

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 contra-
versy.—Frank Rutter.*

TWO NBS studio orchestras appeared at the same time on the same evening last week. It was an excellent opportunity to compare the respective merits of the combinations.

Although there was untunefulness noticeable in both, I liked the Wellington orchestra better, primarily because it played music more in keeping with its size.

Untunefulness is annoying. It is always distinctively noticeable in the higher register—particularly with the stringed instruments, although the flautist in one of the combinations was consistently out of tune on certain notes.

It is quite an easy matter for conductors to tune an orchestra, but it is a different matter to keep the orchestra in tune. This is up to the individual players, as well as to the conductor. The atmosphere of a studio affects intonation, as some instruments sharpen naturally as the evening wears on.

***H**OWEVER, there is no excuse for violinists playing out of tune. They should be meticulous about their playing in and above the sixth positions. Even seasoned players go back to their "Kreutzer" regularly. And there are scores of other books in advance of this volume to keep the strong player in form. Somehow I do not think many New Zealand violinists do sufficient home practice.*

ONE small orchestra I heard last week courageously attempted the overture to Rossini's "William Tell," and the Faust "Ballet Music." I felt sorry for the players. The strings were inaudible in the heavier passages, and the general balance did not please. The storm scene from the Rossini number was most successful from the brass and percussionists point of view, but with such a small combination, what could one expect? Sympathy there, certainly, but in the Finale there was no excuse for the extraordinary arrangement of the opening fanfare. I say arrangement purposely, as I could not imagine that the conductor expressly compelled the pianist to play the answering call after the first four bars of the movement. Later in the same movement of the overture, the same instrument was overtaxed by having to play other cued parts. This will not do!

It is incongruous for small orchestral combinations to attempt works composed for full orchestra unless some augmentation is arranged. May I refer the conductors to a splendid article by Horman Demuth on this subject in the January issue of the "Musical Opinion"—page 311.

THE Northern Orchestra last week played an overture by Montague Phillips, "King Charles II." This is apparently a very new work for small orchestras. I had not heard it before. It went well for a first performance.

We in the Southern Hemisphere know Montague Phillips better as a writer of ballads, and it may surprise musicians to learn that this composer has written extensively for the orchestra—a symphony, two piano concertos, a symphonic scherzo, and several good overtures.



MADAME ANNETTE
CHAPMAN

*Should take a rest before singing
Lieder.*

FLORENCE AUSTRAL, and Kirsten Flagstad were broadcast at the same time by different stations one night last week. Flagstad was singing a ballad, while Austral, with chorus and orchestra, was introduced

by the "Inflammatus" from Rossini's "Stabat Mater."

Both recordings are splendid, even if the Austral one is old.

I WAS sorry I missed the Bach recital by Merle Cunningham from 3YA. I have not yet found a New Zealand Bach player. Perhaps next time. . . .

THE Wellington Commercial Station broadcast some splendid recordings of the popular classical type last Wednesday evening, even if Schumann's "Two Grenadiers" was spoiled by the operator cutting the introduction. I wrote about the same point two weeks ago. Once again—Please, please, please, don't top or tail records, Mr. Operator!

RECEPTION was much better when I heard Madame Annette Chapman—mezzo-soprano—from the 60-kilowatt station early in the week. Some Schubert and Mozart's "Alleluia" was sung by this artist, the German being splendid. I was not particularly impressed with the quality of the voice, as some of the notes were very doubtful. This was also the case when the same artist performed recently at the Northern Main National. I understand Madame arrived in Wellington just prior to her broadcast. It may have been more advisable to arrive earlier and have a good rest after the long train journey before singing Lieder. The interpretation was sound. I liked "The Trout" best.

ALEXANDER KIPNIS, the world-famous basso, was featured on a programme during the week. What a glorious voice he has! Australian programmes schedule a series of concerts in Sydney, and Melbourne by this superb singer, and as portion of each is to be broadcast, I advise listeners to hear Kipnis. He enjoys front ranking in the vocal world.

A PROGRAMME idea with distinct possibilities was broadcast from Wellington last Monday by Mr. Kirk-Burnnand entitled, "Pianists and Pianists." It was a pity the jazz music had to be included. I enjoyed the better type of music illustrating the ability of some of the world's best pianists, even if some of the recordings were not new. This type of programme should appeal, but I would like to see Egon Petri, Dohnanyi, Fischer and Schnabel in the next group—also Myra Hess.

BY "SCHERZO"