

With GRAMOPHONE and RADIO

BY "B NATURAL"

Records of the Week

WITH the broadcast of "The Dream of Gerontius" from 3YA next week, it is interesting to note that there are some fine recordings of this renowned work. It has aptly been described the "finest of its kind," and is one of those works that convince us that the age of the creators of music is not yet past. When presented in Christchurch some 200 will participate. It is recorded on both H.M.V. and Columbia by some of the best known combinations of artists. The Columbia version is recorded on 7308 and 9. The principals are Dame Clara Butt and Maurice d'Oisly, supported in chorus by the Chorus Anglicans and New Queen's Hall Orchestra. This combination alone speaks for a meritorious performance, and when it is conducted by Sir Henry Wood, master conductor of the New Queen's Hall Orchestra, an outstanding rendition is ensured. The full, rich voices of the principals, with the background of the large choir, makes the performance one of undoubted merit. One cannot fail to appreciate the clear enunciation of both soloists, particularly the contralto, as her voice descends into lower registers. H.M.V. chooses different excerpts, and the Hereford Festival Choir records them on D1382, D1350, D1348.

The Keys of Heaven.

THIS popular duet, which will be sung at 1YA on June 1, has been made popular by Dame Clara Butt and Kennerley Rumford, who have recorded for Columbia on 7300. This very old favourite, known almost by everyone, probably better by the refrain,

"Madame will you walk and talk with me," is a duet set to music, and the interpretation given by these two well-known artists leaves nothing to be desired. Every word is clear, and the air delightfully rendered—a perfect recording.

Merrie England.

EXCERPTS from this famous light opera will be presented at 4YA next week by the Dunedin Choral



PROFESSOR ODDONE SAVINI
the noted conductor of the Christchurch Orchestral Society.

—Photo, Stefano Webb.

Society. The recordings of the work are many—it is fully recorded by H.M.V. on D18 to 28, and in Columbia 02804. The latter work is a band selection played by H.M. Grenadier

Sound Made Solid

How Music is Recorded

IN our quarter of the world it is difficult to get first-hand information on how records are made. That it is an involved and interesting process is certain—but how? In an article in a recent number of the "Wireless Magazine," Mr. Kenneth Ulyett tells how he went to a recording studio and what he saw there. We shall let him tell his own story:—

THIS story of a record, so far as I am concerned, is a personal one, inasmuch as a few days ago I went to the studios and recording rooms of a prominent gramophone record concern, and saw records made, and effected a recording myself.

Trial Records.

TO begin absolutely at the beginning, I was asked some time ago to make a trial recording of a few piano solos (a hobby of mine) for the Metropole people, and, anxious to compare the making of a record with the making of a broadcast programme, an appointment was made for a time when some well-known broadcasters would be recording.

The main room is draped with thick, cottonish grey-colour material, the draping extending practically to the full height of the walls. Across the ceiling run cords along which further draping can be drawn by means of a system of wires and pulleys.

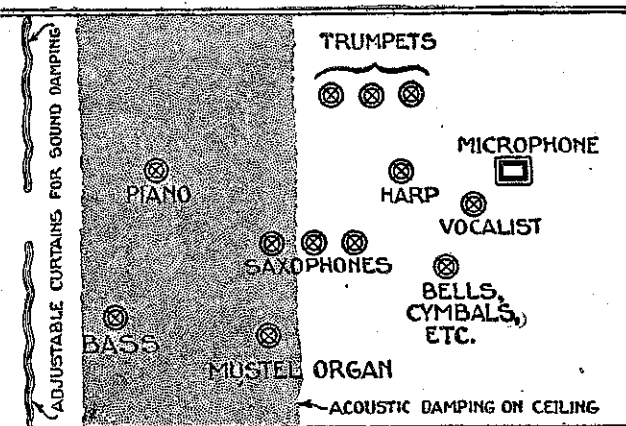
In this way the degree of echo can be controlled, for the actual roof is a good deal higher than the ceiling draping, and when this is pulled right back, the effective height of the room is increased. Heavy matting covers the floor.

The sound of a piano being played in any studio such as this (and, strangely, more noticeably in a gramophone studio than in a B.B.C. studio) always reminds me of a garden party, or an outdoor concert at the seaside!

It is not so much that there is a complete absence of echo, but rather that the echo period is so different from normal that one immediately notices the unusual effect.

Rather Disturbing.

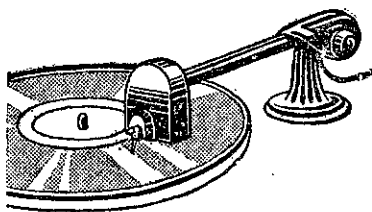
TO performers accustomed to ordinary work this, frankly, is rather disturbing. Of course, recording sys-



The arrangement of the personnel of a jazz orchestra when recording. This is a most important factor, and often means the difference between success and failure.

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AUCKLAND.

THE main Metropole studio is equipped in like fashion. Indeed, in view of the fact that modern gramophone records are almost invariably electrically recorded, it is inevitable that the studio arrangements and the whole procedure should closely resemble broadcast practice. And so I found it.

Guards Regimental Band, conducted by Captain George Miller. The first selection has a live swinging movement led by cornet and trumpet. The tempo changes and the cornet takes up the air strongly supported by the brasses. On the next change the trombone takes up the air with the cornets merrily playing in the upper registers, and the brasses subdued filling in the body. The second side opens with a dancing cornet solo, which leads up to a crescendo in which all instruments participate. Then the trombone leads, leaving the cornet and trumpets swinging up and down in the background. Then all come into unison to give the air the fullest rendition, yet they separate again to unite in the finale. A really fine record.

tems differ, and one may need more echo than others.

But I noticed recently, when at the Blattner talking-film and colour-film studios that, although one of the glass rooms is entirely padded with thick felt, and ventilation has to be carried out with enormous motor-driven fans, the effect is entirely different. There, in the film studio, there is a deathly stillness and quite an appreciable echo.

When preparing broadcast programmes the timing does not have to be accurate to seconds; but it has to be done several weeks in advance; just the reverse is the case with gramophone recording, however.

I played through one or two pieces, and each was accurately timed with a stop-watch. Then the duration was checked with that of standard ten and twelve-inch records, both of which have, for commercial and manufacturing reasons, a definite maximum and minimum time limit.

Little Time Latitude.

THERE is, unfortunately, not a great deal of latitude; this is one of the