

MUSIC OF THE WEEK

*There is no art without life,
There is no life without growth,
There is no growth without change,
There is no change without contro-
versy.—Frank Rutter.*

THIS is a new column in which the critic makes no apology for outspoken comment on radio programmes in New Zealand and overseas.

Most artists like kind things said about them, and I earnestly hope that my remarks will satisfy the majority. However, whatever criticism is offered it will be sincere, without prejudice and made always with a constructive object in view—the object of helping to raise the standard of broadcast performances in New Zealand. With that there goes an earnest desire to help New Zealand artists.

ON Tuesday of last week I listened to a performance by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra of Franz Schreker's interesting work "The Birthday of the Infanta."

Little is known of Schreker in this country. He died four years ago, but one recalls that after studying at the Vienna Conservatoire he founded the Vienna Philharmonic Choir. There is, generally speaking, real colour in Schreker's music. The pantomime music presented last week was written about 26 years ago—but even now has the noticeable ring of impressionism in it. Its performance was good since the composer conducted, but the actual recordings we heard were not a very good test of the value of the work. Technically they were poor stuff.

ON the same programme Mrs. Wilfred Andrews presented some interesting songs from 2YA. I had not heard the "Spirit's Song" by Haydn for some considerable time. Mrs. Andrews's voice lacked perhaps, a little in freshness, but the treatment was sound.

EARLIER in the week we had the Macdowell "Keltic" sonata, played by Jocelyn Walker. For dignity, breadth of style and irresistible emotion the four Macdowell piano sonatas are comparable with any written since the time of Beethoven.

The "Keltic"—the other names are "Tragic," "Norse," and "Eroica"—was the composer's favourite. Macdowell's Celtic relationship provides suitable reason why he had gone to the legends comprised in the famous cycle of the Red Branch for inspiration for this work.

The "Keltic" is programme music, and Miss Walker's performance was technically satisfactory. In the last movement, toward the close, the transcription of Cuchullin's death lacked a little in dignity, but I thoroughly enjoyed the performance as a whole. This young Wellingtonian should do well in the future. Her pedalling was particularly good.



MRS. WILFRED ANDREWS.
The treatment was sound.

I WAS in Christchurch last week and heard a local studio orchestra playing some flippant pieces. The orchestra played late in the evening, and, after hearing a recording by the Queen's Hall Orchestra earlier, it surprised me to find myself thoroughly enjoying the Quilter number. It was a pity, though, that the standard of this performance was not retained. Lately I have noticed untunefulness in this team and there is no excuse to offer for this fault. Intonation is the most important factor

BY "SCHERZO"

in any musical presentation and without perfect intonation the quality must suffer.

WHILE on the topic of orchestras the Auckland studio players performed most creditably the Mozart A Major piano concerto with Mrs Hester Stansfield Prior last week.

Even if the tempos were not quite consistent with the traditional Mozart, so much depends on the national character in music that it is useless to play eighteenth century compositions in an impressionistic manner.

MOZART was a wonder as a child and had not so many facts been brought to light confirming the authenticity of his amazing genius his life could quite easily become legendary. Had he accomplished nothing else but perform that amazing feat of writing the whole of Allegri's "Miserere" from memory after hearing it only once—he would still be claimed a genius. Mozart composed assiduously. Over 600 works came from his pen, with symphonies, operas, masses, songs, piano concertos and chamber music playing the most important part. I notice that 2FC, Sydney, is to present some Mozart on Wednesday, March 23, at 11.45 p.m., N.Z. summer time. That's late for us, but as a soprano, violinist and pianist are involved in the programme it might be worth waiting up for.

AT 2YA last week Julie Werry, a Wanganui soprano, was heard to advantage with some violoncello obbligatos. The songs were of the ordinary popular ballad type and call for little comment, but I definitely liked the ensemble. More vocal items supported with a little instrumental colouring would be welcome on any programme. Last week's presentation was like a liqueur after dinner—digestively satisfying.

I read that Miss Werry left for Australia on the Wanganella to study—her third trip with the same object. It is good to see the New Zealand artists so ambitious.

THE "Radio Record" schedules songs by Owen Jensen, the Auckland studio pianist for Saturday next from the northern main national station. When in Australia I heard that Mr. Jensen writes occasional pieces for broadcast purposes and I shall most certainly try to hear these songs. Joan Moody is to be the vocalist.