

★ THREE-CELEBRITY CONCERT ★

THE musical expression of the romantic age—now fast receding into the dim corners of history books—provided the substance of a celebrity concert in Wellington in which Ignaz Friedman, Polish pianist; Harold Williams, Australian baritone; and Andersen Tyrer, English conductor, took part. Large scale works were performed by the orchestra and the results obtained by Mr. Tyrer show that there is nothing to prevent this combination (NBS strings plus 2YA concert orchestra) undertaking even greater responsibilities—a Haydn symphony perhaps, or some contemporary music, Vaughan Williams for example; or it might be interesting to hear one of Schubert's six overtures, and failing that, a symphony by him.

The concert got away to a good start with Weber's overture to "Der Freischütz." Here was proof of the advantage of having a well trained string orchestra established as a foundation for occasional special enterprises. The next orchestral work was Liszt's symphonic poem "Les Preludes." For sheer splendour of sound this work is hard to beat, yet the orchestra gave no reason to think they were not up to it. Brass entries, particularly, were effective. The programme closed with the gay frivolity of Smetana's "Bartered Bride" overture.

There was a "bloom" on this last performance which suggested that the players are ready to undertake Haydn or Mozart. The improvement shown since the Centennial Festivals (in the brass especially) indicates that the players are getting the feel of being all together.

Saint-Saens Concerto

Mr. Friedman's tour de force was the Saint-Saens Piano Concerto in G Minor. This pianist can transmit something through the mechanism of a keyboard which produces a sound we do not often hear in New Zealand. The orchestra was able to support him in a work which, though it has no pretensions to profound content, is a dazzling display. The light touch of the little scherzo and the grim fierceness of the final presto were carried away with great effect.

The piano part is almost one long and brilliant cadenza, but it is a pity that audiences should set up a roar of applause between movements. From the artist's viewpoint it must take the edge off a good reception to find that the audience does not know there is more to come.

Mr. Williams's items were a severe test of his eloquence. First he sang with the orchestra the prologue from *I Pagliacci* (Leoncavallo) and the Credo from Verdi's *Otello*—impressive declamations which he performed with vigour. The audience demanded his return, so he sang Handel's "Silent Worship." This was a relief from the tension of the other two.

Second Bracket

Two excerpts from Moussorgsky's *Boris Godounov*—"I Have Attained to

Power" and the "Farewell and Death of Boris"—comprised the baritone's second bracket. In these he backed up his singing with a little thoughtful gesture. The audience was again carried

away, so Mr. Williams sang two Richard Strauss songs—"All Souls' Day" and "Devotion." His sips at a bottle of throat restorer were diverting but the dog which barked outside the hall was an invitation to murder. Henri Penn as accompanist in the second bracket gave sympathetic support. He also played the harp part in "Les Preludes."

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