

# ARTIST WHO DEFIES



ALEXANDER KIPNIS.

...His expressive face is diabolic as Mephistopheles in "Faust."

**M**EDIUM of height, sallow in complexion, with brilliant and vital brown eyes, over-scored with heavy dark eyebrows, Alexander Kipnis was trying over his songs with the accompanist for his New Zealand tour, Noel Newson, in the NBS lounge.

As he sang, the glorious bass voice not held in check so much as modulated to a quiet flow of sound, he swayed from one foot to the other. The time of the music, you could see, was running through his brain and into his body.

His eyes lit up, his big head went back as his mouth split in a mighty laugh:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

He was singing one of his songs that will make all New Zealand listen, the "Song of The Flea." It made you tingle to hear it.

**H**ERR HITLER has done New Zealand a good turn.

Alexander Kipnis had much of his musical training in Germany, and he loves the operas of Wagner and the songs of Schubert. But, like Toscanini, the conductor whom he adores, he does not care for Fascism.

When he was in Australia a few months ago, he was due to return to a season in Austria. When the German troops marched across the border and entered Vienna, Alexander Kipnis cancelled his Austrian season.

He decided to come on to New Zealand instead. During his engagement to tour with the NBS, New Zealand listeners will hear the voice of the world-famous bass who lives for his singing, to whom "Art for Art's sake" is no horribly trite platitude, but a deep reality.

All because Hitler's generals marched on to Austria.

...Gave His First Audition  
He Was in a Concentration

Record Interview

by  
"EMILE"

**I**T was his fate, he told me last week, to be born in Southern Russia, in a house which cared nothing for music. Until he was 13 or 14 years old he did not sing, or touch a piano.

Yet, somehow, music was born in him.

He remembers clearly how much the Russian folk songs meant to him. At the age of four or five-years he would sing them all, and often he was so touched by his own singing of them that tears would come into his eyes.

"My mother," he said, smiling, "used to say, 'What are you crying for? Has someone hurt you?' I would say to her, 'I am crying at my own songs.' The songs seemed so sad to me that I had to cry."

**H**IS father died when he was still young, and his family tried to make him follow in his father's footsteps as a merchant. He knew he must follow music.

"I left my mother and got away. I had my shirt, my one suit, and my hat. One day I was no longer there. I left a note to say, 'Good-bye, I am going to study music.'"

**H**E went to Warsaw and had a difficult time supporting himself. While he was a student there he sang in choirs to earn his food. But his voice began to grow, and his passion for Wagner.

Urged on by the passion inside him for further study, he decided to leave Warsaw. He must go to Germany or to Italy. He went to the station and said: "Where is the first train going?" The station officials told him: "To Berlin." He said: "Give me a ticket to Berlin."

That was how he turned out to become an international singer, trained on the

German stage. He would have been a singer of the Italian stage—if the first train had been going to Milan.

**A**ALEXANDER KIPNIS was in Germany when the war broke out. As a Russian subject, he was put into a concentration camp with English, French and other Russians.

"There," he told me, "I was again sad. I sang there, because I was sad. The German colonel of the camp was very musical, and he heard me singing."

The colonel said: Are you a singer by profession?

Kipnis said: No, I am a student.

The colonel said: My brother is the general manager of the State Opera House at Wiesbaden. Would you not like to sing there?

**I**N the age of machine mass production, the true artist alone challenges the cheapening of standards. Alexander Kipnis, world-famous bass, now on tour for the NBS, has given his life to this ideal. Though it is easier to win the handclaps of the many by the singing of a cheap little song, he refuses to give people anything but the best his gifts can offer. How will the public respond in New Zealand?