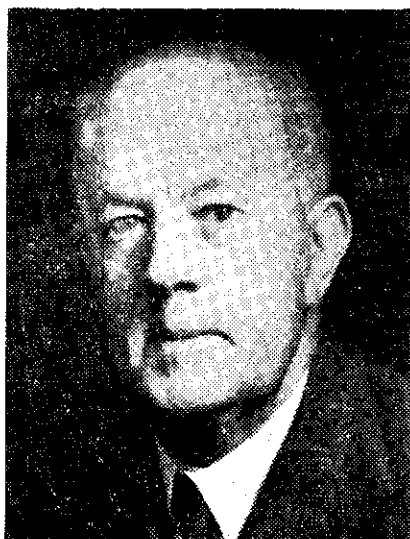


# JAZZ DOESN'T WORRY DR. BAINTON

"SO you've come to pick my brains?" was how Dr. Edgar Bainton, the former director of the New South Wales Conservatorium, greeted us when we called to see him soon after he reached Wellington. Dr. Bainton recently retired from the Conservatorium — "the Con" as he is apt to call it in conversation—and he is here for some months to examine candidates on behalf of the Royal Schools of Music, to adjudicate at the Wellington Competitions in August, and also to broadcast. A series of lecture recitals by him is already being heard from Station 2YA.

We made an unconvincing attempt to put a better complexion on the reason for our visit, and in a few minutes



Spencer Digby photograph

DR. EDGAR BAINTON

"You shouldn't tell people what they ought to listen to"

worked the conversation round to where Dr. Bainton might start talking about music, or broadcasting—which he regards as a good thing for music—or just things in general.

"How long have you been here?" we asked, before inviting him to say all the usual things about our scenery, hotels, taxis, and so on. Dr. Bainton took out his watch. "Two days and half-an-hour." And he chuckled. No, there wouldn't be much point in asking him what he thought of the way we do things.

## Co-operation Was Needed

But he could tell us about the way Sydney is doing things—the new co-operative subsidy system for the symphony orchestra, for instance. There is a three-year agreement between the State Government, the Sydney City Council and the ABC; the State contributing £20,000 a year, the City Council £10,000, the ABC £30,000 to the cost of the orchestra. The ABC gets broadcasting rights, the City Council gets free children's concerts, and the State Government requires concerts to be given in centres outside Sydney.

"When I came to Australia in 1934,

Hamilton Harty was there as a guest conductor for the ABC," Dr. Bainton said. "The following year, public concerts were given by the ABC and the Conservatorium. In 1936, the ABC handled them alone. But only now in 1946 is there a full permanent orchestra, and now only with the help of this triple co-operation. It will be very interesting to see how it works out, and if all parties to it will be satisfied."

Dr. Bainton talked of the growth of a new and wider musical audience in Australia. There are enormous crowds now at concerts that give no promise of playing down to a popular audience, and a greater music-loving public is developing. He is evidently used to being asked by reporters whether he hates jazz, because his next remark, made voluntarily, was "And I don't think the jazz business matters—you shouldn't tell people what they ought to listen to. You should just let them find out for themselves. It's obvious that people everywhere want to know more about music. Neville Cardus does excellent talks on Sunday nights—you may have heard them here—and a children's session, too. And the ABC people say they have evidence that his is about the most popular talk on the air."

"What about your own talks, the ones you'll be doing here?"

"Seven minutes' talk and 23 minutes' music—that's the way it should be," said Dr. Bainton, with his engaging chuckle. "Cardus is better—seven minutes' talk and 53 minutes' music!"

## Lack of Self-Criticism

"What is happening in the way of creative music in Australia? Have you composers?"

Dr. Bainton shrugged his shoulders. There is no great teacher of composition, he feels, and though there are "swarms" of young people writing music, they are not sufficiently self-critical, and don't seem to want to learn.

"And you think the lack of a teacher is the real trouble—not other conditions?"

"I think so."

"They will have to turn to England or America to learn their craft then?"

"England, preferably." Dr. Bainton chuckled again.

He talked a while of orchestral music. Dr. Bainton doesn't see why New Zealand should not now be ready to form an orchestra of 40-50 pieces, but thinks we should not think in terms of the full, 72-80 player orchestra, for some time yet.

"But one thing you have here, which we have not in New South Wales—you can tell them this—is a permanent string quartet. That is something we really should have, and I understand you've had one for some time. Queensland, you know, is supporting one. The State Government there has established one, and it has to work pretty hard, touring all round the State, going to schools and so on."



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