



★ AMONG the singers and instrumentalists who will take part in the St. Matthew Passion next week are (above, left to right) Andrew Gold (tenor), Peter Evans (baritone), Gabrielle Phillips (soprano), Mona Ross (mezzo-soprano), Robin Gordon (tenor), Donald McIntyre (bass), Trevor Sparling (organist), and Gwen Ralph (leader of the Auckland String Players). Ray Wilson (right) will be the conductor. ★

MUSIC OF THE WEEK

St Matthew Passion at Auckland

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH in his prolific career as church organist set the Passion story no less than five times, but the two best-known settings today are the *St. Matthew* and the *St. John*. On Saturday, July 6, the Auckland Choral Society and the Auckland String Players under the baton of Ray Wilson, will perform the *St. Matthew Passion*, and this performance will be broadcast by 1YC. The principal soloists will be Andrew Gold (tenor) as the Evangelist, Peter Evans (baritone) as Christ, and Gabrielle Phillips (soprano), Mona Ross (mezzo-soprano), Robin Gordon (tenor), and Donald McIntyre (bass). The ripieno part for children's voices will be sung by a hundred girls from the Auckland Girls' Grammar School, and the Auckland Presbyterian Broadcast Choir will join in the chorales to give the effect of the audience joining in, as Bach intended.

The Auckland String Players (leader Gwen Ralph) have been augmented for the occasion, and Auckland University College have provided the harpsichord which Hannah Stratford will play. The organist is Trevor Sparling.

The text, taken from the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapters 26-27, has been elaborated by Bach in a series of arias, recitatives, chorales and orchestral interludes. The work opens with a double chorus foreshadowing the events on Calvary, and ends again with the chorus in an elegy after the sealing of the tomb. In comparison with the *St. John*, this is a very personal oratorio, and Bach has used every opportunity for meditation and comment.

APRA-NZBS Prize-winners

Next week the winning compositions in the recent APRA-NZBS Composers' Competition will receive their first

broadcast. Mary Pratt and Maurice Till will present *The Sea Child*, by Dorothy Freed, on Saturday, July 6, from the YAs, 3YZ and 4YZ, and Frederick Page will play David Farquhar's *Variations for the Piano* on Sunday, July 7, from the YCs. Variation was the title first given to this work, but when *The Listener* spoke to David Farquhar he was having second thoughts.

"You see," he explained, "I finished it at 2.30 a.m. on the morning of the last day, and so I gave it the first name that occurred to me. The work itself is a cross between a set of variations and a short suite. There are four movements, Aria, Impromptu, Capriccio, and Epilogue; all, in a sense variation on the aria, but in another sense forming a continuous short suite. So the title Partita for the Piano suits it better, for Partita has been used of both forms. For all the hurry, I like competitions. They give me a deadline and a stimulus."

Both works will be heard a second time from the YCs on Tuesday, July 9, and again from the YAs, 3YZ and 4YZ on Sunday, July 14. Mrs Freed told us she was looking forward to hearing her songs played by someone else



"I am also very pleased," she said, "that listeners can hear it more than once, as I feel that it may have more of a delayed attraction than immediate appeal—I may be wrong. I found it difficult to find a New Zealand poem which fitted my ideas of a ballad, but this one, 'The Sea Child,' by Katherine Mansfield, appealed to me as one that I could set."

Mrs Freed has written several songs, and among them was a part-song that was sung at the Cambridge music school. "Several people there asked the composers' group about part-songs, madrigals, etc., which small country groups could sing," Mrs Freed said: "I would like to do more work in this field, where there does seem to be a definite need."

OWEN JENSEN SAYS GOODBYE

ONE of the most popular broadcasters on music in New Zealand, Owen Jensen, has presented "Music Magazine" from the YCs on the first Tuesday of the month for some years now. However, on July 2 he will be saying goodbye to listeners before he sets sail for the United Kingdom. His able and informative presentation, and his warm and friendly personality have made listeners feel that keeping abreast of musical events and knowledge was not a duty but a pleasure, and his many regular listeners will undoubtedly wish Mr Jensen "Bon Voyage."



N.P.S. photo



★ Gershwin Anniversary ★

TWENTY years ago—on July 11, 1937—George Gershwin died at the age of 38. To mark the anniversary, *Theatre of Music* on Saturday, July 6, will present *George and Ira Gershwin*, from the YAs, 3YZ and 4YZ, a programme which will be repeated on the National Programme on July 14.

George Gershwin believed all his life in the value of jazz as the folk music of America, a folk music which could become the basis of serious symphonic works of lasting value. His musical education was not thorough, but he absorbed and used techniques which he met, and he worked insatiably to increase his musical knowledge. He wrote popular songs with the techniques and approaches of serious music, with unorthodox and complex accompaniments which were an integral part of the songs. His larger works used the striking melodies and rhythms of the popular song. In *Porgy and Bess*, the first American

folk opera, Gershwin successfully combined Negro folk music and popular jazz with the orchestral and choral techniques of serious music.

George Gershwin was gregarious and he liked his work. His brother Ira is a quiet self-contained person, a perfectionist who hates working at all. His lyrics complemented George's music perfectly, and although he usually wrote with the melody set, a chorus or opening line of his would often spark off the melody. Ira had tried other occupations before George's success in popular music tempted him into the field as a lyric writer. Since George's death he has worked with other musicians, including Kurt Weill, Jerome Kern, and Harold Arlen for *A Star is Born* and *A Country Girl*.

In the programme listeners are to hear Ira Gershwin will sing some of his lyrics, and George will be heard playing some of his music.