

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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World for Zeros

IT is not often that a phrase-maker is fortunate enough to be wise, witty, and devastating all in one breath. But that was the achievement of the British M.P. who told the House of Commons the other day that planners were making Britain into a land fit for zeros to live in. The land fit for heroes lasted for 25 years, then disappeared into the abyss again when the second World War began. The land fit for zeros seems likely to last for a century. It is here now, to the sorrow and alarm of all lovers of liberty, but only humbugs and opportunists pretend that they know how to escape from it. Since we must plan or perish, most of us prefer to plan; but we deceive ourselves if we think that planning leaves us free or that the freedom we once enjoyed would now keep us safe. It is the century not of big business but of big political business — of nations on the move against individualists, and combinations of nations against nonconformist neighbours. We must hope, if we allow the human race intelligence enough to survive, that when it has passed through this century it will be a day's march nearer to the liberty it has been so long pursuing. But it is moving rapidly at the present time into sharper discipline and wider control. If the people of Britain are becoming zeros in the effort to survive, the people of most other countries have lost even the encircling ring that indicates where a figure once was. The only liberty they retain is liberty to prod one another into more effective agents of their political bosses — as the factory workers of Russia do in their wall newspapers. But it is in any case a question of degree. The cold war goes on, and as long as it lasts liberty must accept control or face extinction.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

EARLY MORNING MUSIC

Sir,—“Young Farmer and his Wife” expressed my opinion to a “T.” Prior to 6.0 a.m. the test records are often in very good taste, but at the conclusion of the news we get into the groove again. Certainly there is a choice of stations at that hour, so why not a choice of programmes? A surfeit of any one type invites criticism.

Furthermore, has an earlier starting-time for at least one station been seriously considered? I appreciate the temerity of this suggestion, but young farmers and their wives are not the only early risers. **HYDRO WORKER** (Mangakino).

Sir,—May I wholeheartedly support the remarks of Young Farmer and His Wife on the above subject, and at the same time ask the following question? The 6.0 a.m. news received from London occupies 15 minutes, the first 10 of which deals with overseas news and the remaining five minutes gives Home news. When this is rebroadcast at 7.0 a.m., only the first 10 minutes from London comes over the air, and we are handed out a dish of unadulterated rubbish until the weather forecast is put over at 7.15. I suggest that if a vote could be taken the majority of listeners would prefer the Home news to the rubbish.

MORE HOME NEWS (Orewa).

Sir,—May I offer my sympathy to “Young Farmer and His Wife” who write about “Early Morning Music” (*Listener*, October 15). There is a similar difficulty at lunch time, which could be my best time for listening. With crooners howling in agony at the YA stations, I tried 3ZB to find their idea of lunch time entertainment. Somebody was extolling the merits of someone's gentle laxative. I turned past that, found no other stations, and turned back again, just in time to hear the words “Half an hour after taking.”

Let me recommend missing Lunch Music, but listen, if you can, to Mr. Jenner's “Music for Schools,” which follows, and is always interesting, and well worth hearing. I wish that I were more often able to hear it.

A. LUSH (Christchurch).

Sir,—I heartily agree with “Young Farmer and His Wife” in his plea for better music and the destruction of trumpet players. It is no use saying we can switch to another station in the early morning because they are all the same, YA and ZB. Can we not have something more entertaining for the early morning listeners?

ANOTHER FARMER (Bay View).

“GREEN FOR DANGER”

Sir,—I have just read in *The Listener* that *Green For Danger* is to be heard over various stations in six half-hour weekly sessions. I wonder why this production is not put on in one three-hour broadcast, from 7-10 on a Saturday evening, so that the many people who are not able to go out could have the pleasure of hearing a play from beginning to end. We all know that thrillers are among the most popular books of to-day, and one of these plays every other Saturday night alternating with a straight play or comedy

would give much pleasure. And why not put on works such as Galsworthy's *In Chancery* three times a week for one hour each time instead of once weekly? Throughout New Zealand people sit by the radio night after night and all they can hear are half-hour plays, bits of serials, or gramophone records of songs taken from operas, etc. There rarely seems the opportunity of hearing anything right through at one session. I notice many people write to *The Listener* asking for changes in programme, but little change seems to be made.

HOPEFUL (Dunedin).

FRENCH PRONUNCIATION

Sir,—Your correspondent “Alpha,” of Stratford (*Listener*, 22-10-48), says he “would get a good laugh if somebody were to prove that the combination eu (in French) had one sound when used medially and another sound when it is used finally.” May I suggest the word “heureux?” It may not be good for a very loud laugh, but it should keep him happy. At least, it proves that the eu combination has a varying value.

BETA (Wellington).

BREAKFAST AND DINNER SESSIONS

Sir,—As a business man, and one interested in music, I find it very difficult, if not impossible, to listen to some good broadcasts, as being out a good deal in the evenings, I am limited to the breakfast and dinner sessions. But what happens? In the breakfast session I find 1YA putting over practically the same class of programme as 1ZB (minus advertisements, of course), and no sooner do I begin dinner than 1YA switches on to news and information, leaving me to the mercy of 1YD. The net result is that we invariably switch off both breakfast and dinner sessions, and I leave it to your imagination to realise how much we do listen to. My wife tells me that the quality of music improves during the morning. I wish we could have at least the major station broadcast something worth while when the business man has a chance to hear it.

“PATIENCE” (Auckland).

MUSIC FROM ASHBURTON

Sir,—Growls (mine among them) at radio programmes, are all too frequent, so let me make amends by praising when an item delights me. I was twiddling the knob of my radio last week, trying to escape from the uninspired grinding-out of classical music by famous orchestras without an audience, the vulgarity of wise-cracks, and the puerilities of swing, when my hand was stayed by two or three notes of rare beauty. I called my family and friends, and we listened for half an hour to the most beautiful choral singing I have heard for many a day. It was the Ashburton Study Group singing from 3YA, and I venture the opinion that harmonised singing of their standard has not been heard in New Zealand since the Don Cossack Choir was here. Not only was their performance a triumph artistically, but the quality of tone was delightful, and says a lot for the tact and courage of the selection committee in a smallish place like Ashburton. Listeners who have not made the acquaintance of the Ashburton Study

Group would be well advised to look out for their next appearance on 3YA programmes. They are in for a treat.

W. H. GRAHAM (Mangere East).

ORPHANAGES WITHOUT ORPHANS

Sir,—As a postscript to your interesting articles and correspondence on the above subject, it may be of interest to many of your readers to have the latest figures, given by the report of the Child Welfare Department, concerning “Orphanages.”

There are in New Zealand 78 registered Children's Homes conducted by private organisations. These contain 2,418 children (a decrease of 152 on the previous year). Of these 99 are total orphans, 236 have lost the father, and 426 the mother. Thus of the 2,418 children that are a charge on our charity only 31.4 per cent. can be classified as “orphaned,” of which 4 per cent. are “total” orphans.

(CANON) A. H. ACHESON (Christchurch)

SYMPHONIES FROM THE STUDIO

Sir,—As a music lover, and in particular a Beethoven “addict,” I must congratulate the Broadcasting Service on the current series of studio concerts by the Wellington Group of the National Orchestra. Having heard the first of these concerts to-night, I feel that I must offer a little constructive criticism and enter a fervent plea that it may be acted upon in time for later recitals. At the beginning of the concert I was immediately conscious of the “deadness” of the studio.

Whilst appreciating the advantages of a comparatively dead hall or studio when intelligibility of speech is concerned, I feel that the complete absence of reverberation (such as appeared to be the case to-night) detracts considerably from the brilliance of symphonic music, robbing it of much of its dramatic quality. This is particularly noticeable when an abrupt “break” occurs at the height of a crescendo.

May I therefore suggest that for future concerts a more lively studio be used? Failing this, has not the Service the means for producing artificial reverberations?

A. D. BATES (Wellington).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Enquirer (Eltham): Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 in B Flat Minor.

“Turn It Off” (Frankton): Your complaint has been passed on to the appropriate quarter.

“Adonis” (Stratford): A star could appear close to the crescent moon, but not so close as Colderidge suggested.

B. J. Kennedy (Wellington): The frequency of 1YD is temporarily changed to 1280 kc. while adjustments are made to eliminate interference from commercial telegraph channels. As soon as these adjustments are completed 1YD will return to its scheduled frequency.

Dissatisfied (Gisborne): If you could be more specific in your description of the interference to reception it might be possible to discover its cause, but your complaint is too vaguely worded to allow of worthwhile comment.

J.A. (Wellington): The Broadcasting Service states that the error in the Quiz Contest in respect to the wearing of the “flash” was acknowledged in the next session, after you had written. The correct answer had been provided.

“Be Careful” (Wellington): See answer to J.A. In a reply to certain other points raised by you, the Broadcasting Service suggests the explanation may lie in the latitude exercised by the judges or in confusion between the Quiz Master and the competitor. Dominion Day is observed on the fourth Monday in September, as stated. The origin of the name of Christchurch set forth in the answer required was correct.