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BBC's NEW SERVICE

Third Programme is International and Experimental

A FEW nights ago, in the *ITMA* series now being heard from the BBC by British listeners (and in the overseas broadcasts) Tommy Handley was preparing to leave for the moon. Colonel Chinstrap, making his will, was reminded to leave his moustache-cup to Sir Adrian Boulton, and someone asked Tommy Handley what he would do when he reached his destination. He said: "I'm going to start a Fourth Programme."

It is now nearly two months since the BBC started its "Third Programme," promised some months ago by the Director-General, but the *Radio Times* containing the first week's programme has only recently reached us. Apart from the seven days' programmes (6.0 p.m. to midnight each day) which obviously strike out a new path for broadcasting, the same issue contains an introduction by the Director-General (Sir William Haley), and an article on aims and intentions by G. R. Barnes, the Head of the Third Programme.

We print here some extracts from what Sir William Haley and Mr. Barnes had to say, and then a brief description of England's first week of listening in the new programme. Here are some of Sir William Haley's remarks:

The Pattern Completed

"With the opening of the Third Programme on Sunday the pattern of the BBC's post-war broadcasting for listeners in the United Kingdom will be complete. Within that pattern there will, we hope, be many advances and improvements. Each of the three separate services must continually seek to experiment, to innovate, and to raise the general broadcasting standards in its particular field. But the overall pattern itself should for a considerable period remain set. The complications of radio engineering, the difficulties over wavelengths, and indeed the convenience of listeners all demand a settled system of programmes so long as it is well-conceived and adequate."

This matter of adequacy is important. There are many conceptions of the functions of broadcasting, some of them narrowly limited. But a public service such as the BBC has to feel that it is covering the whole range of its possibilities, that it is providing for all classes of its listeners, and that it is, among its other functions, presenting the great classical repertoire in music and drama, and—so far as they are broadcastable—in literature, and the other arts.

To do this within the two services already existing, the regionalised Home Service and the Light Programme, is not possible. Quite apart from the already great pressure upon their time, the basic conceptions of ordinary broadcasting with its news bulletins and other fixed points, its desire in the course of the limited peak listening hours every evening to give some service to every possible taste, restrict to a hampering extent the possibility of devoting the necessary time to the full and frequent performance of great works in their entirety or to the development of those highest forms of music and drama which, while they have a major importance

have, as yet, only a minority audience. The range of the Home Service and the Light Programme is admitted by all who have studied broadcasting programmes throughout the world to be outstanding. But in view of all this, it is not enough.

The Third Programme will have no fixed points. It will devote to the great works the time they require. It will seek every evening to do something that



BBC photograph

SIR WILLIAM HALEY

"An audience that is perceptive and intelligent"

is culturally satisfying and significant. It will devote occasional series of evenings to some related masterpieces, a Shakespeare historical cycle, all the Beethoven quartets; or a series of Mozart operas. It will, so far as circumstances permit, be international. Concerts, operas, plays will be taken from abroad as landline conditions improve. Its talks will include contributions from the great European thinkers. Its whole content will be directed to an audience that is not of one class but that is perceptive and intelligent."

And here is part of what Mr. Barnes (Head of the Third Programme) said in the same issue:

No News Bulletins—No Fixed Schedules

"We start with two advantages. The first is that we have no news bulletins to broadcast at fixed hours. Plays and operas can be given in full and symphony concerts need not be built to fit into a schedule. The second advantage is that we can give more than one performance of all major works. We shall repeat items from our own and other programmes generously and often."

"Music will occupy a third of the programme. The main orchestral concerts of the week will be on Thursday and Saturday; opera, when available, on Friday; chamber concerts on Monday in the Concert Hall of Broadcasting House, for which the public can buy tickets. We hope to broadcast one performance of opera every week, an aim which we will have realised in October with a performance of *Don Pasquale* from the Cambridge Theatre, the Glyndebourne production of Britten's new opera *The Rape of Lucretia*, and

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