



Sir Arnold Bax, Master of the King's Musick, at work on a composition at the country hotel where he lives

Bax—Master of the King's Musick and Brazen Romantic

SIR ARNOLD BAX, Master of the King's Musick, who was 60 last November, is known to every music lover as one of Britain's leading composers. Several of his works are familiar to New Zealand radio listeners — "Tintagel," for instance, and the first string quartet, or the newly released film music "Malta, G.C." Yet until his autobiography, "Farewell My Youth," was published last year, it was possible to say that music lovers knew very little about Bax the man, and that what they knew of Bax the composer was only a small part of what there was to know. Ralph Hill, music editor of the "Radio Times," recently wrote an article in "London Calling" (with some informal photographs of the composer, one of which we reproduce here), in which he offered his explanation for the protracted indifference of the musical world towards "one of the foremost figures in British music of our time."

* * *

IN his early days, Arnold Bax came in for a good deal of spiteful criticism. By the die-hards of that time he was considered an ultra-modern composer, and incidentally, by the die-easies of to-day he is dismissed as a reactionary. The truth is that he is neither one nor the other. His whole conception of music is essentially romantic, and his style as a composer, although very individual, is firmly based on the solid foundations of the past. This is especially so with regard to his harmony, in spite of a fondness for melodic decoration and a calculated use of dissonance when he wants to drive home a point. His views on atonalism as put into practice by composers like Schonberg are characteristic. "It is improbable," he says, "that healthy and natural things like the coming of spring, young love, or any gay or happy idea can ever be associated with so turgid a medium."

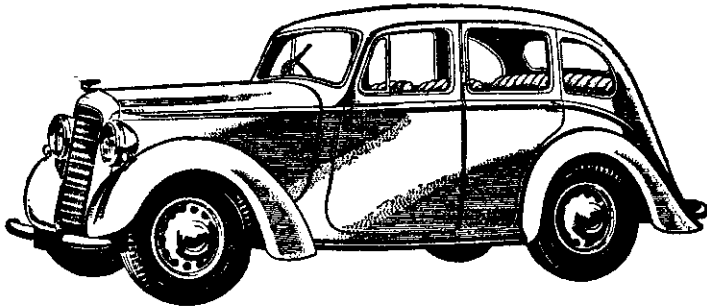
The Battle of Bax

The battle of Bax was fought over a quarter of a century ago, chiefly, if not entirely, by the then young and vigorous critic, Edwin Evans. On the whole, all that Evans proclaimed for Bax has come about, and this critic's enthusiasm has been justified. Why then, you might ask, if Bax is such a great composer is his music not more widely known and appreciated?

The answer is that British composers — outside the honey-pot brand — have never been allowed to be prophets in their own country. And this, I am sure, is the fault not so much of the indifference of the public, but of those individuals and societies who, since the beginning of the century, have been responsible — the notable exception being, of course, Sir Henry Wood — for making programmes.

Like Elgar and Delius, Bax has had to make his way on the merits of his music alone, for he is not a concert virtuoso, nor does he occupy a leading academic post. When Bax was appointed Master of the King's Musick, he occupied a public position for the first time.

(Continued on next page)



7 YEARS OLD but still like new— This 1937 HILLMAN

In peace and war, it has kept its modern lines, its extreme petrol economy, and its traditional low cost of upkeep!

The Spirit of Victory is in the air! Those who are looking forward to the time when they may buy a new car or commercial vehicle produced by the Rootes Group, hope that the day is not far distant when that new model may be chosen. Meanwhile, pre-war models are nobly carrying on the reputation of famous names!

**GENUINE SPARE PARTS ARE AVAILABLE
FOR ALL ROOTES GROUP VEHICLES**

**CARS: HUMBER, HILLMAN
& Sunbeam-Talbot**

COMMERCIAL VEHICLES: COMMER & Karrier

**TODD MOTORS LTD.,
COURTENAY PLACE, WELLINGTON.**

Branches and Dealers throughout New Zealand.

New Zealand Distributors for ROOTES GROUP

Rootes Group Representative: MR. C. H. HORDERN, 472 Bourke St., Melbourne, Australia.

B.3A