

ONE would expect to hear a great deal of noise going on in a composers' workshop with clashing discords, myriads of wrong entries and a harassed conductor having to stop the players every few minutes to adjust the parts. In fact, however, the annual Composers' Workshop recently held in Wellington went very smoothly. Four composers attended, and a small audience was present to hear the new works. The orchestra was in excellent form and gave the works their closest attention and unsparing efforts. At the beginning of the morning James Robertson had warned the audience not to expect polished performances as both orchestra and conductor were sightreading from manuscript. "We don't expect to get all the notes and all the rhythms right," he said, but only once when they were faced with a difficult 7/8 cross rhythm did the orchestra falter and threaten to collapse. During the morning there were various conductors—James Robertson, the composers, and, for one work, Alex Lindsay.



★ COMPOSERS with James Robertson at the opening of the second "Workshop" session: From left, Thomas Gray, David Sell, James Robertson, Thomas Rive and Nigel Eastgate

Orchestration is a fascinating but difficult art, and even the greatest composers find it has its stumbling blocks. The celebrated English composer Vaughan Williams says that in his early days he sometimes used to sit for a couple of hours wondering what on earth to do with the second clarinets. At this workshop composers could discuss their scores with the conductor and smooth out technical difficulties with the players. The composers were quite subdued throughout the morning, and bore their ordeal with stoicism. All round, it

proved itself to be an encouraging and worthwhile event.

The works played were *Overture for a Festive Occasion*, by Thomas Gray (Wellington), *Suite for Orchestra*, by Thomas Rive (Auckland), *Prelude and Scherzino*, by Nigel Eastgate (Dunedin), *Concert Rhumba for Strings*, by David Sell (Lower Hutt), and *Lyric Rhapsody for Viola and Orchestra*, by Roy Spackman (Dunedin)—who was unable to be present—with Eric Lawson as solo violinist



WORKSHOP UNDER WAY

Eric Lawson takes the solo part in Spackman's *Lyric Rhapsody*



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ON-THE-SPOT REPAIRS

David Sell (Lower Hutt), who is director of music at Petone Technical College, corrects the score of his "*Concert Rhumba for Strings*" for the cellist Farquhar Wilkinson