

# Concertos and Chamber Music

**A**N old Anglo-Saxon belief is that anything French has a warmth and colour and dash not found in northern parts. This reputation is at present being nourished in New Zealand by a pair of touring artists, Brigitte de Beaufond and Charles Lilamand. Playing the violin and the piano respectively, the

In the coming week these two volatile musicians will give concerto performances with the National Orchestra of the NZBS. At Christchurch on Saturday, May 15, Brigitte de Beaufond will perform Mozart's Concerto in D, K.218, and at Dunedin on Monday, May 17, Charles Lilamand will be heard in Liszt's Concerto No. 2 in A Major. The Christchurch concert will be broadcast by Stations 2, 3 and 4YC, the relay beginning at 8.0 p.m. The Dunedin concert will be broadcast by 4YC, beginning at 8.0 p.m., and the second half only by Stations 1, 2 and 3YC, beginning at 9.0 p.m.

Like most artists, the French couple use individual names though they are, in fact, Monsieur and Madame Lilamand. They have known each other since 1937, and followed similar careers, but it was not until they were billed simultaneously for concerts in London three years ago that they decided to wed. Both studied at the Conservatoire National de Paris and both won that institution's first prize for their respective instruments. Mlle. de Beaufond studied under Boucherit and Jacques Thibaud, and M. Lilamand under such masters as Walter Gieseking and Alfred Cortot. The German occupation, they say, made little difference to their careers. They continued to play and minded their own business. Their current New Zealand appearances come at the end of a five-months' tour of the Far East, Indonesia and Australia. After this they will return to France for a short time before undertaking a six-months' tour of Germany, Italy, Egypt and Persia. The consequence of this heavy touring programme is that the couple see little of their Paris home and of their two children. They answer a vehement Gallic *non* to the question of musical careers for the young Lilamands. The life, they consider, is far too difficult.

In addition to the concerto performances, six of the French couple's cham-

ber music recitals are being broadcast. After their tour ends, on May 18, NZBS stations will broadcast four further recitals from the studio.

## Orchestra at Timaru

Following its Christchurch and Dunedin visits, the National Orchestra will give a concert in Timaru, on Thursday, May 20. This will be its first appearance in that city with Warwick Braithwaite as conductor. The programme will consist of Schubert's "Rosamunde" ballet music, Beethoven's Symphony No. 2 in D, Mendelssohn's Concerto in E Minor, and Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture. The soloist in the concerto will be Vincent Aspey, leader of the National Orchestra.

English born, Vincent Aspey was educated in New Zealand and studied music at the Sydney Conservatorium. He was leading violinist in the Australian Broadcasting Orchestra from 1928 to 1932. Returning to New Zealand in 1936 he was appointed leader of IYA's Studio Orchestra, and later leader of the NBS String Orchestra and String Quartet. He was a first violin in the Centennial Orchestra formed in 1940, and became leader of the National Orchestra on its foundation in 1946. Since then he has frequently performed as soloist with the orchestra, his Timaru appearance being the first of two in this season alone. In addition to his orchestral work, Vin-

cent Aspey is heard periodically in studio broadcasts, with his wife at the piano, and in recitals with the Almo String Quartet. The quartet derives its title from the names of its members: Aspey and Lawson, violins; Meier, viola; and Ostova, cello.

The entire Timaru concert will be broadcast by 3XC, the relay beginning at 8.0 p.m.



Spencer High photograph  
**VINCENT ASPEY**

two have won critical acclaim for lively performances. Said one Auckland critic: "... they produced in their music a fire and a degree of temperament that we have expected and not always found in some visitors of greater renown. These two are demonstrative players, uninhibited in their playing actions and unusually warm in emotional feeling." Another referred to the pleasant change from players who stand or sit "like graven images" to a pair of musicians "suited their actions to the music."



Amalgamated Studios photograph  
**BRIGITTE DE BEAUFOND and CHARLES LILAMAND**

## WORLD THEATRE "VOLPONE"

"It is not often that Elizabethan vigour is effectively boxed within the loudspeaker, but *Volpone* has just that amount of vigour, without too great richness, which kept it within the limits of what the loudspeaker can do," wrote the *Times Literary Supplement* when Ben Jonson's great comedy was broadcast as a BBC *World Theatre* production about a year ago. Another critic said there were scenes between the cavorting parasite, Mosca, and his magnificent witty master Volpone, when the sheer vitality of the performance of Jonson's swiftly-moving dialogue compensated for "the visual dodging that makes for pace and suspense on the stage."

*Volpone*, which is now to be heard in the *World Theatre* version from National stations of the NZBS, depicts a situation familiar in Greek and Roman satire—the professional legacy-hunter paying homage to a childless rich man in the hope of securing his estate. Though Jonson's other great comedies depicted types of the London of his day, he set *Volpone* in Venice, because the leading characters were to be rogues, and Renaissance Italy had a bad reputation with the Elizabethans. The

names of the principal characters indicate the parts they play. Among these are Volpone (the fox), Mosca (the fly), Voltore (the vulture), Corbaccio (the crow) and Corvino (the raven).

Volpone, a rich Venetian without children, is in the full vigour of life, but pretends to be a hopeless and decrepit invalid so as to attract gifts from those who would like a share of his fortune. His accomplice, Mosca—described by Jonson as a parasite—shows great skill in persuading each of the legacy-hunters that he is to be heir, and they shower costly presents upon Volpone. One of them is even willing to sacrifice his wife's honour. But like many a schemer, Volpone goes too far. Wishing to see the discomfiture of those who are awaiting his death, he makes out a will in favour Mosca and pretends to be dead. At this Mosca pounces on the estate. In the outcome both Volpone and Mosca are severely punished.

"Volpone is an artist and a virtuoso as well as a wealth-hunter and a voluptuary," said Percy Simpson (joint editor of the Oxford edition of Jonson's works) in a *Radio Times* introduction to the BBC broadcast of the play. "He delights less in the possession of his

wealth than in the cunning with which he acquires it. The finest poetry in the play is given to him. It opens with his morning hymn to gold, 'the world's soul and mine,' 'the dumb god' that gives all men tongues. And when Celia, the merchant's wife, is placed in his power by her husband, he throws off the mask, leaps from his couch, and makes his impassioned appeal to her in a sustained flight of magnificent poetry."

*Volpone* was first performed in 1606, and when it was printed the next year John Donne contributed a copy of commendatory verses to it. In these he eulogised Jonson as an innovator in drama—a tribute he paid to no other playwright.

Percy Simpson, who describes Ben Jonson as "the Elizabethan dramatist next in importance to Shakespeare," says it is difficult to give in a few lines any idea of the richness and variety of his art. Few men of his day ranged over a wider field. He was not only playwright, but also masque-writer, satirist, poet, scholar and critic. He was even, for a short time, a soldier.

*Volpone* was adapted for broadcasting by Arthur Young and Derek Blomfield, and produced by Peter Watts, with Michael Hordern as Volpone and Alan



Turnbull Library Archives  
**BEN JONSON**

Wheatley as Mosca. It was produced in two parts. The first of these will be heard from 1YC at 10.0 p.m. on Monday, May 17, and the second at the same time the following Thursday (May 20). Later it will be broadcast from other stations.