

How the International Programme Was Received

A Listener Records His Impressions

By "Observer"

TWO things peculiar to this programme impressed me greatly—atmosphere and continuity. The Americans have certainly mastered the difficult art of presenting radio entertainment in the most acceptable manner.

For example, in the programme in question, atmosphere was particularly fine in the performance by the "Ambassadors of Melody Land," and was so skilfully attained that it wasn't the slightest degree obvious. If it had been, the effect would have been completely spoilt.

It appears that the American aim in broadcasting is to make the listener forget his loudspeaker—forget his valves and batteries—and to induce him by subtly-disguised suggestion to call on his imagination, unconsciously. The latter is important, for if flights of fancy are conscious, they are not effortless. And if effort is involved, the entertainment will not appeal, for its hearers have in all probability completed a hard day's work, and relaxation above all things is desirable.

The second point, that of continuity, is perhaps more important. From start to finish the programme flowed on evenly in well-defined sections, each lasting for a generous length of time. What a change from the contralto solo, "Talk on Pigs," orchestral selection type of programme!

Again, the best example of this was given by the musical combination mentioned previously. What exactly did their performance comprise? A few light musical selections, a little classical music, and two songs. And yet, by calling the orchestra the "Ambassadors of Melody Land," the studio the Palace of Love, and a soloist the Court Jester, the entertainment was, to the writer at least, almost as good as a twenty-minutes' peep at a flesh and blood musical comedy show.

Both atmosphere and continuity were cleverly obtained in one stroke, and, judging by the result, they are

all-important in such an entertainment.

The selections played during the evening by the Ormandy Orchestra were a delight to listen to, Bach's "Air on the G String" being in particular admirably rendered.

Another point: In all these selections the absence or lack of prominence of the first violins was particularly noticeable, the melody being taken in general either by a single violin or by the 'cello. The resulting balance between treble and bass was very pleasing, and reproduction was crisp and clear-cut.

The average loudspeaker will not faithfully reproduce a number of first violins, the music of which is given undue prominence at the expense of the bass.

American orchestra leaders have evidently recognised this difficulty, and surmounted it by carefully selecting or re-arranging orchestrations.

The International Singers are certainly an excellent quartet. Their harmony was delightful. Still, one is inclined to think that if 2YA's Melody Four were not local, they would be just as much appreciated.

For light entertainment, that provided by the Ambassadors of Melody Land would be hard to excel. However, the Court Jester's song about "Mysterious Mose" did not appeal as being particularly bright or humorous. In fact, if this was a fair sample of his stock-in-trade, the Queen of Hearts could not be blamed for depriving him of his cap and bells and banishing him from her kingdom.

THE next turn, "Abroad with the Lockharts," was the first of a series of radio travelogues. Once again the appropriate atmosphere was unobtrusively obtained—this time by a musical prologue featuring a popular selection often played at picture theatres during the presentation of gazettes and travelogues. The sketch itself promises to be an attractive and amusing substitute for the usual never very inspiring travel lecture. The idea of arranging it in serial form is good, as is that of devoting the whole of the opening instalment to depicting the Lockharts engaged in a domestic argument as to whether or not they will spend the summer in Europe.

Every listener who heard this sketch is now personally acquainted with the Lockharts. They know the husband is an easy-going, good-humoured citizen, whose ideal holiday is a fishing one, but who would sooner travel to Europe than quarrel with his wife about it. Mrs. Lockhart is just a typical woman who unscrupulously uses every wile to gain her point, and, having gained it, gives way to her husband on those that really don't matter. I am certainly looking to the next of the series, depicting this entertaining couple on board ship, bound for Europe.

A SOUND of care-free singing in the distance, faint at first but gradually coming nearer, was "Hy-Wide's" introduction to listeners in the humorous sketch by "Hy-Wide and Handsome." Both dialogue and singing were good. The conclusion of this turn, which is also arranged in serial form, leaves Hy-Wide, with Handsome, engaged as his valet, installed in a sumptuous hotel of whose exorbitant rates he is unaware. His remarks when enlightened should be worth listening to.

I NOTICE in a recent issue of the "Radio Record" quite a number of correspondents complaining of the "terrible American accent" characterising a similar programme presented a short time ago. They may be right. I did not hear the programme in ques-

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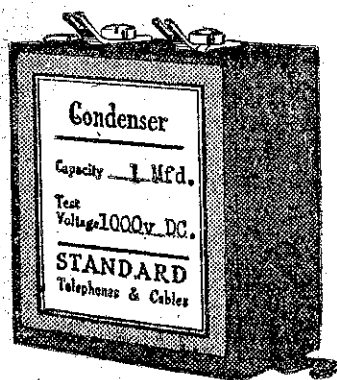
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