

# The Place of the Practising School of Music

AUSTRALIA and New Zealand have a number of similar problems, and one of them is related to the training of the highly-gifted music student. We in Australia have been fortunate in the long establishment of the three Conservatoriums, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. I give them in that order specifically because it was in that order that they were founded. The history of music in Australia would make very different reading if those three practising schools had never been brought into being.

In their own particular way each has been the focal and dynamic centre from which the music of the City and State has developed. There have been gathered together the finest teachers with the most gifted students, each stirred with the glowing ambition of becoming the outstanding soloist. Some players

reach this goal, but the majority become just very good practitioners, and as teachers they are to be found right throughout the country districts, where the standard of music education has been stepped up to a marked degree, and also as members of the six major orchestras of Australia. As a central practising School of Music, the Conservatorium has been able to arrange for the highly gifted student a thoroughly well-balanced course of training which has fitted him to become the well-balanced musician. It takes a number of years for the really brilliant violinist or pianist to be fashioned; and for this reason, as at the Paris Conservatoire, we are prepared to admit the young student, say, 12 years of age, provided there is evidence that there is fine potentiality.



The text of a short talk by PROFESSOR JOHN BISHOP, broadcast recently in "Music Magazine"

Twenty-five years ago, when, after a brief period of residence in New Zealand, I left Wellington to join the staff of the University of Melbourne, I urged that New Zealand's great need in music was a National Practising School. Today I see this need as vividly as before. The quality of New Zealand's music of the future inevitably must stem from

the type and quality of experience that its gifted students can enjoy.

There is nothing new in the idea of a school . . . for since the days of ancient Greece, we have brought together young people of the finest potentiality, that their study together may push the ceiling of their achievements higher, and the depths of their perception and understanding and vision become more profound.

This country has for the music student a fine system of Government bursaries which enable a few of the most gifted to gain valuable experience overseas . . . but fine as it is, it's only the few that can benefit by it. The majority of the students, as in Australia, must be home-trained, and our policy over there, as shown by the three Australian Conservatoriums, is to provide the student with as fine a course of practical training as he would gain in such a city as London. Still the few will travel overseas and build on the experience which they have already gained, but the general level of ability and experience has been raised.

What has been achieved by the New Zealand Broadcasting Service in establishing and maintaining the National Orchestra without the sure knowledge of where new recruits could be gained, is indeed a remarkable achievement. But what of the future? Where is the essential nursery for the future players of the Orchestra? New Zealand will increase its demands for finer and finer playing, standards must go up, and there will always be places to fill.

But to return to my opening theme: Australia's three Conservatoriums have played a lively and rewarding part in the development of Australian music. A similar great practising School of Music would do likewise for New Zealand.

## Fantasy from France

**THE EAGLE HAS TWO HEADS**, by Jean Cocteau, will now be heard in Surf Radio Theatre on Saturday, March 23 (ZBs, ZAs, 1XH), instead of on March 16 as originally planned, and the play for March 16 will be *The Blue Goose*. Jean Cocteau, poet, dramatist, novelist, film director and painter, is an extraordinary and versatile artist, whose work is always profound and challenging. The mood of his works changes from exuberance and sophistication to a poetic awareness of tragedy. Filmgoers may remember his moving *Orphée* and *La Belle et La Bête*. He conceives all art as poetry which finds different media necessary at different times. His play *The Eagle Has Two Heads* is a strange fantasy which some critics have claimed as the most remarkable play from post-war Europe. It is a fairy tale romance of a widowed queen who lives in a dream world. A young poet breaks into her fantastic castle, meaning to assassinate her, but instead he falls hopelessly in love with her. In this production, Brenda Dunrich plays the Queen, and Michael Pate plays Stanislaus, the poet. Other roles are taken by Sheila Sewell, William Eldridge and Sydney Wheeler.

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