

Engagements were given to such local artists, societies, and musical combinations as had attained a reasonable standard of performance. There were 2,291 broadcasts by local artists, 901 recitals by local musical societies and bands, and 2,157 broadcasts by local speakers.

THE NATIONAL ORCHESTRA AND CELEBRITY CONCERTS

During 1947 the National Orchestra continued its inaugural tour and became known, recognized, and appreciated by the concert audiences and radio listeners of the whole country. The first concerts given in Christchurch, Dunedin, and Auckland received a full measure of support, and, together with the earlier series given in Wellington, did much to achieve a high prestige for the Orchestra with former critics and the general public alike, who recognized it as a significant factor in the expansion of musical awareness and general culture of the nation.

Three evening concerts were given in Christchurch during the first visit, two conducted by Andersen Tyrer and one by Dr. Edgar Bainton as guest conductor. The opportunity was taken to give two afternoon concerts for school pupils. Later the Orchestra gave two evening concerts in Dunedin, and again two afternoon concerts for school pupils.

During the first Auckland season, within less than three weeks, the Orchestra played to five capacity houses in the Town Hall. The first two concerts were conducted by Andersen Tyrer, the second two by Eugene Goossens, and the final one by Warwick Braithwaite. The opportunity was taken to invite Mr. Goossens to conduct the Orchestra on his way through Auckland to take up his dual appointment as Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Director of the New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music. Mr. Braithwaite, a New-Zealand-born conductor who had spent many years in England, was engaged to undertake a tour of the four main centres as guest conductor of the Orchestra. In addition to the final concert of the Auckland season, he conducted two concerts in Wellington, two in Christchurch, two in Dunedin, and made a final appearance with the Orchestra in Wellington.

After its first concert tour the Orchestra was broken up into its four groups, one group being attached to the studio in each of the main centres. In addition to giving regular broadcast performances as separate groups, they joined the local studio orchestras for studio broadcasts, and were also required to supplement the studio orchestras when called upon for assistance by local societies. The groups devoted a considerable proportion of their time to the preparation of new works to be included in the repertoire of the National Orchestra.

To strengthen the Orchestra Mr. Tyrer, in October, undertook a further audition tour, which was widely advertised. Every effort was made to find suitable players, but those known to be of sufficiently high standard did not wish to accept engagement as professional musicians. It was obvious that unless steps were taken to engage overseas musicians it would not be possible to keep to the plans to commence the full orchestral season in March, 1948. Accordingly, Mr. Tyrer was sent to the United Kingdom to engage suitable musicians, and at the same time to undertake other work on behalf of the Service. During less than a month in England Mr. Tyrer succeeded in engaging from a large number of applicants the two flautists, four violinists, and one French-horn player required. He also completed final arrangements for the engagement of the two main principals for the opera "Carmen" proposed for production in June, July, and August of 1948. It had been found impossible to arrive at satisfactory arrangements by correspondence, but Mr. Tyrer was able to resolve the difficulties by personal interview. From other viewpoints, too, Mr. Tyrer's visit to England was of great benefit to the Service. He investigated the market for high-quality concert grand pianos, of which there has been a severe shortage in New Zealand for many years, with the result