

Operatic Concert from 2YA

On May 18, Signor Lucien Cesaroni and his operatic company will present, from 2YA, a number of selections from well-known operas. Below a brief reference to each selection is made, and in several instances the story of the opera leading up to the presentation of the item in question is given.

THE first item for presentation is "Within These Sacred Bowers," from "The Magic Flute," by Mozart. This number which is considered one of the greatest of bass arias, will be sung by Signor Cesaroni.

Then follows the celebrated trio from "I Lombardi" (The Lombards), by Verdi. This will be sung by Eunice Standen, Ray Trewern and Signor Cesaroni, accompanied by the Orchestrina, under the baton of Signor A. P. Truda. This will be the first occasion on which this beautiful trio has been broadcast from a New Zealand studio.

For the fullest appreciation of this work, one must know something of the story of the opera.

"Before the rising of the curtain, Pagano and Arvino, sons of Folco, the Lombard, have fallen in love with Viclinda. Pagano is a man of storms and passions, and his hatred is awakened when the girl prefers his younger brother and marries him. Pagano then attempts to kill Arvino, and, compelled to fly for his life, becomes leader of a gang of brigands.

"The opera begins in the square in front of the Cathedral Church of St. Ambrose at Antioch. Arvino has been elected a captain in the first Crusade against the Saracens. The seemingly repentant Pagano has returned and been forgiven, but the air is dark with suspicion, and justly; for with the aid of Pirro he again attacks Arvino and attempts to kidnap Viclinda. By mistake, however, he slays his father, Folco, and in despair he then flies to the wilderness.

"After many years we find Viclinda dead, and her daughter Giselda a captive of the Saracens. Giselda has been placed in the harem of a Saracen prince, Orontes, who loves her and whom she loves dearly. Orontes however, obeys his mother's command that they shall not marry until they both are of the same religion. Arvino, meanwhile, with a Crusaders' company, seeks a hermit who dwells in a cave above Antioch, hoping to learn from him the whereabouts of his daughter. The repentant Pirro, who aided Pagano in the attack on Arvino, is now in Antioch with the Saracens. Through him the mysterious Hermit contrives to have a gateway left open by night. The Crusaders enter the city and Arvino rescues his daughter.

"But Giselda, almost insane, believing Orontes dead, is so palpably distressed at sight of her father that he becomes greatly angered. Orontes, however, is not dead, and he soon comes to her at risk of his life. She flees with him, but he is wounded and the pair find refuge in the cave of the Hermit. Through



his influence, the dying Orontes becomes a Christian.

"Then Orontes begins the beautiful trio with a lovely flowing melody, and this is followed by the duet passages between Giselda and the priest, and later with her wounded lover. The terzetto grows more impassioned as it proceeds, the three voices combining into a splendid climax at the end.

"After the death of Orontes, the Hermit conveys Giselda to her father, and by his inspiration enables her to find happiness in the religious life. For this, both father and daughter are profoundly grateful. The Hermit takes a highly active part in the fighting against the Saracens, and is mortally wounded.

"ALMOST with his last breath he confesses to Arvino and Giselda that he is none other than Pagano. He dies forgiven by the brother whom he twice has tried to kill."

The next selection for presentation is the famous "Largo al Factotum" (Room for the Factotum) from Rossini's opera, "The Barber of Seville." The story leading up to this solo, which occurs toward the end of the first act, runs:

"The handsome and distinguished Count Almaviva is in love with Rosina, the ward of Dr. Bartolo, a mean and suspicious physician.

"Not wishing to have the glamour of his rank influence the girl, Count Almaviva has taken the name of Lindor, and as such, we find him serenading his lady-love. Not very

successfully, it must be admitted, for she pays no attention though the musicians wake the neighbourhood. He sings a lovely serenade, "Dawn With Her Rosy Mantle," but as it fails, he conceals himself to watch a newcomer who is vigorously making known his identity.

"It is Figaro, the factotum, the jack-of-all-trades, the debonair Barber of Seville—the same hero who figures again in Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro." Figaro is thoroughly well satisfied with himself, and gives a list of his accomplishments in the famous "Largo al Factotum."

"It should be remembered that in the days of the perukes, powder and patches, the barber was not only "tonsorial artist," but also a dentist and surgeon who bled his customers as readily as he shaved them. Incidentally he was a privileged person, whose easy access to the homes of the distinguished made him a convenient instrument for plots and schemes of young lovers and old rouses."

The brilliant and loquacious "Largo al Factotum," sung at break-neck speed, is a severe test of the singer's art. The music is as merry and forceful as the words.

"Miserere," the ever-famous duet from "Il Trovatore," by Verdi, will next be sung to piano and organ accompaniment by Eunice Standen and Ray Trewern.

Quite apart from its dramatic significance, the music of this scene is extraordinarily impressive. The beautiful, sorrowful minor melody sung by Leonora, and the exquisite air by the answering Manrico, are combined and interwoven into the marvellously impressive ensemble which makes the scene perhaps the best-known and the best-beloved of all operatic situations.

THE concluding item is a bass solo, "Leporello's Humorous Ariette," from "Don Juan," the opera by Mozart. This will be sung by Signor Cesaroni, accompanied by the Orchestrina.

Leporello is soliloquising on his difficult occupation as servant to Don Juan, and he complains of "scanty fare and doubtful pay." Finally, in his dissatisfaction, he decides to become a gentleman himself and go courting like his master.

No sooner has he made this decision, however, than he hears his master's footsteps approaching, and his recently-formed resolve weakens a little. Don Juan appears in the doorway, and Leporello is so nervous he—well, listeners will be able to discover what happens themselves.