

Radio and Music in U.S.A.

A Visitor's Impressions

(By "Call Up.")

MR. SYD. SLY, perhaps the Dominion's best-known player of brass instruments, has some interesting impressions to relate of his recent sojourn in the United States. Mr. Sly, who teaches in Auckland, spent two years in the States, being most of this time in Los Angeles, where, although conditions were far from good, he secured work with most of the leading bands.

"There is no dearth of music in Los Angeles," says Mr. Sly. "There are at least ten big radio stations giving a twenty-four-hour a day service, and there are innumerable bands and orchestras. The radio stations are operated by the big newspapers and by commercial concerns, and such people as Almee MacPherson, the evangelist. At any hour of the day one can pick up any type of programme, from jazz to sermons.

"There are bands at all the first-class hotels, in the parks during the summer months, at the beach cities, and at places of entertainment, so that the Los Angeles citizen has music almost wherever he goes. There are also about two hundred players working for the talkies, but even so there is a great deal of unemployment among musicians.

"A feature of the city's music is the fact that every secondary school for both sexes has its bands. One primary school had a band of forty-five players. The university of Southern California has a very fine band of about a hundred and fifty players. The band at Long Beach, a very popular resort, is now conducted by Herbert Clark, who enjoys a world-wide reputation as solo cornetist.

"Although there are so many unemployed musicians, the ones who are fortunate enough to be in positions receive excellent rates of pay. Remuneration is strictly regulated by the American Federation of Musicians, a very powerful body which conducts musical matters with an iron hand. For radio contracts there is a weekly minimum of thirty-five dollars a player for half-an-hour or less a day, but many players receive more than this. Two hundred dollars a week is quite an ordinary thing for talkie work. Even for broadcasting all rehearsals are paid for.

"While I was in Los Angeles, Paul Whiteman and his band visited the city, proving as popular as ever. Incidentally I had the pleasure of meeting him personally, and also Ben Bernie and Al. Kauffman, notable figures in the dance band world."

Mr. Sly, who went to America with the express purpose of getting the latest ideas and tuition in regard to brass playing, considers that in America the playing of most brass instruments has undoubtedly reached a higher standard than it has here, but says there is no reason why, with proper tuition, New Zealand players should not ultimately reach an equally high standard. Mr. Sly is a trombone and trumpet specialist, although he can play any brass instrument. He is to play the trombone in the new IYA Orchestra.

The Love Songs of BURNS

a 4YA
Broad-
cast



AT 4YA next Tuesday evening, Mr. W. B. McEwan, Librarian at Dunedin Public Library, will give a lecture on "The Love Songs of Burns." Mr. McEwan is a great student of the writings of Scotland's national poet.

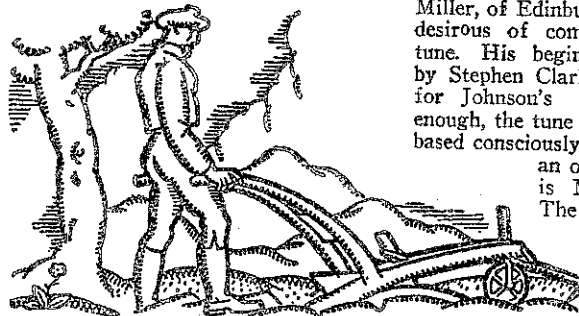
What Thomas Moore did for Irish folk-music, Robert Burns had done for Scotland some time previously. He wrote verses of a folk-like character for many of the traditional Scottish airs. With both poets, this was a labour of love, a task which engaged their deepest feelings, and, in the case of Burns, as well as that of Moore, it is by the first lines of their poems that many of the traditional Scottish and Irish airs are now known. Here the similarity ceases, for while Burns frequently took the old words and the idea they contained, recasting both in a truly poetic and much more beautiful form, Moore usually wrote an entirely

original poem in what he conceived to be the spirit of the melody which he had in mind.

The touching melody of "John Anderson," long preserved by oral tradition, was written down in the year 1578 in Queen Elizabeth's "Virginal Book," which is still preserved. John Anderson was a real personage, and, according to tradition, the town piper of Kelso and a good deal of a joker. The old verses about him are all of a humorous character. But Burns in composing his verses for this melody has idealised and poetized the traditional character of John Anderson, and in so doing has produced a poem which is beautifully fitted to the simple and dignified character of the old melody.

The melody of "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon" is said to have been partly 'faked' on the black keys of the piano by a Mr. James Miller, of Edinburgh, who was greatly desirous of composing a Scottish tune. His beginning was completed by Stephen Clark, arranger of music for Johnson's Museum. Curiously enough, the tune appears to have been based consciously or unconsciously, on an old English air, "Lost is My Quiet Forever."

The words are by Burns. All these items will be included in this outstanding programme.



Famous Musicians Broadcast

"A SIGN of the times is the large number of famous musicians who are abandoning the concert platform for the broadcasting studio," said Mrs. J. Paykel, formerly Miss Eva Stern, of New York, who arrived in Auckland recently after her marriage in Honolulu to Mr. J. Paykel, of Auckland.

Since her first visit to Auckland last winter, Mrs. Paykel has given a number of pianoforte recitals in New York, and she became one of the most popular musical artists engaged by the National Broadcasting Company of America.

"Damrosch is one of the celebrities who has left the concert platform for broadcasting, and he is now conducting an orchestra for one of the radio companies," said Mrs. Paykel. "Toscha Seidel, the violinist, is another famous musician who can now only be heard over the air. Heifetz, who held out for years against broadcasting, played for the radio last winter. Mischa Elman is also playing for the radio, and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and all the Metropolitan Opera stars are

broadcasting. These musicians first maintained that people would not go to hear them if they could be heard equally well over the wireless, but I think it stands to reason that the radio introduces them to a much wider public, which, having heard them over the air, will go to see them on the platform."

A.B.C. Radio Service Heavy Maintenance Costs

AUSTRALIAN listeners apparently receive poor value for their money. According to the Melbourne "Herald": "Australia has a smaller proportion of wireless license revenue devoted to radio programme expenditure than any other country in the world. The British Broadcasting Company spends 78 per cent. of its £1,100,000 a year revenue on programmes alone, compared with the 50 per cent. given to the Australian Broadcasting Company. This comparison, however, is further aggravated by the fact that the A.B.C., from the 50 per cent. of the license fee money it receives, takes 10 per cent. for its profit, pays all the overhead expenses of its nation-wide organisation, all salaries and directors' fees, a big contribution to the Postal Department for lines and mechanics for outside relays, and an enormous sum—about £25,000 a year—for copyright. Therefore, of the £160,000 which the A.B.C. receives from the 332,000 license fees in Australia, there is very little for payment of artists and entertainers at Australia's nine A class stations. Last year the sum was only 25 per cent. of the total license revenue.

"When only 6/- of every 24/- is paid out in programmes, there seems room for reduction somewhere. From the listeners' point of view, the two contributions which could best be reduced are the 9/- taken by the Postal Department and the payments for copyright. The remaining 3/- is paid to Amalgamated Wireless for royalties, and is being used to build up a radio industry which in the future will be of immense value to the station. The Postal Department's contribution, however, is not all being used for the purpose for which it was set aside. The bulk of it is going into consolidated revenue. Approximately 1/- a license is absorbed by the Radio Department's administration expenses, and another 2/- a license to operate the stations. That leaves 6/- a license for construction of relay stations. Only four have been built with the £150,000 collected from this source in the past two years.

"In the country's present condition, and in view of the number of B class stations which have been licensed in country towns and are serving the purpose for which relay stations were intended, this contribution easily could be suspended, permitting a reduction in fees to 18/- a year."

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