

# "ONE-WAY TRAFFIC FOR MUSICIANS"

**M**OURA LYMPANY was holding court — or so it might seem to a casual observer. Looking gay and charming, a pleated skirt flared about her ankles, she sat on a settee against one wall of the hotel room, the centre of attraction for four men—her husband (Colin Defries), her manager (Val Drewry), the talks officer from 1YA and a *Listener* reporter. Actually there was no regal formality about the gathering, but a free and easy three-way conversation among the three visitors, whose thoughts were jogged along by occasional questions from the other two.

"There is too much of this foreign artists business," said Miss Lympany, when asked for her comments on Beecham's recent statement. She explained that by this she meant that whereas Britain welcomed musicians from overseas, there was not a reciprocal movement of British artists to foreign countries, including the United States. "Don't think it's sour grapes which makes me say this. It's not, for I've played a lot, both on the Continent and also in America, but it has always been essentially a one-way traffic."

A further point made by Miss Lympany showed that the attitude of the British public towards their own artists was responsible for some of the trouble. When she goes to New York later this year she will give the world premiere performance of a piano concerto by the young British composer Richard Arnell. "Brilliant though he is he is unable to get his works performed in England simply because he is English," she said.

Also criticised by the visiting pianist was the public attitude to new music. If a number achieved popularity, as had the Warsaw Concerto, for instance, there would be constant requests for its performance, and if an artist acceded to the demand there was an opportunity of "making a packet," whereas programmes of less widespread popularity did not



*MOURA LYMPANY and her husband photographed at a Sydney theatre, where they attended a performance by the Oliviers.*

attract so many people and it was difficult to get some numbers accepted—she had had the Ravel Concerto for Left Hand accepted but once, although she had offered it all over England.

Despite this clamour for the popular, Miss Lympany warned young musicians trying to get their start against offering only the best known works. They should learn out-of-the-ordinary pieces, for some time one of these would be wanted for a programme and they would be able to fill the bill, whereas there was plenty of competition to play the well-known numbers. She confessed that she had got her early "breaks" by always saying she knew any particular out-of-the-ordinary composition when she was asked. If in fact she did not know it she soon made her answer correct by immediately buying the music and practising it.

This was Miss Lympany's first visit to this part of the world, but for different reasons she had been keen to visit both Australia and New Zealand. Her interest in Australia resulted from having a brother working in Sydney and she had eagerly anticipated seeing him again and also his young baby, to whom she was godmother. New Zealand interested her because she had heard so much about it from Colin Horsley. Unfortunately, her brother had been posted to Santiago a fortnight before she arrived in Australia.

Miss Lympany gave three concerts in Sydney and the success of them may be gauged from the comment made that the queues of autograph hunters waiting on her had broken records, and from the fact that after her performance of the Beethoven Third Concerto a stranger had presented her with a score which had on its title page the name of Clara Schumann.

In Australia she and her husband had attended the theatre to see the Oliviers and had subsequently met them for the first time—a case more or less of neighbours travelling 12,000 miles to be introduced. They were enthusiastic about the performance, and Miss Lympany spoke appreciatively of Sir Laurence's musical interest. Lady Olivier, she said, shared her hobbies, being a keen gardener and a connoisseur of wines. "I don't claim to be a connoisseur," the pianist added, "but I know a little about wines—the result of being brought up in Belgium." She spoke in high terms of Australian wines, in particular one to which they had been introduced in Darwin, and asked about New Zealand wine production.

Miss Lympany confirmed the statement made by Richard Farrell that the United States offered the greatest opportunities for musicians to-day, and she referred warmly to the generosity of Americans. On her last visit in 1946 the proprietor of *Musical America*, knowing the difficulties for British people caused by the dollar situation, had offered her a loan of several hundred dollars. "And this without knowing whether or not there was any possibility of my repaying it," Miss Lympany added. Another American, a pianist who had bought every record the pianist had made and who was arranging his holiday so that he could fly from the Pacific Coast to hear her play at Carnegie Hall shortly, had sent her a year's supply of household soap.

(continued from previous page)

simplified. Knowing in advance what day of the week holidays would fall on every year would be a great boon to employers and employees too.

## Two "Days Apart"

But there are some difficulties the reformers haven't been able to overcome. What would happen, for instance, to a person born on Year-End Day or Leap-Year Day, the two "days apart" of the proposed World Calendar? According to Elisabeth Achelis, a birth, marriage, death, or any other event on either of these days would be recorded by its name and date. Such things as railway schedules (and presumably the programme pages of *The Listener*) would record these two days as W or December 31, and W or June 31. Employees working on these days would be compensated as on other holidays (and certainly, at international holiday rates, such overtime should pay well).

Another thing the World Calendar hasn't been able to eliminate is that day of dread for the superstitious, Friday the 13th. There is a Friday the 13th in the first month of every quarter of the World Calendar. (The Edwards calendar

cuts them out altogether, which might account for some of the support it has received.) Neither do World Calendar enthusiasts say anything about the date of Easter. They say this is purely an ecclesiastical matter. At any rate, some church authorities in America are said to favour the World Calendar scheme.

Early in 1947 the World Calendar proposal was brought before the United Nations by Alberto Arca Parro, Peruvian delegate to the Economic and Social Council. He recommended that a committee be set up to discuss the reform, but so far nothing more has been done. But several nations have gone on record as supporting the scheme. In 1931 the League of Nations sponsored an International Calendar conference, when from 500 draft calendars the World Calendar was selected and endorsed by 14 countries. Ten of them are now members of the United Nations, and their approval still stands.

## New Zealand's Position

Where does New Zealand stand in relation to calendar reform? Some years ago the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of

Science set up a Calendar Reform Committee, and the director of Wellington's Carter Observatory, I. L. Thomsen, was appointed New Zealand representative. Last May, at the annual meeting of the Royal Society of New Zealand, the World Calendar Association's proposal for reform was given the Society's approval. In an effort to have the reform supported nationally, the council decided to inform the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition of its decision. And there, as far as we are aware, the matter rests for the time being.

If the World Calendar Association had its way, it would introduce the reform on January 1, 1950, for on that date the present calendar and their new one coincide. And they would like the scheme to be adopted internationally too, for then the stage would be set, they consider, for a smoother, better organised world. This blend of optimism and high purpose is neatly crystallised in the motto which the Association has selected for itself:

Our time is out of joint; but O delight,  
That we are born this age to set it right!

—Staff Reporter