

## This Week's Special Article

# Science Offers A Guide To Musical Capacity

**Y**OUNG lady, refined, musical, seeks friendship of musical gentleman. Gentine."

Have you ever seen one of these intriguing little "advts." in your daily paper? And have you ever thought how much lies in that final word with the capital "G"?

It should be possible to-day to determine a person's musical potentialities with accuracy; to single out from a bunch of towseled toddlers almost anywhere in New Zealand, the future Taubers and Grace Moores—and those who can never aspire, however hard they work, to rise above household virtuosity.

It's a pity we're so far removed from the amenities of civilisation. Special schools for music tests, such as a visiting American told me the other day now exist in the United States, would have a tremendously beneficial effect on New Zealand home life, and save hundreds of children from hopeless musical drudgery. On the other hand, they would prevent the one great musical tragedy which is worse—the neglect of children who are potentially great.

Educational authorities in New Zealand are rapidly realising that music is, of course, not only for the talented. Everyone should play some musical instrument. But, certain it is that a concert pianist's training need not be wasted on someone who can never do more than amuse himself!

**H**OW many children, with absolutely no talent for music, endure years of drudgery at lessons when they would be better occupied indulging a useful hobby? This article by Eric Baker gives an account of an interesting system, perfected in America, by which the unmusical goats can be divided from the musical sheep.

An American psychologist, says a writer in a famous musical publication, began experimenting with music tests 30 years ago. After developing his procedure, during which he examined thousands of children, he was ready for the big test. Could he really predict success or failure in music, not only in isolated instances, but

in the overwhelming majority of cases?

Only recently were the results of the "measuring" of more than 10,000 people, from nine to 66 years of age, made known, and the records are said to abound in exciting case histories.

When the tests were first begun, an 11-years-old boy was singled out from the crowd. His parents were not in the financial position to encourage his desire to become a violinist. But the tests indicated exceptional merit and lessons were begun immediately. Now, still in his twenties, that man is conducting a symphony orchestra.

In New Zealand, just as in any other country, there are people who often "feel a hankering to write down melodies that flit through their brains." But they don't take themselves seriously enough to find out how to go about it. In a parallel case in the United States, an inherent talent of this nature was discovered in a young girl, and since then she has had many compositions published.

On the other hand, there was Clara who, by the time she was 19, had waded through five years of piano practice, just because (Continued on page 30.)

## In the Wake of the Week's Broadcasts

There was a new band on the air last Sunday from 4ZB—none other than the Port Chalmers Harmonica Band, a musical body previously unknown to me. But I'm a bad picker if it is not heard again, and before very long. The renderings of popular numbers were given with vigour, tunefulness, and a robust volume that suggested much more powerful instruments. Actually the band did have accompaniment (I thought it was banjos) that became rather obtrusive at times, and in subsequent broadcasts should be watched.

**MOUTH ORGANS IN GOOD ENTERTAINMENT** Best number: "Good-bye," from "White Horse Inn."

With a sense of joyous anticipation I tuned in to the Novelettes Instrumental Trio from 4YA recently. I remembered vividly an earlier and delightful broadcast. But, alas, someone had blundered!

**ALAS, SOMEONE HAD BLUNDERED**

For the first bracket the trio was obviously badly arranged about the microphone and almost all that could be heard was the piano-accordion, which selfishly crowded out the other instruments. The second bracket was rather better and indicated that the players had been better grouped. The trio performed very pleasantly in the second transmission, but I fear many people would have been so disappoint-

ed by that first unfortunate bracket that they would not trouble to wait.

It is almost an unwritten law that request sessions—from any station—are confined mainly to lighter numbers. I have often wondered whether this means classical music is not really so popular as some people would have us believe, or **IS CLASSICAL MUSIC POPULAR NOW?** whether its admirers feel that to request the playing of a certain number might tend to cheapen it. An odd thought, perhaps, but it exists. Anyway, I was very much surprised last Sunday when—listening to 4ZB's two-hour request session to hear