

SPANISH GRACE AND FIRE

VICTORIA DE LOS ANGELES'S audiences are likely to encounter and be captivated by a blend of two complementary singing personalities. There is the international artist, received internationally in any concert hall or opera house, where the language of Western music is understood. Her art is outside national considerations. But there is also Victoria de los Angeles, citizen of Barcelona; a Spaniard bringing Spain's particular contribution to international music. Spain is a stronghold of individuals who feel their Spanishness (each Spaniard his own Spanishness) more deeply and passionately than the nationals of other countries. If you are born a Spaniard these qualities are with you all your life—in Madrid, Barcelona, Pamplona; Buenos Aires, Santiago or Mexico City—and you cannot die with anything else.

Victoria de los Angeles, an international soprano of the first order, reaches out to her audiences with the emotional power of Spain. That was obvious at her press conference in Auckland, held the morning after she arrived in New Zealand. She talked easily about international music—she has no favourites, any good music is equally good—but the colour and inflection of her speaking voice, her politeness and respect for the feelings of others, were the surface graces of a Spaniard. Through these surface graces the deeper power showed itself steadily; the reserve force only great artists have. One feels they can, if necessary, shiver solid matter. And because this power is communicated, the act itself stands accomplished in the minds of the audience. Only Caruso, a bit of an ex-

hibitionist, had to labour the obvious by breaking tumblers with his voice. His power may have been Italian in origin, that of Victoria de los Angeles is certainly Spanish.

She was asked a question about the Spanish folk songs she sings, with her own guitar accompaniment. Did she have any particular favourites? Which would she be singing at her first Auckland concert? She said no, she had no particular favourites, and she would rather not talk about which she would sing. It should remain, perhaps, a mystery.

"Madame does not herself know," added her husband, Enrique Magrina, "she does not always use guitar accompaniment for the same songs. It is a matter of feeling."

That is a good deal more than mere whim. Only the artist knows when she can communicate from the deepest centres of her being. And the deepest centres of Victoria de los Angeles are Spanish.

She was obviously happy to respond to a question in very bad Spanish about the bird ornaments on her red cloche hat. They were *jilguero*; she did not know the English. Neither did the questioner nor her husband, who spelt the word slowly, but it was agreed they were very like sparrows.

Yes, she had sung all over South America. Buenos Aires she liked best,



VICTORIA DE LOS ANGELES rehearsing at IYA with her accompanist, Maurice Till

still, in spite of losing fifteen days there last year, while Peron was being removed. "We could not get out," she said. "I did not arrive in Mexico City until one day before I had to sing *Manon* there. Mexico City is a very beautiful and cultured city, but it is so elevated, more than 2000 metres, and I must move all over the stage for singing *Manon*. Oh!" She put her hand to her breast, turned her eyes up, and panted. "... I should die. . ."

One more question about the indefinable Spanish artistic spirit, the dance of life with the song, was brought to mind by her reference to stage movement in *Manon*. "I do not know how

to answer it," she said. "It is perhaps as you say. There is, of course, much movement in Spanish folk songs; movements of life, and [with a quick smile] you like them, ha?"

No doubt of that.

"It is a matter of feeling. Sometimes the guitar . . . it is better to say it is a mystery."

She went down the stairs to the IYA recording studios for a short interview with Marina. She had played no prima donna tricks. She has no need. The Spanish fire burns steadily inside the international instrument. She knows this with surety and that is enough to fill any one life. It is a large enough life also to fill concert halls.

(continued from previous page)

Point, McMurdo Sound; and the International Geophysical Year party at Cape Adare (U.S. and N.Z.). Lastly, there is the field radio equipment, including walkie-talkies, "Gibson Girls" and "Sarah" beacons. The last two are both of primary importance for the "homing" of the expedition's aircraft, and for possible emergencies.

The "Gibson Girls" are transmitters that were used extensively during the war by pilots of crashed aircraft. They

generate their own power by means of hand crank and can transmit either an automatic S.O.S. or a signal for aircraft to home on. Their name originated in a succinct American observation on their shape.

The Sarah beacons are a very small light receiver which can be used to talk down an aircraft once it has homed to within a mile or so on the Gibson Girl. Their other important function is to receive time-signals to aid the navigation of sledging parties—especially

survey parties, whose work demands a precision that the standard chronometer may not possess.

The walkie-talkies, a new type that have proved very satisfactory in field trials in the Alps, will be used by parties operating in the area around Scott Base.

The next few weeks will see the assembling of all the expedition equipment in Wellington, in preparation for the loading up of the Endeavour in

November. On the communications side, the long months of planning by the Radio Communications Sub-Committee of the Ross Sea Committee are nearly over, and the last of the testing will soon be done.

Next year, New Zealand's Antarctic station ZLQ will be in operation. To the men of the New Zealand expedition in the South this base station will mean home: to the British team crossing the continent from Vahsel Bay it will mark the ultimate goal.

TWO of the four radio receivers which the New Zealand Antarctic party at Scott Base will use to pick up broadcasts from home

