

He Is No POSEUR

This Musical Man of England

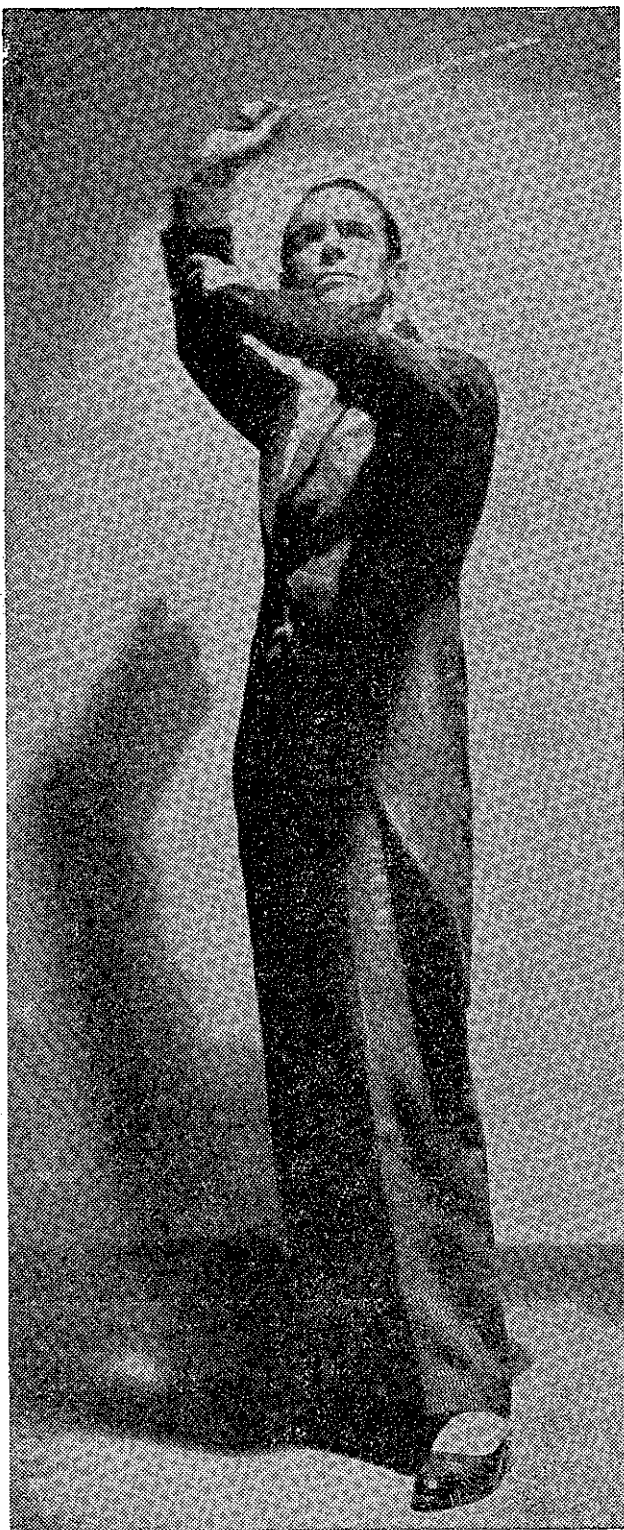
(A special interview with DR. MALCOLM SARGENT, the world-famous conductor, at present in New Zealand.)

HE is no poseur, this musical man of England. I liked Dr. Malcolm Sargent for his straightforward manner and his utter lack of "frills." In a room at Government House, Wellington, where he was the guest of the Governor-General (Viscount Galway) we sat before a fire while Dr. Sargent gave clearcut answers to my questions. The winds and sun of the Pacific had bronzed his skin, the shipboard rest had brightened the eye of a man who is hailed as one of the world's greatest conductors.

On modern composition and the wider appreciation to-day of good music Dr. Sargent had several things to say. "Composition is the creative side of art—I look upon a composer as a miracle, a being who sets foot on this earth but once, perhaps, in a century. There are more people doing musical compositions to-day than ever before, but too often the standard is mediocre. As in the world of letters, so it is in the world of music—general education has increased the number of writers, but it hasn't increased the number of geniuses.

"I do think that the Government of a young country should help its musical societies. Every schoolboy knows the names of Beethoven and Brahms, Mozart and Schubert, but to every schoolboy does not come the chance of hearing the works of the masters. The people must hear the music if a genuine appreciation is to be born and fostered. An orchestra exists for "art's" sake and should not be run as a "business." This applies to some of the greatest and most famous orchestras in the world. They need a subsidy.

"Music has always existed under the patronage of wealthy people. In these more democratic times there are fewer wealthy people, and the State should come to the rescue. Just as the State assists libraries and art galleries, so should it assist the musical societies of the country. Sibelius, for instance, has an annual grant from the Finnish Government and, so great is the respect for his talent in his native Finland that restaurants refuse to accept payment for the meals he eats there."



I mentioned the possible benefits of broadcasting on a public often musically ignorant.

"The standard of music put out by your National Broadcasting Service should be high," replied Dr. Sargent, "but don't let the excellence of recorded broadcast music cripple your musical societies. So long as broadcasting stimulates a desire for music, well and good, but when it causes local societies to languish and die, then it is harmful.

"The B.B.C. had a new job to do when it began the broadcast of good music, a job that it had to tackle alone and without precept. It has learned many lessons, swallowed many bitter pills of criticism, but to-day, I venture to say, the B.B.C. has one of the finest musical organisations in Europe. And England too has advanced musically so (Continued on next page)