

CONCERT ARTISTS FOR 1954

THE emphasis at this year's winter-season concerts will be on the pianoforte. Of four overseas artists whose engagements by the NZBS have been confirmed this week, three are pianists. They are Solomon, Jan Smeterlin, and Bela Siki. The other soloist is Leon Goossens, famed oboist brother of the conductor Eugene Goossens.

Solomon, who will be in New Zealand during April, is to give two concertos with the National Orchestra and four solo recitals. His concertos will be Beethoven's No. 4 in G Major, at Wellington on April 3, and No. 5 in E Flat Major (The Emperor), at Auckland on April 8. The programmes for his solo recitals—one in each of the main centres—have yet to be decided. These recitals will be at Christchurch on April 6, Wellington on April 10, Dunedin on April 13, and Auckland on April 15.

London born, of Russian parents, Solomon began his career as a child of eight. Unlike many, he survived this period, and dropping his surname (Cutner), went on to become one of the world's foremost pianists. He appeared with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at last year's Edinburgh Festival, and has toured extensively in Europe and Latin America. He has made only one previous tour of New Zealand—in 1946—but will be well known to most music-lovers through his many recordings.

Jan Smeterlin, who will tour in late May and early June, is to give two concertos with the National Orchestra, four public recitals and two studio recitals. He has been particularly praised for his interpretations of Chopin, and his Wellington performance, on May 22, will be of Chopin's Concerto No. 2 in F Minor.

Like Solomon, Smeterlin made his debut at the age of eight. He performed a Beethoven concerto with the symphony orchestra at his birthplace, Bielsko, in Poland. His parents objected to a musical career for their son, however, and he was sent to Vienna to study law. There he secretly joined the class of Leopold Godowsky and made such progress that he was awarded a State

prize and sent to London and Berlin for concerts. His real success, however, came after World War I, when, after a concert in Vienna, the audience refused to leave even when the management had turned out the lights. Instead, it stormed the stage and compelled Smeterlin to continue playing, in the dark. Apart from music Smeterlin's chief interest is exploration, and he has frequently combined the two. Many of his tours have taken him well off the beaten track, and for years he has given an annual concert at a mining town 100 miles inside the Arctic Circle.

Smeterlin's tour is being sponsored by the Auckland Festival Committee



SOLOMON

in conjunction with the NZBS. His concerto with the National Orchestra at Auckland on May 29 will coincide with the opening of the Festival, and he will make other appearances during the Festival period. He is also to give solo recitals at Christchurch on June 1, Dunedin on June 3, Wellington on June 8, and Christchurch again on June 10.

Bela Siki was born in Hungary, but is now a Swiss citizen. He too began

his musical career at the age of eight, entering the Budapest Conservatory and becoming a pupil of Dohnanyi. He has played with great success in Europe and last year toured England and Ireland. The Australian Broadcasting Commission's Director of Music, who heard him play recently in Zurich, had this to say: "He is mature in musicianship, and has a superb technique. He was closely associated with Dinu Lipatti up to the time of the latter's death, and his style, musicianship and technique are akin to Lipatti's." For his performance with the orchestra at Wellington on July 24, Siki has chosen Bartok's Concerto No. 3. His only other concerto will be at

Dunedin on July 12, when he will perform Tchaikovsky's Concerto No. 1 in B Flat Minor, Opus 23. In addition, he is to give solo recitals at Auckland on July 14 and Christchurch on July 20.

Leon Goossens, the oboist, will be appearing at the third Wellington subscription concert on June 26 after a tour of Australia. There he will be performing several times under the baton of his brother Eugene, who is conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Four years younger than Eugene, Leon has made, in his own field, a reputation equalling that of his brother. His playing has stirred several contemporary composers to write for the oboe, among

them Vaughan Williams, Sir Arthur Bliss, Gordon Jacob and Sir Arnold Bax. One critic has said of him: "There is perhaps no other musician who can so etherealise his instrument. One thinks of Casals and his 'cello.'" Another referred to a Goossens performance as a "marvellous piece of playing, surpassing in sustained agility all the usual conceptions of the oboe's powers . . . one of the supreme pleasures of the present-day world of music."

Leon Goossens began learning the oboe in his tenth year. At 13 he played in a symphony orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham, and at 16 was chosen as first oboe for the famous Queen's Hall Orchestra under Sir Henry Wood. He served throughout World War I and was badly wounded just before the Armistice. On recovering he returned to his post with the orchestra, but turned gradually away from orchestral work to solo and chamber music playing. He has toured often as a solo artist, but is more widely known through his recordings. The musical distinction of the



LEON GOOSSENS

Goossens family is not confined to Leon and Eugene; a sister, Sidonie, became a harpist of great ability. All are the children of a Belgian conductor named Eugene Goossens, who settled in Britain early in life and became recognised as an operatic conductor of genius. The name, of course, had its drawbacks. It was an invitation to pun. Only one, perpetrated some years ago, is worth recording: "It is now perfectly safe to say Oboe to a Goossens." At his Wellington appearance with the National Orchestra, for which tentative programme details are available, Leon Goossens will play concertos by Cimarosa and Marcello. He will also be heard in other centres.

Wellington's subscription series this year will consist of eight concerts, on April 3, May 22, June 26, July 24, August 19, September 25, October 20, and November 6. The August 19 concert will be the orchestra's last with Warwick Braithwaite as conductor. Mr. Braithwaite has set down for that occasion movements from Mozart's Serenade No. 5, Rachmaninoff's symphonic poem "Isle of the Dead," Rossini's "Matinee Musicale," the Symphony No. 5 by Sibelius, and Beethoven's "Leonore Overture" No. 3.

MANSFIELD MEMORIAL PLAN

LAST October *The Listener* described a plan whereby French and New Zealand admirers of Katherine Mansfield had joined forces to provide a memorial garden to her in the grounds of the Villa Isola-Bella at Menton, on the French Riviera. The grounds were to be planted with New Zealand shrubs and trees, but the villa itself was in such disrepair that it was expected to be pulled down. Latest reports from France now indicate that the villa is being renovated and, as well as the garden, will be preserved to make a more satisfying memorial.

This marks a return to the original plan, as it was worked out by a local resident, J. L. François-Primo, and carried through by a local committee which raised funds. An additional £80 was contributed by the New Zealand Centre of the P.E.N., and £200 by the New Zealand Government.

The villa will presumably be looked after by the municipality of Menton, which had agreed to preserve the grounds and garden in good order. Manuka, toi-toi, karaka and lace-bark were some of the trees and shrubs expected to be planted there. The villa is situated just above the railway lines, and was originally of orange stucco. It can be identified by a white marble plaque which was fixed to the wall in 1939 at M. François-Primo's urging, and which carries the inscription: "Katherine Mansfield, 1888-1923."

Katherine Mansfield lived at the Villa Isola-Bella during the winter of 1920-21 with her friend Ida Baker. Though she was then in an advanced stage of the tuberculosis from which she died, it was here that she wrote "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" and five other stories in her volume *The Garden Party*.



JAN SMETERLIN