

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.*

AN oratorio recital by Frederic Collier, the Australian bass-baritone who has been touring the National stations recently, was presented from 2YA on Sunday, July 3. The performance was enjoyable, and the orchestral accompaniments were well played. Mr. Collier has indeed a pleasant voice, and sings intellectually. Wide experience in grand opera has left its mark on the artist. In all the performances I heard during Mr. Collier's tour there was not one characterised by anything but good artistry.

At times Mr. Collier had trouble with colds, and I understand at least one performance had to be cancelled because of this ailment, but, generally speaking, Mr. Collier has a voice with popular appeal.

I remember him in Christchurch, and I enjoyed his jovial company immensely. He sings in the same spirit—there was nothing of the "coldness" in his voice one becomes accustomed to expect from less-experienced performers. This is one artist who enjoys and sounds as if he enjoys his work. Of course, there will be some who claim that Mr. Collier is not the possessor of a "fresh" voice, but I would far sooner listen to sound musicianship than the best that "bright young things" can do on the concert platform.

Here is a tip for young performers: Do not necessarily sacrifice interpretative ability for the satisfaction of knowing you performed every note accurately—that a minim went the full distance and that all the nuances as marked were given their proper attention, that all the expression marks were carefully noted, and that you did not bungle the words.

Of course, there are some high-brows who will affirm that absolute accuracy is what is required for an outstanding performance, but with these people I must heartily disagree!

NOT for one moment do I infer that carelessness should creep into performances, but I do suggest that unless any performance is a faithful expression of emotion it must lack musicianship. It is definite atmosphere that counts, and that is why I have been so disappointed with many artists I have heard during my brief period of listening in New Zealand. I must mention Kipnis again—he is the model for vocalists to follow.

CHORAL bodies are the greatest infringers of tone art in music. So many eyes are glued on the score, that it is almost a physical



FREDERIC COLLIER.

... Nothing cold about him.

impossibility to perform the work as the composer meant it to be performed. Choralists should know their scores almost by heart, so that rigid attention can be paid the conductor's baton, and so that the real spirit behind the music can be interpreted.

FAULTY programme construction has a great deal to do with the neglect of real emotion in music by the performer. I have seen on one performance an excerpt from Elgar's "Banner of St. George," bracketed with the Bach Chorale. How on earth can a choral society be expected to express the reverence of the Bach number immediately after singing a rousing chorus such as "It Comes From the Misty Ages"?

BY "SCHERZO"

It is all wrong. Such programme construction can only lead me to believe that those responsible for such an error are undoubtedly incompetent of having anything to do with building. Let us have real atmosphere in the art. Then, only then, will New Zealand choral performances generally be lifted out of the ruck in which they have apparently dwelt for so long.

A CHOIR of women's voices performed creditably from the Wellington auxiliary station during the week. Technically, the performance was sound, but I do not like a choir of women's voices—to me such combinations lack depth. It is not "range" I refer to—it is the character behind the singing. In this performance the sopranos definitely dominated the other parts. Once again I must protest the importance of good balance in all forms of concerted work. More concentration on the lower instead of on the melodic line should lead to better balance. You cannot build a beautiful home on a weak foundation. It will not last. It is contrary to the laws of Nature. Conductors, I am afraid, forget at times that music is fundamentally a natural art.

AN interesting experiment in New Zealand schools, music was inaugurated last Friday night by the performance of a concert in the Technical College Auditorium, Wellington. The concert was presented on the lines of the Sargent concerts for children in England. Each piece was described by the conductor before it was played.

Mr. Leon de Mauny conducted a professional orchestra for last week's concert, and it went very well, indeed. I heard most of the programme, and the children appeared to enjoy it thoroughly. There was one point noticeable, however—the speaker, in describing the orchestra, was at times inclined to introduce technical terms without fully describing their meanings.

Great care should be taken to see that even the most obvious terms are described quite clearly. Such terms as "four part harmony" sound most obvious to students of harmony, but I venture to say that not more than five per cent. of young people at the concert would really understand the true meaning of the term.

Still, we have heard the first concert, and no doubt some improvements in scheme of presentation will be made before the next. I understand there will be a series of three. The idea is a splendid one.