

Coronation Film Composer

GUY WARRACK, the composer of the background music specially written for the Coronation film, *A Queen is Crowned*, is at present in New Zealand as one of the visiting examiners of the Royal Schools of Music. *The Listener* met him in Auckland a few days ago, shortly after *A Queen is Crowned* was released here, and asked him how he had gone about composing in advance a score to fit such a big occasion.

"It wasn't my first experience of composing music to fit scenes which had not actually taken place," he said. "I have worked before with Castleton Knight the producer of *A Queen*

is Crowned, and I was faced with similar problems when working on his film of the 1948 Olympic Games, *XIVth Olympiad*, where I had to visualise the right sort of music to go with such events as throwing the hammer, high diving, the marathon race, and so forth.

"I also much enjoyed working on *Theirs is the Glory*, the story of the Battle of Arnhem, which was also produced by Castleton Knight. It was a magnificent film, with not a single professional actor in the cast. Other films I have written background music for are *A Defeated People*, *The Story of Time*, and *Introducing the Commonwealth*."

We asked Mr. Warrack what special problems had been involved in composing music for a film which had been made and released with such speed as *A Queen is Crowned*.



SIR MALCOLM SARGENT (left) and GUY WARRACK rehearsing the music for "*A Queen is Crowned*"

"Some of the sequences were worked out in advance, for example, the historical introduction," he said, "and for them I was given measurements to fit which the music had to be written. The music which you heard in the Abbey while the ceremony was taking place was, of course, that which was recorded on the sound track at the same time as the cameras were photographing the ceremony. My music was mostly that which you heard in the sequences preceding the Queen's entrance into the Abbey, and in addition there was some processional music for the sequences following the ceremony. I wrote first a march built up on two contrasted themes, and then varied and developed these themes to use in other situations.

"I was on the high seas when the film was processed," he said, "so I couldn't be there during the dubbing and fixing of the various pieces on to the finished picture. The music was played by the London Symphony Orchestra, with about 70 players, conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent."

Mr. Warrack said he would be in New Zealand for about six months examining students. He was born in Edinburgh and studied at the Royal College of Music under Vaughan Williams and Sir Adrian Boult. He was conductor of the Handel Society during 1934 and 1935, of the BBC Scottish Orchestra from 1936 to 1945, and Musical Director and Conductor of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet from 1948 to 1951. His compositions include *Symphony in C Minor* and *Divertimento Pasticciato*, *Te Deum* in E Flat, and many smaller works besides his film music. He was Chairman of the Composers' Guild of Great Britain last year.



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