TAST month a packed audience in the Festival Hall of Helheard the Sibelius Violin Concerto played by the great but seldomheard Russian virtuoso, David Oistrakh, whose fame has long travelled abroad from Russia until it has assumed almost legendary proportions. The occa-sion which had brought Oistrakh to Helsinki was the Sibelius Festival, which lasted from June 11 to June 18. Tape recordings made at the Festival were flown out to this country for use by the NZBS, and three of the most important concerts will be broadcast in link of the YC stations on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of next week.

The first broadcast, at 9.0 p.m. on Monday, August 2, includes Oistrakh playing the Violin Concerto, and a rendering of Sibelius's Fourth Symphony by the Finnish Radio Orchestra conducted by Nils-Eric Fougstedt, At 8.55 p.m. on Wednesday, August 4, listeners will be able to hear Sibelius's string



SIR THOMAS BEECHAM

quartet, Voces Intimae, played by Erik Karma (viola) and Artto Granroth

Another honoured guest at the Festival was Sir Thomas Beecham, who on one night conducted Sibelius's Sixth and Seventh Symphonies, as well as other works, and was later photographed with the craggy 88-year-old composer in his Helsinki home. The Beecham concert will be broadcast at 8.15 p.m. on Friday, August 6. It begins with the Sixth Symphony and ends with the Seventh. In between are sandwiched the symphonic poem Tapiola, and the incidental music for Shakespeare's The Tempest. The latter work is in 14 parts: The Oak Tree, Humoresque, Caliban's Song, Canon, Scene. Intrada-Berceuse, Chorus of Winds, Intermezzo, Dance of the Nymphs, Prospero, Song (II), Miranda, The Naiads, and The Storm. The performances are by the Helsinki City Symphony Orchestra.

Red Star

The star of this summer festival is undoubtedly David Oistrakh, for although he has only rarely been heard outside the Iron Curtain countries, he

SALUTE TO SIBELIUS

- Helsinki Festival Recordings

sinki University, Finland, is considered by some critics to be the world's greatest violinist, Even America, where he has been heard only on tape recordings, he is rated the equal of Heifetz, Menuhin, Szigeti and other contemporary giants. He inherited his musical talent from his mother, a professional singer, and his father, a gifted amateur player who started him off on the violin at the age of five. At the Odessa Conservatorium he studied under Piotr Stolyarsky, a famous Ukrainian teacher, and in 1928 be moved to Moscow. After a successful concert tour he continued to build his reputation in Russia and made brief appearances in France, Holland, Sweden and Belgium. In 1937 he won first prize in the Concours Eugene Ysaye, Belgium's international violin competition, and later he was awarded a first-class Stalin Prize, Now, between concerts, he teaches at the Moscow Conservatory.

To those who have not heard Oistrakh on the few recordings of



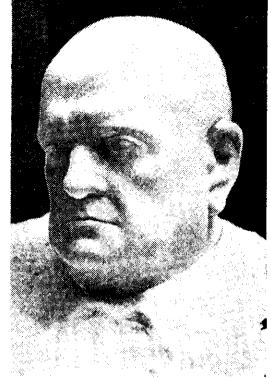
DAVID OISTRAKH

him that are available, his playing of the Sibelius Concerto should come as something of a revelation. He was described after a concert in Florence three years ago as a tremendous violinist with a tone of exceptional power, "His left hand," the reviewer said, "has the agility of a rope-dancer." Others who have heard him acclaim his amazing and effortless technique and his perfect mastery of his material. He has done much to stimulate contemporary Russian composers to write for the violin, and the concertos of Khachaturian, Miaskowsky and Rakov are dedicated to him. Prokofieff dedicated his first violin sonata to him.

More can be expected to be heard also of Oistrakh's be heard also of the search also of the search search as Violin Seathoven's Violin played Beethoven's Violin Concerto with the London Philharmonic Orchestra last Christmas, and whose fame is rapidly approaching that

of his father. London's music critics were enthusiastic about Igor, and Cecil Smith, writing in the Daily Express, said: "Not since the piano playing of the 23-year-old Horowitz burst on Western ears 25 years ago has Russia given us so staggeringly gifted a young musician."

It has not always been praise, however, for these two famous violinists. A performance by David Oistrakh of César Franck's Sonata in A, which was broadcast recently in the BBC's Third Programme (from a recording) was greeted sceptically by the BBC's Listener critic Dyneley Hussey. Oistrakh played the sonata, he said, "as if it were a virtuoso piece by Paganini, often reducing the melodies to



JEAN SIBELIUS -- From a bust by Aaltonen

mere passage-work by omitting the necessary inflections and accents which would give them proper shape." He added that "the violinist has been brought up in isolation from the central musical traditions of Europe, and has probably been taught to despise them. He was interpreting Franck by the light of his own unaided intelligence, and it is natural that a musical idiom, which must indeed be strange to a modern Russian, should not have yielded its meaning to him." He added, however, that Oistrakh's strength and richness of tone were certainly striking, and that he was obviously possessed of a technical mastery of his instrument. All in all, his performance of the Sibelius concerto on Monday night should be most interesting to hear.

N.Z. Variety for BBC

AST year around Coronation time the BBC planned a series of light programmes called Commonwealth Variety, which was to include performances by top variety artists from every part of the Commonwealth. The programmes didn't go on the air as planned, but now the idea has been revived and the NZBS recently airmailed to London tape recordings of some of New Zealand's popular radio entertainers for inclusion in the series. Those selected were chosen as typical of what this country has to offer in the field. and different from what listeners in Britain would normally get from their own cabaret and other performers.

Commonwealth Variety will be broadcast in the BBC's Light Programme, and repeated in the General Overseas Service. New Zealand's contributions will not be used to make up an individual programme, but will be studded throughout the series among those from (continued on next page)



THE DUPLICATS, (from left) Esme Stephens, Dale Alderton, Ena Allen and (seated) John Thomson. AT RIGHT (next page), Johnny Granger