

FESTIVAL IN WELLINGTON

Music Celebrations Crowned With Success

THERE have been many critics in the past who have alleged that New Zealanders have no real love or appreciation of good music; but if any one thing could confound this belief, it would be the progress of the Centennial Music Festival, sponsored by the Government as a cultural commem-

oration of the anniversary of our country. No longer have critics much cause to wail about the insensitive masses—at least where music is concerned. For the Festival so far has been an unqualified success.

The celebrations began in Dunedin, and the people of that centre turned out

in full strength, so that on several occasions, houses for concerts were completely sold out and people turned away. The same story was repeated in Christchurch where audiences made history by their enthusiasm.

It is a well-known fact that what pleases the public seldom pleases the critics to the same extent, and vice versa. But critics in Southern papers gave unstinted praise to the work of the visiting singers, the conductor, Andersen Tyrer, and the Festival Symphony Orchestra and chorus. The Festival in

Auckland is now under way, and if that city rises to its traditional heights of appreciation and support the results should be as memorable as those achieved during the southern tour.

Passing through Wellington on his way to Auckland the other day, Andersen Tyrer expressed himself well pleased with the Festival's progress. "Everyone has been working hard to make it a success," he said, "and hard work has brought its own reward." Mr. Tyrer mentioned that the acting—apart from the music—in the full stage presentation of Gounod's "Faust" had been the subject of much favourable comment.

An indication of the amount of work involved in presenting the Musical Festival in Auckland alone is given by the fact that, in the space of 14 days, 15 rehearsals and 11 performances are provided for. And next comes Wellington's turn.

The programme for Wellington is as wide in its appeal as possible. For the performers it presents the hardest job of work of the four centre festivals. Most outstanding attractions are the performances of "Faust," with a cast including Isobel Baillie, Gladys Ripley, Heddle Nash, Raymond Beatty, Frank Bermingham, and Molly Atkinson. On Saturday, June 22, a work by Wellington's conductor of the Schola Cantorum, Stanley Oliver, will be included in the programme: this work, "A Delightful Land," will be conducted by the composer. On the same evening are the "Enigma Variations," by Elgar, and arias and a scene from "La Boheme" by Isobel Baillie and Heddle Nash.

On Sunday evening, June 23, a Thanksgiving Song Service is to be given by soloists, Combined Church Choirs, and the Festival Symphony Orchestra. Gladys Ripley will sing "Abide With Me," and Oscar Natzke will be heard in two arias by Handel.

Tuesday, June 25, is the date for the production of Haydn's Oratorio, "The Creation," with Isobel Baillie, Heddle Nash, and Oscar Natzke as soloists. The following evening, Wednesday, a symphony concert will be presented, the first half by the Wellington Symphony Orchestra under Leon de Mauny, the second half by the Festival Orchestra under Andersen Tyrer. The symphony is Tchaikovsky's fifth in E Minor. The concert's concluding item is one of the most interesting — Rimsky-Korsakov's Symphonic suite, "Scheherazade." Oscar Natzke will be heard in arias by Mozart and Verdi, and Isobel Baillie in arias by Puccini.

The programme for Friday, June 28, features one particularly interesting item — Rowley's "Concerto for Piano, Strings and Drums," in which the soloist will be Jocelyn Walker. Choral items out of the ordinary are Holst's "Grecian Urn," and Fauré's "Requiem," the latter with Olga Burton and Raymond Beatty as soloists. Gladys Ripley will present songs, in the same programme, by Granville Bantock.

If we may judge by the Festival's progress so far, the Wellington season will be the crowning success of the most outstanding musical happening of the century in this country.

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