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Five Girls And A Man In A Family Orchestra

Love Of Music Is In The Blood Of The Roland Sestet

NOT many cities—countries as far as that goes—can have a talented family of six overseas-trained musicians, who have earned the title of the "Family Orchestra."

New Zealand has the Roland Sestet—five girls and a man—at present living in Christchurch, but working out a concert tour which may include Australia. Touring is nothing to this young combination. It has performed in Vienna and in London.

Leader of the orchestra is Max. The others are Stephanie, Elza, Phyllis, Margit and Olga.

All were born at Te Aroha, children of Mr. and Mrs. D. Roland, the father being a Hungarian. They were taken abroad for study in 1927, and spent about ten years overseas, later appearing in big musical centres, including London.

When they arrived in Vienna, said young Max, who directs the activities of his five sisters, they found things in a very disturbed state, and so for six months they had a holiday in Hungary, camping for many weeks beside the Blue Danube, of which they had heard and read so much.

Though in places where the river flowed through cities, its waters were not true to repute, in the open spaces they found the beautiful, romantic river of their dreams.

There was only one drawback to their months of leisure—their ignorance of the language, for in New Zealand they had spoken nothing but English. They devoted their time to acquiring Hungarian and before long had mastered its difficulties. Then came Vienna.

The carefree existence they had led beside the Danube gave place to serious study, but so much did they love music and so keen were they to learn everything that was

to be learned in the home of music, that they never allowed their interest to lag.

Here came real, hard work. Their master was Professor Rudolf Malcher, leader of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, and, incidentally, a great friend of Kreisler. Madame Kreisler took a keen interest in their progress.

They had special studies with Johann Strauss, grandson of the great composer, and with him played at the Strauss celebrations.

In Budapest they found that life, then, really began at night when much of the time was given to music, and Hungarian Gipsy bands played in every public garden where the people met to talk, smoke and drink coffee. Vienna, however, was no longer the gay place the films made it out to be, yet the people had not lost their love of music; they were steeped in it, and could never lose it.

The Sestet lived two doors from the home where Beethoven composed his famous "Eroica." Sister Olga had the thrill of playing on the composer's piano. They saw Schubert's piano and the original manuscript of his "Ave Maria."

In London the Sestet of New Zealanders played before the Marchioness of Cambridge and on the same programme were Freddie Bartholomew, now famous film star, Nellie Vieveash and the London Diocesan Bandette.

Margit Roland has a cello given to her by Leo Cherniavsky, of the famous Cherniavsky Trio, when the two musical families met in London. It is believed to be of great age. Naturally she treasures it. Margit also has a bow which belonged to Fritz Kreisler, but she does not risk it on her travels.



★ LEADER OF THE BAND.—Max Roland, violinist, directs his five sisters in "The Family Orchestra." ★

Charming Maori Girl Who Gives Songs Of The Islands

CHARMING and rather shy Maori girl, Airini Grennell, has built up an enduring popularity in the few months she has been at 4ZB. Her fortnightly presentations began when she appeared with Kyra Jupp in sessions of popular songs.

When Kyra left for Wellington, Airini continued the presentations, aided by her sisters Myra and Hinemoa.

On Sunday mornings she conducts her session, "Songs of the Islands"; narrating against backgrounds of Island and Maori music, stories of the Polynesian peoples, and describing customs and legends lying behind familiar folk songs.

Airini was born in the Chatham Islands, but since early childhood has lived with her people at Port

Levy, near Lyttelton. She was educated at the Sacred Heart College, Christchurch, specialising in voice production and music. At 18 she had gained her L.T.C.L. and L.A.B., both for singing and piano-playing, as well as scholarships and medals in competitions. She toured New Zealand as leading soprano with the Waiata Maori Choir, and was with the choir on its Australian tour in 1935, and its tour of the British Isles in 1937.

During the tour of the Waiata Choir in England, Airini, along with other members, was presented to their Majesties, King George VI, and Queen Elizabeth. Her grandfather, the well-known South Island Chief, Hone Tare Tikao, had the honour of entertaining the late King George V and Queen Mary when they visited New Zealand as the Duke and Duchess of York.