

WITH THANKS TO THE NBS

An Untutored Ear Listens To Music

(Written for "The Listener" by ARTHUR GILL)

THIS is not a critical article, even though criticism is justified; neither, dear Lord, let it become an outburst of girlish lyrical praise. This is simply an attempt by someone who knows little more than the difference between crotchets and quavers, chords and arpeggios, to give thanks, frankly and unashamedly, for music which delighted the senses to a state of excitement bordering on tears at the Wellington Town Hall on a recent evening. It is estimated, in the rough and ready manner of such estimates, that there were over 2,500 people in the Town Hall. If applause is the obvious fruit of appreciation, then it was a rare harvest. Miss Pnina Salzman, whose simplicity of manner on the concert platform is such as to suggest that at home in Palestine everyone calls her Nina, must have enjoyed the urgency and warmth of the hand-clapping; Mr. Andersen Tyrer and the NBS need have no fear of their part in a scheme of things which brought a splendid artist and a thoroughly competent orchestra together for a concert which most people found memorable.

Hard to Avoid Superlatives

It is not easy to write without using superlatives to convey some sense of the maturity of this performance of Tchaikovsky's Concerto in B Flat Minor. There was a certain splendour about it, despite those rigid perfectionists who found the orchestra a little untidy at times and who should have realised the difficulties of rehearsal. Miss Salzman's strength and precision, her beauty of phrasing, her technical ability all suggest that here is an artist great in the realm of interpretation and, when age and experience have laid their exacting crowns on her white brow, perhaps one of the greatest of them all. She rekindles emotion so that the world is lost in contemplation and enjoyment of the exquisite moment; she brings renewed vitality to passages long since grown familiar by strumming fingers of the lesser gifted; she colours with imagination the moods and movements of the composer. Otherwise what can explain the abrupt storm of emotion created by the performance of this accomplished young visitor, not only during the Tchaikovsky, but during the Falla "Ritual Fire Dance," and the showy, decorative creations of Liszt and Mendelssohn. It is not sentiment. Miss Salzman has a strength which is commonly described as masculine, and energy which frankly is tireless, but neither quality completely explains her. She dominates the moment, whether it be one of great delicacy or great strength, of depth or of laughing lightness.

Some Reflections

In recent months New Zealand seems to have developed a more definite musical mind which suggests (a) that the public has been starved for such a diet, (b) that the wartime lunch-hour concerts and the musical societies have crusaded to good effect, (c) that as a young nation we are at last recognising the buds of a culture which threatens to flower. Dismiss even a big percentage of

audiences as those who "always do the right thing," and you still have a healthy and promising array of genuine lovers of music. Incidentally among those same "doers of the right thing" there is an increasing number of honest seekers who play no instrument, know nothing of musical jargon and yet are stimulated, satisfied, and delighted by good music. They themselves perhaps are afraid to say why, but they modestly help to form

a background for the more articulate. There were many of them at the final Salzman concert. Perhaps again this is an indication of a cultural growth which is emerging from the fourth and fifth generations of this country's families. Within the span of a few months two very fine pianists have been magnificently received by New Zealand audiences; it is an inducement which will no doubt lead to further tours.

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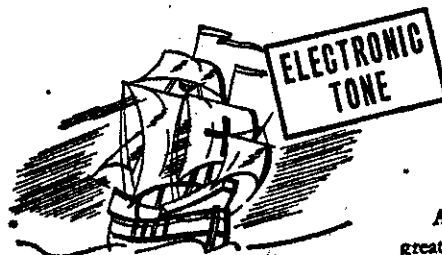
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