

Menuhin, Youthful Genius of Violin, Talks to the "Radio Record" Aboardship

A WELL-BUILT youth, attired in white trousers, tennis shirt and a light grey pullover, and accompanied by his mother and father and two sisters, paced the deck of the Matson liner Mariposa immediately the vessel berthed at Auckland on her last voyage from America to Sydney.

He was no other than Yehudi Menuhin, boy genius of the violin, unparalleled in artistic sweep and achievement, fresh from new climaxes and the attainment of heights seldom, if ever, achieved by any violinist at any time on tours of Europe and the United States. He was on his way to Australia to give concerts before returning to New Zealand to make his first concert appearances, and from here to South Africa and thence back to Europe.

With the Menuhin party was Mr. J. H. Tait and Mr. Arthur Tait.

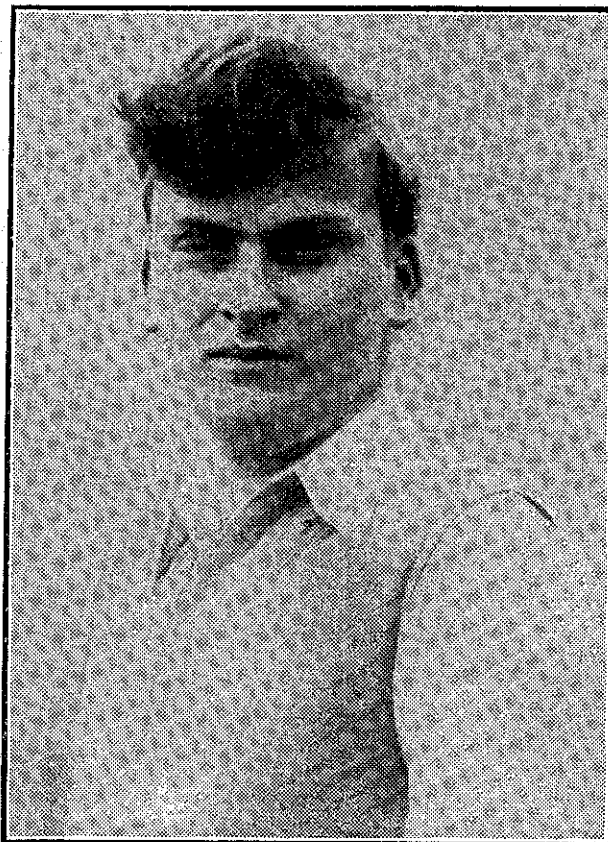
The "Radio Record" representative who went on board the Mariposa to interview the youthful genius, met Yehudi's mother and father, whom he completely dwarfs, his talented sisters, Hephzibah and Yaltah, and his accompanist.

Yehudi Menuhin is a happy, smiling youth, with fair hair and blue eyes, who speaks in a natural and unaffected manner. He gave one the impression that he is thoroughly normal, mentally alert and physically strong, remaining apparently unconscious of the vast resources of his art and the supreme achievements of his great talent. His mind is phenomenally developed. He is a master linguist besides being a master violinist. To his native English he has added French, German, Spanish and Russian. He speaks with insight on musical appreciation and taste in many countries of the world that he has visited.

Young Menuhin told me that he was born in New York on January 22, 1917. He celebrated his eighteenth birthday in his native New York in January last by giving his twenty-sixth appearance before a packed house in Carnegie Hall since his debut at the age of 7. He began to take an interest in music at a very early age. When nine months old, he was carried to his first concert—a matinee performance by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, thereafter being taken weekly. At the age of three he had a tiny violin: at four a child's size instrument was given him, and he began lessons on it with Louis Persinger.

Yehudi Menuhin's parents are highly cultured university graduates and ardent music lovers, though neither is a musician. When Yehudi was a year old, they took him to California where Mr. Menuhin assumed a post as educator. Loving music, but unable to afford a nurse, they tried the experiment of carrying their son to the matinee concerts by the big San Francisco orchestra. At the age of seven, came a great day for young Yehudi—standing on the stage as soloist with that same orchestra which had stirred his first musical awakening, the child played a violin concerto, evoking overwhelming enthusiasm. One year later he astonished and attracted New York, being taken soon afterward by his parents for study in Paris with George Enesco, the famous Rumanian violinist.

Pressing further for information concerning this remarkable boy's career, I learnt that Yehudi Menuhin, when only



10 years, playing at his debut the Beethoven Concerto with the New York Symphony Orchestra, created demonstrations surpassing all precedent, just as he had done shortly before in Paris at his debut with the Lamoureux Orchestra. Each year an added lustre was disclosed in his interpretations. His playing on the artistic side was declared to have shown new depths. After his instant success at his Paris debut, Yehudi Menuhin returned to his native land for his sensational debut with the New York Symphony Orchestra, playing the Beethoven Concerto. From then on came offers for Yehudi's appearance. Only a few in the great cities were accepted. Those centres later privileged to hear the violinist were moved to immense fervour, his debut appearance in each creating scenes of enthusiasm seldom witnessed in musical history.

The tour which he is at present on comprises at least 50 appearances in Australia and New Zealand. Next year Yehudi plans to return to California and spend a large part of his time on his magnificent ranch property, which he recently acquired near Alma, in the Santa Cruz Mountains of Santa Clara County. He has a home near Paris and he plans to spend some time there afterwards during his next European tour.

A great booster for the United States, his birthplace, Yehudi Menuhin thinks that America is musically the best country. "I am always up in arms against that American inferiority complex, that self-effacement, self-belittlement that we Americans manifest almost to a pathological point whenever we speak of European versus American," he said. "Of course, I am talking of music appreciation and musical art as they are to-day and for the last 10 or 12 years. City versus city, country versus country, let us dismiss the myth that Europe to-day has more or better music than we in America. When it comes to performers of music, musicians, the American musician of to-day gives to Europe at least as much as Europe offers him or his country."

Yehudi says he owes his greatest debt of gratitude to that great man and musician, Georges Enesco, who inspired him with his serious, unqualified philosophic and artistic attitude of pure art.