

AROUND THE WORLD WITH THE MUSICIANS

"At least," said the British violinist, Maurice Clare, who was in the news when he played his violin to the passengers during the fire on board the Rimutaka recently, "I can prove to you that I am Scotch."

It was another shipping mishap—this time in a small boat on the River Tay, near Dundee, where Maurice Clare was born. The violinist, with a small boy, was in a dinghy that was being towed by a sailing craft. The boy cast off the rope, the sailing craft went on and the dinghy got upset in midstream.

"In the middle of the Tay," said Maurice Clare, "I remembered I had 7½d in my pocket. I swam with one hand and kept the other hand in my pocket to make sure the 7½d was still there."

ON board the Rimutaka during the eventful voyage was a friend of the Clares, who has an unusual occupation. He was a New Zealander, Mr. Sam Williams, who runs a miniature theatre in which the actors and actresses are puppets.

For ten years Mr. Williams has been in England, studying art, with his wife, also an artist. He was designer of the costumes for the famous Wells film, "The Shape of Things to Come."

He and his wife, says Maurice Clare, carve their own dolls and paint their own scenery. Their puppets are charming. They give real plays with their puppets, such as Marlowe's "Faustus" right through. They may be touring New Zealand in three months' time.

N.Z. Tour

MAURICE CLARE, too, is touring New Zealand, with his wife and his small daughter. He has been signed up by the NBS for a six-week tour which includes performances at Wellington, Dunedin, Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington. He will have Noel Newson as his accompanist.

Afterwards, he is not sure of his plans. He may stay in New Zealand, if he can find scope for his specialised work. He has had his full share of the city life and success. He wants a less racketing world.

FIRST he learned music from his father, a professional teacher at Dundee. The father worked with him in his studies.

"I always seemed to be virtuous," said Mr. Clare. "I liked working at music. No doubt I was damnably priggish."

Under Seveik

Then the young violinist was sent abroad for further study for two years and a half to Seveik, famous teacher in Czechoslovakia.

"Seveik," said Mr. Clare, "was the man who really put violin playing on a scientific technical basis. He wrote hundreds of exercises which were practically foolproof. It was a sort of Pelmanism for the violin."

It was Seveik who had as his greatest pupils Kubelik, Erica

Morini, Marie Hall, Daisy Kennedy and Zimbalis.

"He was a very nice old man," says Maurice Clare. "I went to him when he was 78 years old, but he was extremely wide awake and with all his faculties."

"He was up at 4 or 5 in the morning to start writing out his exercises and I was often summoned for a lesson at 7 in the morning."

Seveik and his pupils lived in a small Czech village and the old master even then kept a sharp eye on the pupils in his charge. His rule was that his pupils should work seven hours a day.

And at all sorts of hours Seveik would go out, immediately after breakfast, say, or lunch, into the streets where his students lived, and have confidential talks with the owners of the houses, asking them how long their lodgers practised.

"If you were caught out," said Maurice Clare, "he wanted to know why."

Memory

He had an astonishing memory. He could remember without making a mistake all the work a pupil had done for three or four weeks back, and he had 30 or 40 pupils. This great teacher, blind in one eye, died three or four years ago.

Even in those days of 1929, there was occasional unpleasantness with the Germans and the Czechs, said Mr. Clare, though it was shown only in small things. For instance, if a German woman came to live in the village, she would be charged more for the things she bought.

The Czechs themselves were marvellous workers and, being the race that produced Dvorak and Smetana, were excellent musicians. No one could play the Slavonic dances like the most rat-trap Czech orchestra.

AFTER leaving Seveik, the young musician went to study with Carl Flesch, in Berlin, the greatest pedagogue in the world for the violin, though he never produced a genius. He was a Jew, now in London.

His book, the "Art of Violin

Playing," was described by his rival Seveik as the "violinist's Bible."

For over a year and a half Maurice Clare studied with Flesch at Berlin and Baden Baden and then went to Georges Enesco, in Paris, the Romanian composer and violinist.

"He is one of the greatest musicians I have met," said Maurice Clare, who was with him in Paris and Romania. "He takes very few pupils, because he likes to get time to compose, and when you first write to him he tries to put you off by asking for a fabulous fee."

"But when he hears you (and likes your playing) he will reduce his fee to your means. He takes you for less and sometimes for nothing."

"His memory was amazing. He would be teaching you a Mozart Concerto when he



MAURICE CLARE. — The Scottish violinist is making an NBS tour.

would break off and say, 'This passage is practically identical with a phrase in such-and-such an opera, in the second act, where So-and-so comes on.' Then he would sing it to you."

Opening Night

FROM Romania the violinist returned to England and joined the orchestra of the newly started Glynebourne Opera in the country some 80 miles out of London.

He was there for the opening night when the venture was still uncertain and there were very few in the house.

"I estimate that night there were only about 30 who paid."



But by the end of the first week it was doing very well and soon it was booked out for the season. It has been booked out ever since.

"Everyone goes," said Mr. Clare. "Toscanini goes every year he is in England. It has become the social thing to do. And the artistry is magnificent. If you talk of Glynebourne today, it is as if you talk of Glynebourne and Salzburg, the home of the great festivals. They go together."

In London, the young violinist began to make his way to success. He joined Sir Thomas Beecham's Philharmonic Orchestra, played at Covent Garden and for ballet.

Beecham Story

He rose to be sub-leader of the orchestra for six weeks and sometimes he had to lead it. Then came a short period of rest and study in solo work. He came back to London and played solo to the orchestra in which he had played as a member. It was no small achievement.

—Every night he prayed the Germans would bomb the Albert Hall.

HE tells the latest Beecham story. The orchestra was rehearsing in the great empty, draughty London Albert Hall. Suddenly bedlam broke out in an awful sound of hammering. Workmen were sealing pipes in the boiler-room. Sir Thomas jumped as if he had been shot.

Then, as the noise suddenly ceased, he said: "Gentlemen, every night during the war I went down on my bended knees and prayed that the Germans would drop a bomb on this place and that it would be destroyed."

The orchestra went on with its work and then, two minutes later, the noise broke out again, terrific, worse than ever. A seraphic smile came over the face of Sir Thomas Beecham.

"Gentlemen," he said, "at last my dream has come true. They're knocking the place down."

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