

IYA to Broadcast the Legend of Nerbudda

ON Thursday evening, September 3, the IYA Broadcasting Choir and the IYA Orchestra will combine to present "The Legend of Nerbudda," the famous dramatic cantata by Hubert Bath.

Hubert Bath is one of England's leading composers and in this work he has given delightful play to the words of the story combining beauty of melody and harmony with expression of Eastern grandeur.

The legend is a very pretty one. The Nerbudda, an Indian river even more holy than the Ganges, rises in the Central Provinces, and after flowing south for a while, turns abruptly to the west, passes through a valley of marble rocks, and eventually reaches the Gulf of Cambay.

The Sone, another river, rising in the tableland of Amarkantak, many miles to the east of Nerbudda's source, at first runs south-east as though to meet her, but, like all other big streams in this part of India (with the exception of the Nerbudda) turns eastward after being joined by a little tributary called the Johila.

The legend relates that the Nerbudda was betrothed by the gods to the Sone, and that, in obedience to this divine decree, both bride-elect and groom-elect went forth upon their journeys, but never met.

Sone is described as coming with due pomp and circumstance, but Nerbudda set out in haste, so anxious and impatient was she to discover the royal personage whose destiny was to be linked to her own.

The slow and stately progress of her affianced at last so increased Nerbudda's curiosity that she determined to find some means of acquainting herself with details of his person. It is the custom in certain parts of India for a bride to be accompanied by the barber's daughter when she goes to her future lord and master, and according to the legend (the map bears out this story), the Queen Nerbudda was accompanied on her journey by a little slave-stream, Johila.

It was to pretty Johila that the impatient bride entrusted the mission which resulted in so much unhappiness, for, piqued at finding herself in advance of her affianced, Nerbudda bade her slave run east in search of Sone, stealthily obtain a close view of him, and then return to make a full and faithful report.

Across the uplands that overlook the valley of the Sone hastened little Johila, happy and light-hearted, loyal to her mistress, and anxious only to do her bidding. But, alas! from the moment that she first peeped at the bridegroom her heart was his; and he, becoming aware of her proximity, was also captivated. Some say that he mistook her for Nerbudda, even that she pretended to be the Queen, but it is more probable that the gods themselves were responsible for the events which followed.

Although wooed by the river, the little stream sought to return whence she had come. But Sone's beauty held her captive, his voice, ever calling, prevented her from retracing her way. At last, unable to withstand his tender pleading, she yielded her lips to his.

Nerbudda, learning what had occurred, indignant and dismayed, now rushed headlong upon her course; but, refusing to journey in the same direction as two such traitors, she turned suddenly aside and declared that, although it had been ordained that she flow east, she never would travel in the same direction as those who had betrayed

her, and accordingly she hastened westward.

But giant marble rocks, some ten miles from the city of Jubbulpore, refused permission to the haughty Queen to pass. This served but to enrage Nerbudda, and to make her the more determined to flow west, though all the other rivers travelled east.

Some idea of her fury may be gathered from the fact that she did not hesitate to hurl herself against the dark, forbidding, sullen rocks, and bursting through all barriers, successfully fought her way westward—and west to this day she flows—a virgin river.

SHE is much venerated by the Hindus, who speak of her as Mother Nerbudda, as though she were married, but explain, with great respect, that her Majesty would never consent to wed, so deeply did she feel the indignity she suffered from her affianced bridegroom.

It is because she blesses all, and because all are anxious to address her by the name which they consider to be at once the most respectful and the most endearing, that they still ever call her "Mother."

A well-chosen cast will be responsible for the rendition of principal parts. Miss Cathleen Mulqueen as Nerbudda should prove that she is well able to fulfil the name part. Her voice is a contralto of

pure tonal quality, and, although a young singer, she has been successful in quite a number of productions from IYA. She is also one of the station's most popular soloists. Mrs. Freda Evans (Johila), lyric soprano, has an excellent reputation both at the station and on the concert platform. Her success in the name part of the "Rebel Maid," one of IYA's most successful productions, will be well remembered by listeners. She is also a member of the Salon Trio, a very popular combination at the studio.

Mr. Sid. Poffley ("The Morning Breeze"), tenor, is comparatively new, and is another of Mr. Barnes's finds. He joined up as a chorister with the IYA Broadcasting Choir about twelve months ago, and was chosen by Mr. Barnes as soloist in all the Christmas productions last year. A very capable singer, with a good breezy style and a voice that is well suited for broadcasting.

Mr. Len Heath (Hindoo Priest), basso, although a very prominent member of the choir, has not been heard a great deal as soloist. He is the composer of a number of choral works that have been successfully presented by the choir, and in the absence of Mr. Barnes always deputises as conductor. His voice and temperament are well suited for the part of the Hindoo priest, and we have no doubt that he should prove an excellent acquisition to the cast. Mr. Len. Barnes (Sone), baritone, of course needs no introduction. His fine baritone voice is always enjoyable.

The success of the production is assured, as Mr. Barnes's enthusiasm and ability in anything he undertakes is proverbial. The "Legend of Nerbudda" has been in rehearsal for the past four months, and its presentation should be something well worth listening to.



The Cast:

Nerbudda	Cathleen Mulqueen
Johila	Mrs. Freda Evans
The Morning Breeze	Syd. Poffley
Sone	Len Barnes
The Pundit [Hindoo Priest]	Len Heath

The Choir sings the chorus of villagers, voices of the trees, voices of the jasmine flowers, voices of the gods, and chorus of cultivators.