

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.*

LAST week at a private recital

I heard a young singer who had recently returned from London and the Continent after spending four years there studying music. I remembered her when she was in Australia before her departure overseas. Her singing then was much the same as it is now, yet she had had tuition from teachers in some of the best colleges in the world.

After hearing her sing I began to wonder why she had not improved; and then I remembered many other musicians who had left Australia and New Zealand to study overseas, only to find when they returned, that the public had not received them as budding Melbas or successors to Paderewski.

Before they left their native shores everybody had said how marvellous they were. After so many years of splendid tuition they must have improved!

Then they begin to wonder if their trip had been worth while.

There must be dozens of musicians wondering the same thing to-day.

After hearing the young singer last week I asked her who recommended her to study abroad. She told me her teacher and all her friends had influenced her to go. While she had undoubted vocal technique, she was not, and never would be, a musician. Her singing was not an instinctive art, it was a cultivated art. There was no warmth in her voice—no temperament and no feeling. Without these attributes there can be no real musicianship.

In recommending her to study abroad, the young woman's friends had really been her enemies. With the exception that she gained more general experience in life, she had more or less wasted time and money for four years.

So it is with the greater number of young artists. I have in mind several young pianists who contemplate going overseas for further study. I only hope they have been well advised before they leave their native shores.

Sometimes I wonder what the effect would be if one were always candid in criticism. Would it not be better if

all musicians were brave enough to say with confidence when they really did not enjoy a performance, and brave enough also to give praise, in spite of opposing opinions when they truly considered praise was due? To me there always appears to be a clouded insincerity in art that does more damage than good. It would be much kinder to a pupil or performer, if, when enlisting an opinion on a performance, fearless criticism was always given... even at the expense of the performer's immediate "feelings."

SUCH opinions, given entirely without prejudice and with utmost sincerity, would be the greatest assistance any student could have. Personal friends and relatives are seldom the best judges of one's ability, and, although artists generally prefer to hear nice things said about themselves, it would be to their advantage to listen carefully to any adverse criticism and check that, too, before being discouraged!

I RECENTLY claimed to have noticed an improvement in the 3YA orchestra, but I am sorry to say this orchestra had a fall from grace on Wednesday. "The Bohemian Girl" overture was played much out of tune—this was particularly noticeable in the higher register. The final chords were ragged. After enjoying the orchestra so much last time I listened, I was greatly disappointed. Some of the players could not have been watching the conductor carefully, or they would not have anticipated "tutti" chords the way they did. The combination was, however, satisfactorily balanced.

DAWN HARDING pleased me immensely last Wednesday at IYA. She has a beautiful voice—the quality is even throughout, and the piano accompaniments were well played by Mr. Jensen. Auckland listeners should appreciate their good fortune in having such artists as Dawn Harding and Mrs. Harold Owens in their midst. But there is one thing, Miss Harding: I would like to hear your words a little more distinctly at times.

Still, the performance pleased me nearly as much as the Lehmann records I heard from a South Island station during the same week.

A TRIO consisting of Isobel Langlands (violin), Trevor de Clive Lowe (cello) and Marjorie Gully (piano) broadcast from IYA during the week. The players kept well together, but there was little light and shade in the performance. The 'cellist sounded too vigorous at times with the bow arm when playing the lower notes—this was all the more noticeable in view of the fact that the violin was inclined to be on the quiet side throughout. The pianist played exceptionally well, particularly in the first movement, but an over-abundance of pedal in the very loud parts blurred things occasionally. Some sections of the work attained a very high standard indeed.

FREDERICK COLLIER, a well-known Australian bass-baritone, commenced a tour of the main National stations last week. I heard the oratorio recital on Sunday. Mr. Collier has a voice of rich quality, which he used most artistically, even if I did not agree with his phrasing in "Honour and Arms." The long phrase on the word "glory" should be unbroken.

The other arias were beautifully sung. There is not the slightest tendency toward portamento in Mr. Collier's voice. His programme last Tuesday was splendidly sung. He should become popular indeed before his tour is completed.

MR. A. G. THOMPSON, Christchurch baritone, has a good quality, if not an altogether interesting, voice. He, too, lacks light and shade. The low notes come through very well indeed. I did not like his interpretation of "To the Forest" (Tchaikowsky). It is not "LUV making" with a short "V," Mr. Thompson! A lighter style would suit much better in this song. The artist had a general tendency to "chop" most of his words. Perhaps he was concentrating on the final consonants for the purpose of diction.

Generally, the group was lacking in contrast; it needed a good, bright number early in the recital to make it interesting.

SO that listeners in each Australian State should have the opportunity of hearing the exceptionally gifted young Sydney pianist, Valda Aveling, aged eighteen, before her departure for London, the Australian Broadcasting Commission arranged a Commonwealth tour for her.

BY "SCHERZO"