

Music for Middlebrows

"SOMETHING old, something new, something borrowed, something blue," is Alex Lindsay's programme formula for a series of six broadcasts to be given shortly on the YA link by the Alex Lindsay String Orchestra. These are to be, quite unashamedly, music for middlebrows; by which is meant all those who wish to relax with music now and again.



ALEX LINDSAY

N.P.S. photograph

The Alex Lindsay String Orchestra has become known to listeners for its regular broadcasts of the best music in the string orchestra repertoire. In addition to many works by the older composers, the orchestra has introduced an enterprising list of contemporary compositions, including quite a few performances of music by New Zealanders. But all this is only one aspect of the scope of the orchestra's activities. It has been Mr. Lindsay's aim from the foundation of his orchestra to make it as widely as possible a vigorously useful part of Wellington's musical life.

In addition to its Town Hall Subscription Concerts, there are the Promenades at the National Art Gallery, where the orchestra reaches a different audience and where it is possible to achieve a more sociable atmosphere, and an open-air concert in the sound shell at the Botanical Gardens to the largest audience of all. The orchestra has played, too, at schools and assisted at school festivals and stage performances. Its members have been associated with the Wellington Amateur Operatic Society, and were the nucleus of the recent season of ballet launched by the Australasian Society of Operatic Dancing. The orchestra has worked with the Schola Cantorum and it recorded David Farquhar's music for the New Zealand Players' production of *Ring Round the Moon*.

The new series of broadcasts by the Alex Lindsay String Orchestra is another step towards making itself useful in whatever direction music is needed. The radio can and does fulfil a far wider musical function than the concert hall. Apart from providing music for all tastes, it can become, too, whatever the purist may think about it, a pleasurable background to other things—knitting, whittling, ironing, making the jam, or even, on occasion, talking. The appeal of the new Lindsay Orchestra broadcasts will be wider than of those it has been presenting in the last few months; but the music will be as carefully chosen, and the playing will be of the Orchestra's usual high standard, which means, of course, that you probably won't want to talk through it.

"Greensleeves" will be the theme and, says Mr. Lindsay, the programmes will all be "music that people know—or would like to remember," with, generally speaking, a folk-tune atmosphere. But the orchestra will not be above including an occasional jazz number. Hence the "blue" in the programme

formula. All the music will have been arranged for strings with, now and again, the addition of piano. Arrangements by Terence Vaughan and Thomas Gray will be among those drawn upon.

The title of the session will be *Music for Awhile*, and something of the shape of things can be gathered from the first programme to be presented. This will include such well-known pieces as Percy Grainger's "Mock Morris," Brahms's Waltz in A Flat, MacDowell's "To a Wild Rose" and "Uncle Remus," with a bunch of folksong arrangements, "My Love's an Arbutus" and "Sligo Dance Tune," arranged by Eric Thiman, and Vaughan Williams's arrangement of "Let Him Go, Let Him Tarry." Each programme will include, too, what is sometimes called "a bracket of vocals." Singer for the first programme will be Donald Munro, who has chosen two old favourites for his contribution, "Yeomen of England" and "Passing By."

As, Mr. Lindsay points out, familiar music only becomes "hackneyed" when it receives a hackneyed, jaded performance. The Alex Lindsay String Orchestra is looking forward to its new-style broadcasts with enthusiasm. *Music for Awhile* will introduce "something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue"; but whatever it is, the music will be presented with a new look. The first programme will be heard (from all YA stations) at 7.30 p.m. on November 20.

"I'm a Stranger Here Myself"

"IF you're over in Britain this year and don't know your way around very well, you will soon discover that one of the many odd characteristics of life in Britain is that the person you go up to to ask for directions is invariably terribly sorry, but he's a stranger in these parts himself. The number of people who happen to be strangers in these parts themselves is quite astronomical, and probably accounts for the fact that you never see the British speaking to each other in trains."—Alan Melville, talking on "Strangers in These Parts," in the BBC's North American Service.

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