

Local music societies were assisted with the loan of music from the Service's library, and in the case of some societies by the loan of orchestras for combined broadcast performances.

A Royal ode contest was conducted by the Service in connection with the proposed visit by the King and Queen. The winner was Miss Ruth France of Christchurch, and the winning musical setting was composed by Mr. Terence Vaughan.

The policy of building up an historical library of Maori chants, &c., was continued, and a recent visit by the Mobile Recording Unit to Tokaanu resulted in some valuable material being recorded. This historical library is quite extensive, and the work of preserving ancient Maori material that is in danger of being lost will be continued.

NATIONAL ORCHESTRA AND CELEBRITY CONCERTS

The 1949-50 season was a very full one for the National Orchestra with extensive tours of both the North and South Islands.

The opening of the season found a large part of the National Orchestra still engaged in opera performances in association with the touring International Opera Company. In all, the Orchestra appeared 104 times with the Opera Company and played to an estimated audience of 120,000 people.

At the conclusion of the season the full Orchestra reassembled in Wellington and then commenced an extensive tour of the North Island. In the main this was a provincial tour and concerts were given at New Plymouth, Hawera, Wanganui, Palmerston North, Hastings, Napier, Gisborne, and Hamilton. School concerts were also given at each of these centres. The Orchestra took part in Auckland's Music Festival Week, appearing in orchestral concerts and with combined choral groups, the principal work being Elgar's "Caractacus." The New Zealand pianist Peter Cooper also appeared with the Orchestra at this Festival. Later in the year two further visits were made to Auckland for public and school concerts. During the first of these, associated artists were Peers Coetmore, English 'cellist, and Stewart Harvey, Auckland baritone. At the schools concert two young soloists, Miss Barbara Jury and Miss Winifred Cooke, were presented in concerto performances.

Following the Auckland concerts the Orchestra played at Whangarei and Rotorua. An extensive tour of the South Island was also made during the season with concerts at Christchurch, Dunedin, and Invercargill, two of them being in association with Alexandr Helmann, Russian-American pianist. First visits were made to Ashburton, Oamaru, Timaru, Greymouth, Hokitika, Westport, Nelson, and Blenheim.

Free school concerts for post-primary pupils were also given at most of these centres.

On its return to the North Island the Orchestra visited Masterton. In two of the Wellington concerts the Orchestra had as associated artist, the well-known violinist Leo Cherniavsky, who featured the Tchaikowsky and Mendelssohn violin concertos. Both performances attracted capacity houses and were very well received, as also were the Wellington performances by Alexandr Helmann.

Including the performances with the Opera Company, the National Orchestra gave a total of 188 performances, including 37 schools concerts. It is estimated that the audiences at the schools concerts totalled approximately 40,000 children.

On the 19th December Mr. Andersen Tyrer relinquished his engagement with the National Orchestra. During his association with the Orchestra, which commenced in October, 1946, Mr. Tyrer gave unstintingly of his ability and enthusiasm in the training of the Orchestra and in the attainment of a standard of performance which won high praise from audiences and music critics.

Applications for appointment as Conductor for a term of three years were invited in England, Australia, and New Zealand, and from seventy-one applicants, Mr. Michael Bowles was appointed. Mr. Bowles is eminently qualified in attainment and experience for the position, and we are confident that his term of office will be a notable one in the development of the National Orchestra.