

The Week's RECORDS

IN THE WAKE OF THE WEEK'S ... BROADCASTS...

TO the man-in-the-street, Brahms was once probably the least known of all the great masters—even if all are not quite so innocent of knowledge on the subject as the hero of a certain story.

"Do you like Brahms?" he was asked, to which he replied, "Never tried them—what are they?" And this recalls another:
A.: "Do you like Brahms?"
B.: "M-m-b-Ye-y-Yes."
A.: "No more do I!"

Brahms was not always held in the same high regard as he is today—people joked about him, others failed to appreciate his worth as a composer, and the French musical public came near to loathing him. Indeed, one Parisian public auditorium displayed emergency door signs as follows: "Emergency Exit in case of Fire—or Brahms!"

Of course, the growth of the cult of Brahms and his widespread appreciation today is reflected in the recording companies' supplements, so it is not strange to find among the recent H.M.V. discs, two very fine overtures by Brahms—the "Academical Festival" and the "Tragic."

Thanking Them

As a graceful recognition of the honour of being made a Doctor of Philosophy by the University of Breslau in 1880, Brahms composed his "Academical Festival" overture. Despite its rather solemn title, this overture is one of the gayest pieces that he ever wrote.

Brahms selected a handful of the more convivial student songs and worked them into a concert overture which remains one of the amazing pieces of comedy in the whole range of music. The last tune to be used, and one which university students the world over know, is "Gaudemus Igitur."

Needless to add, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, under Bruno Walter, have in their record (H.M.V. DB 3394) thoroughly entered into the spirit of the work and the result is a disc which will find its way into many libraries. It deserves a place on every shelf. Linked with the "Academic Festival" is the "Tragic" overture, which was completed a few months later and the two overtures were both played under the composer's baton when Brahms received his degree.

Beyond the expression of the mood that the title suggests, the "Tragic" overture has no "story" behind it. Played by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, under Arturo Toscanini, the records (H.M.V. DB 2349-50) are all that can be desired.

The overture takes up only three sides and the fourth and remaining side contains in delightful contrast the Menuetto and Trio which comprise the third movement of Beethoven's "No. 1 Symphony in C."

Under The Moon

No one could depict "Moonlight" in music to so successful a degree as Debussy, the "Moonlight" sonata notwithstanding (a title by the way, which was none of Beethoven's choosing). "Clair de Lune" seems to be the very embodiment in music of the calm beauty of a summer night and the white light of the full moon.

The music seeks to suggest rather than actually depict the scene, but there is a more clearly defined melody than is usual in the Debussy pastels. That Leopold Stokowski has succeeded in his transcription for orchestra will be admitted by all who hear this record (H.M.V. DA 1634), played by the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra.

Ngaio Marsh, Christchurch, gains the title of Public Speaker Number One among women radio talkers. From 3YA the other night she

"TOPS" IN HER RADIO TALKS Her work was admirable. First her deep rich voice is suited to the microphone; second, her matter is excellent, and third, underlying everything she has to say by radio is sound commonsense tempered with a vein of subtle humour. Miss Marsh may well star as "tops" in this field.

Over-the-air choirs can be somewhat indifferent, no matter how well they sound in a hall. This is usually due to unsatisfactory placing of the microphones, or a lack of the right balance of voices, so that strong voices drown out the lighter ones. No such complaints, however, regarding the transmission given by the Opoho Church Choir from 4YA the other Sunday. Indeed, no complaints at all; instead, praise for the singers and for their unknown conductor. The choir's singing was a lesson in real harmony. In "The Glow Worm," I honestly thought I was listening to a first-rate recorded presentation.

MICROPHONE SENSE OF CHOIR Farewell broadcast of American woman trumpeter, Grace Adams East, was generously given last week in a national hook-up for a talk to the children of New Zealand. She does not speak over the air quite as well as she plays—which, admittedly, would be asking almost an impossibility—but her voice was well-pitched and soft, so that the American accent became a pleasant variant to the New Zealand ear, without harshness and with a quaint interest of its own. Material of the talk was excellent, wise advice masquerading as pleasant entertainment. One suspects that Santa Claus will have numerous requests for trumpets this Christmas.

SHE SPOKE TO CHILDREN There was no violent excitement about the first Christchurch wool sale, even though prices were steadier than many expected and the demand more animated. Wool, almost alone among primary commodities, has for a year now remained extraordinarily stable, without great fluctuations either way in any of the important markets. However, the two Christchurch stations, 3YA and 3ZB, managed to infuse some enthusiasm into their retailed reports to listeners. Station 3ZB turned on the "barkers" at various times during the day and enterprisingly interviewed an auctioneer, who came to the microphone immediately after selling 256 lots in 32½ minutes. Peak prices and comments on purchases were given during the day. Station 3YA, having an expert at the hall where the sale was conducted, sent frequent reports over the air, complete with prices in full range and the state of competition. Country listeners—those most concerned—were more than well served by the Christchurch radio services. A day or so before the sale, 3ZB conducted a sidelight, in which listeners were taken through the whole wool process, from the time the sheep arrives at the shearing

shed until the bales are offered for sale. This was excellently done, and interesting to everyone—for wool prices have a mirror of their own in the pocket of the man in the street.

Recital from 2YA last week by Wanganui-born soprano Julie Werry, touring from Australia for the NBS, gave listeners a glimpse of fine achievement, even finer possibilities. Criticism of the first group she sang, "Arise, O Sun by Day," "Hush-eeen," and "Goin' Home," was a slight breathlessness, as if she had hurried a little on her way to the studio, but the second bracket, "At Parting" and "A Birthday Song" were near faultless. In the first song of this bracket, she sang as Tauber must

STUDY OF A SOPRANO Home, was a slight breathlessness, as if she had hurried a little on her way to the studio, but the second bracket, "At Parting" and "A Birthday Song" were near faultless. In the first song of this bracket, she sang as Tauber must

HIM-AND US I often find more enjoyment in these performances than the more strained efforts of "artists" who are often old enough to know better. Any steps made to bring children out of themselves—and I doubt if there is any better method of conquering shyness and self-consciousness than the placing of children before a microphone—deserves praise. And those who are in charge of this particular session do their utmost to put children at their ease. Last week I was highly amused by the rendering of "The Greatest Mistake in the World" given by a three-year-old. I don't think it was a mistake to send that child to the studio, for he revealed a near approach to artistry. Session concludes with the excited youngsters being allowed to call up "hullo" and "goodbyes" to parents and relatives.

CONQUEST OF SHYNESS I was amused one day when a commercial announcer said, "Dorothy Lamour will now moan the 'Moon of Manakooru'." The announcement prepared me for the worst, and virtually all I remembered of the record after it was played was its moaning note. Since then I have heard the record from other stations. Later hearings satisfied me that the 4ZB announcer upset my perspective. Maybe the song is "moaned," but—by its very theme and native air—demands that treatment. Dorothy Lamour gives the song with artistry, mood and voice regulated so successfully she can create in the mind's eye an island moon, lazy lagoon waves, and swaying coconut palms.

MOAN THAT HAS ATMOSPHERE Recorded talks over 3YA by that learned man Professor Arnold Wall on "The Meaning of Words," have been among the most delightful items of their kind on the 3YA schedule recently. And some of his verdicts have given people furiously to think. For instance, a listener in Timaru, writing to the station last week, queried the origin of the American expression "O.K." The correspondent claimed that it came from "Oll Korreck," signed on papers dealing with battle arrangements made by Stonewall Jackson during the rebel rising. The correspondent cunningly added, "Jackson was not regarded as an educated man." This one is new to us!

THE SAFETY WEEK officials might frown on this picture—but we like it! Here is T. Kirk-Burnand, of the National Broadcasting Service, deeply engrossed in his "Record" as he walks along a busy Wellington street.



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STATION 4YA HAD THE HONOUR given up to the time of writing, but its quality was enough to make all who heard it tune in eagerly for the others. Mrs. Scott has been a pro-

PEOPLE KEEN ON WORDS ALL the bonfires in Berlin, Rome, Vienna or Moscow are only vivid expressions of the justifiable fear all tyrannies have of ideas.—Mr. W. C. B. Sayers.

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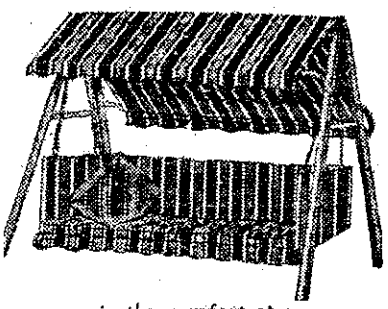
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