

In other parts of New Zealand should have an opportunity of hearing it.

Of the many fine choral works to be presented during the year the most unusual will be Dyson's *The Canterbury Pilgrims*, which Wellington will hear in June with the Phoenix Choir. Dyson, born in 1883, is noted as a fine teacher and composer. James Robertson was a pupil and protege of his, and is very anxious to perform *The Canterbury Pilgrims*, which he considers is a near-masterpiece of English choral music of this century. The work was first performed in 1931 at Winchester, when Dyson was music master at the College. A setting of Chaucer with attractive solo



JAMES ROBERTSON
A big season ahead

songs, and boldly written choral numbers, it is very popular with English choral societies. Besides the Verdi Requiem, with Richard Lewis, Schubert's Mass in G and a repeat performance of Honegger's *King David*, with William Austin as narrator, will be given in Christchurch in August. Donald Munro will be the soloist in Delius's *Sea Drift* in Wellington in November. This setting of poems by Walt Whitman, with its background suggestive of forest, winds and water, is one of Delius's masterpieces.

The orchestra, one of the most continuously travelling if not the most

widely-travelled in the world, begins its provincial touring in March with concerts in Palmerston North, Auckland and Hamilton. In April there will be the first concert in the new Lower Hutt Town Hall, when the acoustics will be thoroughly tested by the final item.—Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" with band and effects. The use of this hall by the National Orchestra will make Wellington audiences the most favoured in the country, for they will now have two cities to choose from. Provincial tours proper continue with visits to Hastings, Napier and Gisborne in April. Last year these concerts were very well attended, and many people were quick to come forward with suggestions about the kind of programme they would like.

These have been considered, and the result is the inclusion of a work such as Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in the programmes for Napier and Gisborne. At Hastings, William Walton's sister, married to a sheepfarmer in the district, will be able to hear her brother's "Scapino Overture." Other towns to be visited are New Plymouth, Wanganui, Palmerston North and Greymouth. Three youth concerts will be held—at Christchurch in August, and at Auckland and Wellington in September. There will be many school concerts and nearly 25 studio concerts.

The year's orchestral concerts will come to an end on Saturday, November 16, in Wellington. This is James Robertson's final concert, and will contain only two items. Vincent Aspey, who, as leader of the orchestra, has been very closely associated with Mr. Robertson during his stay here, will play the Sibelius Violin Concerto, and in the second half of the evening the Beethoven Choral Symphony will be performed. James Robertson hopes that the singers in this work will be drawn from several of the city choirs, so that as many as possible can share in his last concert.

These, then, are the outstanding musical events of the year. In the main centres seats for subscription concerts are being allocated, and with James Robertson's return from Australia on March 19, rehearsals for the first concerts will begin.

The Coming Week

● **Ken Smith Brass Players:** This interesting addition to the smaller ensembles in this country, has been formed by the well-known trumpet player Ken



N.P.S. photograph

KEN SMITH
A new ensemble



Spencer Digby photograph

VIVIEN DIXON
An old master



CLAUDIO ARRAU, who will play the Brahms Piano Concerto No. 1 and the Beethoven No. 5

Smith. Groups of brass players such as this are often formed by the brass section of an orchestra, where they correspond in a way to the wind quintet formed by the woodwind section. In last year's Edinburgh Festival programmes the Boston Brass Ensemble, made up of eight members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, gave several concerts of early music as well as works by Poulenc and modern Americans. The repertoire of the brass ensemble goes back to the 16th century. Today brass groups are popular amongst modern composers, especially in America. Next week's programme by the Ken Smith Players begins with a sonata "La Spiritata," by the 16th century Venetian Gabrieli, and this is followed by arrangements of Schubert and Haydn (4YC, 8.18 p.m., Saturday, March 23).

● **Renata Tebaldi** can be heard next week in a programme of operatic arias by Rossini and Mozart (1YC, 8.35 p.m., Saturday, March 23). Renata Tebaldi is a year younger than her great rival Maria Callas—she was born in 1922—and her great opportunity came when Toscanini invited her to sing at the reopened La Scala in 1946. She continued to sing there each year until the end of the 1954-55 season, when, according to her recent letter in *Time* she relinquished her roles because of "an atmosphere not at all pleasant." She has sung in opera houses all over the world and at the San Carlo, Naples, which in Italy ranks with La Scala, she receives

the traditional prima-donna's welcome of roses and flowers showered down from boxes and galleries. "La Tebaldi" has become a legend, and some of the qualities that make up the legend are the elegance, purity and style of her singing.

● **Tartini Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord:** Vivien Dixon and Gwyneth Brown are at present playing six of the many Tartini sonatas for violin and keyboard.

"This is the first time we've played them with the harpsichord, and it's very much more effective," said Vivien Dixon, who has a special interest in Tartini—Tartini is another composer who is gradually being re-discovered and re-assessed. "These six sonatas are the six I thought the most attractive. They're not well known simply because they haven't been reprinted since about 1905." At the harpsichord, Gwyneth Brown, although playing from a given bass in the Malpiero edition, is able to use her extensive knowledge of the period to fill out the given harmonies (2YC, 9.14 p.m., Tuesday, March 19).

● **Works by Chausson (1855-1899):** Chausson is another minor French composer whose works are being heard more often today. Described as "a somewhat timid man who shunned noisy expansiveness and delighted in intimate friendships," his music is serious, charming and sensitive. Chausson died at the early age of 44 as the result of a bicycle accident (2YC, 10.15 p.m., Saturday, March 23).