INSTRUMENTS IN THE ORCHESTRA:

(8) The Bassoon

ments of the National Orchestra, written to help interested listeners towards a more informed apprecia-tion of orchestral music and a better understanding of the resources at the command of the conductor.

T has been remarked that if an orchestra without a bassoon sounds all wrong, a bassoon without an orchestra sounds terrible. The instrument has a strong reedy tone, sometimes (and fittingly) described as "fruity." Its ability to produce notes of a humorous quality has earned it the nickname of "Comedian of the Orchestra." Beethoven, in his Sixth Symphony, uses a bassoon to portray a meandering drunk, and in "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," by Dukas, the enchanted broomstick is represented



most of the master composers. The bassoon is a double reed instrument of the woodwind family, in which it has the bass voice. It is to the oboe and the clarinet what the violoncello is to the violin. Its history is much the same as that of the oboe, its direct ancestor having been the bass pommer which was six feet in length and straight.

no means employed for humorous effect alone, however, and it is used in a wide

variety of ways in the orchestras of

quite mechanics of the bassoon, however, require the tube to be just under eight feet long, so it is "doubled back" on itself, giving it in effect a length of about five feet and making it easier to handle. The reed has been brought within easy reach of the player's mouth by a curved metal tube. The instrument is made of wood, in five pieces, and has tapering, conical bore.

A high degree of skill is required to manipulate the keys, of which there are from 16 to 22, and as the acoustics of the instrument are imperfect the player must rely partly upon his ear to guide him.

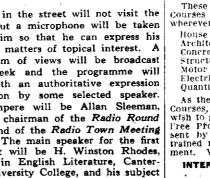
The double which is sometimes seen in orchestras, is more ponderous and produces an even mightier bass than does the bassoon. Its fore-runner bore the magnificent name double quintgreat pommer.

The National Orchestra has two bassoons.



Spencer Digby photograph

R. GIRVAN First bassoon in the National Orchestra





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Time Gallups on at 3ZB STUDY COURSES FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO GET ON

DUPLIC' Opinion, 3ZB's new pro- the man in the street will not visit the is an extension of an idea which began nearly two years ago with the Round Table series. The Round Table discussion group was a panel of fewer than a dozen speakers, from which four were chosen each week to deal with subjects submitted by listeners. After a run of 18 months this session gave way to Radio Town Meeting, in which anybody who wished was given the opportunity to have his say as a member of the studio audience after the selected speakers had spoken. In Public Opinion

gramme to be broadcast each Sun- studio, but a microphone will be taken day at 8.0 p.m. starting on August 31, out to him so that he can express his views on matters of topical interest. A symposium of views will be broadcast every week and the programme will finish with an authoritative expression of opinion by some selected speaker. The compere will be Allan Sleeman, who was chairman of the Radio Round Table, and of the Radio Town Meeting sessions. The main speaker for the first broadcast will be H. Winston Rhodes, lecturer in English Literature, Canterbury University College, and his subject will be "A Formula for Peace."

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