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FRESH AIR IS GOOD FOR SINGERS

Margherita Zelanda Comes From Otago

"THERE are just as many good singing teachers in New Zealand as there are in Australia," said Madame Margherita Zelanda. "There is no need for students to go to Australia to complete their studies."

We were discussing singing in Australia, and the conversation had come round to the theory that Australia produces so many good singers because the climate is so warm. Said Madame Zelanda: "In comparison with the population, New Zealand has produced just as many. The climate here is much more invigorating. New Zealanders have the stamina and the physique for singers. But we have one great handicap and that is our tendency to catch colds. Australians haven't this same tendency. And colds, almost more than anything, retard the progress of a singer."

Madame Zelanda, who has returned to New Zealand for a short period, during which she is filling engagements for the NBS, has been singing and teaching in Australia for some years. She has been under contract to the Australian Broadcasting Commission and Amalgamated Wireless. Since the war broke out she has travelled extensively, singing at Australian and Allied military camps, Red Cross, and Comforts Fund concerts, besides taking a big job with the National Emergency Services. She was responsible for the telephone control of a municipal section of the Sydney Metropolitan Area, and helped to direct the machinery of the A.R.P. and Citizens' Aid Services for a population of more than 100,000. "We saw plenty of fireworks and heard plenty of noise the night Sydney was bombed," she said. "We were certainly kept busy that night."

A Singing Family

Madame Zelanda was born in Otago. She was the youngest of eight children, all of whom became singers. "Every singer should be brought up in an environment of fresh air," she said, "and we had this in Otago, for I'm a farmer's daughter, believe it or not."

Her early training was at the St. Philomena's College Convent of Mercy, Dunedin, under the leadership of Sister Mary Ursula, to whom Madame Zelanda gives credit for the training of her voice and the preparation for her musical career. From Dunedin she went to Australia and attended the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music and sang under Andrae Shalski. From Sydney she went to Italy, where she studied at the Palermo Conservatorium, graduated as *prima donna*, and then went on to Milan for further study under Bavagnoli.

"The standard of singers in Italy is—or was—very high," she said. "The Government watches their development and, if it isn't satisfactory, the parents are asked to remove them to some other occupation. If the parents can afford it, they pay for the training, otherwise the State pays. A talented child is thus given every opportunity."



MADAME ZELANDA

"A farmer's daughter, believe it or not"

On Sunday afternoons in Palermo the students are presented at the theatre—"the world's most critical audience," Madame Zelanda called it. The audience votes on the singers. It was such an audience which voted her a *prima donna*.

Madame Zelanda is small and attractive; easy to talk to, for she is friendly and unaffected. She considers the Australian people charming, but is very proud of New Zealanders. "People have a good opinion of New Zealand artists abroad," she told us. "They think we can breed good musicians as well as good racehorses."

This week Madame Zelanda is in Christchurch giving evening recitals from 3YA on Monday, Thursday, and Friday. Next week she will be heard from 2YA, Wellington, on Saturday (March 4), and Sunday (March 5).

Note for Sportsmen

TO provide for a more complete coverage of sporting activities and to incorporate any cancellation or alteration which may be necessary at the last minute, 2ZB's "Preview of Week-end Sport," conducted by George Edwards will, in future be heard each Saturday morning at 8.15, instead of at 10.30 on Friday evenings as previously.

* * *

IF you are confident that you can detect who is John Charles Thomas and who is Lawrence Tibbett, or who is Lily Pons and who is Miliza Korjus, you are in for a lot of fireside fun when you tune in to 2ZA, Palmerston North, on Wednesday evenings. *Personalities on Parade* is the title of a new session, which will be heard at 7.30. Singers and instrumentalists are heard in this programme, and there is plenty of variety. The listener's job is simply to jot down his idea of who is who, and win a prize.