

# The Auckland Competitions.

## SOLO PIANIST RECITAL.

BY BAYREUTH.

AUCKLAND'S competitions, which have been running all the week and do not conclude before Saturday night, are once more drawing large houses and attracting great interest. At this stage of the proceedings the opportunity is ripe for a critical survey embracing the whole performances. Those that we have seen so far were notable more for numbers than quality in the musical section, whilst the elocutionary work showed improvement on that of last year. The big event of the week was the solo pianist contest, nearly the whole of the 40 entrants facing the judge. The difficulties of an adjudicator under such circumstances are more perhaps than anybody can realise, unless they have undertaken the actual work themselves. But when all things are considered, the awards made by the judge were somewhat puzzling to others whose qualifications entitled their opinions to be weighed. Professor Ives, of course, is not an amateur nor inexperienced in such matters, and as an outsider he can be trusted to formulate an opinion not tinged by local or personal feeling. It is unfortunate that there should be a difference of opinion, but, as a musical critic, I am bound to say the placing of the competitors in the solo pianist recital was at variance with a very solid and experienced body of musical thought. It is not a case of any provincial or insular outlook. It is a case of artistic experience and judgment going dead against the decision. The winner of the contest, Miss E. McLaren (of Dunedin), is to be congratulated, and no one begrudges her the triumph. She plays with a good deal of temperament, but though her final performance was not without technical flaws, Professor Ives, in giving his decision, asked outright whether the audience had ever heard a finer technique, a finer touch or obviously a finer temperament. "I don't remember," he said, according to my shorthand notes of the speech, "in all my life hearing a better interpretation of that finale." Perhaps the judge's memory is defective, otherwise this is tantamount to an admission of limited experience. I am only one of musical people in Auckland who have heard leading exponents of Beethoven such as Busoni, Damond, or Paderewski, but none of the local critics (myself included) were in any way

aware that the winner of the solo competition, capable and praiseworthy as her performance was, had surpassed or even approached the work of these great artists. The awards of 95 marks out of a possible 100 for the first, and 93 to second and third, only serve to make the judge's sincerity and declaration all the more obvious. His remarks would not stand the test of mature judgment. On the final performance, undoubtedly Professor Ives placed the performers in order of merit, however unsatisfactory the marking appears, but it is felt an error of judgment was made in excluding at least one of the performers from the final. Professor Ives, of course, clearly of a different opinion which must be respected, but it is suggestive at least to record the fact that one of the pianists chosen to compete in the final had arranged before the contest came on to take lessons from that very competitor, whose exceptionally good work did not find him a place. It is not a case of pitting just one opinion against another—the fact which matters is that experienced opinions differed widely from the one which excluded the name of Mr Baxter Bockley from the final. The judgment is made now and the incident is, let it be hoped, closed for good.

The final placing of the contestants was as follows:—  
Miss E. McLaren (Dunedin), 95 marks 1  
Miss Q. Foster (Dunedin), 93 marks 2  
Miss M. Mitchell (Dunedin), 93 marks 2  
The second prize of £8 8/ will therefore be divided, and will accompany the piano to Dunedin.

The performers in this contest were:—  
On Tuesday: Mr A. Bartley (Auckland), Mr A. O. Baker (Dunedin), Miss E. McLaren (Dunedin), Miss F. Cannon (Christchurch), and Mrs Blundell (R-mura).  
On Wednesday: Miss Edna Smeaton, L.A.B. (Auckland), Miss M. Mitchell (Dunedin), Miss T. Gallagher (Ellerslie), Mrs E. Sutherland (Devonport), Mrs B. Dale (Waihi), Miss F. Denz (Mount Roskill), Mr L. A. Eady (Auckland), and Mr A. Pacey (Dunedin).  
On Thursday: Misses P. Mills, M. Lewia, C. Biggens, D. White, M. Lusher, and E. Webb, of Auckland; M. Taylor, Takau; Mrs Rogers, of Ponsonby, and Mr R. Yates, of Auckland.  
On Friday: Misses C. Brook (Bishop), N. Ridley (Dunedin), B. Snodgrass (Te Puke), L. Harper (Christchurch), C. Wilkie (Fordell), A. Thearby (Wanganui), and Q. Foster (Dunedin), Mrs G. A. Martin (Ellerslie), Mrs Ingram (Te Aroha), and Messrs J. McGuire (Ponsonby), W. Woolford (Mt Eden), and Baxter Buckley (Gore).

The choir contest was not productive of the number of entries which one would have expected from the excellent prizes that were offered. There appears to be some apathy on the part of Auckland conductors which local congregations ought to rebel against if they have any appreciation of energy and lively interests. The Grafton-road Methodists, which won last year and at Wellington recently, were again successful, thus winning the challenge shield and the conductor's baton. Trinity Methodists were second, and Unitarian's third.

The violin solo produced an exceptionally good string in Miss Ida Bosworth (Auckland), who won not only the first prize with 95 marks, but warm praise from the judge. Professor Ives said that he had judged different instrumentalists in Australia, but he had never heard violin playing come up to the standard he had in Auckland. The winner of first place (Miss Bosworth) was an exceptionally gifted player. She had musical instinct, graceful pose, perfect ear, fine technique, played with spirit, and she gave a poetic and artistic performance of the solo. He would be very proud of her if she was his daughter. She had a brilliant career before her, and her teacher had done excellent work and was to be complimented. Mr A. Gordon (Auckland), was placed second (91 marks), and Miss Mathieson, Wellington, third (87 marks).  
Remarks upon the leading elocutionary work are held over till next week, pending the completion of the competitions. The society is fortunate in having secured such a solid and careful judge in Mr J. H. Hopkins, of Melbourne.

## FLOWER CARNIV

### SWEET PEA PAGEANT NEXT SATURDAY.

Auckland's big flower carnival and sweet pea pageant on Saturday last had to be postponed owing to the continuous deluge which assailed the city. It has therefore been decided to hold the sweet pea pageant, embracing, as it does, a big display of floral costumes, posters, decorated exhibits, etc., at the Metropolitan Grounds, Auckland, on Saturday next.

Entries can be made with the managing secretary, Mr. W. Satchell, at Mr. Wallace Bruce's offices, Swanson-street.

## BUSINESS PARS.

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For floral art work, wedding orders at shortest notice, funeral emblems, and choice cut flowers, Miss Murray may be consulted at the Queen's Floral Depot, 185, Upper Symonds-street.

At the Tutorial Postal College, Woodside-road, Auckland, correspondence tuition is provided for Civil Service, teachers' certificates, and University examinations; Mr. M. C. W. Irvine, principal.

Country visitors are welcomed and general patronage asked for at Len Adams', Britomart Hotel.

Mr. Percy F. Wade, magician and society entertainer, 44, Shelly Beach-road, is open for engagements at concerts, "At Homes," garden parties, etc. Dates may be booked at Wildman and Arey's.

Mr. John Routly, architect and structural engineer, may be consulted at his rooms, Empire Buildings, Auckland.

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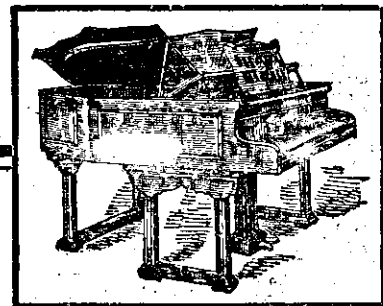
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