

children's travelling expense are refunded if at least 80 per cent. of the practices are attended.

Groups of recorders are popular in both girls' and boys' schools. In some cases treble and tenor instruments are added to the descant ones. I recall an excellent rendering of two of Handel's pieces by a group of 24 boys of the Sefton Park Secondary Modern School in Liverpool. Orchestras and recorders are frequently used to play the hymns for the morning assemblies—and, incidentally, English schools have assembly halls.

Percussion bands were valuable, I felt, when the children played from music. They were usually taught first to read their parts through using French time names, and this appealed to me.

Audition-Festivals

Festivals are popular. In some districts, for example in Northern Ireland and Ayrshire, they are competitive, but the trend is to the non-competitive type. The most interesting one is a kind of compromise. It is the festival with auditions. During the day the various groups perform in front of each other in the presence of an adjudicator, who writes confidential critiques, which are handed to the conductors concerned. Afterwards, the adjudicators usually discuss performances with the teachers, meet the children for a massed rehearsal, and conduct the evening concert. At the Portsmouth schools festival the choir was accompanied by an orchestra consisting of teachers, and all participating groups had to be regular school classes as shown in the school timetable.

On the whole, music is in a healthy position; but this has not just happened. It has been due to good leadership. I quote again from *Music and the Amateur*: "The pioneer work in the counties of the last twenty years is bearing fruit and the many enthusiasts engaged in the work of county music committees and rural music schools now see that they are taking part in a great and spreading movement."

A number of people remarked on Dr. Vernon Griffiths's book, *An Experiment in School Music-Making*, in which he describes a scheme he introduced into King Edward Technical College, Dunedin, in 1933, since when it has spread to a number of our leading secondary schools—and will, one can hope, be used in our primary schools too. It was good to hear this appreciation of work being done in New Zealand.

Greatest Show on Earth

"OF course, London is the greatest show on earth, for never have so many human characters been gathered together at one place," said Laurie Lee (who was born in the country but lives in London) in a BBC programme, *An Obsolete Exile*. "Here, in a day, you can see the world. Stand at the entrance to a main-line railway station during rush-hour and you can see every possible human species scurrying past."

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