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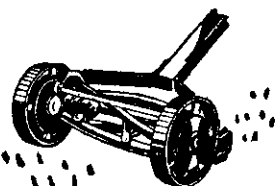
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SYMPHONY WITHOUT SOAP

Public Funds Back New Sydney Orchestra

(By Courtesy of the Australian High Commissioner's Office)

A NEW symphony orchestra has just been born in Sydney, Australia, without the aid of soap operas or public subscription. Financed jointly by the non-commercial Australian Broadcasting Commission, the New South Wales State Government and the Sydney City Council, the orchestra has a full complement of 80 players. It is assured of a £60,000 annual vote for three years, and is scheduled to give 100 concerts a year in city and country. Terms of the agreement provide that each year the Broadcasting Commission contributes £30,000, the State Government £20,000, and the City Council £10,000, plus free use of the city concert hall, which is usually rented out at £40 a night.

Low Priced Concerts

A glance at the programme of concerts shows how the plan will bring good music to everyone. Of the first year's 100 concerts, 12 will be free Sunday performances. There will be 20 low-priced concerts (seats 5/3, 3/1, 1/-) and 20 free afternoon concerts for school students. Most of these will be given in the Sydney Town Hall, which seats 2,200, although there will be some in the spacious Botanical Gardens near the heart of the city.

Between city recitals, the Sydney Symphony will tour the State, giving low-priced and free concerts in at least six larger centres. Portions of the evening concerts are broadcast on the State and Commonwealth radio networks.

Thirty-Hour Week

Members' ages range from 18 to 65; they are paid about £12/10/- weekly. The working week was fixed at 30 hours after discussions between employers and the local musicians' union. Annual leave and sick pay are among the benefits in the agreement. Leaders of sections get special pay, and there is a proficiency loading for players of outstanding merit.

Typical of Australian conductors who will be associated with the Sydney Symphony is Joseph Post. He is one of Australia's most brilliant young musicians, and was guest conductor at an early concert by the Sydney Symphony this year. From outside Australia, the Sydney Symphony's first guest conductor for 1946 is to be Walter Susskind, one of the leading young conductors in Britain. Another noted conductor, Eugene Goossens, is likely to follow Susskind.

For many years there have been visits to Australia by prominent overseas conductors. Most of them were brought to Australia by the ABC, the foresight of which made the Symphony Orchestra possible. Players in the Sydney Symphony feel that they have gained vitality

from the visits of these conductors, whose different approach greatly freshened Australian orchestral music.

When Charles J. Moses, general manager of the Commission, discussed the Sydney Symphony with the Prime Minister of New South Wales (Mr. McKell) two years ago, he had a sympathetic hearing; the Government envisages the building-up of a national opera house, the expansion of tutorial services at the Conservatorium, and encouragement in the community of a love of music and the arts.

Since the ABC formed its first studio orchestras, it has concentrated on giving a large proportion of free concerts for children. The effect of this policy has been remarkable. Years ago Australian experience was that public concerts were attended almost wholly by older people, but to-day young men and women make up the greater part of concert audiences. The youngsters who listened to the free concerts have grown up, and now they eagerly seek seats at the concerts given by the Sydney Symphony.

Noting this increased appreciation of music, Mr. Moses recalls the ABC's earlier struggles. "Our first venture in public symphony concerts," he said recently, "was in 1934, when Sir Hamilton Harty, who was brought to Australia as the ABC's first guest conductor, gave five concerts in Sydney with a scratch orchestra. Year by year since then, the numbers of orchestral concerts have increased. The establishment of a permanent full-size symphony orchestra of over 80 players was always our aim, but it was not financially possible until the New South Wales Government and the City Council agreed to help the ABC by assisting in meeting the cost of this gigantic undertaking."

World Interest

It is doubtful if any orchestra in the world has had such a good start as that given to the Sydney Symphony. Many rely on making recordings to fill the gap between revenue and expenses, others have to go barnstorming for funds. In the British Commonwealth the only other orchestra comparable with the Sydney Symphony, financially, is the BBC Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

The New South Wales plan has aroused considerable interest in other countries. Many letters have been received by the Australian authorities, including one from the committee of the Philadelphia Orchestra. The formation of symphony orchestras on a similar plan is being considered in Victoria and South Australia, two other culturally-adult Australian States.