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FAREWELL TO FOUR VOICES

Station 12M Will Change Hands Again

A STATEMENT by the Minister of Broadcasting makes it quite clear that in a few days the familiar voices of Sgts. Larry Dysart, Frank Gaunt, Gene Twombly and Karl Jean, announcers at the American Expeditionary Station 12M Auckland, will no longer be heard in this area. The Station will be handed back to the NBS to be an auxiliary to 1YA.

Aucklanders reacted variously to the new noises that filled their homes when the team went on the air in April last; some applauded, some raised their eyebrows and turned the volume down, some were dazzled, some were static-struck, and some rushed to pen and paper to express their delight—I saw the first day's batch of praise by mail. After a few weeks, after a few months, even last week, the station was still a subject for argument in some households; a tribute to the hourly liveliness of the announcing and to the weekly newness of the recordings.

"People call us up and ask us 'What's funny about that new comedy you put on last night?' and we have to say that we can't figure it out ourselves, we've

Accent on the variety, not on the music; here we go—musical variety."

"Gene's got that cheeky way with him, but it seems to go all right," said Larry.

He's got a cheeky way, I agreed. The first day I met him he wanted to know "Had you folks heard of Saroyan before we came to this country?" We had quite a conference over that.

WHEN they arrived and I interviewed them for *The Listener* I asked them all what their hobbies were, thinking a hint might bring them some invitations. Yesterday I asked them how things had gone. Had Larry gone swimming?

"Yes, once," he said. But it wasn't the right season. He has been around, met people, made friends, married an Auckland girl. He'll be mighty sorry to be leaving.

Karl Jean with his interest in classical and church music has fared well among the music people. Frank Gaunt has been so busy with his one-act plays he hasn't had time to accept an invitation to spend a holiday on a southern sheep run. He's had to satisfy his love of horses watching their noses at Ellerslie. He recently married an Auckland girl.

Gene Twombly had one invitation to go yachting. "Of course it wasn't the yachting season. But the man said he'd like to take me on his yacht and he'd like to get a singing friend of his on the air over 12M. The friend hasn't got on the air and I haven't got on the yacht."



LARRY DYSART

been so long away from home we've lost touch with the new angles and set-ups. They think that's crazy; we're Americans and we ought to understand our own humour."

Larry Dysart told me this yesterday when I went to say goodbye. As I walked in the telephone buzzed (buzz for less noise in that noisy place).

"A P-38? It's a Lockheed Interceptor. And a Warhawk? No, that's a P-40. You're welcome."

He shrugged. "See how it is? We have that all day long. What's the time, who's the President of America, who's the President of America now, how do you spell Guadalcanal, how many stars and stripes in the Stars and Stripes, where was Joe Stalin born, what does 'hep' mean? . . ."

"Yes, what does 'hep' mean?" I asked him.

"H'm. 'Hep.' Well, I'll put it this way: You can say a person is 'hep' to the jive. You know, jive or jitterbug."

"Yes," I said, "but what way 'hep' to it?"

"Well, he's kinda on familiar terms with it."

"Au fait?"

"Oh what?"

"Oh nothing. A-u f-a-i-t. French. Awake up. At home."

"Yuh. That's right. Awake up. At home. Hep."

We left it at that.

WE went next door to watch Gene Twombly running his Turn-Tune-Time.

"This is Station 12M and the time is 1 p.m., yes, 1 o'clock, and you are going to have an hour of musical variety.

THE Station was opened in April under the organisation of Major Purnell H. Gould, Chief of Armed Forces Radio Services in the Pacific Ocean Area. When the Station was established Major Gould went overseas and the four announcers have since carried on, Larry Dysart being in charge.

"This is a very informal station," he said yesterday. "Often the boys have to extemporise and we have all had a chance to put our own ideas over. Actually the experience here should be of terrific value to us in radio back home in the future."

Among their "own ideas" are the four favourite sessions: Turn-Tune-Time (Gene Twombly); Classical Corner (Karl Jean); American College Songs (Larry Dysart); and Thirty-minute Dramas (Frank Gaunt). Such small sidelines (designed, as all the programmes



FRANK GAUNT



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