

## FAMOUS PIANIST.

---

### DR. SCHNABEL INTERVIEWED.

---

#### His Choice of Programmes.

"I am fully satisfied; my expectations have been surpassed," said Dr. Artur Schnabel, the eminent pianist when, after his arrival in Perth from Adelaide yesterday afternoon, an interviewer asked him what impressions he had formed as a result of his two and a half months in Australia.

Dr. Schnabel explained that he was referring not only to his own recitals—which, by the way, have been phenomenally successful—but to musical conditions in Australia generally. So far as he could see, the Australian Broadcasting Commission had been a cultural blessing to the Commonwealth, because commercial considerations did not prevail with it. "I was not at all afraid of coming to Australia," he added, "having been informed already by Dr. Sargent, Szell and Huberman about the excellent conditions here—most promising conditions, which during the last few years have been the talk of musicians."

Dr. Schnabel was expected in Perth on Saturday afternoon, but changes in air service arrangements in the Eastern States owing to bad weather resulted in a delay of 24 hours. One consequence was that he was able to attend Dr. Sar-



Dr. Artur Schnabel, the visiting pianist, leaving the airliner Bungalow on arrival at Maylands aerodrome yesterday afternoon.

gent's orchestral concert in Adelaide on Saturday night. "They played Beethoven's Eighth Symphony well," he commented.

"Eighth Symphony well," he commented. "It is not easy." He arrived at Maylands by the airliner Loongana yesterday afternoon.

The outstanding success of Dr. Schnabel's concerts has been the more remarkable because of the exceptional character of his programmes, from which merely virtuoso pieces and musical trifles are invariably excluded. Dr. Schnabel believes that commercial enterprises in music are apt to underrate their public in a way that is not justified.

"I think that the principle of 'safety first' can never be so productive as 'courage first,'" he said last night. "Concert audiences in Australia had not been very familiar with the type of programme which my musical nature has made me cultivate. I was very happy, not only for personal reasons, but for the sake of music, to see that this music seems to mean something to many people in Australia."

#### **Musical Cooks Tour.**

Certainly no pianist had hitherto ventured to present such programmes in Australia, the interviewer told him, and

referred to the usual type of celebrity-pianist programme, beginning perhaps with Bach or Beethoven and ending probably with Liszt.

"The typical virtuoso programme," Dr. Schnabel commented, "seems to me something like a Cook's tour of Paris—it begins in the morning with a cathedral and ends with a night club." It was sometimes asserted that a programme should be arranged like a good menu, which was a thoughtless comparison. A dinner began with tit-bits—hors d'oeuvres—and it was not true that a good soup, fish

it was not true that a good soup, fish or chicken was heavier to digest than, say, plum pudding. In a good menu it was expected that all the courses should be prepared of equally good material and by the one chef, the master artist. "What people really mean with that comparison is having some courses in the best restaurant and some in the cheapest," he added with a smile. "But actually the claim that a programme should be like a good menu is already met in a sonata or symphony, because the different movements are already designed to provide diveristy and contrasts.

"My idea is that everything in human life should aim upwards, and if one must have these wanderings one should start in the night club and end in the cathedral. Nothing is satisfying which obviously goes down. I think it is paradoxical that many persons who present musical fireworks are called stars—but stars last and fireworks fall down again. My idea is that we should always end a concert with a kind of transcendental, symbolic experience. As Nietzsche has said: 'It is warmer on the heights than one thinks in the valleys.'"

#### **A Disclaimer.**

Dr. Schnabel is emphatic, however, that there is no merit due to him for presenting the music he chooses. "It simply attracted me," he says. "I have not sacrificed anything. I simply have to do it. Everybody expresses himself. Some are many-sided, some one-sided. I am quite content to be one-sided, to be exclusively dedicated to values which are generally acknowledged to be very good. But the conclusion that I do not appreciate and love certain things which do not appear on my programmes would be absolutely wrong. It is simply that, since the works which attract me most are so numerous, as I got older I concentrated more and more on them. I played

so numerous, as I got older I concentrated more and more on them. I played many other things when I was younger. I love those works which I consider to be better than they can be performed;— what I mean is that the task has always to be above me. It is an axiom for me that the art has to be under all circumstances on a higher level than the person related to it. These works to which I have devoted myself never cease to present new problems to me, and they are, therefore, an ever-fresh experience."

Curiously, perhaps, Dr. Schnabel, the interpreter of the great classics, composes music which, in his own words, "is reputed to be excessively modern." "I cannot see any contradiction in that fact," he says. He has composed mostly chamber music, also piano works. The latter he does not play himself. Being very difficult, they would require much practice, and he added, smiling, "I cannot practise on my own child after it has been born."

After his Perth appearances this week Dr. Schnabel will return to Sydney, to play in the Sydney String Quartet in chamber music. Then he will sail for the United States.

---