

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.*

THE week began splendidly with broadcasts of opera from three of the main National stations. Auckland presented "Don Pasquale," Wellington had "The Mikado," and Dunedin gave excerpts from the operas of Rossini, Verdi and Massenet.

It was difficult to know, with such a feast of good recorded music available at the time, which station to switch over to. I would have enjoyed listening to each programme separately.

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ON Wednesday, during some dial-hunting, I heard some peaceful singing by a women's choir. I was surprised to find I was listening to the Orpheus Sextet. Last time I listened to the combination I was disappointed, and, if I remember correctly, said so. It seems almost impossible for a women's choir to improve so rapidly; however, there is no disputing the fact that the Orpheus Sextet had a new lease of life last week—especially in the first group of items presented. The arrangement of "Ma Curly-Headed Babby" was good, and the voices blended nicely. It was during the singing of this number I tuned-in to 2YA.

Should the combination continue with such excellently-balanced singing, it

will win many new listeners. One more thing—the numbers were sung with restraint. In that there was a good tip for all vocalists—concentrate on quality, not volume, when singing before the mike. It is restrained singing that sounds most effective. Forcing is the first step toward faulty intonation.

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THE Wellington Commercial station put on a good Haydn excerpt one afternoon last week.

What did strike me about the Haydn number was the way the announcer introduced it. He told the listeners not to be afraid of the title—but to listen carefully to the music, as it was such a "jolly tune." It was, too.

There is an interesting point about "classical" music. It was Jascha Heifetz, I think, who started that, and if, when most of the classics were broadcast, the titles were announced at the conclusion of each piece, instead of at the beginning, the works would not be feared by so many listeners. The very sound of "opus so-and-so" or "Sonata in F Major," "Symphony," "Concerto," etc., is enough to make many listeners condemn a programme right away. But if a work, or, better still, an excerpt of a work, were played and the title announced afterwards, I think that much would often be thoroughly enjoyed by the listener who claims that he "definitely does not like this classical stuff."

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THIS, incidentally, would make an interesting programme—a half-an-hour of excerpts from the major works, names not given until the end of the programme. Some little time ago one of the BBC musical authorities presented a programme on similar lines. He sandwiched in between two very light selections a short pizzicato piece, and then surprised his listeners by saying they had been listening to an excerpt from a Tchaikowsky Symphony.

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FRANCES REVERE played some Bach and Chopin last week. She played it well. The Chopin suited her best, and I can only reiterate my previous statement about the Bach—I have yet to hear a New Zealand Bach player.

I heard all of the Wellington Symphony orchestral concert on Tuesday. The programme was distinctly French, and the Cesar Franck Symphony in D was well played.

Cesar Franck (a Belgian by birth) completed the symphony two years before his death. There is something fascinating about his music: it is almost impossible to confuse Cesar Franck's music with that of another

composer. His music is veiled in mysticism. The style is free and melodious, even if rhythmical sense is at times lacking.

The Wellington orchestra began well. The symphony was quite the best thing on the programme. There was, however, a little untunefulness noticeable in the inside of the orchestra. The second violins and violas were not always playing as accurately as might be. This was particularly noticeable in the symphony. As Cesar Franck introduces chromaticism frequently, all the more care should be taken. The conductor is to be congratulated on a good reading of the score.

The other items went well, and Ava Symons played the Introduction and Rondo splendidly. Just one thing—the bow arm seemed a little too vigorous at times. Miss Symons has a good style and has been well taught.

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Christchurch and Wellington had orchestras on at the same time one night later in the week, and I noticed how greatly improved the southern orchestra was. The items were light, but they were played well. The flautist did not dominate this time—in fact, it was difficult to detect what wood-wind the conductor used—the balance was so greatly improved. The piano appears to play a prominent part in this orchestra, apparently "filling in" parts. What I liked about the performance generally was the decision with which each movement was attacked.

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THE Hamilton Dickson String Orchestra played light music also on the same night. This orchestra is improved, but I would like to hear it play some better music. String ensembles have wonderful scope to introduce really good string music on the programmes. What about it, Mr. Dickson—why not that Brandenburg?

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I WENT to a Hammond organ recital by Dr. V. E. Galway, given in the capital city during the week. What an amazing instrument this Hammond organ is! The softer stops were delightful, but there appears to be room for improvement with the quality and depth of the pedal notes. However, I intend writing a little more fully on the instrument shortly. The doctor played well, but seems happier at the console of the Dunedin Town Hall organ.

I DON'T care a rap about the National Theatre; we are the National Theatre.—Miss Lillian Bayliss (Old Vic.).

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