



WARWICK BRAITHWAITE
Conducting opera is more difficult

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it given under the conductor of the Academie Nationale orchestra, who conducted the symphony from a violin part, the inference being that he couldn't read a conductor's score."

But Braithwaite agreed that it was an advantage to be able to dispense with a score once a work had been memorised completely and that it helped the conductor to concentrate more deeply upon his artistic conception of the work being performed.

Boyd Neel told us that he conducted without a score purely because he had no need of one. His memory is excellent but he uses a score at rehearsals when he is working on a piece with which his orchestra is not familiar. Braithwaite, too, uses a score to rehearse even those works with which he is most familiar and which he can conduct from memory any time, because (as he pointed out to us) it would be a waste of time for a conductor to attempt to commit to memory the reference letters

and marks which he has to make use of at rehearsals. As Andersen Tyrer put it, "In the score are only the more obvious marks of expression and phrasing. It is the conductor who fills in the blanks. It is he who must supply the dynamics that give the music 'soul.'"

Lang gives full credit to the conductor of opera: "The well organised symphony orchestra can muddle through without a mishap even if it does not get much help from the conductor. But in the opera everything depends on the conductor."

Braithwaite, who has had considerable experience conducting opera in addition to his work with symphony orchestras, agreed that conducting opera from memory is far more difficult.

"With singers performing from memory, mistakes can easily occur which might throw everything out and at such moments it is most comforting for the conductor to have the notes in front of him."

Andersen Tyrer summed the whole thing up for us. From the one extreme of regarding the conductor as principally a showman he warned us against going to the other.

"I think the main danger a conductor comes up against," he said, "is of being regarded purely as a sort of human metronome. All that the composer has left behind are the printed symbols on a page. From the tangible the conductor must create the intangible. From the black and white page he must create the essence of the music. That is why he is there, and his work at rehearsals and what he does on the concert platform should be directed towards that end."

(Listeners will hear more about the functions of the orchestral conductor in one of a series of talks recorded for the NZBS by Boyd Neel during his stay in New Zealand. Details of these broadcasts will be announced later.)

Eric Coates' Music from 1ZB

IF it is a pleasure for many listeners to hear the works of Eric Coates, it is just as much a pleasure for members of an orchestra to play them; for Coates believes that every player should have something to do. From his own experience he knows the boredom some players have to face, waiting to add their few bars of music. And so Coates' policy in orchestrating his compositions is that every instrument, from the first violin to the triangle, should have something to say. Next month Eric Coates will be 61 years old. He was born in Nottinghamshire, England, and educated at the Royal Academy of Music, London. After playing in the Queen's Hall under Sir Henry Wood, he started composing and conducting. At the promenade concerts of 1911, Sir Henry Wood introduced the *Miniature Suite*, composed by Coates when he was 25. Other suites followed and later, at the request of his small son, Coates started writing fairy stories in music. The first was *The Three Bears Suite*.

Coates is still composing, and his most notable work in recent years has been his *Three Elizabeths Suite*, written in 1944. A special programme of his music will be broadcast by 1ZB at 10.0 p.m. this Sunday, July 27. It will include *The Three Bears*, part of *The Four Ways*, *Saxo-Rhapsody*, *Sleepy Lagoon*, "Valsette" from *Wood Nymphs* and the *Three Elizabeths*.

NATIONAL FILM UNIT

"MUTTON-BIRDERS," the story of how mutton-birds are caught, packed, and transported, is told by the National Film Unit in Weekly Review No. 308, released on July 25. The season for mutton-birds is a short one and the work for the most part is done by Maoris. Whole families are taken by boat to the little island south of the Bluff where the birds are plentiful, and both men and women take part in the work. The primitive little island presents many difficulties, and the film shows how ingeniously these have been overcome, especially in the handling of the packed birds. The Soccer test "South Africa v. New Zealand" is also included in this review.

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