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# Gisborne Music Lover Sets an Example

Written for "The Listener" by

M. PRUDENCE GREGORY

HOMELESS for about eight months, a newly-formed branch of the British Music Society searched Gisborne in vain for accommodation. One hall was not available on suitable evenings, another private home had two pianos but not enough seating accommodation, the vocal group's efforts were drowned whenever rain fell on the tin roof of its meeting place. . . .

That was two years ago. At the end Orchestra, Christina Young and Tessa of May this year, the Queensland State Birnie, Stewart Hi vey, the Auckland

String Quartet played to Gisborne British Music Society members in a perfect, miniature auditorium, complete

with acoustically treated walls which reduce the reverberation period as much as possible for a place of that capacity, a rare atmosphere indeed for visiting performers in New Zealand.

Behind the arrangements for this celebrated group to visit Gisborne lies a tale of one man's enthusiasm for music—one man's vision of a home for musicians where they could practise at odd hours, where they could perform under the best conditions possible and listen to the music of others in comfort. He is H. F. Wise, president of the Gisborne branch of the society, who decided to build a music-room when no suitable premises were available. His work, his time, and his money have produced the perfect setting for chamber music where 150 people can sit in theatre seats, in a centrally heated room, and listen to the best talent available.

# Everything Laid On

There is fluorescent lighting to reduce glare, grand and upright pianos, and a complete system for producing music from any source, whether over the air from records, or from films. This has been made possible by the installation of a talkie projector on which films of famous orchestras are shown in different groups, and an amplifying system.

In two years, the society has placed itself in the debt of musically-minded people in Gisborne to a remarkable degree. Through its ability to offer visiting musicians a place in which to perform without having to hire an empensive opera house, the society has brought to Gisborne in the past two years artists who include Lili Kraus, once as a soloist and once with Robert Pikler, the Ernest Jenner trio, Dora and Gerhard Willner (two recitals), Max Gilbert, viola player from the Boyd Neel String Orchestra, Christina Young and Tessa Birnie. Stewart Hi vev. the Auckland

baritone, Mr. and Mrs. Lionel Harris, Wellington. In addition, the Queensland State Quartet, as mentioned, has

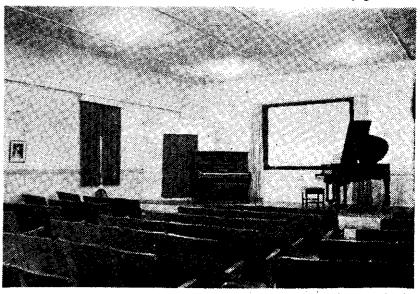
just given a recital and Webster Booth and Anne Ziegler will give a performance next month under the society's ausnices.

To the city dweller who takes the appearance in his home town of any celebrity visiting New Zealand as a matter of course, this may not seem like the musical feast it is in Gisborne. However, because Gisborne has been often left out of celebrities' itineraries as a result of its poor communications, it has suffered severely in the past in its endeavours to provide those interested in the arts with stimulating recitals and opportunities for hearing the best performers in New Zealand.

### Standard of Music Improved

The distinct hiatus between the standard of promising local musicians and the finished products of the musical world who all too rarely visited the town has now been minimised, and those who are studying music with a view to becoming performers and those who like to listen to the best in music, find through the British Music Society their way opened to music of much the same standard as that prevailing in the cities.

The music room is not for the sole use of visiting performers, of course (continued on next page)



GISBORNE'S Music Room-"a perfect setting for chamber music"