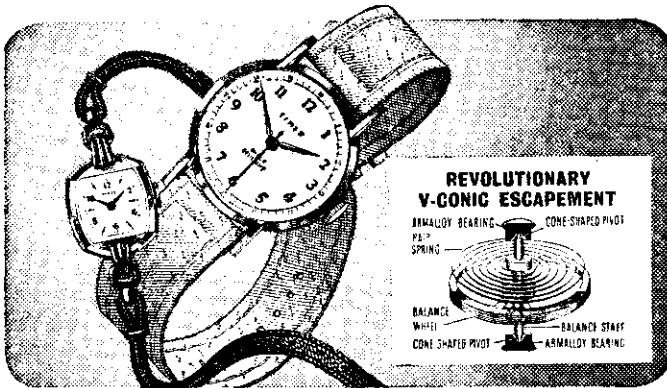


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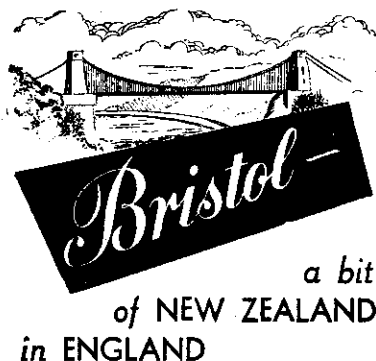
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Birthday of Schola Cantorum

WHEN the Schola Cantorum enters its 20th season on March 9 it will mark the occasion with a Wellington Town Hall recital of works "chosen from the things we've enjoyed most or have got most satisfaction from" in the past 19 years. That's how the choir's conductor, Stanley Oliver, put it when *The Listener* asked him to say a word about the occasion. Notable among these works are *Flos Campi*, by Vaughan Williams, a work without words and one of the most difficult things ever attempted by the choir, which they first performed in the Wellington Town Hall Concert Chamber in August, 1937. Mr. Oliver has a rather special interest in *Flos Campi*, as he was conductor of the Montreal Choir which gave the first performance of this work in America, in 1930. Another work to be heard in the anniversary recital is Holst's *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, which was performed twice in the first public recital by the choir in October, 1936—because, as the programme said, it was felt that it was written in an unusual and unfamiliar idiom.

Both these works are on the first half of the anniversary programme, which will be broadcast from YC stations at 8.0 p.m. on Wednesday, March 9. On the second half, to be recorded and broadcast later, are three choruses from the *Bach Mass in B Minor*, for which the choir is hiring from Australia three trumpets in D. Mr. Oliver said these are specially made for the playing of Bach because parts of his works are too high for the modern orchestral trumpet. The orchestra for the anniversary recital will consist of players from the National Orchestra.

Mr. Oliver recalled that the performance of a work by Bach several years ago had begun the choir's departure from its original policy of concentration on modern works. "The emphasis," he said, "has always been on modern or less heard older works. The perform-



Spencer Digby photograph

STANLEY OLIVER
The BBC asked for more

ance of older works gave our programmes something of an historical interest." To illustrate this point, he said that the anniversary programme would open with a short unaccompanied English work from the 16th Century because in its polyphony it had the germ of the more extreme polytonality of the Vaughan Williams work—*Flos Campi*—which come immediately after it.

When it was suggested that the Schola Cantorum gave too few recitals, Mr. Oliver said they had to choose between giving more performances and maintaining their standards. Speaking of the type of programme given by the choir, he said they had never made concessions to popular taste yet they had managed to increase their audience from 300 to a point where they were disappointed with fewer than 1200. The choir had also become increasingly well known overseas. Both the ABC and the BBC had asked for more recorded programmes, and the recital recently given at St. James' Church, Lower Hutt, had been recorded in Australia on an LP disc.

SMALL CONTINENTS; BREAKER BAY

TO me they were as continents, these greywacke rocks,
Rooted and firm in the dizzying swing of the universe.
Firm after the swift flight over shingle, over tins, over bottles
(Light-splitting glint on their cruel edges) firm against sea-spray,
And the loud tides lashing and sucking the narrow channels.
But when I had watched a little, sitting upon their vigorous
And upturned coping, I knew they were not grand, nor spreading,
Not continents, not even islands, only a small and delightful
Perch where the wind blew, and the sun shone, and I could be happy.

Because I remembered that there was a painter who knew these rocks,
Intimately and with affection, spreading upon the quiet canvas
Colour and line and robust enjoyment, painting the essence of happiness
As well as the essence of rocks. He also, I thought, has paused
Watching beside their small summits, absorbing a little
Of their tranquil and innocent strength.

So shall I gather

Out of his understanding a small content, untroubled hour—
Not giving, not doing, not attending or working to routine,
Only beholding, with satisfactory astonishment, that this portion
Of rock, and sea, and sun, and high wind blowing, is as I thought
In my dreams that it might be, but till now had not been certain.

—Ishbel Veitch

N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 4, 1955.