

Police tried it over at one rehearsal. They were interrupted by a Salvation Army Officer:

"We're having a Holiness Meeting next door. If you don't stop that terrible noise we'll call the police."

"The police? We are the ruddy police! Come to think of it, boys, it is a bit of a row. Well, come down from Mars, lads, get out 'Let the People Sing.'"

When the composer of the row left the R.A.F. he gave the work to the Irish Guards Band, whose bassoons objected that they couldn't hold one note for a minute and a half, overlooking the fact that the score tells them they can breathe whenever they like, provided they do it at the end of a bar. The BBC now has the work which it hopes to do when it has a military band. The trials of a composer! But still, when Anthony Elton was released from military service he celebrated by a walking tour in the Ardennes, from which came a string quartet which is to be played at a Wellington concert--by the Rosner Quartet--a work whose happiness reflects the circumstances of its origin.

Back in London working under Lennox Berkeley the gloom of a city in which he had no money and no prospects crystallised in a short symphonic suite for orchestra whose musical directions tell its character--appassionato, melancolico, furioso, patetico. Occasionally, though, a happy interlude produced something a little lighter, like the little work for small orchestra called "Gorgeous Food." (Presumably with no repeats.)

Anthony Elton thinks his best work so far is in the Symphonic Suite and in two serenades for orchestra--the first being four sound portraits of women, three real and one imaginary, and the other a number of impressionistic sketches, of which the fourth has a very peculiar origin.

"I'm very fond of cats," he says, "and at Curacao I brought on to the ship a hungry cat from the wharf--in complete ignorance of peculiar regulations about quarantine and so on, and took it down to the cookhouse. When I came up on deck a little while later I found a furious row going on between the ship's captain and a Curacan policeman. One was refusing the poor animal on the grounds that it came from the ship, and the other because it came from Curacao. I discreetly faded away, but I heard later that they had compromised by drowning the cat, which made me feel awful. That night the moonlight on the sea glistened like the eyes of the poor cat, and the fourth movement of the serenade was born in my mind."

What now? He is working at odd jobs to keep himself, one of which included wrapping up the albums of Elvis Presley! He is also living in Wellington writing music furiously: two sets of songs, some of which will be sung by Robin Gordon and Peter Nisbet in the half-hour broadcast which will also include the two-clarinet sonata. A concert of his works, given in the Lecture Hall of the Wellington Public Library on May 10, included the string quartet and the *Variations on a Pastoral Air* for flute and string trio, played by James Hopkinson and the Rosner Trio.

And all the time, he is keeping firmly in mind his mission in life: "After all, I'm a composer."

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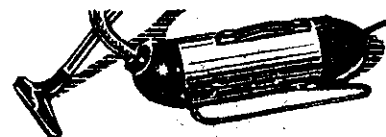
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