



By

"WIRIHANA"

"Special to the Record"

LOOK left and meet three Auckland musicians. The lady with the violin has put her foot down. She is Miss Isobel Langlands, organiser of the Auckland Entertainers' Association who says: "Too long performing musicians in this city have given their services like performing seals for a fish sandwich!"

NO more will Auckland's professional musicians and entertainers perform for any organisation without payment.

Too long, they say, have they given their services like performing seals for a fish sandwich.

To protect themselves have they formed "The Auckland Entertainers' Association."

This important stand was taken largely as a result of the enterprise and organising ability of Isobel Langlands, Australian violinist, who has for some years been prominent in Auckland musical circles and who, assisted by Colin Muston, L.R.A.M., convened the first meeting held on Sunday, March 13. Last week a largely attended meeting ratified the constitution and rules. Officers of the thumbs-down-on-bun-payment society are: President, Colin Muston; vice-president, Dennis Johns; secretary and treasurer (pro tem), Isobel Langlands; committee, Phyllis Bloy, Marjorie Tiarks, Dan. Flood, Alan McElwain, Robert Harris and Frank Poore—all well-known professional entertainers.

ONE member of the new association puts the case succinctly. He says, "It is just as bad form to ask a professional artist to entertain without a fee as it would be to ask one's doctor to dine, and to suggest, after dinner, that he might give one his professional advice about some ailment in payment for a good dinner. It seems that musicians and entertainers are the only people who are expected to smilingly give their best without a fee—to give something which they have spent years of their time trying to perfect. Various forms of inducement held out to us by different societies, clubs and wealthy hostesses—who, by the way, should know better—are not always subtle. In fact they suggest a complete lack of intelligence!

"Who of us has not been asked, at some time or other, to come and sing or play, or do an entire evening's accompanying because we will enjoy ourselves?—'have a good night—or 'because there will be a good supper'—or 'because it will be a good advertisement'? Some even say it will be an 'honour' to perform at their clubs. All this has gone on long enough. It must be stopped."

Sing An Aria For a Bun

IT was pointed out that many artists were often out of pocket after having performed at such a function. They had many expenses which are never thought of. They must keep up appearances, and buy new music, and instrumentalists have always to keep an expensive stock of strings. Songs could not be bought for less than 3/-, a sonata cost 5/6. Another point stressed was the nervous energy that musicians expended at each performance, not to mention the valuable time and hard work put into rehear-

NO BUNS BY REQUEST

sals to bring the performances near perfection; for what?

"The principle is all wrong, for we have come under the heading of begging," said a member. "Our sense of values has become

so blurred that we have been content to sing an aria or play a sonata for a cake or a bun and a cup of tea."

"Yes, and remember that our efforts are not appreciated when we can be heard any or every day or night any week for nothing," was another remark made during the meeting. "If we continue to hold ourselves and our work cheaply we deserve to be held cheaply—and we have held ourselves cheaply. It is tiring to be taken for granted as a performer."

In an interview with "Wirihana," Miss Langlands explained that the Association was not formed by reason of any mercenary motives. Similar associations were successful in other countries. By paying artists for their work a standard would be set. Miss Langlands quoted the case of a trio which carried out two rehearsals before the members played without payment. It cost them 1/- an hour for hire of a practice room, plus a charge for borrowing the music used. Then they all had to pay their fares to and from the place of entertainment.

"You see there are countless other things also to be taken into consideration," Miss Langlands said, "especially where the performers are women. We cannot be seen more than twice in the same dress. Frocks are really an expensive item."

No Mercenary Motive

MISS LANGLANDS pointed out that while the Association was out to right a long-existing wrong and to protect its members, there was no feeling of antagonism toward any club or society.

"We are all anxious to clear away any misunderstanding," she said, "and to create a feeling of friendly helpfulness and co-operation. We will give once each year a big charity performance, when the entire proceeds will be devoted to deserving organisations. This should prove to the public of Auckland that we are not mercenary. Heaven knows, our past efforts should be proof enough that we are not."

The objects of the Association include acting as an intermediary to assist artists to obtain professional engagements and to assist those organising entertainments of every description to obtain suitable artists, and to protect artists against exploitation for so-called charity functions, by insisting that members should be paid a fee according to an arranged schedule. Membership is open to all musicians, vocalists and entertainers generally and the membership fees are purely nominal—7/6 per year. The Association will not deal with orchestral or any engagements at present protected by the Musicians' Union, but would concentrate on concerts and other entertainments in the interests of soloists.