

This Week's Special Article

An Argument Which Only Goes To Prove . . . Nothing

LAST week I heard two musicians arguing the motor-talk of old drums away. Most evenings they dial-twist happily from station to station, pulling ten minutes of Kreisler out of the ether here, five five minutes of Nikish there. Between times they sit and smack their lips and murmur: "Oh boy, oh boy, oboy! What wouldn't we do to scrape those strings and tickle those ivories thus!"

But this night something at dinner sat heavily on their stomachs. One said: "Anyway, who are you, giving yourself airs; There's only one instrument to express the greatest in music—the violin."

The other snarled: "Beethoven would agree with you, of course."

"Boys," I said, "save your breath. You're both wrong. The King of Instruments is the organ."

Being the only man who is ever right in a musical argument, I harangued them thus:

"The greatness of an instrument depends on its expressive power. For the convenience of this argument let us break this vague qualification into its component parts and call them: (1) Basic tone

IN the North they have begun to argue about the "greatest musical instrument" again. So "SARI" takes a hand with this lightly-told tale of a musical argument and its conclusion.

quality, (2) variety of possible effect, and (3) directness of expression. Which of you nitwits are going to argue with me about the basic tone quality of the organ, the piano, and the violin?

lin? . . . The simple, honest beauty of an open diapason . . . Why, the dynamic range of an organ is one of the wonders of the world. It can whisper so soft you can only feel it or it can shake buildings. Its variety of tonal timbre is almost as awe-inspiring, for the staple diapason tone has received so many additions in the form of related hues—or of more or less successful imitations of the sound of other instruments—that organs have actually been built which eliminated the diapason entirely or confined it to the pipes controlled by the pedal keyboard.

"Here the piano is a poor, second, and the violin a wretched third. True, all start at the lower end of the dynamic scale on almost even terms, but the violin abandons the hopeless contest before it is well begun and the piano drops out just as the master-instrument is warming up!

"In variety of tonal effects the piano and the violin are again hopelessly outclassed. You pianists may claim that the number of tonal effects at your command equals almost that of the organ, and that the roofshaker is only pre-eminent when the subtler (Continued on next page.)

In the Wake of the Week's Broadcasts

It is to be feared that the company engaged in "The Fantastic Case of the Four Specialists" by Max Afford, broadcast from 4YA last Monday, found the play just a little beyond them, and as a result the presentation lacked that

THRILLER PLAY THAT LACKED GRIP. a listener is to be dissuaded from

switching to another station. The fault could not surely be attributed to the writer, for Afford is too skilled at the game not to know when a play is right or not right. The story revolved around a man found lying in a locked library. From the pages of four detective thrillers four noted characters stepped and each, according to his own light, solved the mystery of the killing. Afford's appreciation of his art is revealed in the fact that the "four specialists" consisted of such differing personalities as Philo Vance, Father Brown, Hercule Poirot and Sherlock Holmes. The climax of the play was

at best an anti-climax, for the "dead man" proved to be lying in a drunken stupor. It is regrettable to have to state that, as handled, the conclusion of the play was very much an anti-climax, and absolutely cancelled any good impressions that may have been formed earlier.

Deepest sympathy to Jack Davey. Auckland was just enjoying to the full the humour of this crazy broadcaster from Sydney when a bad attack of influenza robbed him of his voice. And he has it insured

VOICE THAT IS EXPENSIVE.

for £10,000 too! For several days he could not speak, except in a low whisper. A big programme had to be altered within a few hours of broadcast on this account and his itinerary was upset, too. Last Wednesday he sailed from Auckland on the Awatea on his return to Sydney.

The Dunedin Returned Soldiers' Choir is not heard very often on the air, nor do they make many public appearances. Either happening is truly an "event," and it was pleasing to learn

THEY WERE EQUAL TO THE BEST. that this group of male voices was to be heard from 4YA last Monday night. Assisted by Mrs. W.

Hall Masters the choir gave a concert that must be long remembered by those who listened in. One of their numbers was the "Anvil Chorus" from "Il Trovatore," the finely balanced rendering was equal to the best in combined choral work. A well-known number "The Anvil Chorus" possesses a swing and a vigour that must always make it popular and these characteristics were brilliantly captured. Some slightly differing nuances of expression, neatly interpolated, could not have been other than widely appreciated.