

SYMPHONY SEASON PREPARATIONS

Another Guest Conductor Announced

WITHIN a week of its inaugural concert on Thursday, March 6, under the baton of Andersen Tyrer, the National Orchestra of the NZBS will make its second public appearance, again in the Wellington Town Hall. This second concert will be on Wednesday, March 12. On Saturday, March 29, there will be a third, this time with Dr. Edgar Bainton as guest conductor, and Lili Kraus as solo pianist.

Another guest conductor announced for the 1947 season is the New Zealand-born musician, Warwick Braithwaite. Braithwaite, who was born in 1898, went to England during the First World War, and won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music. After three years as a student, he joined a touring opera company, first as chorus-master, and later as conductor. After a year with the British National Opera Company he was appointed by the BBC as Musical Director of its Cardiff station, and while there he conducted the Cardiff Musical Society. When the National Orchestra of Wales was founded in 1927, with the support of the BBC, Braithwaite became its conductor.

In 1931 he joined the Sadler's Wells Company as opera conductor, and stayed with them till 1940. In that year he was appointed conductor of the Scottish Orchestra. During the latter's 1943-44 season he conducted 132 major symphony concerts and 18 children's concerts.

His views on the inclusion of women players in an orchestra are reminiscent of those recently expressed by Sir Thomas Beecham. But he does not go so far as to say that women should not be in an orchestra at all. He says that they make fine oboe players, but he is

not so sure that he likes them among the violins. He thinks they are too individualistic, and unable to sink their own personalities for the benefit of the whole. They are more at home, he believes, in an exclusively women's orchestra, for though they are splendid workers—earnest, and meticulously careful—their discipline is not as good as that of men.

Shortly before the outbreak of war in 1939, Warwick Braithwaite completed an opera, *Pendragon*. He has also written four overtures, a string quartet and a Symphony in E.

Because we did not know a great deal about it ourselves, and felt that many listeners might share our ignorance, we asked two NZBS technicians to tell us how the microphones were placed for the broadcasting of an orchestral concert.

Many factors, we were told, have to be taken into consideration, to preserve balance of tone in such a broadcast. Generally three microphones are used for the orchestra itself, covering the strings, the woodwinds, and the brass. If a soloist is playing with the orchestra, a fourth microphone is allotted to him. And, of course, there has to be one for the announcer.

The orchestral microphones are suspended from the roof of the hall (and getting them suspended is just a small part of the technician's job) at a height



WARWICK BRAITHWAITE
Women make fine oboe players

of 15 to 18 feet above the heads of the players. The relay is usually controlled from the balcony, or dress-circle, and each microphone is plugged in to an amplifier. The whole passes by land-line to the control-room of the station which is doing the broadcast. In the case of the National Orchestra's debut, this will be 2YA, which will broadcast the whole concert.

One technician controls the four, or five, microphones, each of which has a separate volume control. The balance of tone is finally checked at the studio and information passed back to the relay point by manual telephone on a second line. In the control room the volume level is checked further, and amplified again before being fed by another line to the transmitter at Titahi Bay. And so the listener receives the programme.

But before all this is possible, a certain amount of testing must take place at the hall during a rehearsal. This work is complicated by the fact that the echo in an empty hall is generally severe; tests when a hall is full are far more satisfactory. In some large halls overseas, however, the acoustics are such that there is little difference between a full and empty hall. Plush seating absorbs a good deal of sound; even the clothes of the audience help to minimise echo. Technicians must vary their arrangements a little from summer to winter, for while fur coats and thick clothes appreciably dampen sound, the lighter wraps and dresses of a summer season have not quite so marked an effect.

With the recent alteration and redecoration of the Wellington Town Hall, acoustics are said to have improved materially from a broadcasting point of view.

Tale of the Australian Outback

NEAR the town of Colac (Victoria, Australia) is an old deserted homestead, once magnificent, but now nothing much more than a wayside camp for passing swagmen. In the home paddock is a headstone which records the death, on September 3, 1855, at the age of 21, of Kathie . . . , wife of the former owner. A cryptic inscription runs, "Forgiving and Forgiven."

From this, and certain other collected facts, Elizabeth Hanson, Australian story-writer, has produced a serial for radio, *The Legend of Kathie Warren*. It opens in 1853 with the arrival from England of a young bride to take up Australian outback life. And then the story follows a line of intrigue between wife and handsome stranger, and trouble on the gold diggings, culminating in the events at Eureka Stockade. There are four books in the serial, the first going under the general title of *The Legend of Kathie Warren*: the other three are "Jane," "A Man Came Riding," and "A Love Had I." And as there are 208 episodes, we leave listeners to find out all about them from their radios.



MARY WARD
Star of "The Legend of Kathie Warren"

The serial is now being heard from 1ZB and 2ZB; it starts at 3ZB on Monday, March 3; and at 4ZB on Monday, March 17. It is on the air on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and listening-time is 10.30 a.m.