

ENGLAND WILL DO HIM

HIS hobbies are sailing—windjammers, not yachts—and golf; he is an organist who has visited 22 countries, had lessons from two great French masters and from one great English one; and he has played on church organs as far north as Trondheim and as far south as Adelaide.

MURRAY Fastier, pupil of Dupré, Commette, and Bullock, is in Auckland meantime waiting to get to England—it's the Navy for him if the doctors don't turn him down a fourth time. He has come to New Zealand from Sydney, where he was organist at the Town Hall for the last two years; he's teaching in a school,

the world," he said. "But give me England every time. She'll do me. And next to her, Norway for culture and Norway for social system—it would be an eye-opener to many New Zealanders. There a little town can support a symphony orchestra—a good one. Music and art have a full and important place in the lives of the people."



MURRAY FASTIER at the Sydney Town Hall organ. He wore this beret to opera in Paris, and while sailing round Africa in a windjammer

and on April 15 will give a concert in the Auckland Town Hall, sponsored by the Auckland Grammar School. The proceeds from this concert, to be broadcast from 1YA, will go to patriotic funds as a donation from the school. Owen Jensen's Auckland String Players and Lyla Fastier (soprano), will take part in the programme.

When Murray Fastier went to Paris in 1939 specially to study under Marcel Dupré, he was greatly disappointed when the great organist said he could not possibly take another pupil, he was much too busy. So said Murray Fastier: "Will you give me lessons at 8.30 a.m.?" Dupré was astonished at the earliness of the hour—apparently it's different in France—and agreed. So for five weeks, Murray Fastier was taught by Dupré at 8.30 each morning.

Murray Fastier was the only pupil Dupré ever had from this side of the equator, and he persuaded Dupré to risk the terrors of the ocean—the artist loathed sea travel—and to visit Australia for a concert tour in the winter of 1939. One result of this tour was a remarkable growth in public interest in organ music in Australia.

Murray Fastier sailed, in holiday times and other times, round Africa and into the Arctic. He has written some interesting accounts of his voyages, especially of his journeys in the Scandinavian countries, for which he has a special affection.

"The Scandinavian countries are worlds ahead of us in culture—if it weren't for England, I'd say they lead

Yes, he said, Australia was alive to music. The Australian broadcasting organisations knew how to sell their wares; they advertised their classical musicians just as energetically as their soaps. And the result was that people really listened to classical music and music of other kinds, too—not wilfully, but because they wanted to.

"But you can't play what you like. You've got to play what they like, which is often enough what you like, too, you'd find to your surprise," Murray Fastier said. "The idea of the organ is that it's a solemn instrument used for playing dirges in church. It's a great deal more than that, and a great concert instrument. It doesn't take people long to realise this if you once give them the chance."

At the concert on April 15, the organist's wife, Lyla Fastier, will sing four songs with organ accompaniment. Lyla Fastier is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Wylie, of Riverton, formerly of Maheno, North Otago. She studied in Sydney, and has been heard in Australian and New Zealand broadcast programmes.



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