

# Dunedin Music Festival

**D**UNEDIN'S second Festival of Music, scheduled to begin on September 19, will consist of four concerts spread over nine days. Two orchestras, four choral groups and seven soloists will provide the programmes.

The first concert, on Saturday, September 19, will open with a performance by the National Orchestra of Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia* on a theme of Tallis. This will be followed by one of the major events of the festival, as the orchestra and the Dunedin Choral Society, assisted by members of the Royal Dunedin Male Choir and the Returned Services' Choir, combine to present Dyson's *Canterbury Pilgrims*—a musical setting of Chaucer's prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*. Dyson chose the more interesting vignettes given in the poem, including those of the Knight, the Squire, the Prioress, the Franklin, the Doctor of Physic and the enormously experienced Wife of Bath.

According to Robert Hull, "the martial fame and vigour of the Knight is vividly done in a chorus which, though mostly strenuous, concludes with a charmingly reflective passage in description of this warrior's gentler virtues." By contrast, the portrait of the Wife of Bath is gaiety all the way. "It hits off that rollicking creature so brilliantly that it is impossible not to sympathise with the range and variety of her matrimonial exploits."

Although Chaucer's metre—and some of the more archaic words—have been lost in the choral version, Dyson has largely succeeded in retaining the humour and vigour of the original. The pilgrims who, at the end of the work, are heard setting out for Canterbury, with the Knight just beginning his tale, are in no way misrepresented by their translation into music. The solo parts are taken by the soprano Dora Drake, the tenor John Chew, and the baritone Ninian Walden. The conductor is Warwick Braithwaite.

As a forerunner to the Festival performance, Mary Martin will give a talk

on *Canterbury Pilgrims* from 4YA at 3.15 p.m. on Sunday, September 13.

The second concert of the Festival, on Monday, September 21, is by the National Orchestra, with the Chinese bass-baritone Yi-Kwei Sze as soloist. The latter will sing Mozart's *Per questa bella mano*, *Un bacio di mano*, and *Mente to lascio*. The orchestral items will include the Sibelius tone poem *Tapiola*, Haydn's Symphony No. 99 in E Flat ("Schoolmaster"), Massenet's ballet suite *Le Cid*, and two nocturnes *Nuages et Fetes*, by Debussy.

Yi-Kwei Sze, who has frequently been likened to the Russian Chaliapin, has been lauded by critics during his recent tour of Australia en route to New Zealand. Said the *Sydney Morning Herald*: "Yi-Kwei Sze sang with beautiful tone and commanding distinction of style." And the *Adelaide Mail*: "His superbly controlled voice is enhanced by an intellectual penetration and musicianship which gave to each song he sang the hallmark of distinction."

The third concert, also by the National Orchestra, is on Tuesday, September 22. The New Zealand-born pianist Peter Cooper will be the solo artist. He will play Tchaikovsky's Concerto No. 1 in B Flat Minor, Opus 23. The purely orchestral items will be Respighi's *Trittico Botticelliano*, Mozart's Symphony No. 39 in E Flat, and Liszt's symphonic poem *Les Preludes*.

Peter Cooper has had an appreciative press after each performance of his ten-week tour of New Zealand. Owen Jensen's comment in a recent issue of *The Listener* is perhaps representative: "Peter Cooper's playing is . . . modest, thoughtful without being overwhelmed by conscious intellectualism, lively but not exuberant, assured but never bombastic."

The Festival ends on Monday, September 28, with a concert by the 4YA Orchestra and the Teachers' College Choral Society. The programme will include a number of part songs and Purcell's *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*. The soloists will be the contralto Lesley McIlroy and the pianist Maurice Till.

## Songs of the Countryside

**W**HEN the tenor Martin Boddey sang "Joe the Carrier Lad" in a programme of English folk songs broadcast by the BBC last year, this bright little song apparently had a cheering effect on at least one listener—for she wrote in to say that it had made her happy for a whole day. "Joe the Carrier Lad" was one of many folk songs sent to Francis Collinson from all over England in response to a request he made to listeners to help him track them down. This particular song was sent by an old lady in Shakespeare's county of Warwickshire, and it makes a happy introduction to a selection of these songs which is to be heard from National stations of the NZBS, starting from 3YC on Friday, September 11, at 8.51 p.m. The general title for the four programmes to be broadcast is *Songs from the English Countryside*. They were arranged and are introduced by Francis Collinson and were recorded by the BBC Transcription Service.

Among the songs that Martin Boddey sings in the first programme are "The

Cottage in the Wood," which has the age-old theme of boy meeting girl—and, of course, a happy ending. "The Sweet Little Watercress Girl" has a somewhat sadder quality. It is one of those very old ditties which most people know vaguely, but not enough for it to be noted down. Francis Collinson was, however, lucky enough to be sent a copy by a listener who remembered most of it, but had to reconstruct the other part. The last song in this programme dates from the early days of Queen Victoria when there was a sort of "song invasion" from German Switzerland. These songs have, as it were, become naturalised, and this one, "The Case o' Needles," was sent from the Cotswold Hills.

Martin Boddey is heard again in the third programme of this series. The other soloists are Robert Irwin (baritone) and Jan Van Der Gucht (tenor). In each case the accompaniment is by the Wynford Reynolds Quartet, with the male voices from the BBC singers.

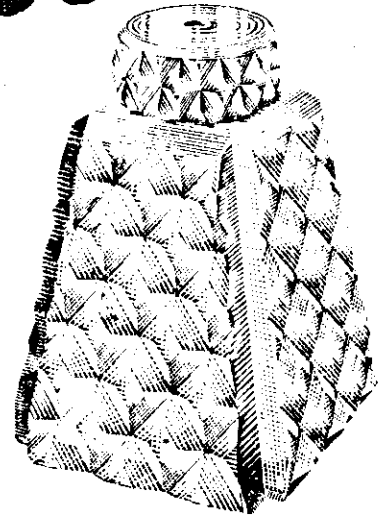
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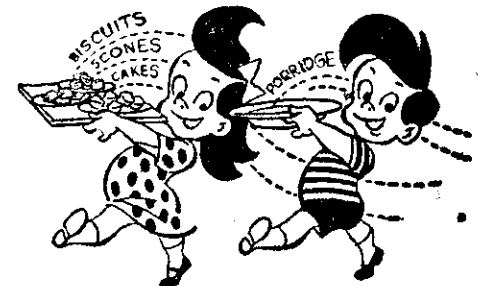


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