

GUITARS SOFTLY PLAYING



At a summer school on Rottne Island

By WINFRED BISSET, staff reporter

● Sadie Bishop, of Melbourne, is pretty, young, mother of a two-year-old son, and a crusader — for the classical guitar.

"THE guitar," she said, "is not something new. It is not a ukulele. There was music written for it 300 years ago, some of the most romantic music ever written and some of the purest.

"We do not plink the guitar strings. We use varieties of thumb tone, down-stroke, up-stroke, nail tone, flesh tone, and tambour, all kinds of technique that give tone color to the guitar. We are serious musicians."

Sadie was introducing the guitar at a Classical Guitar summer school at Rottne Island, W.A. — the first summer school of its kind in Australia.

The cottage

The school was held in Cottage "F" on the island, built by convicts more than 120 years ago, and the Vice-Regal summer residence from 1848 to 1864.

Students ate picnic meals — often to the accompaniment of their own guitars. They practised popular Spanish folk

tunes on the beaches, sometimes danced to their own music.

Sadie is a guitarist with an international reputation.

She has played her guitar on TV in London. She arranged the traditional flamenco music of southern Spain and recorded it for a film, "Spring in Andalusia," which was sold recently to the A.B.C. for TV.

Captured

A pupil of Segovia and Pujol, she has become completely captured by the lovely music produced by the classical Spanish guitar — and she wants it to become known throughout her own country.

For two successive years Sadie attended a summer school conducted by Segovia in the Italian town of Siena.

The summer school on Rottne Island was an attempt to recapture the atmosphere, coloring, and gaiety of the Italian setting.

It succeeded.

Sadie's crusade seems to be succeeding, too.

More and more orders for the classical guitar are com-

ing in for Andries de Jaeger, of Mount Lawley, W.A.

Mr. de Jaeger came from The Hague eight years ago. The guitars he now makes in Australia, Sadie says, are equal in quality to concert instruments imported from abroad.

And interest in the classical

guitar is spreading fast on a nation-wide basis.

The Classical Guitar Society of Sydney was formed in 1947 by a group of businessmen.

"They numbered less than ten," said Sadie, "taught themselves from manuals, and improved themselves by listening to records.

"Today there are more than 50 playing members,

and Neils Stevens, whose teacher in Copenhagen was Mme. Gorki-Schmidt, is now giving group tuition to fellow members."

Twice last year the Sydney society brought Sadie from Melbourne to give recitals.

At home in Melbourne, she has about 60 pupils and a studio opposite Malvern Station.

Last year the Adult Education Centre included classical guitar playing in its syllabus.

But Melbourne has yet to form a society of its own.

The Western Australian Society was incorporated in September, 1959, started by Mrs. Lorna Prendiville, a well-known Perth artist.

Her studies

When her husband's post-graduate studies in surgery took the family to England she studied at the Spanish Guitar Centre in Leicester Square.

The Centre is run by Len Williams, father of rising young guitarist John Williams, formerly of Melbourne, whose playing Segovia has praised extravagantly.

When Mrs. Prendiville returned to Perth she included in her one-man show of paintings a self-portrait and a portrait of her daughter, Susan. Both she and Susan were playing the classical guitar.

Gradually a movement started in Western Australia.

Now the Society includes five young women, five children, two professional plectrum guitarists, eight Uni-

versity staff, including Professor Frank Callaway, the patron of the Society and the Professor of Music, a high-school teacher, a nurse, a doctor, a radio announcer, a city librarian, and a young farmer who travels 200 miles from Boyup Brook to Perth for lessons.

Its aims

The Western Australian Classical Guitar Society's aims are to "promote the playing and teaching of the nylon-stringed classic guitar in the manner of the great masters, Segovia and Tarrega."

The Society is affiliated with British, American, and Continental Societies.

The music played ranges from 17-century Gaspar Sand, who was Court guitarist to Philip IV of Spain, to modern musicians like Manuel de Falla, Joaquin Turina, Manuel Ponce, of Mexico, Villa-Lobos, of Brazil, from troubadour lute music of France to flamencos, the traditional folk improvisations of southern Spain.

On January 31 in the newly built St. Catherine's College at the University, Sadie Bishop will be solo artist at a concert given under the auspices of the Festival of Perth Committee.

Meantime, a small classical guitarist group is forming at the University of Queensland, and in Tasmania there's an enthusiast who tape-records his guitar practice, sends it to Mr. Williams at the Spanish Guitar Centre in London for criticism.

CRUSADER



● Sadie — with her classical Spanish guitar.