

ORCHESTRAL CLOSE-UP—1

MALCOLM LATCHEM, who is in the first desk of violins of the National Orchestra, came to New Zealand early this year and joined the Orchestra soon after he arrived. Born in Salisbury, England, in 1931, he began playing the violin when he was still very young and had his first orchestral experience as player, and later as soloist, with the school orchestra. When still at college he started a string quartet and it's with smaller string groups that his main interest lies.

In 1947 Mr. Latchem won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music, London, studied under Albert Sammons, and later with Sacha Lasserson and, in Belgium, with Arthur Grumiaux. His studies interrupted by National Service, he joined the Band of the Life Guards and played in their orchestral group. Sometimes this would be for a State dinner at Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle, or at another time providing incidental music while the Queen and other members of the Royal family played Canasta. Back in college he gained more experience in concerto playing, adding the Bartok, Delius and Mendelssohn concertos to his repertoire. One year he won the Howard prize, the chief prize at the college for violin playing.

When Malcolm Latchem left College in 1953 he free-lanced for a time with some of the numerous string groups and orchestras which started in London after the war. Many of these groups have no conductors—an old custom that is again

becoming established. "This is the way music seems to be going," he told us. After a short tour of some German towns as leader of a student orchestra, he joined the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra for a year, playing with them at Glyndebourne and Edinburgh. This period he describes as being "very hard work."

Malcolm Latchem had not been in this country very long before he set about forming a chamber group, and a few weeks ago his string quartet gave its first series of broadcasts and a successful first public concert. The other members of the quartet are all in the National Orchestra and so far their programmes have been mainly of modern works. When asked what composers he liked best he said that as he was interested in the smaller chamber groups it was naturally music written for these that concerned him. "In the main this happens to be the older music and, at the other end of the scale, contemporary music," he said. Malcolm Latchem will play his first concerto with the Orchestra on Tuesday, October 16 (Y.C.'s, 9.15 p.m.) This will be Prokofiev's seldom-played but very fine second Violin Concerto.



MALCOLM LATCHEM N.P.S. photograph

written in 1935 soon after the composer had returned to Russia.

To meet this young violinist is modest and quiet, and when playing he has an air of complete absorption in the music. His violin, he tells us, is a Pressenda, made by one of the famous Italian violin-makers of the last century.

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LYING on a bed in a Russian prison in Poland, wearing kilts, and playing a tin whistle to a group of astounded guards is only one of the experiences described by Joe Wallace in a series of talks, *European Journey*, which will

be heard in the Women's
TRAVELLER Hour of Commercial
and X stations in the

next few months. Mr. Wallace is a lecturer at the Otago University School of Physical Education, and spent his sabbatical leave last year touring Europe, where he was studying the organisation of physical education and recreation in different countries.

Mr. Wallace was born in Glasgow in 1918 and taught there for some time. During the war he was an infantry officer and his seven years in the army included extensive experience of life in Egypt, Palestine, Persia and Iraq, as well as nine months in a German prisoner of war camp. He taught in Germany for two years, and has been in every other European country west of the Iron Curtain.

Listeners will remember Mr. Wallace's programme *The Reel and Strathspey Club*, which he conducted from 4YA for two years, and his broadcasts on athletics and on books. Founder and editor of a professional journal, he also does some writing occasionally. There are seven talks in *European Journey*, which will start from 2ZA on Monday, October 15, 4ZB on October 29, and 1ZB on November 5. Mr. Wallace tells in amusing and colourful fashion of the people he met and the countryside through which he travelled in Germany, Poland, Spain and France.

N.Z. LISTENER, OCTOBER 12, 1956.



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