

HERE AND THERE

MAINLY ABOUT PEOPLE AND PROGRAMME FEATURES



INCLUDED in the dinner-music session at 8YA on August 10 is the deservedly-popular "Waiata Poi," and of this charming song Dr. Keith Barry recently related the following: "One of my happiest recollections is walking in late to a well-known London theatre a few years ago, and hearing the strains of 'Waiata Poi' floating in the auditorium. Hurrying upstairs I stood at the back of the dress circle and saw a 'Maori chorus' of 50 English girls doing the poi dance while a well-known musical comedy star sang the famous melody. The effect was overwhelming, and there were at least three encores and half-a-dozen recalls. At a little party Hill told us that he composed it in a few moments about 11 o'clock one evening while a friend was getting some supper. So do great inspirations come, without a moment's notice, and in most inconvenient places. 'Waiata Poi' has the reputation of having more than once been the cause of breaking the inflexible 'no encore' regulation at certain American orchestral concerts." I only the musical organisations would co-operate and invite Alfred Hill to tour New Zealand and act as their "Guest Conductor," what a stimulus would be given to local effort in musical art!

THE last opera of Mozart, written a few months before his death, approaches so near to perfection that one almost feels in it the motion of the spirit wings which were (so soon, alas!) to bear away Mozart's genius from earth, too early by far, for he died at the age of 35, having accomplished in this short period more than other great composers have in their full lives. One of the most remarkable operas known to the stage, "The Magic Flute," is half fictitious and half allegorical. The text done by an old stage director was long mistaken for a fiction without common sense, but Mozart saw deeper, else he would not have adapted his wonderful music to it.

IT is true the tales of old Egypt are mixed up in a curious manner with modern free-masonry, but a deep moral sense pervades the whole. During the 18th century Freemasonry had a political as well as a benevolent side. It attracted men of high character whose ideal was the regeneration of humanity by moral means, but rightly or wrongly, it was held by the Church and the political authorities to be dangerous both to religion and the well-being of the State. At the same time it drew into its ranks a fair number of highly placed ecclesiastics and politicians, some in the capacity of spies, but the majority undoubtedly sincere philanthropists and idealists.

THE Emperor Franz I was a member of a Viennese lodge, and in 1743 Vienna was treated to the piquant situation of the lodge being raided by orders of the Empress Maria Theresa, and her august husband having to escape by the back stairs. History reveals this woman as being the possessor of many royal and domestic virtues and her record, in the main, is worthy of her period and station. One of the vocal gems in "The Magic Flute" is the bass solo, "Within These Sacred



HARISON COOK.

Walls," which demands a fully developed opera sense on the part of the singer. This is a possession of the Singapore-born artist who was loquacious in Malay long before he could say a sentence in English, and whose long association with grand opera companies and Covent Garden cultivated that inborn sense. Listeners to 2YA on August 3 will hear Mr. Harrison Cook in "Within These Sacred Walls."

DUNEDIN'S renewed enthusiasm for active participation in the production of the works of the masters, marks a milestone in New Zealand's musical history. The response of youth in the formation of a juvenile orchestra and the animation of the Dunedin Orchestral Society are gratifying evidences that brightly reflect one of the southerners' noble characteristics—a refusal to accept defeat. In this age, when mechanical music threatens to swamp the urge for individual musical expression, Dunedin has accepted the challenge and a prototype of C. J. Dennis

following Dunedin's progress in musical matters is afforded the opportunity of adding to a new version of "The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke," one entitled "The Stouth of Mechanised Music."

INCLUDED in the senior society's very fine programme of August 10, which 4YA will relay, is Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, that the composer called in relation to the mighty seventh, the little symphony. It is anything but little in conception, however, and the finale is often spoken of as one of the supreme movements among symphonies. In the first movement the tunes are set out quite straightforwardly and then subjected to humorous treatment of great ingenuity. The conclusion is a tremendous outburst of sound—Beethoven in a bit of a temper. More humour follows with graceful and attractive interludes and until the stirring and bolsterous finale the symphony is full of surprises more startling than Haydn's.

THE inclusion of Mr. Max Scherek's name on the programme demands that a word shall be said about him. The talented son of a gifted father, who could from memory play the musical score of over 30 grand operas in addition to memorising an immense repertoire in other spheres, Mr. Scherek has been able to observe the advance of musical appreciation in the Dominion as few others have. Mr. Robert Parker, C.M.G., Mr. Lund, Mr. Towsey and Mr. Scherek's father made musical history in New Zealand, and those who hear Mr. Max's in two movements of Chopin's opus. 11, No. 1, will agree that the mantle of the father has fallen upon the shoulders of the son.

IT is not generally known that the Prince of Wales is particularly fond of negro spirituals, his favourite being "I've Got a Robe." The inclusion of this number in the programme of the Commercial Travellers' Male Voice Choir, which 2YA is broadcasting on August 8, focuses attention on the origin of these songs. They date from the time when the negroes were slaves upon the plantations. Isolated as they were, ignorant and elemental in their ways, they turned to the promises given in the Bible and used them as a basis of song-expression. They improvised melodies and words of the most simple character, their method of singing being to quote a line in colloquial language and repeat and develop the fact embodied in it until all had taken it up.

ENGINEERS have commenced operations on the site of the new Lill station.