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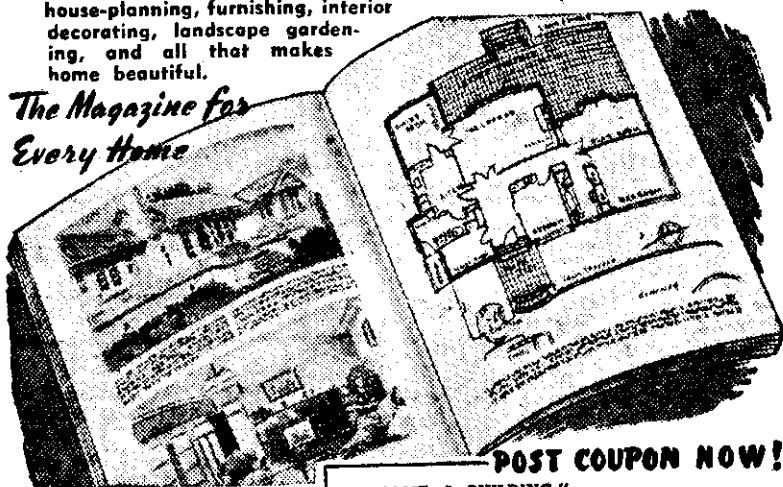
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Radio Review

ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

AFTER the purling waters of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Prelude and Cortège" (*Le Coq d'or*), Haydn's *London Symphony* moves quietly, laying tone by tone with a careful observation of their effect and with the instruments moving in more obvious unison. Glazounov's tone poem *Stenka Razin*, performed for the first time in New Zealand by the National Orchestra and relayed by 3YC, leaned too heavily upon the "Volga Boatmen" for me to extract much else from it. As a layman, though, I am very much interested in the way a composer's imagination works when setting pure music to a tale such as this. How literally do passages of music follow the emotional outline of the story? If one dared to break the silence of the trained listener, would he say, "Ah, now, precisely with that movement, he has sacrificed the princess to the river?" Night had made an effort to claim me by the time we reached Sibelius, whose sombre flowing moods liberate the shadowy myths from the lakes as they move by with depth of feeling I cannot often find in music. A further hindrance was an accompanying rattle of static with each increase of the orchestra's pitch and volume, that denotes either an ill-adjusted microphone or a sudden fault in my radio.

Kiwi Among Germans

A PENNY has a head and tail. You either take both or you go without your penny altogether. In the same way you either have to take or leave *Captive Kiwi*, whose power to entertain springs from a surprisingly young outlook. The amazing life the narrator gives to typical Kiwi language springs from a Gulliver-in-Lilliput view of himself among the slow "stereotyped" Germans. I never would have believed you could lay so much on with a trowel and get away with it, yet each 3ZB session invariably finds me chuckling at the enemy up against the antics of P.O.W.'s whose chief occupation lay in exasperating their guards. Mr. Thompson has done, nevertheless, one disservice to his cause by wishing to show us the Germans in such a clottish light. I have come to have a profound respect for their restraint. As each instalment develops I expect to find him shot before it ends. The only thing which equals this feeling is the respect I have for Mr. Thompson's courage and endurance in the face of experiences which would have killed many other men.

—Westcliff

Robust Poets

CONDITIONED as we are to those products of the strictly unofficial occasion celebrated in such programmes as *First Hearing*, we are likely to approach a little warily a series of talks on the Poets Laureate. After all, we remember, Dr. Gerda Eichbaum gleaned quite a large portion of her programme *Good Bad Verse* from our Laureates' less inspired moments. Professor Greig, however, has got away to a fine if unofficial start with his talk on John Skelton and Ben Jonson, both entries a

purist might have scratched. But this calculated widening of the field will doubtless serve a useful purpose. Later on in the series, when we are tempted to think "cushy job," we will remember poor Ben Jonson having to plead for his promised two-thirds of a butt of sack from the royal cellars; and any suggestion of sycophancy in later Laureates can be measured against the picture of John Skelton cocking an anything but sycophantic snook at Cardinal Wolsley.

The Other Queens

I SUPPOSE we may be allowed a little emotional tightening and intellectual slackening at Coronation time, but sometimes I feel we're just a mite eclectic in our choice of historical personages to point our moral. Lately I have felt a little sorry for such characters as Mary Tudor and Queen Anne, and even more so for William's Mary who, though equally female sovereigns in their own right, are entirely passed over by the compilers of the Coronation programmes in favour of Elizabeth I and Victoria. Take Hector Bolitho's *New Elizabethans*, for example, a very pleasing programme giving plenty of scope for national pride and simple personal sympathy. But Captain Marryat's remark, almost the programme's *raison d'être*, that "England was never so great or glorious as under the dynasty of our Queens," was illustrated solely in terms of Elizabeth and Victoria. I thought the ignoring of our other female sovereigns a little pointed. It would have been both courteous and historical to dredge up some happy parallel, even though it took a little more dredging.

—M.B.

Music for Verlaine

THE poems of *La Bonne Chanson* formed the "beloved little book" which Paul Verlaine wrote for his future wife, before the marriage which tragically disintegrated during the siege of Paris and his explosive friendship with Rimbaud. Verlaine's character can be read in his face—half-saint, half-satyr; and in these poems one sees that side of him which produces a lyricism exquisitely light and pure. He himself valued them for being "so pleasantly, so sweetly, so purely thought, so simply written." They are authentic poetry of Impressionism in its heyday, and have the morning glitter of a country-scene by Monet or Sisley. No wonder that Fauré's setting of them is considered his masterpiece, for who else could have matched them with music of such candour and simplicity? The set of *La Bonne Chanson* recorded by Sophie Wyss and Kathleen Long (heard from 1YC), though careful, is curiously lacking in the corresponding qualities of performance: the airy glitter is not there; and it is much to be hoped that makers of LP records, who have so often shown themselves to be enterprising, will someday soon give us a worthier recording.

In the Laboratory

THE BBC programme on the Cavadish Laboratories at Cambridge (from 1YC) was heard, topically enough, on the same day on which the investigation of D.N.A. was announced in the newspapers. It was a chatty but informative programme, in which three well-briefed announcers were evidently determined to keep the somewhat re-

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