account of studies of identical twin calves at Ruakura Animal Research Station. Birds building nests? Well, we heard a millinery expert discussing straw and feathers for the spring



chapeau, but sex was not permitted to rear its bedecked head. And I cannot regard as truly vernal the account of the grape-growing industry in New Zealand or the picture of the Wellington auctioneer "surrounded by pumpkins like a priest at a harvest festival." Sure enough, we did hear from a high-country shepherd who made a point of hearing the first long-tailed cuckoo, but he said spring meant to him getting his gumboots out and looking them over before the floods. Looks as though I shall have to go back to getting my romance from Aunt Jenny.

Sheep in Goats' Clothing

EVERY day as I walk in the grey shadow of the current weather report or news broadcast I console myself with the thought that every day in every way the past is getting brighter and better. There is a relentless process of whitewashing going on that makes one realise that even the future, given time, will be quite respectable. (They debarnaced Bligh in six episodes—maybe even Mussadiq will turn out nice again.) And I have recently started listening to 2YA's *Scapegoats of History*, a series whose worthy aim it is to rescue from the obloquy of posterity those whose fair fame has been blackened by "the plotting of evil men." Last week Strafford, this week Montrose. The programmes are vivid and exciting, and the idea itself extraordinarily fecund. It's rather like deciding something had better be done about the kitchen, and when that job's finished you notice for the first time that the dining room could do with a coat of paint. Montrose and Strafford emerged from their half-hour's going-over without a stain on their characters, but I must say it left Queen Henrietta Maria, who had the misfortune to figure in both episodes, looking more than ready for brush and paint.

—M.B.

Back to the Mainland

OF the sessions on the 1951 Census in which panels from Dunedin, Wellington and Christchurch have so far taken part I found the Christchurch panel the most entertaining and informative. In the Dunedin panel ("Are we in danger of becoming a Tadpole State?"), quite apart from not knowing what the operative word *tadpole* implied, the listener laboured against a rather heavy and monotonous presentation of the theme. Wellington scrambled up the slope a little, becoming more fluent in discussing the scope and power of town-planning authorities, but except for one long unidentified speech the Christchurch panel may be said to have informed because it entertained. Not only was the humour

(continued on next page)



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