

New Paths In School Music

(Written for "The Listener" by
R. E. McLAY)



Combined boys' and girls' special choirs
of the Hutt Valley Memorial Technical
College

If you were to take a walk round the buildings of the Hutt Valley Memorial Technical College any school afternoon, your curiosity would be aroused by the concatenation of musical sounds proceeding from various rooms and from a variety of orchestral instruments. If this curiosity impels you inside, choose a Monday because this is a particularly busy afternoon in this Factory of Music. In one room a violoncello class, in three or four other rooms violin groups, in still another place a brass band group, and so on. Of the 340 day-pupils, at least a third learn to play one of the normal instruments of a symphonic orchestra—violin, 'cello; flute, oboe, clarinet; cornet (or trumpet), horn, baritone, euphonium, trombone, tuba; percussion instruments. Third violins act as violas and

second 'cellos as string basses. As yet there are no bassoons but otherwise no orchestral instrument is neglected.

On his first day at school a new pupil is handed a questionnaire—does he wish to join a group class? If so, what instrument does he choose? And so on. From the questionnaire, the Director of Music is able to organise the classes for the year and get the assistance of a suitable number of part-time professional teachers. Up to one hundred new boys and girls join the classes each year. In 1942, for example, there were more than 50 beginner violinists.

And what of instruments and who pays for them? Yes, that is a huge problem but not insuperable. Over the course of a few years, the College has acquired a large number of instruments, dozens of music stands, and a large quantity of orchestral and band music. Violinists purchase their own instruments (when they leave school they still have them, and can continue their music studies without interruption). Other instrumentalists have the use of a school instrument except for the few cases where a pupil already owns an instrument. No charge is made for school

instruments on loan to pupils; in fact all tuition and music's free, too, and the only fee charged is one of three shillings per pupil at the beginning of each year.

Group Methods

Instruction is by group methods which have proved eminently successful in the hands of good teachers. The spirit of

(Continued on next page)



I have ONE regret

*I did not start
taking De Witt's earlier*

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