

"MERRIE ENGLAND"

THE recent performances of Sir Edward German's light opera, "Merrie England," by both the Royal Wellington Choral Union and the Auckland Choral Society last month followed close upon the revival of the work at the Princes Theatre, London, which took place on September 6. This revival is said to have added ten years to the composer's life. Sir Edward might have been a successful engineer if parental authority had had its way, and a successful conjuror if he had followed his own early inclinations. Finally he decided to devote himself to music, and he did this so thoroughly that, while gaining prizes and medals at the Royal Academy and impressing his teachers with his compositions, he played the violin in theatre orchestras and taught pupils. Sir Edward once summed up his characteristics thus:

Melodically I may be a success;
 Harmonically respectable;
 Orchestrally sound;
 Socially a mistake.

The last is an allusion to his aversion from lionisation. Truly he is a master who declines to advertise. This most typical of English composers is almost a Welshman, calls himself German, although his real name is Jones. Born on the border line almost of England and Wales, he was baptised Edward German Jones, but dropped the Jones on the advice of Sir George Macfarren. The cast of "Merrie England" in its London revival contains three names familiar to New Zealanders. Joseph Hishop and Eula Crickshank are favourites on the radio with their recordings, while the leading come-

dian's part is to be taken by none other than W. S. Percy, one-time a most popular member of Pollard's Opera Company. He is one of the numerous actors who are also authors or painters, or both. His recently-published "Strolling Through Scotland" will be read with interest by his admirers when it arrives here. Mr. Percy, by the way, is a frequent exhibitor in the Royal Scottish Academy.

WENT TO HOLLYWOOD

SEVERAL months in Hollywood gave Mr. Bertram Potts a good working knowledge of the directing of films and of scenario writing. "Believing that New Zealand would go seriously into



the business of making films I went to Hollywood to study the methods there," said Mr. Potts. "New Zealand, unfortunately, has not made much progress in the film-making field, but the knowledge I gained in America stood me in good stead when it came to writing and producing radio plays. One of my plays, 'The Raft,' has already been given over the air, and the New Zealand Broadcasting Board has purchased two more, 'Torn Pages' and 'Eaten in the Jungle.' I have done a fair amount of free lance journalism, and contributed frequently

to the 'Radio Record' and other New Zealand and Australian papers."

FROM BIRMINGHAM

MR. WILL BISHOP, well-known to New Zealand listeners, hails from Birmingham, where he had established a definite connection as a writer of songs for vaudeville and ordinary stage presentation. Since he has been in Wellington Mr. Bishop has written several songs for broadcasting and he has had several more published abroad. "Will Bishop and his Piano" are a popular couple on the air, the former usually giving something that he has written himself. He has been a regular contributor of light verse to the "Radio Record" for several years, and he is not unknown to readers of daily papers in different parts of the country.

AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN

EDITH LORAND, the famous violinist-conductor, was born at Budapest. Her father, the director of a large petroleum factory, was a Hungarian, and her mother, although Austrian, had descended from an old Italian family, and in her youth had been a brilliant pianist. At an unusually early age Edith displayed exceptional aptitude for both the piano and the violin. She was but six when she made her debut at a Budapest charity concert. Later she studied under Hubay at the Academy there, and at 16 was awarded a Professorship Diploma. She then went under Flesch of Vienna, and since then her career has been one of dazzling brilliance. She has toured Europe, appeared in London in 1928, and speaks perfect English, French and Italian.

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