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PHILIPS FOR MUSICAL EQUIPMENT

Auckland Notebook

YOUTH SERVED HERE

THE National Orchestra's Youth Concert in Auckland, seemed, by the press pictures, to have succeeded in attracting numbers of youth, some in couples and some in segregated blocks. May have been an odd family party there, too.

A jazz interlude was announced about the middle of the evening. The audience liked it—loved it clamorously. The critics were pretty indulgent—it was a contribution to entertainment rather than culture, youth likes jazz and youth must be served—that sort of line. The orchestra members who played seemed to enjoy it, and I was only briefly uneasy. Of course it wasn't jazz. I hadn't expected it to be. It was fun, and jazz is fun, too, but jazz is not something you can pick up for a ten-minute interlude and then lay aside. Jazz is very single-minded. You could say I'm quibbling with words, and I admit that the word jazz is often used loosely, but it's the only word I know to describe the sort of music I can't describe. So let's leave it there and say something about what was actually played in this interlude at the Youth Concert. It was the number that made me uneasy: "Stardust," trumpet with string backing. The players achieved their effect precisely. The trumpet had a huge, golden tone, as lush as a Rubens Venus. The string tone derived from Stokowski at his most florid, down through Kostelanetz and David Rose. Rich, beautiful music, expertly played. There's a big market for it in the U.S. It's called mood music, and piped into restaurants at so much an hour, where it blends with candlelight, warm glances and sweet, sticky desserts. The National Orchestra group had it off so slick I was scared.

However, they changed their attack and lined up four or five reeds while the strings retired in favour of brass. This group chugged through Blue Moon and Blue Skies. No commercial value there, thank heaven. I relaxed and was glad they were having fun.

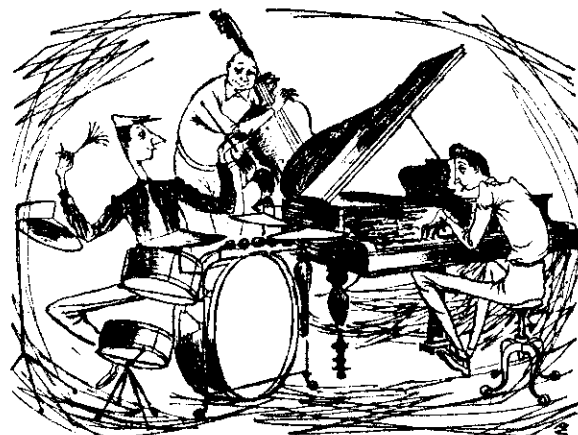
Warm Tonic

THE afternoon Canterbury played the Springboks I stole quietly into 1YA to see if they had a landline on the job. It was a fearful wet day in the north and technical hitches were recurrent. While the technicians listened for signs of life, I heard a familiar noise myself and tracked it to the open door of the control room of one of the large studios. It sounded very like jazz: piano, bass and drums, just three souls keeping out the rain with a little warm tonic sol-fa. There's not much to say, really. They were having a fine time, a shirt-sleeves or sweater session which would go on the air sometime, but as they made the recording they were playing for themselves. The drummer, a lean, easy, disjointed practitioner in a red jacket-shirt and a cloth cap, pushed things along solidly, nodding encouragement to the pianist and bassist. The bassist grinned a chubby grin, and the pianist

appeared slightly tranced, waking at intervals to return the drummer's nods. It wasn't perfection; a bit rushed sometimes, a few clinkers from the members present; but there they were, celebrating something that came amongst them when they sat down and played. You can't ask for more than that to keep the blood free from water on a fearfully wet afternoon.

Strong Poison

IF there's anything that truly disgusts the New Zealand housewife (a fairly stable type) it's sour milk. The stuff's much rarer now because city authorities supply pasteurised milk, which doesn't sour but putrefies quietly in its own graveyard. Foreigners, such as Scots, Bulgars and South Germans, who have been swilling sour milk throughout history (the English used to, too, but got all delicate about the time they were draping the limbs of the drawing room piano with fringes)—these foreigners and oddments like myself who have been infected with foreign customs, find themselves far from a cow in Auckland city. In Christchurch, in some of the more remote suburbs, it is still possible to get raw milk from a milkman. All you do then is put it in a warm place for a couple of days and it goes sour as anything—fit for the biggest Bulgar. In Auckland, however, no milkman may carry raw milk and pasteurised milk on the same truck, even in sealed bottles. In addition a milkman needs a different licence to sell raw milk. So they don't carry it. When I settled in Auckland I rang several authorities asking where I could get raw milk, and they were extremely good-natured, hiding their natural feelings and doing their best to help me in my search for this strong poison. But when they looked up the book of rules they could find no way to sell me their product before it got caught up with the machinery. "You'll have to get it from a farmer," they said. That turned out to mean a man with his own cows outside the city area. I haven't found one yet (they don't seem to advertise), but meantime a nice German lady has supplied a powerful culture, already working, which will do the trick with pasteurised milk, for a while, at least. Any Bulgars wanting to share this poison, look me up. I'll be sitting on the steppe with a bowl and a big spoon. —G. leF. Y.



"Three souls keeping out the rain with a little warm tonic sol-fa"