

Act One of . . .

## Gounod's FAUST

*to be produced from 2YA by*

Signor Lucien Cesaroni

SIGNOR LUCIEN CESARONI,  
Grand Opera Bass.

A STRONG cast, headed by Signor Lucien Cesaroni, will give a radio presentation of Gounod's "Faust" from 2YA on Friday, October 3. There is no better known bass singer and music teacher in New Zealand than Signor Cesaroni, who comes from a most musical family. The fact that his operatic party is to present excerpts from Gounod's famous opera is sufficient recommendation as to the standard which the performance will reach. The instrumental portion of the programme will be provided by the 2YA Orchestra under Signor A. P. Truda.

An interesting story surrounds "Faust." Considering the great popularity of the

opera, it is strange to recall that in 1859 it was received with mild indifference both in Paris and Milan. In London in 1863, with Tretjens, Trebelli and Charles Santley, the opera was an immediate success. When Adelina Patti appeared as "Marguerite" in the following year (she was then 21), she received an overwhelming ovation.

"Faust" is certainly the most popular of all opera, for in Paris alone some 1700 performances have been given. It was in this opera that Caruso made his debut in 1895 at Caserta, Italy.

THE story is founded, as is that of Berlioz's "Damnation of Faust," on the first part of Goethe's great drama, the scene taking place in a German town. Faust, an old and learned student, is in his study, philosophising on the unsatisfactory results of his life's labours, his insatiable thirst for knowledge having brought him little reward; and, chafing at his advancing age, which will prevent his further studies. He contemplates a cup of poison, when an evil spirit appears in the guise of a dashing cavalier, Mephistopheles, who persuades him to try life in a new form, promising him renewed youth, beauty and wit in exchange for his soul. The compact is made. By the demoniacal powers of Mephistopheles, Faust is transformed into a handsome young cavalier, full of an eager desire for pleasure, and possessed with ample means for the gratifying of his wishes.

Mephistopheles shows him in a vision a lovely village maiden, the gentle Margarita, and Faust, falling desperately in love with her, seeks an opportunity

to gratify his longing. In this he is assisted by the evil Mephistopheles, who quickly finds an opportunity for bringing the pair together.

Margarita, who is greatly beloved by her brother and guardian, Valentine, is left by him in the charge of an elderly dame named Martha when he is called away to the wars; and Margarita, being as virtuous a maiden as she is lovely, he feels that she will be safe until his return. Dame Martha, however, is not a very prudent guardian, for when Faust, having made the acquaintance of the lovely maiden, is brought to her retreat by Mephistopheles, the foolish dame allows the lovers entire freedom. She is too much occupied with the flatteries and attentions lavished upon her by the cunning demon, in whom she sees only a very fascinating cavalier.

AT first Margarita resists her lover, but her own love is so strong that she is powerless to fight against it, and, being childishly innocent of the ways of the world, she is irresistibly led away from the paths of virtue. The awakening from her blissful dream comes at last, however; and when Valentine returns from the wars and hears of his sister's undoing, he furiously challenges her betrayer, and a fierce fight ensues. Faust has no wish to harm the brother of his beloved one, but Mephistopheles, by a dexterous move, directs the sword of his protegee to the heart of Valentine,

who falls dying at his feet. Margarita shrieks as her brother falls, and rushes to his side; but Valentine, with his last breath, curses her for the evil she has wrought. The poor girl is so overcome with horror at this terrible ending to her fair love dream, and so harassed by the persecution of her friends and neighbours, that her mind gives way, and in a sudden frenzy she takes the life of her new-born babe.

For this unreasonable crime she is thrown into prison and condemned to death. Meanwhile Faust, who has been transported by Mephistopheles into other regions of pleasure, cannot forget his beloved Margarita, for whom he had conceived a true affection; and seeing in a vision that she is in trouble and danger, he will not rest until he sees her again. He therefore gains access to her prison, accompanied by Mephistopheles, and passionately (Continued on page 3.)

