

# TAUBER WITH THE ORCHESTRA

## Notable Concert Season Planned for 1948

SINCE August 20, when the National Orchestra of the NZBS ended its highly successful opening season, its members have been rehearsing in groups in their home centres, preparing for the 1948 series of concerts. Next year at least three noted artists from overseas will appear as guest performers with the orchestra. One of them will be the tenor Richard Tauber. Isobel Baillie (soprano), who toured New Zealand for the NZBS at the time of the Centennial Musical Festival in 1940, will be another, and the third will be the young New Zealand pianist Richard Farrell, who is at present studying in New York.

**M**EMBERS of the orchestra will start their first annual leave on December 22, returning to rehearsals on January 12. Then, at the beginning of February, the groups in Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin, will join the Wellington section for a month's concerted rehearsing before entering on a comprehensive list of 1948 engagements.

### Season Will Open in Auckland

The new season will open on Tuesday, March 2, in the Auckland Town Hall, when Isobel Baillie will be the guest artist. Three concerts will be given in Auckland, with an innovation by way of

a popular lunch-hour concert on Wednesday, March 3, in the Town Hall. At a concert on Thursday, March 4, Isobel Baillie will again be the guest artist.

On Friday, March 5, the orchestra will return to Wellington to prepare for the first Wellington concert of the new season—in the Town Hall on Wednesday, March 10, with Isobel Baillie again as soloist. On the following day there will be a lunch-hour concert in the Town Hall, and on Friday, March 12, a concert for secondary school pupils, with Miss Baillie as guest artist, will be presented in the afternoon. On Saturday, March 13, another concert will be given by the orchestra in association with the soprano, and a second school concert will be staged with Miss Baillie in solos



TAUBER receives a lesson in playing the flute from Sir Thomas Beecham prior to the tenor's appearance in "The Magic Flute" at Covent Garden

on Tuesday, March 16. On Friday, March 19, there will be another lunch-hour concert, and on Monday, March 22, one more concert for school pupils, with orchestra alone.

### The Otago Celebrations

After the Easter holidays, at the end of March, the orchestra will go to Dunedin to take part in the musical portion of the Otago Centennial Celebrations. It will be heard, in the

Dunedin Town Hall, with Isobel Baillie, on Saturday, April 3. Then, on Wednesday, April 7, the orchestra will be associated with a massed male voice chorus in a programme which will include Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet* and David's *The Desert*.

On Saturday, April 10, a concert programme with orchestra and a combined mixed chorus will include Vaughan Williams's *Festival Te Deum*, (continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

where my fabulous Chinese meal was ordered for me in Chinese writing (on a little pad), and where I tried and failed to master chopsticks, we drove in a luxurious UN car round Central Park and down Broadway to see the lights. Then we made for The Village (Greenwich Village) to go to Nick's.

NICK'S is where you used to go to hear Mugsy Spanier, Miff Mole and Pee Wee Russell. Of that outfit (as I believe "Turntable" would call it) only Mugsy remains at the moment. He keeps court there with five others, making a sextet of the following instruments: trumpet (Mugsy), clarinet (Ernie Caceres), trombone (Freddie Ohms, I think), piano, bass, and percussion. They blow both hot and blue, and there is no cover charge for going in to hear them—only a dollar minimum, which you spend on drinks, ice cream, etc. It is a ground floor place about three times as big as Blake's Inn, in Auckland, and has the same sort of decor—leadlight windows, dark oak tables, and Ye Olde English motifs all round. There is a sign saying that it is dangerous and unlawful for the place to contain more than 203 persons. This was the first surprise for me. I had never imagined that you worshipped the deities of the jazz heaven in such a little joint. When your eyes get used to the dim light and the

cigarette smoke, you see the heads of deer, moose and tiger, and stuffed ducks gathering the dust of years up near the beams, Ye Olde Hunting prints on the pillars, and small parchment lampshades on the cubicle-lights bearing silhouettes of Jolly Farmers tossing off pots of Brown Ale, and so forth. There are cubicles round the walls, tables in the middle, and a dais against the far walls for the musicians. No dancing. You can lean against the bar counter if there are no seats, but I daresay you pay the dollar minimum just the same.

AT a guess, I'd say that the crowd along the bar contained the real enthusiasts. One female person in her middle twenties was wearing slacks with the bottoms rolled up, a long, man's-style cream linen jacket (unironed) with a split back, her hair gathered behind her head in a big gold clasp about the

size of a man's fist. Over her eyes she was wearing the prodigiously ugly new style of glasses, going up to points at the outside, which have presumably been invented by manufacturers with the object of making all women who wear glasses buy new ones. Her right foot was jigging every time I looked, and she was talking in a very knowing way with a young man of similar years whose chief distinguishing feature was a prison crop—of which there were several other examples in the place, being, evidently, a mark of some particular belief, or perhaps of some special degree of sophistication. From their vicinity I heard pronounced in a tone of final authority that the boys were playing well that night. I noticed later that Ernie Caceres drank with them during one of the breathers.

Hearing such music as that of the Spanier Sextet in its natural habitat (notwithstanding the exotic decor, which you forget when the music begins) is a totally different thing from hearing it as, for instance, when a visitor in your own home on a Friday night asks you to switch on "Turntable's" session from 2YA. For one thing, every bit of its extraordinary vitality reaches you, and the visual side has a lot to do with that. The simple fact that you are hearing it in the place where it belongs by nature should give you some curiosity for it in place of any prejudice you may have had against listening to mechanical reproductions of it in a place where it can never be anything but a minority cult. In short, I find myself echoing Igor Stravinsky, who is reported to have said something like this: "I like ze jazz and ze swings. It is to Harlem I go."

Nick's, however, is not Harlem. Neither is Mugsy Spanier a Negro. And something a New Zealander notices about the sextet that plays at Nick's is that it is quite unlike those assemblies of depraved, watery-eyed creatures shown in film shorts of jazz bands. Its members dress how they like and Spanier could be taken for any American in a grey double-breasted suit. Caceres, a squat, cocky little man, who plays a clarinet with passionate sensitivity (and improvises with wit and cunning), could be a Spanish Indian, I suppose. The double-bass player could be a salesman from a men's department in a New Zealand drapery shop, and the percussion player reminded me of no one so much as Major Lampen. He sat quite still, his head never appearing to move, and his little moustache pulled to one side in a sort of perpetual phlegmatic sniff. Evidently his hands and feet were flying about beyond my range of vision, because he was providing a brilliant rhythmical commentary on what the other instruments were doing, as well as supplying the basis of the rhythm.

IT was midnight before the big UN car rolled up to the entrance to our Pier and we took leave of John Male. Yet at midnight, for the benefit of the few stragglers who would be coming back to the boat for a free bed, there was a Negro lift-attendant on duty. We could have walked up the stairs (equal to about three floors), but this man was there to save us the trouble. And he did it as all the other menials whom I saw did their jobs, as if he was happy to be able to.

—A.A.

(To be concluded)



"I had never imagined that you worshipped the deities of the jazz heaven in such a little joint"