

The dearth is as real in Sydney as elsewhere. How many realise that were a last-minute unforeseen circumstance to prevent certain first and second-desk wind players from appearing at a Town Hall symphony concert, the lack of adequate substitute players in this city of 1½ millions would probably force abrupt cancellation of the concert?

Benefit from New Arrivals

"It is a fallacy, the Union says, to imagine that because a musician is of foreign birth and has a foreign name, his musical ability is greater than that of an Australian."

Agreed. Yet three "foreigners," bearing the everyday names of Green, Gray and Gregory, are to a very great degree responsible for the recent improvement in the playing of the Sydney orchestra.

It is common knowledge that only the sudden appearance in Australia of Mr. Tilsey from the Hallé Orchestra of Manchester enabled "The Firm" to open its Melbourne Italian opera season with a complete orchestra.

This gentleman and his second-oboe partner were both indisposed at a later Melbourne performance, and with no substitutes available, Mr. Ghione suffered the humiliation of conducting a Puccini opera without any oboes at all.

To complete the saga, the player being still indisposed when the company arrived in Sydney, I had to consent to release Mr. Green from his Conservatorium opera duties to take the player's place at the opening rehearsals and performance of *Aida* at the Tivoli; no Sydney player being procurable.

So much for the available "wealth of talent" referred to by the secretary.

The Union goes on to say this: "Our action is no different from that of an industry seeking a tariff to keep out goods from overseas."

The simile is inept. Foreign virtuosi entering a country deficient in that commodity should be labelled vital raw material!

It isn't sufficient that Brisbane and Perth should want to build conservatoriums. They must get professors to train the young students into first-class players. Where are these much-needed, high-grade professors? If not in our cities, they must come from abroad, not only to teach, but to take a first-desk post, if necessary, in the local orchestra.

No first-class solo orchestral performer is too good to hold a post at the local Conservatorium; conversely the fallacy that any unqualified antiquarian is good enough to teach must be exploded, and is being exploded rapidly.

World comment on the union ban—not yet available—will be caustic and dismayed; in the cultural sense, Australia has experienced a major set-back in her development.

Foreign Players in Britain and U.S.

In a country so thinly populated as this one, no one in his senses would urge the policy of a wide-open door for hordes of foreign musicians menacing the livelihood of our players. Yet I'm sure there isn't a musician in those shortly-to-be-disbanded orchestras of the Italian opera and Ballet Rambert (capable performers who would probably be the first to disclaim top symphonic rating), who would pretend to see in the annual arrival of a mere three or four foreign performers—to bolster the country's symphonic standard—a menace to his livelihood.

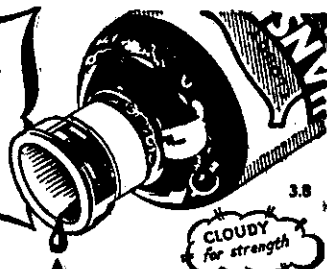
American and Australian conditions are hardly comparable, yet to-day the great orchestras of America—the world's finest—contain an average of 70 per-

cent foreign names in their "personnel" lists. My former 55-year-old orchestra of Cincinnati included 62 foreigners, all of whom became full-fledged American citizens after they joined the orchestra.

Every single principal player and the majority of the rank-and-file of the London Queen's Hall orchestra were foreigners when I first joined it as violinist in 1911. These men influenced and helped mould the present virtuoso tradition of the British orchestral player.

Can we in Australia (particularly at its present stage of musical development) pretend that we can entirely dispense with the cosmopolitan factor which has helped to make British and American orchestras what they are to-day?

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