

ALTHOUGH his home is at Long Island, New York, Claudio Arrau—who arrives in New Zealand next week for a series of NZBS concerts—remains for all other purposes a Chilean. Chile, knowing this, has made it possible for its great pianist son to travel the world on a diplomatic passport—probably the only concert artist who does so. And in Santiago the capital, where he made his official début 47 years ago at the age of seven, they have named a street after him: Calle Claudio Arrau.

Arrau, whom Neville Cardus called "the greatest of the great pianists," was born in 1903 in the small village of Chillan, between the Andes and the sea. By the time he was four years old he was playing Beethoven sonatas, but in his case there is a difference from the usual run of musical prodigies: before him there was no history of musical talent in the family, and apparently nothing else to turn his mind to music. Regardless of this, such was the young Arrau's interest that he did all his own training—even to the extent of teaching himself musical notation.

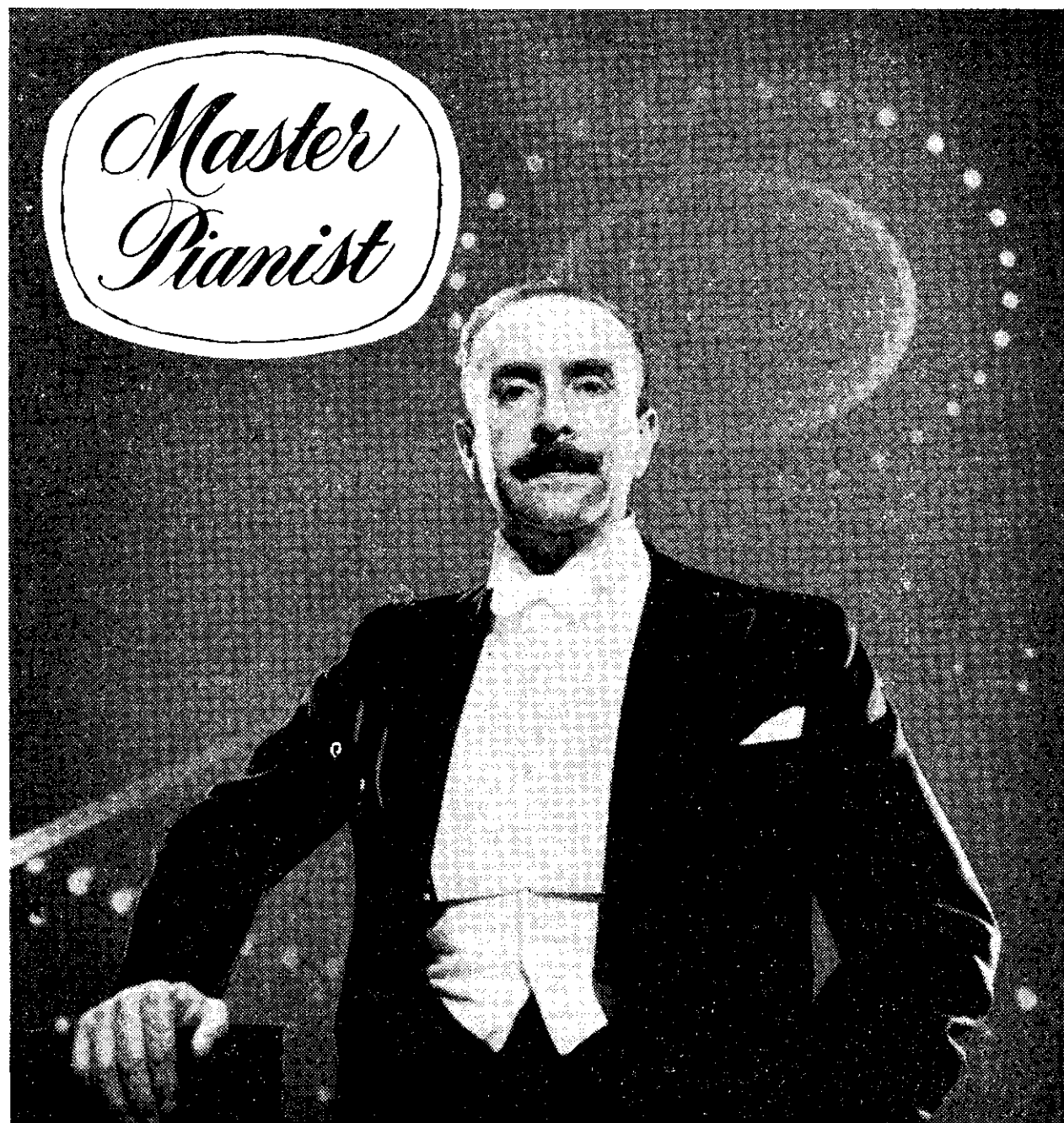
At the age of five came his first public recital, and two years later he made the official début in Santiago mentioned previously. At this début many influential people heard the boy, and decided that this native Chilean talent should not be wasted. The enlightened Chilean Government made arrangements for the child and his family to go to Europe to further his studies. First, however, came two years' study under Paoli in Santiago.

Throughout the period of the Great War, Arrau studied under the famous Martin Krause at the Stern Conservatorium in Berlin, and through this teacher he can claim that his artistic pedigree stems from Beethoven. The latter taught Karl Czerny, Czerny taught Franz Liszt, and Liszt was tutor to Martin Krause. In 1918 Krause died and the young Chilean pianist began his slow rise to eminence, his first task being to convince German audiences that one didn't necessarily have to be born in Europe to be a good pianist.

In 1923, Arrau attempted to break into the concert field in America, with recitals in Boston and Chicago.

"I was not developed enough," he has since said, quoting his critics. "My personality was not clear-cut." In 1941, however, after he had already made his name in Europe and South America, he returned for his first Carnegie Hall recital and was hailed by New York critics as the greatest South American pianist since the Venezuelan Teresa Carreno. Since then he has been in great demand in America, having given there (up until 1955) some 700 solo recitals, apart from orchestral appearances.

Today's assessment of Arrau as a pianist places him in the world's top half-dozen, but some critics are even more specific in their praise. The late



Cecil Smith, for instance, wrote after an Arrau recital in London in 1953 that if Arrau was not the finest living pianist he did not know who was. The year before, during a South African tour in which he played nine concerts in Johannesburg alone, one South African music critic called him the supreme pianist of our time: "He towers above contemporary players, both in reputation and in achievement; and, indeed, he now commands the musical ear of the world as few pianists, surely, can ever have done."

Arrau has in his repertoire a total of 63 works for piano and orchestra, and 76 different recital programmes which he plays completely from memory. He was the first man since Schnabel to play all the 32 sonatas for piano by Beethoven in one series, and has also done the same with the piano concertos, and with all the published piano works of Chopin.

Franz Liszt, it is said, could listen to his own playing with detachment, as though from the far end of a room. Arrau, apparently, shares this faculty of detachment; which not only allows him to maintain a high level of execution but to face the unexpected if and when it happens. Once in Chile, for instance, he played through an earthquake, thus preventing the audience from panicking. On another occasion in Mexico City he had to finish the Waldstein Sonata in the dark; this was no burden apparently, for his teacher in Berlin had taught him to play in the dark with his eyes shut. Perhaps the worst adventure occurred during a recital in Linz when the pedals of the piano fell off. Of this

disaster Arrau observed simply: "I found it a challenge."

Besides his native language, Arrau reads in four others: English, French, German and Italian. Besides music, and his children Mario and Carmen who are studying in America, his interests run mainly to serious reading (psychology, philosophy and sociology), and the collecting of antiques. His wife, who travels with him wherever she can, has observed that the one place her husband cannot pass is an antique shop. As a consequence their Long Island home is full among other things of Ming and T'ang pieces, Greek and Egyptian vases, and icons from Eastern Europe.

Claudio Arrau's first New Zealand appearance will be with the National Orchestra in Wellington on September 3, when he will play Brahms Concerto No. 1 in D. Other concerts scheduled are for September 5, in Christchurch (solo); September 7, Auckland (solo); September 10, Wellington (solo); September 14, Wellington (solo); and September 17, with the National Orchestra in Auckland, when he will play the Beethoven Concerto No. 5 ("The Emperor").

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

South Molton Street, W.1	- 4
Auckland Letter	- 5
Song of the Twenty-four Shirts	- 6
Radio and TV in the U.S.	- 7
My Poor Boy	- 8
Opera from the Studio: Eugen Onegin	- 9
Editorial	- 10
Letters from Listeners	- 11

The Aunt Daisy Story	- 4:
The Battle of the Sexes	- 12, 14-15
Books	- 16-17-18

Parliament and 2YC	- 19
Open Microphone	- 20
Films	- 21
Shepherd's Calendar	- 22-23
Radio Review	- 24-25
Holiday Programmes for Boys and Girls	- 26-27
Programme Guide	- 28-29
The New Music	- 30-31
Ask Aunt Daisy	- 32-33

BROADCAST PROGRAMMES	
Mon. to Sun., Aug. 26-Sept. 1	35-55