

## Walking and Talking With Schnabel

Artur Schnabel with his gentle manner, his thatch of grey hair, his warm handshake, and his cigar, came down the steps of his hotel this morning, stood in a patch of Queensland winter sunshine, waved away the offer for a drive to 11 o'clock rehearsal at the City Hall, and said, *'I will walk. How could I drive on a morning like this? Here you have the climate of the Riviera. I will walk'*.

And walk he did, up George Street, across Queen Street, into Adelaide Street and down to the City Hall. He walked leisurely, and as he walked he talked, so engrossingly, that his listener pacing at his side has earned the lifelong enemy of half a dozen pedestrians. by crashing into them without apology, and was nearly run over at three intersections. And this is what he said: *"This lovely morning! I find your Queensland a compensation for having to miss summer. When I come to tour so far a country as Australia, my chief regret, is 'now, I will have to miss summer.' and I think what a pity the world is a sphere. 'But here in Queensland it is almost summer and I think how lucky I am'.*

### NO ENCORE AND WHY

Yes, what you have heard is true. I give no encores, and I will give you my reasons..

*'First, I believe that applause should be a receipt, not a bill. .*

*Second, if an audience likes me so well that it insists that I return, should I not be offended when it ceases its demand?. If an audience brings me back once then for politeness' sake, it should bring me back again and again — and again, so that ultimately we must die together. '*

*"Third, the idea of encores came originally from the artist - not the public. During the seventies of the last century, tenors in the opera houses of .Europe used to have paid claques to applaud their, high C's. They sat in a specified box, and they clapped and clapped. The harder they clapped the better paid they were, and the singers' encores depended for the most part on the enthusiasm of the claque. It is interesting when one hears of greedy audiences to remember who it was who encouraged them to be greedy in the Europe of the past century'.*

### A MUSICAL REASON

*'And my fourth reason is a musical one. When I build a programme, I try to create an edifice - a finished building. Long experience has taught me how to do this. What a shame it would be were I to give encores - to put a little ornamentation here, a little colour there, and spoil the finished whole. There was a time when people as a matter of course, applauded between the movements of a sonata. When complained and said'. 'Can we not have silence between the movements of a sonata, there was an outcry of: «I am the public, I like to applaud. You must have applause. The public wants it»'.*

## WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC WANT?

*'Now who can tell what the public wants?. Who knows what the public is? There are more factual likes in that great mute body which cannot defend itself, than enough. When a musician says he must play down to the public, I think it means rather that he will suit himself. And why not? Each man must do what he considers best. I believe I am the only one among better known musicians, who constructs his programme with music of the one standard. I believe that is the best thing to do. There are other musicians who proceed to build what I call a Noël Coward-Shakespeare programme - something of this, something of that. If they consider they get their best results that way. it is sufficient justification for their method. But let them not say they do please the public. I do not believe it! '*

**THE WALK COMES TO AN END !** On the footpath outside the City Hall with the roar of traffic threatening to drown the conversation, the walk came to an end. Dr. Schnabel said he had enjoyed it. *'It made him feel fine'*, he said, and he sighed for the days when he used to play tennis. *"And mountain climbing, too."* he said. *"There, is a sport for you. with no competition. Artist do not like competition. There is no competition in art, there should be none.'*

## SCIINABEL. AND CARDUS

About cricket: *"Well, I will tell you something. Mr. Neville Cardus is a good friend of mine. His little daughter says that Don Bradman and Artur Schnabel are her two heroes. Well, Mr. Cardus sent me his book on cricket. I was a polite man. I read it. Every morning when I came down to breakfast I told my family what I had read in Mr. Cardus' book, and people said, 'Artur Schnabel is interested in cricket.'* But now I will tell you,. *What is a wicket and what is a ball? I still do not know, so that is the extent of Artur Schnabel's cricket"*. Whereupon Artur Schnabel's laugh defeated the sound of the traffic In King George Square before he gave his neat little bow, and turned into the Hall to rehearse.