

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS,
ON AND OFF THE RECORD.
By *Swarf*

Rainbow Ends. From time to time Sir Henry Wood presented Quilter's music at the Promenade Concerts at Queen's Hall, "R.Q." as his friends liked to call him, first attracted notice by his settings of Shakespeare. Famous singers like Elwes, Plunket Greene and John Coates helped to make his work known and admired.

POPULAR judgment of music is still deeply tinged with megalomania. The public seems bemused by mere size, and mistakes size for quality. The popular epithet for music is "great," and also for performers of music. Music cannot ever, it seems, like other forms of art, be merely good or beautiful. I suggest that this point of view is as Victorian and out-of-date as bustles and mutton-chop whiskers. . . I think the trouble is partly due to the gramophone which offers us the greatest moment and the greatest work to repeat at any moment as we will. Personally, I'd rather have a spontaneous ditty from a simple singer, but then I like music, not elaboration. Let me plead as often as I can for musical quality and simplicity, spontaneity rather than bombastic "greatness."—The late Hubert Foss, who was formerly Music Editor of the Oxford University Press, writing in the *Musical Times*.

MAX SAUNDERS, New Zealand composer, who has written a great deal of music of all kinds for the BBC while living in England during the last 20 years, has been commissioned by the Corporation to compose music for two poems by Edward Lear—*The Jumbies* and *The Dong with the Luminous Nose*. The work will be for soloist, mixed chorus and



MAX SAUNDERS

N.Z. LISTENER, OCTOBER 9, 1953.



PERCY, THE NON-RUGBY-PLAYING KIWI, left Auckland the other day to take up residence in the London Zoo. Percy (later named Ngapuhi) made the trip by Pan-American Clipper. A gift from New Zealand to the Zoological Society of Britain, this kiwi was rescued from a bush fire at Kara, near Whangarei, and the Northland school children took a special interest in him. Phil Shone, IZB's breakfast session announcer, was on the spot to record the kiwi's departure, and in the photograph (above) he is seen with R. W. Roach, Director of the Auckland Zoo, and other helpers, giving Ngapuhi his last meal of worms before being tucked into his travelling crate. Ngapuhi had with him enough worms to see him as far as Honolulu, where arrangements had been made for him to stretch his legs in a grassy run and supplement his diet by natural feeding. On arrival in America he spent some time at a worm farm before pushing on to London.

chamber orchestra, and the first performance will be on the BBC's Third Programme at the end of this year with the composer conducting. Auckland is Max Saunders's home town.

GRACIE FIELDS'S sad tale of the guest who took a harp to a party and was never asked to play, is not so improbable as it sounds. An English musician, Robin Richmond, has taken an electric organ weighing nearly a ton to innumerable parties. The difference is that as one of the leading swing organists he is always asked to play. The organ is transported in a shooting brake specially built for the purpose. Richmond's first professional job was an organist was at a Lambeth cinema which on Sundays was used as a Wesleyan chapel. The instrument had a special switch which could be used to eliminate the more lively "effects" and convert the organ to its Sunday purpose. Richmond was sacked when he failed to adjust this switch for a Sunday service. Later he became organist at a big London picture house in the days when the "mighty howitzer" was a popular feature of the show.

IN September, 1951, the newspapers headlined an escape story that might have come straight from a film thriller when a party of anti-Communist Czechs escaped from Czecho-slovakia to the American zone by commandeering a train and dashing across the frontier in it. The full story has been told in a book by Martin Fiala, which Marjorie Banks adapted for radio and produced in the BBC Light Programme. A transcription was

recorded at the time. The personal stories of those who took part in the escape — and the elaborate precautions and planning involved in seizing the 9.15 train from Prague to Asch make an absorbing hour's listening. *The Nine-Fifteen to Freedom*, as this programme is called, will be broadcast by 3YC at 9.30 p.m. on Thursday, October 15, by 2YA at 9.30 a.m., and 3YA at 10.0 a.m. on Sunday, October 18.



HAROLD GRIERSON, radio script writer and reader of Rotorua, who was the subject of a paragraph on this page last week

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