

SECTION XIII.

MUSIC AT THE EXHIBITION.—AMUSEMENTS.

Good music was one of the best features of the Exhibition, a feature that did a great deal to brighten the impressions of the big show carried away by visitors. The music, indeed, was of a class that opened a new world to thousands of New-Zealanders, more particularly the younger generation. It not only entertained, but it educated, and it was the means of arousing a deep and genuine love for the great masters of music amongst a large body of the people.

This was the mission fulfilled by the Exhibition Orchestra, a splendid musical body raised and retained for the Exhibition season by the New Zealand Government. It was early recognised that good music was a necessity if the Exhibition was to be made a success, and arrangements were made for a strong orchestral force to play daily throughout the season. Mr. Alfred Hill, a talented young New Zealand musician and composer—who has made the interpretation of the special spirit and genius of Maori music one of his particular studies—was appointed conductor of the orchestra. The number of the orchestral force was fixed at fifty-three, a force that enabled Mr. Hill to deal adequately with the works of the world's greatest composers. Mr. Hill made a trip to Australia in August, 1906, for the purpose of selecting a number of musicians there, and he succeeded in gathering together the very best talent in the ranks of Australian and New Zealand instrumentalists.

The orchestra was made up of—

Ten first violins.	One harp.	Four horns.
Ten second violins.	Two flutes.	Two trumpets (trumpetinas were used).
Five violas.	Two oboes.	Three trombones.
Six cellos.	Two clarionets.	One drum, &c.
Three double basses.	Two bassoons.	

Of these players, twenty-nine were engaged from Australia and twenty-four from New Zealand. Seven were Italians and three Germans, the rest English. Five ladies were included among the number. The combination was admitted on all sides to have been the finest ever heard in the colony. Mr. Hill was fortunate in securing such a fine musician as Mr. George Weston as leader. It was this gentleman who led Mr. Cowan's orchestra at the Melbourne Exhibition some years ago. The orchestra contained many fine soloists in the persons of Messrs. George Weston and Cyril Monk (violinists); Miss Arline Thackeray and Miss Wells (violinists); Messrs. Gladstone Bell and Johnstone (violoncello-players); Messrs. Jamieson and Truda (flautists); Messrs. Clive and Ilforté (clarionets); Mr. Kuhr (hornist); and Mr. Oakes (trombonist).

The orchestra played on an average twice a day. The works chosen for performance included symphonies by Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Goetz, and Brahms. Most of the standard overtures were played; and suites, ballet music, and miscellaneous items by Wagner, St. Saens, Tschaiikowski, Bazzini, Bizet, Massenet, Delibes, Gounod, and Sullivan varied the programmes. Several concertos for pianoforte and orchestra and violin and orchestra gave colonial artists an opportunity of playing for the first time with a first-class orchestra. Chamber-music concerts were also given, at which many works hitherto unheard in New Zealand were brought out. Besides string-music, items for wind instruments alone, and wind in combination with strings proved acceptable numbers. At first, owing no doubt to the great novelty

of the side-shows, the unusually large number of bright sunny days, and the fact that the majority of people visited the Exhibition primarily for easy amusement, the orchestral concerts were poorly attended. By degrees the merit and high standard of the concerts became known, and the attendance increased very largely as the season went on. As showing the educative value of the work of the orchestra, the tastes of the audiences improved so much in the six months that, while the lighter music gave the greatest pleasure at the earlier concerts, it was the works of the classic writers that held their attention and won their applause in the end. During the last month of the Exhibition the Concert Hall was crowded to overflowing, and at the last concert of all the Hon. George Jones made a very flattering speech, eulogizing Mr. Hill and the players under his direction, and remarking that it was a thousand pities that the people or Government of New Zealand could not see its way clear to make the orchestra a permanent institution. The Acting-Premier, the Hon. W. Hall-Jones, in his speech to the Governor on the closing-day, also made reference to the splendid work the orchestra had achieved from an artistic and educative point of view. The Press of the whole colony had nothing but the highest praise for the glorious feast of music that had been provided for New Zealand by Mr. Hill and his band. It was mentioned as an interesting fact that at the ordinary rate of giving orchestral society concerts in cities—namely, four a year—it would take sixty years to give the number of concerts provided by the Exhibition Orchestra in six months.

Sir John Gorst, the British Government's Special Commissioner to the Exhibition, in referring to the music at the Exhibition, said that the Ode as performed on the opening-day of the Exhibition by the orchestra and the large choir would have made a great impression even in the art centres of the Old World.

Of the first orchestral concert (a programme of Beethoven, Massenet, and Wagner) given in the Concert Hall, a critic wrote, "The concert artistically was far and away the finest performance of classical orchestral music that has ever been heard in New Zealand. So magnificent was the executive skill, so fine the attention given to smallest detail and least accent, and so utterly responsive was the band to the slightest direction of the conductor (Mr. Alfred Hill) that the public were almost convinced they were hearing the music called 'popular.' Those who came just to hear the orchestra play a bar or two were held enthralled, and sat the programme out in a sort of ecstatic dream. If the audience was small, it was terrifically enthusiastic."

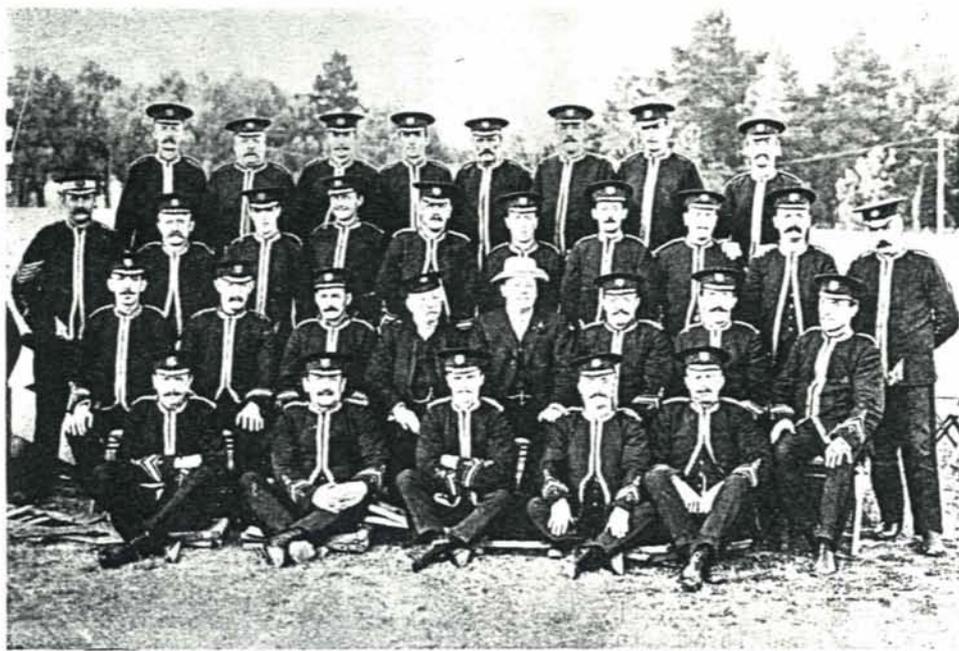
At the close of the Exhibition Mr. Hill and his orchestra toured New Zealand—Mrs. John Prouse, of Wellington, kindly financing the tour, thus making it possible for



MR. ALFRED HILL, CONDUCTOR OF THE ORCHESTRA.

the people of the principal towns of New Zealand who were not able to visit the Exhibition to hear music of a standard never attempted in the colony before.

Another musical feast provided during the Exhibition season was the outcome of a generous and public-spirited inspiration on the part of Mr. Henry Brett, of Auckland, one of the Auckland Commissioners of the Exhibition. Mr. Brett, who is the President of the Auckland Orchestral Society, and vice-president of the Choral Society, and also president of the Auckland Liedertafel, has been closely connected with musical matters in Auckland for the past forty years. He was one of those who strongly supported the Exhibition Executive Committee in their first appeal to the Government for an efficient orchestra, and in the earlier stages of the negotiations, before the Government had decided finally to largely increase the orchestra, Mr. Brett approached his Orchestral Society and offered to take them to Christchurch provided the orchestra contained not



THE "BESSES O' THE BARN" BAND.

less than sixty performers. Mr. Brett's offer was accepted, and the members practised hard for several months. The permanent orchestra had in the meantime been increased to fifty-three, under Mr. A. Hill's control; but Mr. Brett considered that the Auckland society's hard work deserved recognition, and he therefore carried out his original intention. The Auckland orchestra, numbering about seventy, under the conductorship of Herr Wielaert, accordingly visited Christchurch as guests of Mr. Brett, who paid all expenses from the time of leaving Auckland until they returned. The orchestra gave three concerts, which elicited high eulogy. There were two vocalists with the orchestra—Madame Wielaert and Mr. Hamilton Hodges of Auckland.

During January there was a particularly large gathering of musicians connected with the Exhibition. Besides the Exhibition Orchestra with its fifty-three members

all told, there were the Besses o' th' Barn Band, numbering thirty-six, the Auckland Orchestral Society, seventy strong, and the Christchurch Musical Union Orchestra; the total number of instrumentalists was over two hundred.

Organ recitals were another excellent feature of the musical side of the Exhibition. Recitals of an admirable order were given by Dr. Bradshaw and other musicians on the fine organ in the Concert Hall.

Amongst the vocalists who appeared at the Exhibition concerts were some of New Zealand's and Australia's finest singers, and one or two celebrities in the outer world of song, such as Madame Blanche Arral. The New-Zealanders included Miss Amy Murphy, Mrs. Burns, Madame Wielaert, Mr. John Prouse, and Miss Florence Quinn, a young Auckland contralto who had received her training in Bendigo, Victoria.

A great musical event was the visit to the Exhibition of the Besses o' th' Barn Brass Band, the oldest and most celebrated band of music in the world. The "Besses" arrived in New Zealand from England early in January, and played two seasons, each of a fortnight, at the Exhibition, one in January and the other in March. They played every afternoon and evening, often in the Sports Ground as well as indoors. The Band, which came from Whitfield, Manchester, takes its name from an old Lancashire village called the Besses o' th' Barn, and it has been in existence for over a hundred years. As far back as 1821 the Besses were awarded their first prize at musical competitions—that was at the coronation of King George IV. During 1892 the Besses held every brass band challenge cup in Great Britain; and in the year 1903 they gained their crowning victory at the great National Championship Contest, held at the Crystal Palace, London, when they succeeded in carrying off the Thousand Guineas Trophy, and with it, for one year, the Brass Band Championship of Great Britain and the Colonies. The band numbered thirty performers, under the conductorship of Mr. Alex. Owen. Their concerts were magnificent demonstrations of the real beauty of brass-instrument playing. No one who heard the grand "Tannhäuser" overture performed by the Besses will ever forget it. As a Christchurch bandsman remarked the day after the farewell performance of the Besses, "they taught us a new musical language."

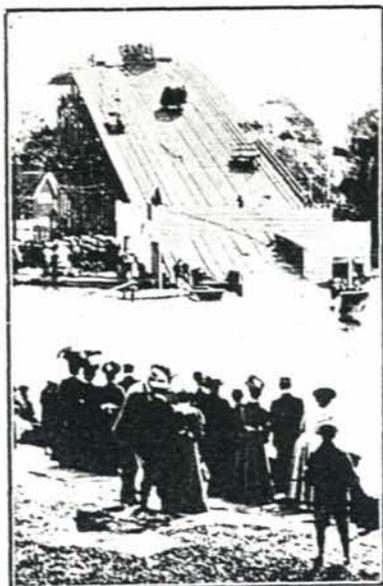
The farewell concert of the Besses o' th' Barn Band, given in the Exhibition Sports Ground on the evening of the 14th March, was attended by a very large audience. At the conclusion of the concert, Mr. Siddall, the conductor of the Woolston Brass Band, on behalf of the members, presented Mr. Owen, the conductor of the Besses o' th' Barn, with a handsome travelling-rug, as a token of the esteem in which he was held by the band. They were very grateful to Mr. Owen, Mr. Siddall said, for his kindness to them before the bands contest, and the band was very proud to have sat at his feet for a while. It was rarely that New Zealand would have the opportunity to hear such a band as he had under his control, and his visit would no doubt be of great value in pointing a way to the players of the colony.

A Christchurch musical critic well summarised the qualities of the great band, and its impression on the music-lover, when he wrote, "A feeling of stupefaction overcomes the listener who fully realises the magnitude of the feat accomplished by the conductor. The beauty of tone, often resembling the mellow effects of the wood-wind, the fine smooth legatos, an unfailing precision of attack, and the excellence of individual performers are as nothing compared with the consummate art and restraint displayed in the blending of the instruments, each player conscious of the exact degree of sound necessary for the harmonization of the whole, without blurring the perfection of outline in theme or counter-theme, even at the fullest power. And this alone involves a degree of artistic perception and refinement and a controlling power that stamp Mr. Alexander Owen as the great conductor which undoubtedly he may claim to be."

AMUSEMENTS AND SIDE-SHOWS.

No visitor to the Exhibition could have had reason to complain of the want of amusement. In the grounds a space of 12 acres was devoted to a "Wonderland," in which the great feature was a water-chute. Between this and the Exhibition Buildings there was a miniature "Pike" with its varied diversions, and there were a number of other side-shows, all of which helped towards the gaiety and merriment of the million. Then there were the daily concerts, and such popular entertainments as West's "Living Pictures" and the Brescians, in the Concert Hall; and, by way of contrast, the *poi*-dances and *hakas* in the Maori village; while frequent athletic and military sports and other competitions were held on the Sports Ground.

"Wonderland" was the big show-place for those on amusement bent. It was open every afternoon and evening, and was as a rule the busiest place in the Exhibition.



THE WATER-CHUTE.

Bordering the Victoria Lake, it was pleasantly situated, and was a particularly brilliant picture on fete nights, when countless lights illuminated the grounds and buildings and the little lake. The "Wonderland" diversions included the first water-chute erected in New Zealand; a mirth-provoking "helter-skelter" tower; a toboggan or switch-back; an uncanny-looking monster Chinese dragon, running to and fro on a tram-line and carrying loads of wondering juveniles; a "Katzenjammer Castle," with its darksome interior, its weird noises and alarms; a couple of camels, on whose backs the little folk learned something of the gait and manners of the "ships of the desert"; and some performing dogs and monkeys. The water-chute, a novelty to stay-at-home New Zealanders, was easily the most popular of all these forms of holiday-pleasuring. Its summit was some 60 ft. above the ground-level, and the boats with their merry freights "shot the chute" in thrilling fashion down into the lake, and, skimming over the water, brought up at the little landing-stage near the "Wonderland" entrance. At night, when a chute-ride gathered an added thrill, crowds would collect on the opposite side of the lake to watch the flying boats, and enjoy

the half-feigned, half-in-earnest shrieks of feminine alarm as the lightning-barges took the water.

"Wonderland" was organized and financed by a New Zealand syndicate, and was under the management of Mr. A. L. Baird. Over 350,000 people purchased tickets of admission, and the concession and complimentary tickets used brought this number up to probably half a million.

The "Pike," with its marionettes, "laughing-gallery," "House of Trouble," "Rocky Road to Dublin," and slot-machines and peep-shows of all kinds, was another popular resort. It was under the management of Mr. Hamilton. The "laughing-gallery" was particularly well patronised. In the vicinity were a riding-gallery, a "jungle" shooting-gallery, and sundry other attractions for juveniles and those of older growth. A camera obscura, and an "air-ship" that worked on wire ropes and took cruises over

the lake waters and back, were to be visited further in the rear, between the pine grove and the Maori pa.

Best of the indoor "side-shows" was the great cyclorama of the Battle of Gettysburg. This huge circular canvas, 375 ft. in length and 45 ft. in height—with every figure life-size—was housed in an immense galvanised-iron structure at the southern end of the Exhibition. The wonderful picture, with its realistic battle-effects and its explanatory lecture, drew large crowds all through the Exhibition season. The record attendance was on Easter Monday, when nearly four thousand people paid for admission. Amongst the visitors were no fewer than twelve veterans of the American Civil War, who had either fought in or been present at the famous three-days battle. Nine of these old soldiers were New Zealand residents. Of the twelve, five had fought on the Northern side and seven in the Confederate ranks.

Another form of diversion was provided by O'Neill's Buckjumpers. The attempts of local equestrians to ride the buckjumpers, in the contests for silver cups and other prizes, were often hugely amusing to the spectators.

A specially attractive feature of the Exhibition by night was the beautiful pyrotechnic displays given by a representative of Pain and Son's London Fireworks, who had come out from England for the express purpose of giving firework-exhibitions during the season. The first splay was given on New Year's Eve, when there was an immense attendance, and aerial and ground fireworks exhibitions in numerous elaborate designs were given once a week thereafter, until Easter Monday. Several exhibitions of day-light fireworks, an innovation from the East, were also given by Pain and Son.

DAILY ATTRACTIONS.

The following is a typical list of the "daily attractions" of various kinds, with the hours at which each was open, as published in the official programmes:—

ART GALLERY.

Monday—6d.	Wednesday—6d.	Friday—1s.
Tuesday—6d.	Thursday—Free.	Saturday—Free.

FERNERY.—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.—Free.

AQUARIUM.—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.—Free.

MAORI PA.—Open 10.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m.—*Poi-dances and haka*s by Maoris and Rarotongans at 3.30.

GEYSER. "Model Rotorua."—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.—Free.

FIJIAN CAMP.

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT'S EXPERIMENTAL GRASSES and BEE APIARY.—10 a.m. to 8 p.m.—Free.

MINES DEPARTMENT.—Coal-mine.

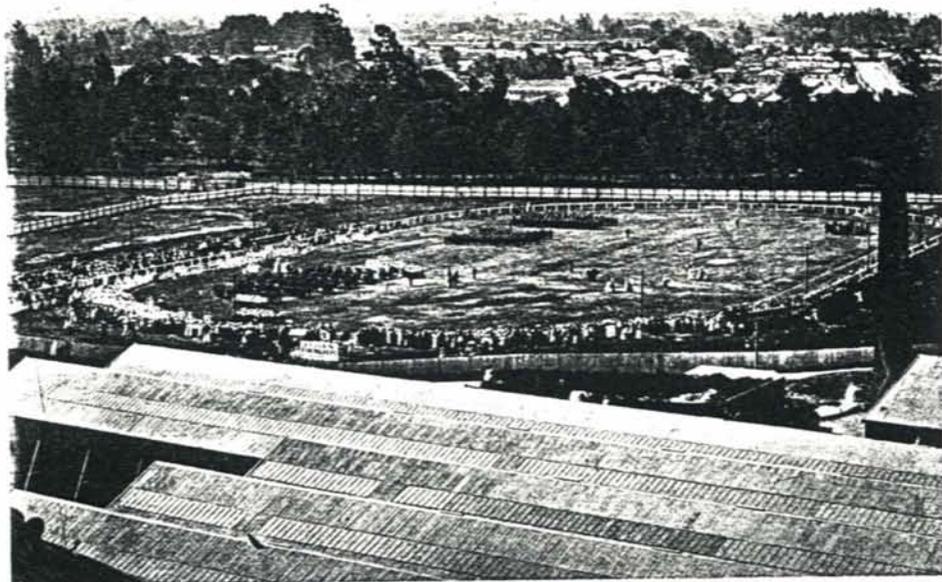
WONDERLAND.

	2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.	7 to 10.30.
Water-chute.	Fancy diving.	Camels.
Helter-skelter.	Toboggan.	Performing dogs and monkeys.
Dragon.	Katzenjammer Castle.	Tea-rooms.

THE PIKE.

Marionettes.	Laughing-gallery.	Slot-machines, &c.
The House of Trouble.	Rocky Road to Dublin.	

ELECTRIC ELEVATOR (South Tower).—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.
CYCLORAMA, "The Battle of Gettysburg."—10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
WEST'S PICTURES.—Every half-hour.
EGYPTIAN HALL.—Every half-hour.
WORKING COLLIERY.—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.
BUCKJUMPERS.—8 p.m. to 10 p.m.
JUNGLE SHOOTING-GALLERY.—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.
BOXBALL RINK.—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.
RIDING-GALLERY.—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.
AIR-SHIP.—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.
MOTOR-LAUNCHES (on river).—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.
PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO.—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.
WORKING MODELS.—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.
THE GIANT CHILDREN.—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.
CAMERA OBSCURA.—10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
CONEY ISLAND.—10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.



A MILITARY PARADE ON THE SPORTS-GROUND.