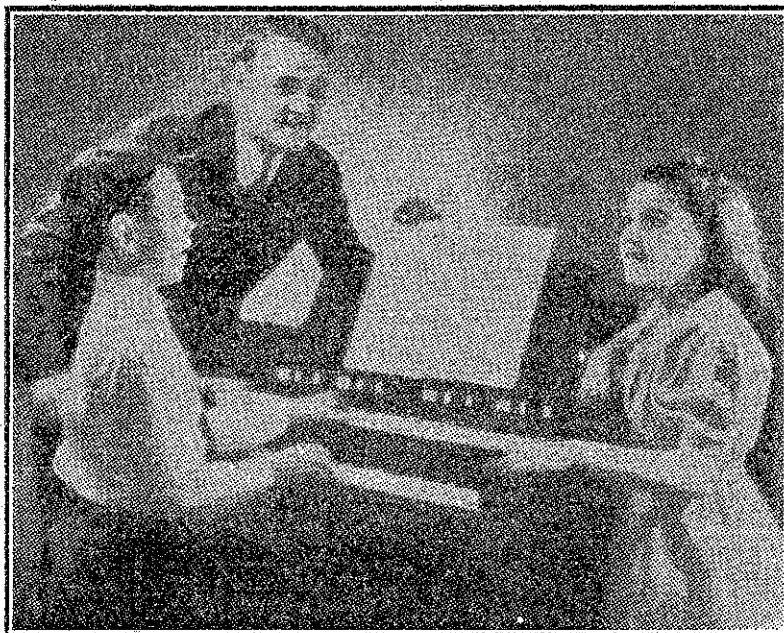


MUSICIANS OF TO-MORROW

How England And
America Secure the
Musical Future

An interview by the
"Record's" Christchurch
Correspondent



THROUGHOUT Great Britain, music—especially school music—is rapidly coming to the fore, leading eventually to the formation of very fine adult choirs and orchestras. Any country, any nation, in fact, to be musically great, must start with its children. Let them play any old instrument, sing any simple song—let them express themselves through music—and thus they will find a tremendously greater joy in living. It has been proved scientifically that children who are taught music in the schools or the home are more efficient, generally, than those who lack musical instruction.

These are, in brief, views of Mr. Victor C. Peters, well-known Christchurch musician, recently returned from a tour of England and the United States. He visited England in 1931 and has noted the rapid strides made in the intervening years in orchestral and choral work.

His researches lead him to think that New Zealand is lagging behind. There are several fine musical instructors in the schools and colleges, but their efforts are restricted. He makes a strong plea for greater interest in orchestral work—by pupils, teachers and, above all, the Government. Once that interest is aroused—and the instructors are given greater scope—there is no reason why New Zealand should not take its place as a country of musical prominence.

SINCE his return to the Dominion, Mr. Peters had hardly a spare moment to himself. He has been busy taking up the musical threads where he left off many months ago, and complying with requests to address this social gathering and that. But he regards these duties not as an arduous task, but as a means of spreading a musical gospel.

THE main trouble with New Zealanders, as Mr. Peters sees it, is that they are content to do the listening while other people do the performing. "I fully appreciate the fine work being done in the schools, but it is limited," he says. "In England every town of decent size has its

director of music for school purposes, while some schools have even as many as three and four full-time music masters." New Zealand might well copy this pattern.

Members of big choirs in England are remarkable sight-readers. They have to be, or their conductors would be more than displeased. It is an undoubted fact that their proficiency comes from their training as school children. A rehearsal by a big choir was a revelation to Mr. Peters. One hour's try-out of an eight-part work, entirely new, found the singers perfectly capable of performing the work unaccompanied! This is due, he claims, to a sound school foundation in musicianship.

N.Z. Behind the World

AMERICA, too, is forging ahead rapidly. Working one's way through college has always challenged the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the American student.

Playing poker with invalids, giving one's blood for transfusion, and trick flying are a few of the novel methods that have been used. There are other means far less spectacular and diverting, but "cashing in" on musical talent and ability to play an instrument is another path that is attracting more and more students. That it is pleasant, profitable, dignified, and leads to worthwhile personal contacts are some of the reasons for this.

WHILE singing in a church choir, or playing the piano in a gymnasium and dancing classes provides a considerable number with extra dollars, by far the most of such students are found in the college bands and orchestras. It is a striking fact that there are almost three times as many people in America earning a living through music as there are in dentistry, playing behind the footlights, or engaged in the ministry, law or architecture. And this does not include the tens of thousands doing part-time work, teaching, singing in choirs, or earning extra cash with violin or saxophone.

There are also five times as many musicians as there are journalists, although journalism has for some years been a recognised vocational. (Continued on page 51.)