

LADS FROM LANCASHIRE

Bandsmen Who Have Made A Big Noise In The Musical World

(By The Rev. T. A. Brady)

THE broadcast by Mr. Wright from 2YA must have given great pleasure to all bandsmen and those who are fond of band music. Coming from Lancashire myself, I was greatly interested when mention was made of the leading Lancashire bands and "Belle Vue," the most historic centre of band contests. Everybody who has any intimate knowledge of Lancashire, knows it to be a very musical county. It produces great singers, great choirs, and its brass bands are by no means the least production of its musical genius.

"Belle Vue"—the French for "Beautiful View"—lies on the outskirts of Manchester. It is a very large valuable estate which contains one of the two zoos outside London. Within its grounds are to be seen all kinds of wild animals and animals not so wild. It's a great place for pleasure seekers, for it provides them with every sort of amusement. There are dancing, boating, sham fighting amid a display of fireworks not to be seen in any other part of England.

Band Contests

But two of the biggest events of the year are the band contests. One takes place the first Monday in July, when second-grade bands compete. The other is held on the first Monday in September when only bands of "top hole" fame are allowed to enter. Twenty bands is the maximum number at each contest, which takes place in a huge cool pavilion that accommodates many thousands. Playing begins at two o'clock sharp and finishes about seven in the evening. At one time the contest piece was arranged by Sir Charles Godfrey, musical director of England's great military bands, and it was taken from one of the grand operas. Sir Charles not only arranged the music, but along with two other outstanding musicians served in the capacity of judge.

A Village Production

One striking thing about Lancashire bands is that they are not the product of the city or town, but of the unpretentious village and hamlet. The renowned "Besses-o'-the Barn" Band had its birth in a small village near to Manchester. Wingate's Temperance Band of radio fame belongs to another mining village hard by the cotton city. Irwell Springs is from a hamlet that sits on the side of a hill where the River Irwell has its rise. These

bands are largely composed of coal-miners and mill-workers, who often enough are employed at the same mine or mill.

The greatest band in the judgment of musical experts that ever contested at "Belle Vue" came from a village named Kingston. All its members worked at the mill, and this band had a most remarkable record. It won the September championship three years in succession. Sir Charles Godfrey was not slow to express his very high appreciation of such an achievement, and declared that it had reached the very peak and symmetry of band artistry and technique.

To sit and listen to these bands is an experience never to be forgotten. And you get more than musical thrills. The bodily movements of the performers are a revelation in themselves. Coats and waistcoats are discarded, shirt sleeves are rolled up, and with heads erect the players abandon themselves to the job in hand. They breathe and heave together like one man, so that everything moves as a piece of clockwork. There is one end only—to express by unity

and harmony the very soul of the music that lies before them. The last of these contests I attended was won by "Besses-o'-the-Barn," the test piece being "Peer Gynt," by the Norwegian composer, Grieg.

Debt to Homeland

During this Centennial year much has been said about the part the Homeland has played in the progress and development of New Zealand. Missionaries and pioneers from overseas have laid the solid foundations of the national and social life of the present. But music too has made a fine contribution, and that has been brought from the Mother Country. The brass band cult of Australia and New Zealand owes its all to the Homeland.

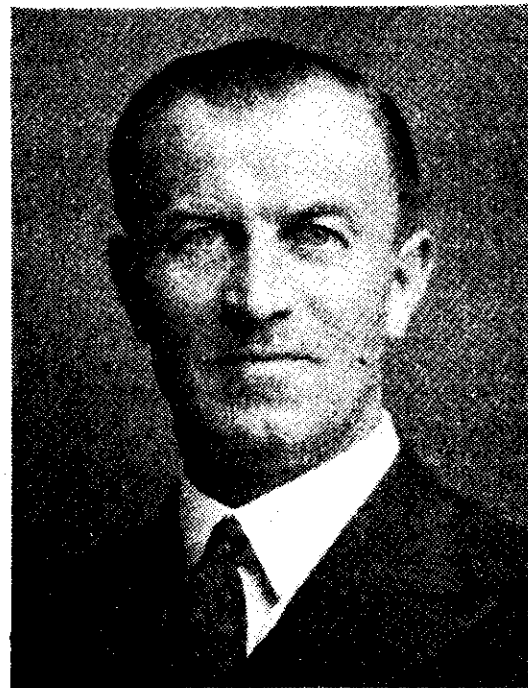
When I came into possession of the beautiful Souvenir Programme for this Centennial Band Contest, I saw three names and they were the names of personal friends, the very men who have arranged the test pieces: William Rimmer, J. J. Greenwood, and Ord Hume. Rimmer I often met in the home of my eldest brother, himself a band conductor and judge. Greenwood began his musical career under the baton of the same brother. Ord Hume was another personal friend.

Yes, the brass band world is one, and the high state of efficiency reached in one country will sooner or later be reflected in another. And so the day is not far distant when New Zealand will send its brass band to compete at "Belle Vue" and other centres in England.



REV. T. A. BRADY

MOST LISTENERS KNOW HIM



ONE of the most experienced and best known radio and concert artists in New Zealand is Rex Harrison. He has broadcast from every "A" station in this country and Australia—and that is probably something of a record. Listeners have heard him constantly since 1921, when he began broadcasting at 2BL and 2FC Sydney.

He has been singing professionally for 30 years, and has given many public recitals throughout Australia and New Zealand.

He is the holder of many New Zealand Championships, and in 1928, competing against 86 professional and amateur singers, he won the Championship of Australia.

Among listeners from Cape Kidnappers to Bluff, he is one of the most popular of radio artists.

Radio in India

A new impetus to broadcasting in India may be given by the war. Discussing ways and means of "keeping India informed and interested" in "an extended Empire programme," the *Times of India* and other publications recently received, mention plans to send from London recordings for broadcast by AIR (All-India Radio), to include broadcasts in Hindustani in the Empire News Service, and place this material at the disposal of an extended system of local aeriels.

No Change

Owners of all-wave radio sets with names printed on fixed wavelength positions on the dials have been worried at changes proposed to come into effect on March of this year. At the international conference at Montreux last year a complete re-shuffling of wavelengths was arranged. Now, it seems, according to announcements made by the G.P.O. (Great Britain) the Montreux agreement must be added to the many international pacts that have become war casualties. The *Evening Gazette* (Blackpool), looks on the bright side of the news to point out that push-button dialling and dials with names on them instead of figures will not need expensive alterations.