

STATIC

by
"SPARK"

IN the inauguration programme of the new Empire station we were warned by Sir John Reith, Director-General of the B.B.C., not to expect too much in the initial stages, and harmony-lovers, with an elementary knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of short waves, happily have expected and continue to expect nothing but distortion more foul than discord. As I write—at the conclusion of Low's talk—I am hopeful that the novelty of rebroadcasting has almost run its course, but having received an index of the fare available, I have ready a warm welcome for the Blattnerphone tape. Intelligibility of the talks, ranging from about a farcical one per cent. to a poor eighty per cent. in scattered places, does not suggest to me that the service can be an indubious harbinger of peace, although it is dedicated to the best influences in mankind. As an act of grace listeners may be prepared to accept the dedication in its spirit, providing aural reminders are infrequent, and while with best wishes trust that signals will improve in time many will remain convinced that years ago PCJ was a wonderful transmitter which was ushered in without a screed of altruistic bunkum.

BROADCASTING brings under the notice of the public at large an enormously extended repertoire of music of very conceivable variety. In the matter of Christmas music this is certainly true, and the lovely "Christmas Concerto" of Arcangelo Corelli, the eighteenth century Italian composer, is a notable example, for which listeners to 4YA, Dunedin, would be very grateful. The history of this masterpiece goes back 220 years, to the Christmas Eve of 1712, for which it was composed. The series of concerti grossi which Corelli left us are laid out for the same team as the better known ones of Handel—a little group of solo strings and the main body of the string orchestra in five parts. It is on the contrasts of these and their combination that the concertos are built up.

CORELLI has a twofold claim to an honoured place in the history of music—as a great violinist, who set the art of violin playing on the foundation on which it has ever since rested, and as a composer who did a great deal to advance the art of writing both chamber music and for orchestra. A simple and kindly soul, he was the friend of both Handel and Scarlatti, and Handel was inclined to make game of Corelli's simple, decidedly careful and unassuming ways. It is told of him that he would always rather walk than hire a carriage, and that he cared nothing for fine or even presentable clothes. He left behind him a voluminous collection of very fresh and attractive music, a great gallery of fine paintings which

he gathered together, and the very considerable fortune of £60,000 in cash.

THE pictures and money he bequeathed to his friend, patron, and employer, Cardinal Ottoboni, whose orchestra he conducted. To the cardinal's credit, he it said, that though he took over the art collection he sought out Corelli's relations and divided the money among them. Corelli travelled extensively, being the forerunner of virtuosi such as Paganini, Sarasate, Ysaye, Kreisler, and Szigei. Although Handel, the bluff Saxon, twitted Corelli with "liking nothing better than seeing pictures without paying for it, and saving money," Corelli bequeathed the world a priceless legacy of rare compositions, including the "Christmas Concerto," which is the eighth of the series, and one of the most charming.

ONE would imagine that the mortals of Hollywood would become thoroughly satiated with the excitement due to the production of a premiere picture and take such an event as a matter of course. According to Mr. B. Bernard (2ZW), if a new world premiere picture were launched each week, profound inquisitive interest would still continue. Hollywood is Hollywood, and the existence of everybody resident there is dependent upon movie-making. Prior to the initial showing of a new picture for world reproduction, a considerable amount of publicity is given by newspapers, magazines, and posters throughout the length and breadth of the United States, to the plot, the theme, and to the better-known participants. On the night of the first showing the searchlights from associated theatres are erected along

the sidewalks, and when the illuminations are fully operating the scene is indescribable. All Hollywood is in a fever of excitement.

ALTHOUGH the capacity of the theatre is small (about 1500), and showing does not start until 10.30 p.m., crowds commence to congregate at the entrance early in the morning. The price of admission is about £2/10/- in English money, if one is fortunate enough to secure a ticket when they are first issued, as speculators buy up blocks of seating and charge high premiums to intending visitors. When Hollywood is compressed into the space fronting the theatre, radio announcers describe the scene to the remainder of the United States, and leading characters in the production are invited to make a few remarks to please their absent admirers. At the conclusion of the initial screening comes the party at the Roosevelt Hotel, and in American this is some party. Following all this, the country is then flooded with articles and announcements, to what the enthusiasm of theatre proprietors and their patrons. Publicity is the instrument by which Barnum's dictum, "You can fool the public all the time," is given practical demonstration. Further publicity is generated by the private parties of the leading stars, professional jealousy knowing no better method of scoring off a fellow member of the firmament, and according to Mr. Eric Linklater, these parties also arouse more than a little interest.

ORATORIO is usually very well done in New Zealand, and consequently this form of church music in-

vokes a partiality among all music-lovers. The relay by 2YA of immortal Handel's glorious "Messiah" from Lower Hutt was a most splendid performance, and a very pleasing feature was the distinctness of enunciation. As a rule, choral work broadcast from a church suffers in this respect, but on Sunday few words were lost in the echoes.

MR. VOCO'S pot-pourri programme reminiscent of his contributions throughout the year was a bright affair, recalling many pleasant hours given during 2ZW's Tuesday nights' transmissions. Even nervous number 38 jogged the memory of a quite joyful series. Alloyed fractions are not the usual fare submitted by Mr. Voco, and one of the most appealing features of his programmes is that they are mostly built upon a well-conceived theme, with the solid foundation of the best recordings. The talks have invariably been extremely interesting, and his best wishes for a Merry Christmas were heartily reciprocated by his many listeners.

FROM "La Source" (The Spring), one of Delibes' many successful and tuneful ballets, two suites have been made. The present composition is divided into four short parts, and of the other, the first suite is the famous "Nella," the concert waltz of which, by Dohnanyi, is familiar through Backhaus's exquisite record. These two suites were the first important compositions of Delibes, who in his twenty-fourth year was established as one of the accompanists at the Paris Opera House, where he had distinguished himself by his industry and excellent musicianship. He is said in particular to have attracted attention to himself by the manner by which he played the full score of Meyerbeer's "L'Africaine," at the time considered the last word in complexity. The director had entrusted the composition of a ballet called "La Source" to a fashionable Polish composer by the name of Mikus. Nobody, not even the composer, seemed very happy with the result, and Delibes was asked to lend a hand, which he did to such effect that the music written as a kind of stop-gap was voted by everybody the outstanding feature of the score.

DELIBES'S name as a composer of ballet music was made, and after a couple of divertissements he was commissioned four years later, in 1870, to write the ballet "Coppelia," by which he is best known to-day. The first movement of the present suite, which the Concert Orchestra under Mr. Leon de Mauny has selected to play on the 30th, "Scarf Dance," be-

A One-Act Thriller

"Congo Nights"

(Hughes)

Played by the

B.B.C. Dramatic Players

Will be broadcast from 3YA

On

MONDAY, JAN. 2.

