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STATE ORCHESTRA'S

S.A. ORCHESTRA

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

CHANGE OF PITCH

Low Pitch Instruments Used

High Standard In London

Reform To Be Effected This Year

By Dr. Alex Burnard

15th SEASON TO BEGIN

In the past the South Australian Orchestra has been under a decided disadvantage in adhering to the now obsolete high pitch, stated Mr. Harold Parsons yesterday. Mr. Parsons has been appointed permanent conductor of the orchestra, which, founded by Dr. E. Harold Davies, enters upon its 15th year on Saturday night, when the first concert of the season will be given in the Elder Hall.

A large audience greeted the South Australian Orchestra's opening performance for 1934. The occasion was notable for two reasons—the adoption of low-pitch instruments for the first time, and that Saturday night's concert was given in the Elder Hall. It is early days yet to comment much on the pitch of the winds; they must have time to "run themselves in," some of them; but we can definitely say that the orchestra's true home is the Town Hall. The Conservatorium hall is notoriously "tricky," acoustically, especially half-way back, and every now and then there was an echo or a blurring. But it was not bad. The grouping and general balance were excellent, and the string work was about the best yet. Mr. Harold Parsons was as alert as could be, and was a master of nuance.

Mr. Peter Bornstein, who returned by the Mongolla on Saturday from a five months' trip abroad, said that the average efficiency of orchestral playing in London was higher than ever. There was a tendency to level down the individuality of players. British composers were gradually coming to the fore, but on the whole the old masters predominated in programmes, although an evening was occasionally devoted to modern writers.

With the large number of orchestral concerts and recitals billed in London, Mr. Bornstein said that it was difficult to take account of them all. Celebrity repertoires were apt to suffer from familiarity. The most patronised artist during his visit was Artur Schnabel, the great German pianist, concerning whom there was a diversity of opinion. Kriesler was as popular as ever, and still able to fill the Albert Hall.

Mr. Bornstein was personally conducted over Broadcasting House by Dr. Adrian Boult, principal conductor and musical director of the B.B.C. He was very impressed with the architectural features of the building, its interior decorative scheme, and technical efficiency. Through the courtesy of the B.B.C., he was allowed to attend rehearsals of orchestras and soloists. He heard such famous artists as Carl Flesch, Frederick Lamond, and Schnabel, as well as excerpts from the new opera "Wozzek," by Alban Berg, which was conducted by Dr. Boult.

A new string trio by Hindemith, and Prokofieff playing in his own new piano concerto, were among the many interesting events which attracted Mr. Bornstein's attention. These two composers belonged to the modern German and Russian schools, respectively, he said. The Prokofieff piece was percussive in its nature, and could not be judged by old standards. It was rather on the style of the hammerclavier, and had no euphony. Rhythmically, it was very vital, but was without any color and hardly any melodic line.

Mr. Bornstein gave a recital at the Grotian Hall in London, and the critics were favorably impressed with his interpretation of the moderns. He will give a recital in the Elder Hall on May 14, and will play the Bach chaconne and Debussy sonata, which were particularly well received in London. He will resume teaching at the Conservatorium next month.

The orchestra will number 60 players this year, Mr. Parsons having increased the string section. He has added stands to the first and second violins, and to the cellos. Mr. Parsons has also enlarged the percussion section, which in modern orchestras consists of more than timpani and drums, to meet the demand of present-day scores.

"For many years conductors of important musical bodies have realised the necessity of fixing a standard of pitch which will meet with general approval," said Mr. Parsons. "That decided upon is considerably lower than the pitch hitherto used, and our orchestra has thereby been seriously handicapped. The change to low pitch necessitates a big expense, as new instruments must be procured in the wind section. This year the much-desired reform will be effected, so that co-operation with visiting artists from abroad will not present the difficulties of the past. The University has dealt with the problem also, and the organ in the Elder Hall is at present being remodelled and tuned in accordance with the low pitch."



Mr. Harold Parsons

Town Hall Organ

"It now remains for the Town Hall authorities to fall into line and have the pitch of their organ lowered," aided Mr. Parsons. "In its present state the instrument may be said to be obsolete. Future choral performances will be seriously handicapped by the non-inclusion of the organ."

"Several new and important works are set down for inclusion in our programmes this year," continued Mr. Parsons. "The most impressive should be the Symphony in D minor of Cesar Franck. Capriccio Espagnol, by Rimsky-Korsakov, will be a feature of the second concert. It is hoped to include a major work of Sibelius, who is so much in demand just now in London. Symphonies of Schubert, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky will also be performed. The year's programmes, therefore, should be of exceptional interest. The lighter musical side will also receive due consideration. Grieg's 'Peer Gynt' suite will be performed at the first concert and selections from Sullivan's 'Mikado' at the second. Nearly 70 symphonic concerts have been presented, and this fact in itself fully justifies the assertion that the orchestra is doing much for the advancement of music in this State."

Saturday's Concert

Included in the programme to be presented at the Elder Hall on Saturday night is Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony, Weber's "Oberon" overture, Elgar's "Bavarian Dances," and Grieg's "Peer Gynt" suite. Mr. George Pearce will appear as solo pianist in the magnificent Saint-Saens Concerto No. 2 in G minor with the full orchestra. This will be the first performance of this concerto with orchestra here and the event should be of outstanding interest. Miss Linda Wald will sing an aria from "Le Cid" (Massenet) and a group of Strauss songs. The concert is being held in the Elder Hall because of the Town Hall being unavailable. The remaining concerts, however, will be given in the Town Hall on the second Saturday in each month, beginning in June.

Weber's "Oberon" Overture impressed by its contrasts, and its fine definition and attack. We had some great work in the "Unfinished" Symphony, whose first movement realised itself for the Leviathan it is. The passage towards the close of the "development" was truly in "the grand style." Some charming wind effects were heard in the Andante, but some were rather excruciating—pitch again, but we must not complain. The effects were made almost solely by nuance and color (its single-windedness, simplicity, and restraint were very impressive), but I thought it might have gained by rubato.

The "Peer Gynt" Suite (No. 1) was necessary the greatest sufferer as regards pitch. Enough of that. The first two numbers, "Morning" and the "Death of Aase," went rather faster than usual. "Anitra," however, was a very demure damsel. The balance in the "Death" was exquisite. There is surely no color in the world to touch massed strings, muted or otherwise. "The Mountain King" gave us a very finely gauged "swelling" indeed. The first two of Three Bavarian Dances, from Elgar's Op. 27, were ultra simple material. Very sensitive conducting and response to it gave us a delightfully free handling of the tempi. The Finale showed more of the real giant Elgar, and provided a stirring finish to the programme.

Mr. George Pearce was the soloist in the Saint-Saens G Minor Concerto. He found much of poetry in the opening movement, and showed mastery of the plentifully bestowed bravura. Specially appealing was his control in the peroration, where the Bachian dignity of the preamble reasserts itself. The orchestra was very ready in the Scherzo, and the soloist crisp and rhythmic. His rapid passage work had a fine restraint and cleanliness. The Finale went at a good healthy canter, and hung together excellently. At times the soloist showed a tendency to force the pace (e.g., in the long chain of trills). He stood up grandly to the prolonged technical demands and thoroughly earned his ovation at the end. The ensemble was of a high standard, but the echo was at its worst in this item, sometimes rendering definition impossible. I wanted to hover among the rafters to see how sounds fared up there.

Miss Linda Wald, to Mr. Pearce's satisfying accompaniments, gave us some of her most delightful singing. She has a refined quality that is quite her own. Deep sadness pervaded "Pleurez mes yeux" (Massenet), intensely felt all through, with a heavy climax at the end. Her encore (by Raoul Pugno) was beautifully tender. For her second instalment she gave us Strauss. "Dream in the Twilight" suited her head quality to a T, and her pianissimo was lovely, but I thought it slightly on the fast side. She caught most of the throb and joyousness of "Longing Hearts."

Adv. 1-5-34

Mr. R. J. Clark, who graduated in law last year at the University of Adelaide, and who was admitted to the Bar on April 21, has been appointed secretary of the Law Society of South Australia. He is only 22 years of age, and was educated at King's College, where he was a prefect in 1928. Mr. Clark was one of the first four prefects appointed at that college. He is the first old scholar of King's College to have graduated for the LL.B. degree at any university, and he is an ex-president of the King's Old Collegians' Association, and a committee member of that association. Last year, at the University, he was president of the Australian Student Christian Movement, and a member on the International Relations Club committee.

Adv. 1-5-34

Dr. A. C. D. Rivett, the chief executive officer of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, will today convey to the Melbourne University authorities his decision not to accept the position of salaried vice-chancellor of the university. By his decision Dr. Rivett renounces an additional £400 a year, but it is believed Federal Ministry will shortly be increasing his present salary.

Adv. 1-5-34

Members of the British, Australian, and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition, 1929-31, headed by Sir Douglas Mawson, have been awarded by his Majesty the King polar medals in bronze, with appropriate clasps. The announcement of the awards was made by his Excellency the Governor-General (Sir Isaac Isaacs) at Canberra last night. More than 50 medals have been awarded, every member of the expedition, from the cook to the commander, receiving one.

MUS. DOC., UNIVERSITY OF W.A.

Honorary Degree Conferred On Prof. E. Harold Davies

PERTH, April 29.

The honorary degree of Doctor of Music was conferred on Professor E. Harold Davies, Mus. Doc., Director of the Elder Conservatorium of Music, University of Adelaide, by the Chancellor of the University of Western Australia (Sir Walter James), at a conversation, held last night at Winthrop Hall, in honor of the visiting delegates to the conference of the Australian Music Examinations Board.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University (Professor H. E. Whitfield) said Dr. Davies was an illustrious musician and a learned man, known and loved throughout Australia.

Adv. 30-4-34

At the meeting of the Council of the University on Friday the Chancellor (Sir George Murray) recalled the life of Sir Josiah Symon and the gifts which he had made to the University, and moved that the sympathy of the University be conveyed to Lady Symon.

Mr. Bornstein's Concert

I WENT to the Grotian Hall in Wigmore street on Tuesday night to hear Mr. Peter Bornstein give a violin recital, in which he was assisted at the piano by Mr. Gerald Moore. The recital greatly pleased a goodly audience, which included more than a sprinkling of South Australians. These included the Agent-General and Mrs. Hill, Mr. and Mrs. Clive Carey, Mrs. Bornstein, Madame Schilsky, widow of Professor Schilsky, and her actor son, Mr. Austin Trevor. Mr. Bornstein tells me he will be leaving London next week in order to reach Adelaide in time for the opening of the Conservatorium term. He will return to London in November, when he has arranged to give another recital, and will be here for the concert season. The whole of the time since he arrived in England he has spent in attending concerts and recitals, listening to broadcasts and observing tendencies—in his words, reconnoitring.

He observes, he said, some slight tendency to return to the classical in violin music. Ten years ago when he was here, Stravinsky was being played with great enthusiasm. Today his vogue seemed to have passed, and now there was noticeable a great enthusiasm for Bach. The frequency with which he had heard the Bach Chaconne included in concerts recently he judged to be an indication of a general appreciation of the composer's greatness as a writer of violin music. Mr. Bornstein is greatly interested in the work of young English composers. He is to hear next week the first public playing of a sonata by a young man named Rubbra, with a possible view to playing it in Adelaide.

MUSIC EXAMINERS FOR PERTH

Annual Conference Soon

The annual conference of the Australian Music Examiners' Board will be held in Perth from April 27 to May 1. Delegates from several States passed through Adelaide today in the East-West express.

Prof. Bernard Heinze and Mr. J. A. Steele, Mus. Bac., will represent the Melbourne University.

Dr. Arundel Orchard, of the Sydney Conservatorium, passed through in the Karoola last week. The registrar of the conservatorium (Mr. S. G. Triglone) was a passenger from Sydney in the Melbourne express today.

Mr. Sydney May, of the University of Queensland, will represent that State, and Mr. George Limb will represent Tasmania.

Prof. E. Harold Davies, of the Elder Conservatorium, joined the delegates here as South Australian representative, and Prof. A. D. Ross will join the conference at Perth as the West Australian delegate.

Mr. J. Sutton Crow, of the University of Melbourne, will be general secretary of the conference.

News 24-4-34

Dr. M. L. Oliphant, one of the scientists concerned in the discovery of a third type of hydrogen at the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge, is a son of Mr. H. G. Oliphant, of Ayres road, Westbourne Park, and was formerly associated with Professor Kerr Grant at the Adelaide University. Dr. Oliphant is a Messel Research Fellow, and has been associated with Lord Rutherford in the Cavendish Laboratory for the past 64 years.