

Talented Australian

ONE of the penalties too often paid by concert artists in this part of the world—as well as by members of other specialist professions—is that to be in the centre of things they must become expatriates. In particular it is one of the facts of life for Beryl Kimber, the Australian violinist.

"I heard only the other day that my brother, another violinist, had arrived in Melbourne after three years of study in England," she told *The Listener*.



Spencer Digby photograph
BERYL KIMBER

"When I arrive home—I have concert engagements in both Sydney and my home town, Melbourne—another brother, a doctor, will also be there, and it will be the first time all of us have been together for years." Miss Kimber's absences from home, even from England—her second home—have, however, their consolations. During March and April this year she was in Russia and won a prize at the Tchaikovsky International Competition.

"I was in Russia for about five weeks, in Moscow itself for a fortnight," she said. "The prize I won entailed a tour of the country, so later after the competition I went to the republics of Ukraine and Latvia." One thing she particularly noted on these travels was the vast difference between the inter-republic passenger planes and the jet she eventually travelled on from Russia to Prague. "The planes flying the ser-

vice between Latvia and the Ukraine were very cold, and there were no safety-belts. People just seemed to walk up and down quite happily while the planes were taking off and landing. The Russian jet was quite different—the very look of it is impressive and it is terribly powerful. We did the trip from Moscow to Prague in two hours and 20 minutes at 700 miles an hour."

In the jet, as a further contrast, there was not only heating, but an oxygen supply, caviar and vodka. The only drawback, Miss Kimber said, was that she was the only woman in at least 100 passengers. "They were delegates, I suppose," she added. Air-line hostesses in Russia were strange to Western eyes. They wore flat-heeled shoes and did not wear a uniform.

We asked Miss Kimber if she had met the American pianist Van Cliburn during her visit to Russia.

"Yes, he was staying at the same hotel," she said. "I knew him before the competition. He is a very natural person—so normal in fact, that one would never have imagined he would win anything. After his success in the competition he was just the same. He has a great humility, and I imagine will always be the same."

The only Russian words that Miss Kimber learnt off were "Hullo" and "Goodbye," and later, in Australia, when she was asked to say something in Russian to greet David Oistrakh and his wife at the airport under TV cameras, she used both.

"Goodbye? But I've only just arrived," Oistrakh said, puzzled.

Miss Kimber hopes, however, to have an opportunity to add to her knowledge of Russian when, at Oistrakh's invitation, she goes to Russia again next April. "I got to know him quite well while he was in Melbourne, and he wanted me to return to Russia to study with him," she said. (While in Wellington, David Oistrakh said of Beryl Kimber: "She is very, very talented. Her playing in Russia aroused great sympathy and enthusiasm.")

Miss Kimber said she was sorry she did not see more of New Zealand in her few weeks, though she thought there was something to be said for staying put and capturing the spirit of one New Zealand city. "Wellington is beautiful, especially on a sunny day," she added, "it reminds me of Hobart, where I spent many years."



PAUL WALDEN (second from right) and the Vocaltones, who will be heard in ZZB's "Radio Roundabout" on Sunday evening, August 10

N.Z. LISTENER, AUGUST 1, 1958.

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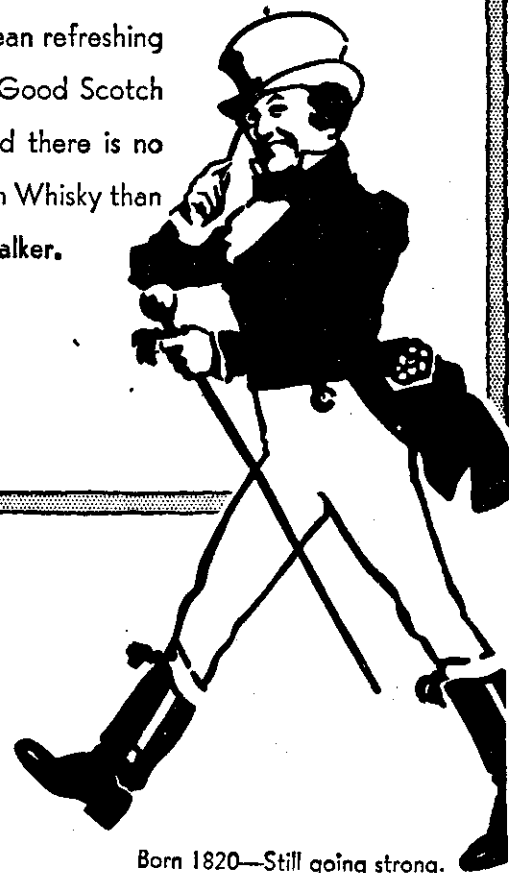
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