

*Charles Towsey of Henley upon Thames in the County of Wexford Gentleman*

*Mary Harriet Sparks*

*C. B. Moorhouse*

# TOWSEY TALES

**NAME:** Arthur Cyril Towsey

**BIRTH DETAILS:** 23 March 1878 Dunedin

**DEATH DETAILS:** disappeared 17 March 1932

**CHART REF:** Towsey Chart B1

**MARRIAGE DETAILS:** 9 August 1911, Hamilton, NZ

**SPOUSE:** Mary Imelda Cooper

## PART 3 OF 3

When Cyril left for London, it was unsure whether or not he would ever return to New Zealand. The deciding factor at the time of his departure, would have been the degree to which he was successful at 'Home'.

Taking into account what Cyril had said about success in London being dependent more on being known than on talent, it is reasonable to assume that he had, by 1910, establishing enough of a name for himself to have gone on to a successful career in Britain and Europe. So there are other factors to take into account in his decision to return to the smaller pond of New Zealand.

The first of these would be his already lengthy engagement to Miss Cooper and in her case, there might well have been a greater desire to return to New Zealand.

Judging by the reviews of her London performances, she seemed to have a voice good enough to be successful, but when you look more closely at those comments, they might have been complementary, but they were not as fulsome as one would expect for a truly great singer. We should also not place too great an emphasis on the glittering status of the Lords and Ladies in her audiences, as these bejewelled socialites were clearly associated with her brother-in-law, Laurence Cunningham, with whose family she had resided during her London years.

Mr. Cyril Towsey, the well-known pianist, who has been following his profession in England for about four years, returned to New Zealand to-day by the Ruahine. As yet his plans are not definitely fixed, but he intends to remain in his native land for some time at least, and will give several concerts. Mr. Towsey, who was met by his father, left for Wanganui by the Main Trunk express.  
*30th May 1910*

OPERA HOUSE, HAWERA.

FRIDAY, JULY 1.

GRAND MUSICAL RECITAL.

**MISS MAY  
COOPER**

AND

**CYRIL  
TOWSEY**

(Direct from London).

PROGRAMME.

1. Piano Solo, "Sonata in G sharp minor" (Moonlight).....Beethoven (Adagio, Allegretto, Presto.)  
CYRIL TOWSEY.

2. Songs—

- (a) "In Questa Tomba"...Beethoven
  - (b) Three songs from R. L. Stevenson's "A Child's Garden of Verses" ..... Graham Peel
  - (c) Die 'Junge Nonne' (The Young Nun) ..... Schubert
- MAY COOPER.

3. Piano Solo, "Ballade in A flat" ..... Chopin  
CYRIL TOWSEY.

4. Recit. e Aria, "O Mio Fernando" (La Favorita) ..... Donizetti  
MAY COOPER.

5. Piano Solo, "Adagio from Fantasie in C (Wanderer)....Schubert-Liszt  
CYRIL TOWSEY.

6. Songs—

- (a) "Mon Coeur s'ouvre a ta Voix" (Samson et Dalila)....Saint-Saens
- (b) "O Divine Redeemer".....Gounod

(c) "The Pretty Creature"

Arr. by Lane Wilson

(d) "Annie Laurie".....Liza Lehmann

MAY COOPER.

7. Piano Solo, "Scherzo in B flat minor" ..... Chopin  
CYRIL TOWSEY.

8. Songs—

(a) "A Summer Night"

Goring Thomas

(b) "Aime Moi" ..... Bemberg

(c) "The Tryst" ..... Peter Cornelius

(d) "Mattinata" ..... Tosti

MAY COOPER.

Piano used at this Recital: Schiedmeyer and Sohn, supplied by Dixon and Bates.

Box plan now open.

Prices: 3s, 2s, 1s.

*1st July 1910*



When Mamie's sister's husband died in 1909, Mamie's sister either wanted, or was obliged to return to New Zealand, probably bringing an end to Mamie's easy access to high society.

Mamie also had quite a large family back in New Zealand, so all in all there would have been little desire to stay on in London. Cyril also seemed to be missing his home and would probably have chosen to return anyway, even without Mamie's influence.

What this demonstrates, is that when trying for a musical career of global fame, an important factor is whether one's desire for the roar of the crowd is fervent enough to override attachments to family, friends and the familiarity of your home town. Cyril on his own, might well have opted for that career; he did not have too many family members left and had tended to move about quite a bit already. So he would have returned to New Zealand for a visit but quickly discovered that, having visited old places and faces, his greater desire was the hum and buzz of London. Mamie's life though, before London, had been firmly fixed amongst her family in Auckland.

**ST. PAUL'S HALL.**

**MARY COOPER-CYRIL TOWSEY**

**CONCERT. 6 June 1910**

To-morrow evening Miss Mary Cooper and Mr. Cyril Towsey will give their concert and piano recital in St. Paul's Hall. If the first part of the programme is any inducement, a full house is assured. For Ries' "Es Muss Was Wunderbares Sein," Miss Mary Cooper received the highest praise at her farewell recital in London. Her rendering of "O Mio Fernando," from "La Favorita," captivated the critics. In the second part of the programme something rare may be expected in Miss Cooper's singing of "Die Yung Nonne." Mr. Runcomen, in the "Saturday Review," said "Miss Cooper thrilled everyone present by the intensity of her performance." Mr. Cyril Towsey comes back to New Zealand with a big reputation, and the numbers he has chosen for his reappearance are those with which he has earned the good opinion of the English critics. His rendering of Chopin's great work is masterly. Miss Louise Croucher, violinist, will play Grieg's Sonata in C minor with Cyril Towsey, and also the "Recit. and Adagio" by Godard. Miss Croucher has delighted critics in Germany and Australia. All the accompaniments will be played by Cyril Towsey. At the Marchesi-Carreno concert, a critic said: "It was difficult to distinguish between the words of the song and the notes of the piano, so perfect were the accompaniments played by Mr Towsey. The box plan is open at Newcombe and Co.'s, Ridgway Street

**CONCERT BY MR CYRIL TOWSEY.**

9 June 1910

In our advertising columns will be found an announcement of a concert to be given in St. Paul's Hall on Friday, the 17th June, by Miss Mary Cooper and Mr Cyril Towsey. They have both just returned from the Old Country, where they spent over four years. Miss Cooper, before leaving London, gave a vocal recital in the Bechstein Hall, and the London papers in every instance spoke of her lovely mezzo-soprano voice and her sympathetic method of interpretation. She sings songs in French, Italian and German, besides other English songs of the old-world music. The London "Times" says "Her quiet tone was resonant, and beautiful to listen to. Her voice is naturally an attractive one, and she produces it easily." Mr Cyril Towsey has gained for himself the very highest praise that can possibly be bestowed on any accompanist, and in many Press notices of concerts where he acted in that capacity with artists of the first flight such as Melba Marchesi, Alice Verlet, Edna Thornton, and others, he is called "an ideal accompanist." In many of the tours Mr Cyril Towsey was also solo pianist and he has many good criticisms for his playing. They will be assisted by Miss Louise Croucher, the talented violinist. Seldom has the Wanganui music loving public an opportunity to hear such clever artists, and the price of admission is within the reach of all.

22 June 1910

**THE COOPER-TOWSEY RECITAL**

A large audience assembled last night to hear the second recital given by Miss Mary Cooper and Mr Cyril Towsey. Mr Cyril Towsey opened the programme with "Five Lyric Pieces," by Greig. The pianist showed fine poetic feeling throughout, and his performance was in every sense satisfying. In the Adagio from Fantasia in C (Schubert) Mr Towsey was heard most favourably; his tone was very fine, and his judicious use of the pedal throughout was skilful. Mr Towsey's performance of Chopin's Scherzo in B Flat Minor was excellent, showing a fine technique, and his interpretation was musical. Mr Towsey was recalled with enthusiasm. There can be no question that the pianoforte solos are of high educational value, and all students of music in Wanganui must regard Mr Towsey's visit at no mean value. Miss Mary Cooper's numbers were most enjoyable. Her rendering of Graham Peck's "A Child's Garden of Verses" found great favour with the audience. Miss Cooper's voice is of fine quality. Her singing of "The Tryst" (Sibyllus) was exquisite, and her musical gifts are unquestionable. Miss Cooper sang the somewhat hackneyed "A Summer Night" of Goring Thomas, and gave it a rendition which a Colonial audience is rarely treated to. Miss Cooper sang "The Banks of Allan Water" with fine pathos, and her mezzo voice work in the third verse was most effective. Miss Cooper's other numbers included Saint Saens "Softly Awakes My Heart," Gounod's "O Divine Redeemer," Mallinson's "Four by the Clock," and Peter Cornelius's weird composition, "The Monotone."

The accompaniments were beautifully played by Mr Cyril Towsey, who undoubtedly possesses gifts of a high musical standard, and imparts into his playing that requisite amount of sympathy which goes a long way to assist a soloist. The piano used was a Brinsmead upright, and its tone proved most suitable for the acoustics of St. Paul's Hall.

June 1910

Having already been engaged for two years before returning to New Zealand, it is interesting to note that it was still another fifteen months before Mamie and Cyril married, in August 1911.

What is also interesting about this wedding, is that the only mention of it in the newspapers, is several lines in the Auckland Star Marriage Announcements. One would have expected articles to at least appear in the Wellington and Auckland papers. But then, perhaps the wedding was a small, quiet affair.

It is most likely that Cyril and Mamie moved to Hamilton at the time of their marriage there, because Cyril was offered a post as organist.



*April 1913*



**Three Generation:** *Arthur Cyril, Arthur John & Arthur Charles Towsey*



**Circa 1920s:** *Cyril with motorbike*

"The most wonderful performance I have heard in my life; and I have never heard anything so marvellous as the performance the winner put up," said Mr. Cyril Towsey, of Auckland, instrumental judge, when speaking at an evening session of the Manawatu Competitions Society festival of the art of Miss Iris Lawson, of Dannevirke, who won the 'cello solo, own selection, playing the "Hungarian" Rhapsody." The judge added that he knew the selection well, and had played it himself for many performers, but he was amazed at the rendition heard that evening. He warmly congratulated the accompanist, the winner's sister, who had done very well indeed in her sympathetic playing of a most difficult accompaniment. He stated that the winner should go very far and make a great musician. Miss Iris Lawson is only 14 years of age.

*June 1924*



## CAMBRIDGE FESTIVAL

CAMBRIDGE, This Day.

The third annual Cambridge Musical and Elocutionary Festival concluded a five days' session with a magnificent demonstration concert last night. The competitions proved a huge success, in every way. The judges were Mr. Cyril Towsey, Auckland, and Mr. Culford Bell, Wellington.

6th September 1924

## Mr. CYRIL TOWSEY Mr. CYRIL TOWSEY Mr. CYRIL TOWSEY

Accompanist to Madame Francis Alda, Prima Donna, says of his "LA GLORIA":—

"I thought you might be interested to hear about a test we had at a friend's home the other evening between a latest model new "La Gloria" instrument and the "New Wonder" La Gloria. The La Gloria won out on every record tested. I had been hoping for some time to test out the two machines, using the same room and same make of needle. I need hardly tell you how pleased I am to be the owner of a La Gloria, now proved by actual test to be the finest instrument on the market at the present time."

(Sgd.) CYRIL TOWSEY.

The original letter can be inspected at the Head Office of La Gloria, Auckland.

**£3 worth of RECORDS  
FREE**

with every

# LA GLORIA

No Deposit. Free Records. Free Repairs. Free Needles. Free Deliveries. Free Service.

La Gloria Gramophones Ltd.  
La Gloria Gramophones Ltd.

167 Cuba St. WELLINGTON  
C. A. PORTER, Manager.

Telephone 23-259. 15 Oct. 1927

## Mr. Cyril Towsey

New Zealand's foremost Pianist and Accompanist to Madame Frances Alda, Prima Donna, says of his "LA GLORIA"

"I thought you might be interested to hear about a test we had at a friend's home the other evening between a latest model new "La Gloria" instrument and the "New Wonder" La Gloria. The La Gloria won out on every record tested. I had been hoping for some time to test out the two machines, using the same room and same make of needle. I need hardly tell you how pleased I am to be the owner of a La Gloria, now proved by ACTUAL test to be the finest instrument on the market at the present time."

(Sgd.) CYRIL TOWSEY.

The original letter can be inspected at the Head Office of La Gloria, Auckland.

**£3 worth of Records FREE with every**



13th Oct, 1927

your own choosing from our new stocks of Columbia, A.C.O., and Bellona Records.

Just think of starting off with a Record Library absolutely FREE.

Such is the astounding offer with which we are introducing the La Gloria, the World's Best Gramophone. Make no mistake about this fact: the La Gloria IS IN A CLASS OF ITS OWN. For over four years it has incorporated the revolutionary system of amplification that has been adopted only recently by foreign manufacturers.

And don't forget—the LA GLORIA is

**Made in New Zealand**

Available on the most attractive terms

**NO DEPOSIT** Two Years  
to Pay

And above all **LA GLORIA'S Square Deal**

SEE OUR WINDOWS. Hear a demonstration of this King of Gramophones. Get your FREE Records and go home happy.

Doesn't this offer justify our claim to be

**THE FIRM THAT PUTS THE EE'S IN EASY TERMS**

## LA GLORIA GRAMOPHONES Ltd.

C. A. PORTER, Manager 167 CUBA STREET 2 Doors below Dustins'



**FREE NEEDLES**

**FREE DELIVERY**

**FREE REPAIRS**

Remember, with all Gramophones, no matter what make, springs will break sometimes. To have repairs effected would cost you 15/- to 21 in the ordinary way. But these replacements are FREE when you own a La Gloria.



**Circa 1926: Cyril Towsey visiting the Monfries farm.**

His wife might have been regularly advertising throat medicine, but that was nothing compared to Cyril's endorsement of La Gloria gramophones.



1 Sept. 1927

## MASTER OF MUSIC

[F] crochets and quavers could be forged into jewellery, Cyril Towsey, music teacher, of Auckland, could lay claim to a coronet of priceless gems.

For two years in Germany under the tuition of Heinrich Lutter, C.T. juggled with the mysterious black and white symbols. Then followed five years of study in Wellington with Maughan Barnett, when—as he says—"I received the most valuable lessons I have ever had."

During a tour of the British Isles, in which he figured as accompanist to some of the world's best vocalists, it was once said in a press report that "Mr. Towsey is an accompanist and not a soloist; musicians will understand that this is the highest possible praise that can be bestowed upon a pianist." And so say the music-lovers of Auckland.

Before coming to the northern city, Hamilton knew the excellence of his talent as an organist and choirmaster and orchestral and choral conductor.

His striking appearance and cultured manner tell one immediately on meeting him that within this unassuming mortal is the refined temperament of a genius—the soul of a musician.

Cyril had met and worked with the famous pianist, Wilhelm Backhaus during his years in London and, during his tour of New Zealand in 1926, Cyril took his son, Arthur to meet him after a concert.

Although Arthur never developed any musical talent, he did have a very good ear for music.

At 13 years of age, maybe Arthur was expressing the naivety of youth, or maybe he was being a smart alec, but when introduced to the great man, Backhaus asked

"Well, what did you think of that?" To which Arthur replied "You played a wrong note", to which Backhaus replied; "You're quite right. I did play a wrong note."

Whether Backhaus and Cyril then took Arthur out the back and beat him up, was not stated.

Knowing how the price of technology keeps falling, it is interesting to note that the price of the gramophone must have been so high that they daren't mention it, except to say that it could be paid off over two years.

The advertisement below, for a concert by Frances Alda, sees Cyril as the solo pianist. We also see that the concert is being presented and directed by Mr. D.D. O'Connor. This is the professional name of Mamie's cousin, Dan O'Connor; Timothy Behane O'Connor's eldest son, who was then 33 years old and developing his career as a theatrical entrepreneur. Dan O'Connor was associated a lot more with the Towsey family in the future, particularly with Cyril's son, Arthur.



### A Musical Library

As the result of a gift of 539 volumes by Mr. Lewis Eady, a special music section is to be established at the Auckland Public Library. The gift was accepted by the City Council last night, telegraphs "The Post's" Auckland correspondent. Mr. L. A. Eady, in a letter to the council, stated that the gift had been inspired by a suggestion made at the Libraries Conference, and a list of books had been compiled by the Chief Librarian, Mr. J. Barr, after consultation with Mr. Maughan Barnett, Mr. John Tait, and Mr. Cyril Towsey. It was estimated they would

cost £250, and Mr. Eady said his father, Mr. Lewis R. Eady, had agreed to purchase the books and he himself would undertake to keep the collection up to date. The question of housing the volumes and the handling would be left to the Library Committee, a request being made that the collection be named the "Lewis Eady Music Section." Miss E. Melville, in proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Eady for his gift, said the section would be a valuable addition to the library. The gift showed the value of the Libraries Conference, from which the present offer had arisen.

5th February 1927



TO-MORROW NIGHT AT 8.15.  
TO-MORROW NIGHT AT 8.15.  
TO-MORROW NIGHT AT 8.15.

A L D A,  
A L D A,  
A L D A,  
A L D A,  
A L D A,  
A L D A,

# FIRST MEMORABLE CONCERT

By  
THE WORLD'S GREATEST OPER-  
ATIC SOPRANO.

T O W N H A L L.  
O W N H A L L.  
WELLINGTON.

TO-MORROW NIGHT AT 8.15.  
TO-MORROW NIGHT AT 8.15.  
TO-MORROW NIGHT AT 8.15.  
TO-MORROW NIGHT AT 8.15.

And on  
TUESDAY NIGHT AT 8.15.  
TUESDAY NIGHT AT 8.15.  
Two Concerts Only.

MR. D. D. O'CONNOR  
Will have the Honour of Presenting

## MADAME

FRANCES ALDA,  
FRANCES ALDA,  
FRANCES ALDA,  
FRANCES ALDA,  
FRANCES ALDA,  
FRANCES ALDA,

Prima Donna of the Metropolitan Opera  
House, New York.

## "THE MOST FAMOUS NEW ZEA- LANDER."

Frances Alda, who was born in Christ-  
church, has been for eighteen seasons prin-  
cipal soprano of the world's greatest Opera  
House, the Metropolitan, in New York. She  
has sung no fewer than forty-eight  
operatic roles in association with Caruso,  
Scotti, Martinelli, Chaliapin, and other  
famous singers. Alda's name is a house-  
hold word in the United States and in  
the South American countries, where she  
has been equally successful in opera and  
on the concert platform.

TO-MORROW NIGHT

## TO-MORROW NIGHT

MADAME ALDA will Sing:—

Lungi dal caro bene ..... Seechi  
Je ne suis qu'une bergere..... Philidor  
Oh! Sleep, Why Dost Thou Leave Me?  
Handel  
A Christmas Carol.....Bax  
Quelle Souffrance.....Lenormand  
The Soldier's Bride.....Rachmaninoff  
Coplas de Curro Dulce.....Obradors  
One Fine Day ("Madame Butterfly")  
Puccini  
The Star ..... Rogers  
The Birth of Morn.....Leoni  
The Singer ..... Maxwell  
An Open Secret .....Woodman  
Etc., Etc.

Solo Pianist.....CYRIL TOWSEY

7/6—RESERVED SEATS—7/6  
AND 10/6.

## BOX PLANS AT THE BRISTOL.

Day Sales 5s, 3s at Doors only. Tickets  
on sale to-day at Opera House Confec-  
tionery.

Direction ..... D. D. O'CONNOR

30 September 1927



1929. Cyril Towsey with  
Ina Bosworth (violin) Mollie Wright (cello)

Auckland's future in regard to cham-  
ber music looks distinctly rosy. The  
Auckland Trio has made a deep impres-  
sion on listeners, and a recent concert  
drew a gratifyingly large audience. Mr.  
Towsey is conductor of the trio.

## Tune In To "Truth's" Radio Announcements

THE pianoforte solo tuned in from 1YA  
while Mr. Cyril Towsey was playing  
"Prelude and Fuge in C Minor," im-  
pressed on listeners what a finished artist  
he is. This piece was excellently render-  
ed.

11th July 1929

We see right from the start of radio  
broadcasting in 1926, that Cyril and Mamie  
are both regular performers on the evening  
programmes, almost all of which were  
performed live.

Also by the end of the 1920s, there  
was not as much harmony on the domestic  
scene for Cyril and Mamie as there was on  
stage.

There is never much point in going  
into the nature of domestic problems, as what  
they tend to boil down to is two different  
personalities, whose initial flush of infatuation  
has passed, for whom the day to day minutia  
of coexistence has become a bit of a chore  
rather than the endless series of blissful  
moments on which their marriage was  
launched.

We should be able to get a basic idea  
of the problems by looking at the obvious  
personality traits of Cyril and Mamie.

He seems to have been quiet,  
sophisticated, good looking, charming,  
talented and, thereby, still attractive to women.

She had the strength of character of  
her ancestors. Wherever in her family gene  
pool she dropped her fishing line, she was bound to pull  
out a larger than average trait.

From the little that I have heard of Mamie, she  
tended towards the practical rather than the wafty. For  
instance, she apparently never wasted time chatting on  
that new-fangled telephone; bringing conversations to a  
speedy conclusion with "yes? What do you want?"



# Mimes and Music

BY "ORPHEUS"

The Auckland Trio, Misses Ina Bosworth, violinist; Mollie Wright, 'cellist; and Cyril Towsey, pianist, is giving its last chamber-music recital of the season on Monday, 13th October. Dvorak's B Flat Trio (Opus 24); Three Miniatures by Frank Bridge; and Faure's Piano Quartet in C Minor, are to be played. Mrs. R. A. Singer, viola, will add to the trio for the quartet number, and Miss Molly Atkinson will be vocalist.

*4th October 1930*

It seems that Mamie was either jealous or suspicious, or both, of Cyril's interactions with all the attractive young women with whom he came into contact. Whether there was any reason for her suspicions, I do not know.

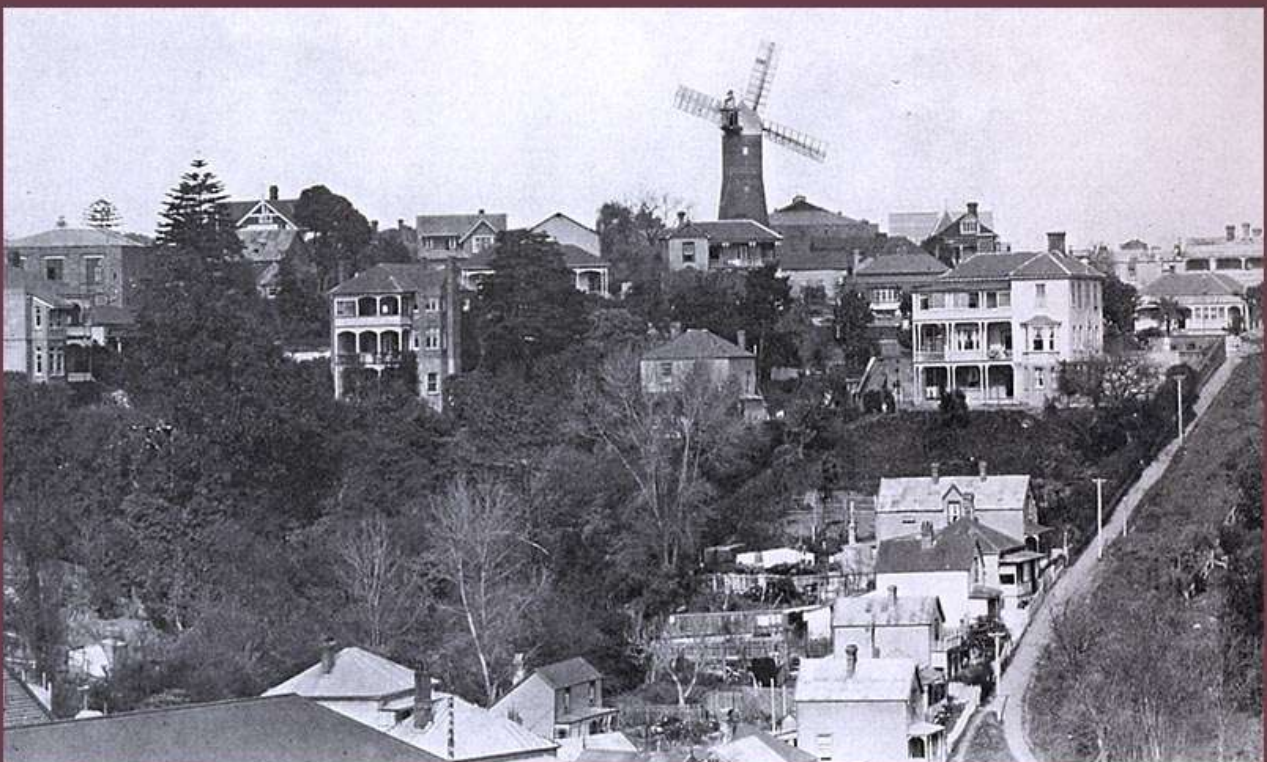
Cyril was apparently always polite and reserved, but would often be busy working in his room, usually with piano students, at family meal times.

The Mrs. R A Singer referred to in 'Mimes & Music', from October 1930, was Dorothy Singer, wife of a prominent barrister and solicitor, Richard Arnold Singer, known to his friends as Dick, who was a close friend of the Towsey family until his death in 1961.

Soon after this advertisement was placed, Dorothy Singer was having trouble sleeping and got up in the middle of the night and, thinking to take a sleeping potion from the bathroom cabinet, accidentally killed herself by drinking poison from another bottle instead.



*Cyril Towsey circa 1931*



**Towsey family home: 1918 to 1970s. 12 City Rd. Auckland**  
**Top of hill on right of picture.**



Cyril's health had been in decline for some time, probably from cancer, when he had an operation in December, 1931, performed by a surgeon who was an old friend. The procedure had not gone well and Cyril had been very concerned about the situation.

Arthur commented that after he arrived back in Auckland, he noticed a rapid deterioration in his father's health with a corresponding loss of weight.

After the failure of the operation to relieve his pain, he had started looking through medical books in the hope that they might shed some light on his condition.

On the evening of 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1932, Cyril had been playing at the radio studio with the orchestra as usual. He regularly finished there at 10pm, but on that evening he left early, leaving his wrist watch on top of the piano.

**FEARS FOR MUSICIAN.**

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**MR. CYRIL TOWSEY.**

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**LAST SEEN ON THURSDAY NIGHT.**

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As he did not return to his home on Thursday night after leaving the 1YA radio station about 10 o'clock, Mr. Cyril Towsey, the well-known Auckland pianist and music teacher, was reported to the police yesterday to be missing. No trace of him had been found at an early hour this morning.

Mr. Towsey, who was the official accompanist at radio station 1YA, was met by his son in Quay Street about 10.20 on Thursday night. He did not make any remark about returning to his home, but appeared to be in his usual spirits. About half an hour later he was seen on the ferry wharf. Since then his movements have not been traced.

When Mr. Towsey's disappearance was reported to the police a search was made. Aged 53 years, Mr. Towsey is 5ft. 10in. in height, and has abundant curly grey hair. He never wore a hat. He is clean shaven and wears glasses. When he was last seen he was wearing a blue suit flecked with red spots, a winged collar and black shoes.

**19th March 1932**

## MISSING MUSICIAN.

### SEARCH FOR MR. CYRIL TOWSEY.

The police and relatives made a careful search to-day for Mr. Cyril Towsey, who was reported to be missing yesterday. He was last seen late on Thursday evening near the waterfront.

The fact has been established that Mr. Towsey was suffering from loss of memory and Mrs. Towsey will appreciate receiving information from anyone who may have recognised her husband.

It has been reported that Mr. Towsey was seen in Victoria Park at 10.30 yesterday morning. Later in the day he was supposed to have been seen near Purewa Cemetery.

This afternoon a party of police, assisted by Boy Scouts, left to search thoroughly the Domain and other places, including the breastwork near the Devonport vehicular ferry.

**19th March 1932**

At about 10.20 that evening, Arthur was riding his motorcycle along Quay Street, which runs along the ferry terminal, when he saw his father walking briskly in the opposite direction. Arthur turned around and rode up to his father, who responded to his greeting by saying that his mother should be finishing a singing engagement at the Town Hall at about that time and that Arthur should go and accompany her home.

Arthur said that Cyril seemed to be in his usual frame of mind.

Arthur went to the Town Hall, but his mother had already left, so he returned home.

At about eleven o'clock, James Melling, the Town Clerk, who had known Cyril for many years, was boarding the ferry to Stanley Bay, when he noticed Cyril also boarding. He approached Cyril and, believing that he actually wanted to go to Devonport to visit his sister, suggested that Cyril was boarding the wrong ferry. Cyril agreed that he must have made a mistake and returned to the dock.

That was the last time that anyone ever saw Cyril.

Over the following months, there were numerous reports of sightings of Cyril across New Zealand and as far afield as China, but all proved to be false.

In the days following his disappearance, all ships that had left Auckland after that date were radioed to see if Cyril might be aboard.



## MR. TOWSEY NOT FOUND. REPORTED SEEN IN PARK.

### SEARCH CONDUCTED BY POLICE.

The well-known pianist and music teacher, Mr. Cyril Towsey, who disappeared on Thursday night, is still missing. In his capacity as official accompanist at the broadcasting station 1YA he accompanied two songs on Thursday evening and was seen walking out of the station at 9.45 p.m. He was engaged to play the tympani in an orchestral item that followed, but he did not return.

Four people, including his son, spoke to him later that night in the vicinity of the Ferry Buildings. One man said he appeared somewhat distraught. Musical engagements and prolonged rehearsals had kept him very busy in recent weeks and it is thought that he may have suffered from excessive mental activity.

An employee of the City Council who has been engaged for years collecting rubbish from houses in City Road, in which the missing musician resides states

*21st March 1932*

that he saw Mr. Towsey in Victoria Park at 10.30 a.m. on Friday. He said, "Good morning, Mr. Towsey," and in reply Mr. Towsey waved his hand in characteristic fashion.

Inquiries were made by the police in the vicinity and a gardener employed at Victoria Park said he had seen a man answering to Mr. Towsey's description walking through the park just before noon on Friday. He remembered him because he was acting in a self-centred manner, striking his fist on the palm of the other hand as though in earnest debate with himself.

A report that Mr. Towsey had been seen in Purewa Cemetery induced a number of his friends to search the grounds with electric torches between midnight and 1 a.m. on Saturday. The search was resumed in daylight by a body of police and it was eventually proved to everyone's satisfaction that the report was due to a case of mistaken identity.

In case Mr. Towsey should have suffered from a lapse of memory, the public is asked to keep a look out for anyone resembling him.

There was one story that some people believed explained Cyril's disappearance.

In the weeks before, a luxury yacht, the Nahlin, belonging to a Lady Yule, had visited Auckland.

During her stay, Cyril had conducted a group of musicians on board, for the entertainment of Auckland's elite and it is said that Cyril and Lady Yule struck up a close friendship. The Nahlin sailed soon afterwards and despite the yacht being stopped at sea and searched, rumours that Lady Yule and Cyril had run off together, persisted for years.

In a Supreme Court hearing seven years later, a police officer stated that from the experience of a number of past cases, if

## MISSING MUSICIAN.

### MR. C. TOWSEY NOT FOUND. REPORTED SEEN IN CITY.

No definite advice has been received by the police concerning the whereabouts of Mr. Cyril Towsey, the well-known pianist and music teacher, who disappeared on Thursday evening. Yesterday the police received information that a man answering to Mr. Towsey's description had been seen in Hobson Street about 7.30 a.m. on Saturday, while another informant stated that he had seen him in a fish shop in Victoria Street West shortly before midnight on Saturday. No corroboration of these statements has been obtained.

*22nd March 1932*

## MISSING MUSICIAN.

### MR. CYRIL TOWSEY.

### NO DEFINITE INFORMATION

Although his description has been widely circulated and he is known to many residents of the city, Mr. Cyril Towsey, the well-known pianist and musician, has not been traced since he left the 1YA studio over a week ago.

Several times last week-end it was reported to the police that a man of Mr. Towsey's description had been seen near Victoria Park, in Hobson Street and in other parts of the city, but it is believed that this man is a different person bearing a remarkable resemblance to the missing man, the chief difference between the two being a slight disparity in height and build.

No organised search was undertaken during the week-end, but launches and other craft were requested to watch the harbour and beaches. *28th March 1932*

Cyril had gone into the harbour at night, on an outgoing tide, it was most likely that he would have been carried out to sea and never seen again.

A sad, lonely end to Cyril's life, but perhaps easier than the protracted, painful decline that he would have been expecting otherwise.