

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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Mahatma Gandhi

MANY years will have to pass before Gandhi takes his abiding place in world history. At present no one asks any of the questions about him that so many asked even two or three years ago; but that phase will pass too. Voices which are silent now will be heard again, and even centuries hence historians may still be asking whether he was an inspired leader or a misguided saint. But no one again will call him a charlatan. If he had died before the partition, or lived long enough to see India at peace again, it would have been easier to estimate his work for his own people. But the effect of that work has yet to be seen. It is beyond question that he liberated India; but we shall not know to what he also committed India until Moslem and Hindu have shown that they can live together in harmony and maintain their liberty in a predatory world. It will not be known this year or next, and may not be known this century. But it is not necessary to wait for the verdict of time before we estimate Gandhi's contemporary stature. By whatever standards we measure greatness, he was one of the three or four great figures of his day; and if we consider not merely what he did but the level on which he worked he was without a peer during the last few years of his life. We must in fact go further and say that greatness will remain with him even if time brings confusion to his cause. Time has brought confusion to many causes, including Christianity. It is however a melancholy thought that neither saintliness nor wisdom, nor the two combined, keep a man safe while he lives or his fame safe afterwards.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

PAUL ROBESON

Sir,—I was amazed to read T.L.M.'s letter regarding Paul Robeson. His reaction to the line, "All the odder Black Trash sleepin' on de floor" is astounding. I am sure that I am not alone in thinking that it is this very line that makes a somewhat trite song poignant, especially when sung by a Negro. Mr. Robeson is too fine an artist, and too shrewd a propagandist (I use the word in its best sense) for his race not to appreciate to the full the innocent irony of the words.

Thank goodness, millions of listeners all over the world will not agree with T.L.M.'s dislike of Robeson's records. Almost everything Robeson touches he adorns, and people feel, when they are listening to his records, that not only are they listening to a great and sensitive artist, but to a great man as well.

No living Negro has done more for the elevation of his race, both from an artistic and a political point of view.

"WHITE TRASH" (Island Bay).

THE WORD "TRASH"

Sir,—Besides "Uncle Tom's Cabin" Mrs. Beecher Stowe wrote other books, and some of these deal also with the Negro life around her. We had several of her books, and I recall the word "trash" here and there throughout, used much as we nowadays say "fellows" or "kids." The Negroes would call some of the white people "trash" and a magnificent black cook ruling her kitchen would chase away the giggling, jostling piccanninies round the door, with some similar slang expression, only that in those days it was not called slang. Phraseology of this kind is no surprise to anyone who has pored over those stories, now doubtless out of print.

DO-DAH (Dunedin).

INTERRUPTED SYMPHONY

Sir,—On Tuesday afternoon, January 13, I was listening during the classical hour over 2YA to a very enjoyable programme of music by Beethoven. Near the end of his Fifth Symphony, when there was still about six minutes to go, the music was suddenly cut short on a chord, which sounded entirely out of place, and the announcer, without any explanation nor apology for the mistake, introduced the next item. (The technicians could not have been pressed for time as Beethoven's Rondo in C Major was played as an extra item at the end). What may have happened is that the technician in charge may have inadvertently overlooked that there was another record to play. If so, surely the least that could have been done would have been to express regret when the mistake was discovered.

A. F. FRANKLAND
(Hataitai).

"CULTURAL ENDEAVOUR"

Sir,—The annual report of the broadcasting service contains many such ambitious phrases as "cultural endeavour." But if the broadcasting staff shares in "cultural endeavour" it is not apparent from the following list of recent incidents:

An advertised broadcast from 2YA of a Mozart piano concerto fading out without apology during the last movement to make room for the punctual presentation of a bowling summary. So-called "music-lovers" sessions filled

with 4-minute recordings of concertos and symphonies in "potted versions" that should never be broadcast in any session. Racing results interpolated between sides of master-works in afternoon classical sessions—and at one station, works interrupted to announce station and time. Announcers to whom, week after week, the world-famous pianist remains an uncorrected "MOYZA-WITCH." 2YA and 2YC

More letters from listeners will be found on page 17

simultaneously broadcasting Wagner's "Ring" music on a Sunday evening. And at 10 o'clock on a Sunday morning, when surely one station can be spared for better class music, every station accessible to Wellington listeners (2YA, 2ZB, 3YA) going hell-for-leather on band music: an anomaly which has continued over a period of years.

He would be bigoted indeed who did not admit that there are occasions when a real service is provided. But it's still high time some one awoke from dream fantasies of cultural endeavour to do something about bad-mannered announcing, club-fisted panel operating, thoughtless programming, eternal interruptions of advertised broadcasts to pander to punters, mispronunciations in perpetuity, and above all, programmes that have remained un-coordinated from the year dot.

C.J.A. (Wellington).

MUSIC AND BOWLING

Sir,—To-night there was to be at 9.30 Concerto for Piano, Mozart; with Kathleen Long at the piano. I was alone enjoying it intensely when in the very middle of a movement the music was faded out and bowling results were thrust upon the listeners. It is not fair at all, and I wish to make this very definite protest. It happens too often.

A. E. COLLINS (Lyal Bay).

SPORTS RESULTS.

Sir,—In addition to having race results from every station on an average of eight days in the last fortnight, I see lovers of good music are to be further penalised by having no classical hour in the afternoons for another 10 days.

On behalf of your many listeners not interested in sport who are also having holidays and pay the same licence fee as others I venture to state that if we had good music in the same proportion as we get sports results, a roar would go up which would be heard in Australia! Are we not entitled to consideration from at least one station out of three in Auckland?

ENID M. SMITH (Bayswater).

BRAINS TRUST AND SPORT

Sir,—Have you ever had a smack in the face from your radio? We had one last Friday night. While we were enjoying the Brains Trust from 3YA, the announcer broke in with "We are now interrupting this broadcast to give an account of to-day's bowling championships." Sport seems to come before everything else. For years now sports have had priority on the main stations. How about putting them on to the auxiliary stations for a change? This would only be sportsmanlike—to give the other fellow a "fair go." I have

been listening in to a programme of good music and the programme has been cut short to relay from a racecourse. How about cutting in on a relay from the next race meeting and saying "We are now interrupting this relay to give you a recording of the Brains Trust conducted by Donald McCullough?"

IRENE THACKER (Stoke).

CONGRATULATIONS

Sir,—May I through your esteemed journal congratulate 3YA and 4YA on their excellent broadcasts of cricket, yachting, and other sporting events. Frankly I do not agree with "Hopeful's" letter (23/1/48). One play all night would bore me stiff. I think "Hopeful" makes the mistake of New Zealand conforming to British ideas, instead of British people here conforming to New Zealand. Anyway, does BBC provide eight stations for local taste? In fact at night I can often get ten or twelve local stations well. Can ten or twelve British stations be contacted if variety is required? My best wishes go to *The Listener*.

WULLA (Christchurch).

MUSIC FROM 1YA

Sir,—I would like to ask if 1YA could give us more music in the 7.0 a.m. to 10.0 a.m. session. We are limited here to 1YA in the daytime and therefore cannot tune to any other station.

E. ROBERTSON (Whakatane).

ORGAN MUSIC

Sir,—I read with interest "Organ Stop's" letter in a recent issue protesting against the excessive amount of organ music that he reckons comes from the programmes of the Wellington Broadcasting stations. All I can say is that I haven't yet heard an overdose of this music. In my opinion it is the nicest music of the lot to listen to. I hope the NZBS continues to give us more of this kind of music, and that "Organ Stop" will realise that all tastes have to be considered in the selection of music.

"MUSIC LOVER" (Wanganui).

PERSONAL DEITY

Sir,—In his letter discussing the Thomist synthesis of faith and reason Mr. J. Malton Murray invites us to give over reason as well as faith. He says, "if we begin to think of a personal Deity we become consciously embroiled and befogged with our own personalities," etc., and he asks us, "to accept the idea of an impersonal source of supernatural inspiration." We attribute personality to God for this reason. We are persons (rational beings). We did not make ourselves. We were made. We are effects. We had a cause. This cause could not be mud and slime evolving, for "nothing can give what it has not got"—a critically important truth of reason though it sounds simple. The cause of men must be a Being who is rational either in the same way as we are or in a more excellent way. There are powerful reasons for holding that God is rational in a more excellent way, but you can't give them in two or three sentences. In any case, He is personal. As for the inspiration—you can no more get supernatural inspiration from an impersonal source than you can get rational conversation out of a brick wall or rational philosophy from an old-fashioned "Rationalist." None of them can give what they haven't got.

CHARLES LANGTON
(Auckland).