

Gaiety is the Keynote of the Proms.

THE young Mr. Henry Wood did not know what he started that Saturday night in August, 1895, when he conducted his first promenade concert. He was an enthusiastic 26, and that night at the Queen's Hall he was conducting London's only regular orchestra.

He needed to be an enthusiast, and one suspects that at times he had to be a little less than musical while Mr. Iver McKay sang "Dear Heart." Mrs. van der Veern-Green warbled "Loch Lomond," and Mr. W. A. Peterkin rollicked out "A Soldier's Song."

Whatever might be said by our grandparents, remembering cosy musical evenings among the antimacassars, late Victorian England was not noted for its musical taste. That first promenade audience apparently enjoyed:

O leave me not, dear heart!
I did not dream that we should part,
I love but thee. O love thou me,
And leave me not, dear heart.

Before Kipling introduced a little realism and the South African War de-

J. W. GOODWIN describes how the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts began 60 years ago, and how their Diamond Jubilee is being celebrated this season.

ated the national jingoism, they revelled in:

On the bayonets bright, in the thick of the fight,
We gallop to victory,
And when the fighting is o'er, we think of our darling's face once more.
And pour out a flagon of wine.
Glorv or death's our watchword on the field,
Fiercest foes and countless n'er shall make us yield.
No wonder that we're victors in every fight,
When for home and beauty we offer our life.

It's easy to feel superior, but they liked it, and it's just as well, because they asked for more. Concerts, "promenade or balcony one shilling," became a regular summer attraction, still with Henry Wood conducting.

Those Sea Shanties

If he did not know what he was starting in 1895, he certainly could not foresee the outcome of his musical frolic when he composed his *Fantasia of Sea Shanties* 10 years later.

"The young promenaders enjoyed every minute of it," said Sir Henry Wood in later years. "They stamped their feet and sang as I whipped up the orchestra to a fierce accelerando, leaving them far behind. It was good fun and I enjoyed it as much as they."

It has been good fun at the final concert every year since, such riotous good fun that it was omitted last year because the BBC's director of musical programmes felt that the promenaders' performance was becoming a nuisance to the Albert Hall audience and to radio listeners.

This musical Canute succeeded in keeping the sea shanties off the air, but that was all. That night the bright lights dimmed under the great glass dome, the "mikes" were switched off, the TV cameras trundled away, some of the thousands in the wide sweep of galleries began edging towards the stairs, but the promenaders, the gaily-garbed students jammed into the arena, stood waiting.

With a shrug and a knowing wink, Sir Malcolm Sargent turned back to a grinning BBC Symphony Orchestra, and the drums and the waves rolled.

The victorious promenaders clapped and stamped and shouted with glee, punched balloons to the arching roof, hurled coloured streamers at the sacred podium, and added their own orchestration with rattles, squeakers and whistles.

All-night Queue

Many of those who went wild with appreciation had attended every one of the 46 concerts they could get into. On

Friday they had started queueing for the last Beethoven night, and after the concert had gone straight back to the queue to stand and drowse and sprawl and chatter for 19 hours until the doors opened for the final night. More than 2000 were turned away.

Collectors soon had hats heavy with pennies for bouquets, one for Malcolm and another for Basil—conductors and artists are known by their Christian names—100 red and white carnations for the orchestra, and £20 to spare for the Musicians' Benevolent Fund.

It will be much the same this year. Weeks before the two months of concerts began, all tickets for the galleries on the first and last nights had been allocated by ballot, but for the aptly-named arena there will be queues every night.

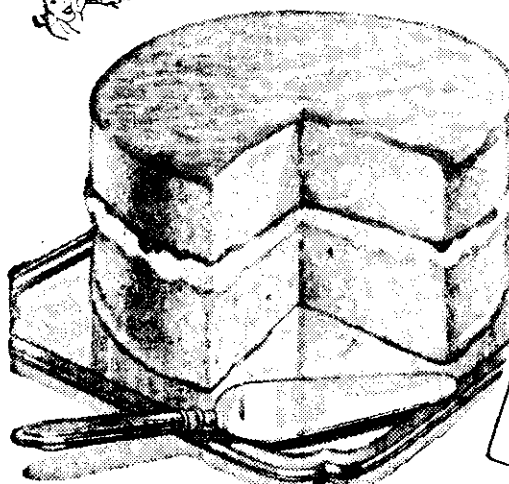
Comfortably the arena can hold 600, but for the great occasions 1000 pack into its suffocating discomfort. The ambulance men tiptoe pianissimo to the rescue of those who are overcome.

Diamond Jubilee

Dismiss them as bobby-soxers if you must—and it's true that the crowd looks much the same at the Wembley speedway—but they are not there to hear "Dear Heart." For this diamond jubilee season, five orchestras will play the works of every one of the great composers, 32 works will be played for the first time at the Proms, eight of them for the first time in public.

John Ireland's 75th birthday on August 13 will be celebrated and prom-

FIELDER'S Famous SPONGE RECIPE!



3 eggs
1 cup Fielder's Corn-
flour
1 teaspoon baking
powder
4 oz. sugar
1 dessertspoon of plain
flour
Beat egg white to stiff
foam and add yolks.
Add sugar gradually
and beat till stiff and
sugar has dissolved.
Add sifted cornflour,
flour, and baking pow-
der. Bake in 8-inch
sandwich tins in mod-
erately hot oven 350°
F. gas, 425° F. electric
for 15 minutes.



13.N.33

Once the family taste this wonderful sponge there'll be cries of "More!" For this is the sponge recipe that swept Australia . . . that is now being acclaimed by women throughout New Zealand. The recipe doesn't seem unusual . . . but its "magic" is in one ingredient . . . Fielder's-Cornflour. Fielder's is made from pure WHEAT, not maize . . . that means greater fineness, pure whiteness, "neutral" taste with no foreign flavours and greatly improved baking.

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N.Z. LISTENER, AUGUST 27, 1954.