

GRAND OPERA FROM AUSTRALIA

Ten Full Broadcasts from YC Stations



COMPLETE operas, presented by the National Opera of Australia, will be heard from NZBS stations on ten occasions during the company's New Zealand season, which will open in Auckland on Tuesday, March 9 with *The Barber of Seville*, broadcast from 1YC. This station will broadcast *Il Tabarro* and *Gianni Schicchi* on Wednesday, March 17. Other broadcasts will be from 2YC on Tuesday, April 6 (*Faust*), on Thursday, April 15 (*La Boheme*), and on Thursday, April 22 (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*); from 3YC on Monday, April 26 (*The Barber of Seville*), on Thursday, May 6 (*The Abduction*), and on Monday, May 10 (*Il Trovatore*); and from 4YC on Saturday, May 15 (*Faust*), and Tuesday, May 18 (*Il Tabarro* and *Gianni Schicchi*). The company will spend three weeks in Auckland, three nights in Hamilton, three weeks in Wellington, ten nights in Christchurch, two nights in Timaru, eight nights in Dunedin, and four nights in Invercargill. The duties of conductor will be shared by Warwick Braithwaite, conductor of the National

Orchestra, Georg Tintner, of Auckland, and Dima Gallungi, of Sydney. All broadcasts will begin at approximately 8.0 p.m., and all the operas will be sung in English.

"This policy of presenting the entire repertoire in English has already been the cause of much discussion," Frank Monk, honorary representative of the Company in Auckland, told *The Listener*. "But I think it an excellent policy, for if opera is always presented in the language in which it was written it will never be popular with the general public; it will always remain the cultural property of a select coterie... and that would be a very sad thing. The object of this tour is to bring the full enjoyment of opera to as many people as possible. English-speaking people must lose a great deal if they hear only operas sung in a foreign tongue. In Europe the practice is for an Italian opera presented in Germany to be sung in German, for a German opera in Italy to be in Italian, and so on."

To ensure technical fidelity in the broadcasting of the operas NZBS technicians will attend as many rehearsals as possible. They may employ as many as ten microphones, placing them so as to obtain a good pick-up of sound from all parts of the stage and a correct balance between the various sections of the orchestra. Previous experience with the broadcasting of the Italian Grand Opera Company's performances suggests that four "footlight" microphones may be employed, with four more for the orchestra, and possibly two overhead to look after any activity toward the back of the stage. The requirements, however, vary with the auditorium and with the opera itself.

From the listener's point of view perhaps the most important performance of all on the opera night is that of the technician responsible for "mixing" the various microphones. On his skill depends the balance of the entire broadcast. He must anticipate the entrances and the movements of the performers and stage and switch in the appropriate microphones. Others, not for the moment required, must be deadened in order to exclude extraneous sound. And, over all, there must be maintained a harmonious balance, neither singer nor orchestra being emphasised at the expense of the other.

New Zealanders are already making a major contribution to the musical side of the tour. Heather Begg, Auckland contralto, is regarded as one of the outstanding soloists; in an orchestra of 32 players there are 16 New Zealanders, and in a chorus totalling 36 members, 26 are from this country, mainly from Auckland and Wellington. They have been conducted in rehearsals so far by Mr. Tintner.

"The New Zealand members will give a very good account of themselves," Mr. Tintner said. "They are all young, trained voices, and very keen. Rehearsals have been going ahead, in separate groups, for some months, and we have assembled in Auckland in good time. The New Zealand part of the orchestra, too, is most promising, including the very best players available." Australia has supplied most of the key players, but, said Mr. Tintner, more New Zealanders would have been employed if they could have been found. "There was a shortage of wind players,

★ MEMBERS of the Australian National Opera who will take part in the New Zealand tour: At left, Betty Prentice as Rosina and Beryl Hardy as Bertha in *"The Barber of Seville."* Below (left to right), Mrs. C. T. Lorenz (hon. managing director), Gladys Mawson (soprano), Heather Begg (contralto), Phyllis McKay (soprano), and John Dudley (tenor, and director of productions), Geoffrey Chard (baritone), Frank Lisle (bass) and Georg Tintner (conductor).



N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 5, 1954.