

# NO BOMBS NOW - AND PLENTY OF MUSICIANS

## Union Opposes BBC's Use of Transcriptions

A WARTIME agreement between the BBC and the Musicians' Union in Great Britain, which permitted repetition broadcasts of band and orchestral performances by means of transcriptions has now been repudiated by the Union, and the notice of termination was to expire in May. According to a March number of *News Review* the notice created a new headache for the BBC. It may in time affect some of the programmes now supplied on records to overseas broadcasting services such as the NBS.

The agreement was made in 1942 when the BBC found it difficult to maintain broadcast services without transcriptions because of bombing and a shortage of musicians. Now there are no bombs, and plenty of musicians.

The Union's secretary, Frederic Dambman, says the Union is out to widen the field of possible broadcast employment. Every repeat broadcast of a BBC performance (by way of transcriptions) does someone out of a job, he says.

According to *News Review*, the BBC uses some 30 repetitional broadcasts a

week of band and orchestral performances (this refers to the BBC's own transcriptions of programmes in which musicians take part—not to the use of ordinary gramophone records).

While the agreement was in force, the BBC was able to use its transcription of a musical broadcast for home programmes on payment of 25/- to each performer concerned. When a special

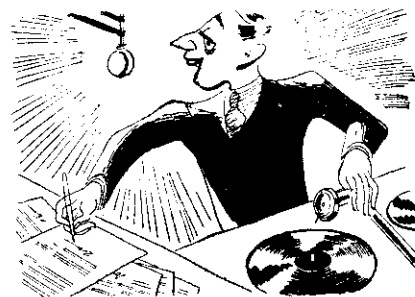


STOKOWSKI  
An exception was made

transcription was made of a non-broadcast performance for later broadcasting (for which performance full fees were paid) no payment was made for its first broadcast, but for any repeats the 25/s fee applied. For overseas recorded broadcasts, the fee was much less, and paid only once, independent of the number of times the transcription was played.

Dambman made it clear that the agreement his Union was terminating applied only to repeats of BBC transcriptions. In some cases, the use of recordings was recognised as necessary, for instance, when music is required early in the morning or late at night, or when the music is given some individual twist and cannot be heard except on records—examples of this being recordings made by Leopold Stokowski or Duke Ellington.

From the listener's point of view, the demands being made by the Union would mean "live" broadcasts, which give the listener a sense of immediate participation, and are not subject to the mechanical breakdowns that sometimes give away a recorded programme that is pretending to be "live."



But no one expects musicians to turn out at daybreak to provide bright music for early morning when records can be used.

The BBC refused (in March) to make any comment for *News Review* on the Union's move, and would not supply statistics showing the number of transcribed programmes broadcast. Dambman commented: "The BBC is probably still recovering from its usual unconsciousness. . . . Our position is simple. We are terminating an agreement in accordance with the terms of that agreement."

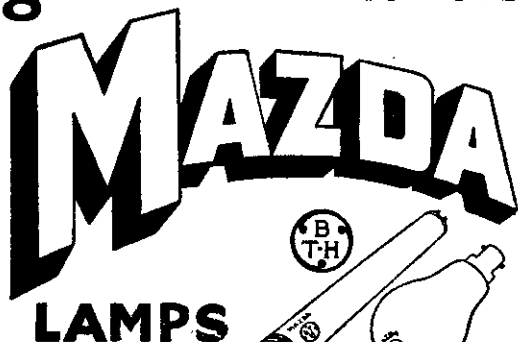
There are estimated to be 16,000 members in the Union, scattered throughout Britain, and Dambman said he was receiving applications for membership more quickly than he could record them.

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