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All Blacks and Auroras

IT is not quite certain yet that the last laugh of the All Black Tour will not be on the faces of the Maoris. Those who read the article on Page 6 will see that it is one thing to send a football team to South Africa and another thing to get the battle cries carried back to New Zealand through the Southern auroral zone. We are not suggesting of course that it will not be done. The NZBS technical staff are what technicians in some other parts of the world call "hot stuff," and if there is a clear way over or through they will find it. They have in fact been testing for it since October last, and already may be presumed to possess most of the available secrets. But we say available with some anxiety. There are weather secrets which no man possesses, spots liable to appear on the sun which no man or combination of men can control. So the engineers do not promise first-class reception. They promise "sufficiently clear reception to make most of the broadcasting understandable"—a rather more modest undertaking. They may of course be better than their promises—get on better terms with the sun or the ionosphere or the geomagnetic poles or the curtains, draperies, and coronas of the auroras themselves than they will admit they are at the present time. It is better to promise little and deliver much than get it the other way round. But if it was inconsiderate of the All Blacks to choose a winter for play that can't be guaranteed meteorologically, there is compensation in the fact that thousands of us will be learning things about the weather that we seldom thought of before. There is always the possibility, too, of another kind of compensation—escape into the auroral bands of sounds that we may not be eager to hear.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, MAY 20

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

SAM CAIRNCROSS

Sir,—Your correspondent D. J. Ramage can be quite sure that Sam Cairncross hasn't a swollen head. He impresses me as a modest man, aware that an artist learns to the end of his creative life, and prepared to admit that some of his work is still experimental.

We must give credit to his energy and his willingness to forget the flesh-pots for the sake of a vision which may or may not be attainable. Recently he was at the East Cape working on any subject—marine, landscape, or Maori figure. There is nothing of the week-end dabbler about this man and still less is there anything of the timidity about financial things that handicap some people. Cairncross paints and lets money come second.

My namesake "Vincent" will be interested to learn that Cairncross originally did set up his canvas to paint an ox, but when he saw the size of a carcass he realised he had underestimated badly, and so he did the sheep. He painted solidly eight hours a day for nearly a week at the Wellington abattoirs, where meat workers who came to scoff remained to admire.

"Vincent" appears to doubt the authenticity of Cairncross's approach to the subject "On the Hooks." I'll admit freely that Rembrandt is Sam's God (not a bad one at that). Incidentally, if you want to ruffle Cairncross you can compare his work to Van Gogh—he dislikes him.

You can hardly convict Cairncross of some form of piracy because he also does a flayed carcass hanging from a hook. Quite a few Dutch masters have done raw meat too, just as dozens did dead ducks hanging and lying, plucked and unplucked. Any true artist could find considerable beauty in a butcher's shop. Look at the flesh colourings and the gradations in the mottled fat next time you go past one. You'll see a challenge to any painter.

D. McD. VINCENT (Wellington).

PET AVERSIONS

Sir,—With winter approaching might I suggest a "Pet Aversion" competition for listeners. I can nominate three items to start off. (1) Women who sing men's songs. Instance, Gracie Fields howling "Gimme a Girl in My Yarns." Cannot women distinguish the difference between equality and imitation? (2) ZB programme titles that have no relation to the contents. Instance, 2ZA's "Monarchs of Mime and Melody." How is mime put over without television? (3) BBC programmes that are years old. Instance, *ITMA*, recorded in 1946, and

another programme recorded during the last war, both heard from 2YC this week. Surely it shouldn't take years for these records to reach New Zealand.

I could nominate other aversions, but those three stand out in front.

LISTENER (Hawera).

TAKAHE VALLEY

Sir,—In your issue of April 22, in the article "The Egg Came After the Chick," Mr. Sorensen describes the exploration of a new valley where takahe were found; "there were numerous signs, and soon nest sites, old and new, were found and at least four birds observed at close range." But in the local paper of April 27 a long telegram from Wellington quotes Dr. Falla as saying, "that the total area inhabited by the notornis or takahe was only about 400 yards square." Will you please comment on this apparent contradiction?

NELSONIAN (Nelson).

(We are informed by Dr. Falla that he was misquoted.—Ed.)

A N.Z. THIRD PROGRAMME

Sir,—Isn't it time the broadcasting service instituted a third programme? The moron and the middle-brow are well catered for, but what does the poor old highbrow get? His fill of music, yes, but there are hundreds who will listen to the most abstruse modern poetry, technical lectures, etc., and think the music of Shakespeare's verse and prose preferable to a broadcast of the Celestial Choir. What do they get? A snippet of Shakespeare here and there throughout the year, usually as recitations, and on the anniversary of the birth and death of the world's greatest poet a shortened version of one of the plays. The version of *Othello* done last week was a splendid example of the cruel penalising of the players, for the "Put out the light" speech had to be left out. Hamlet without the prince wouldn't have come as a greater shock to listeners. Let's have a third programme. We are growing up culturally, the artists are here and the willing listeners are here. We have the stations, too. I have just been around the dial and found seven stations broadcasting music. Why can't one of those stations give us something to think about instead of treating us as sponges who will soak up anything and forget about it a minute later?

J.T. (Auckland).

HISTORY AND THE BBC

Sir,—Those of your readers who have listened to the BBC programme "Four Centuries of British Parliaments" from Station 2YC on recent Wednesday evenings will no doubt be as dismayed as I

was to learn that the speeches of leading British statesmen are reproduced with scant regard for truth. One example of wilful tampering is enough to throw a shadow over the authenticity of the whole series of broadcasts.

In the episode dealing with the pre-1914 Parliament, broadcast recently, the extract presented from Lloyd George's speech at the time of the 1911 Morocco crisis was:

If a situation were to be forced upon us in which peace could only be preserved by surrender, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure.

Now, what Lloyd George did say was: If a situation were to be forced upon us in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Britain to be treated, when her interests were vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of Nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure.

The excision, without comment, of the middle of this sentence is inexcusable. By omitting what has long been regarded as a classic example of the transition from national "honour" to

More letters from listeners will be found on page 24

national "interest," the broadcast misleads listeners about Lloyd George's motives. The omission is the more culpable as the programme has been prepared by D. C. Somervell, a leading British historian.

J. D. O'SHEA (Wellington).

BEETHOVEN'S "JENA" SYMPHONY

Sir,—I was very interested when the programmes for Friday, April 8, listed from 1YA at 7.30 p.m. recordings of a "Symphony in C—Jena" by Beethoven, for I had never heard of such a work. But although the hearing of a new symphony by Beethoven is an amazing event, neither *The Listener* nor the announcer introducing the work, gave any discussion of it. Researches among available books on Beethoven, of which only those by Thayer and Becker briefly mentioned the work, told of a manuscript of a symphony discovered at Jena in 1909, and signed "Louis Beethoven," and presumably a very early work by that master.

The performance revealed a fine full-length symphony—but absolutely in the style of Haydn. If Beethoven's name was not attached to it, it would certainly be regarded as Haydn's. I wonder if you could give myself and other interested listeners some information in your columns about this work and its revival, what critics think of it, and what reasons there are for believing it is not by Haydn.

J. R. ROBERTSHAW
(Mt. Albert).

(All that most reference books have to say about the Jena Symphony is simply that it is attributed to Beethoven; authenticity disputed. Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* says that in 1909 Professor Fritz Stein, musical director of the University of Jena, announced that in a collection of music at the Académie Concerts founded in 1780, he had discovered the complete parts of a symphony in four movements in C "par Louis Beethoven." These words were in the handwriting of the copyist on the second violin part; on the 'cello part is written "Symphonie von Beethoven."—Ed.)

CRICKET TESTS

BBC Commentaries Through 2YA

STATION 2YA is to remain on the air to broadcast the BBC's ball-to-ball commentaries on the four Cricket Test matches, the first of which will start on Saturday, June 11. In each match the first day's play will start at 10.30 p.m. (New Zealand time), and the second and third days' play at 10.0 p.m. (New Zealand time). Station 2YA will also broadcast at 7.30 p.m. on each of the days of play a short report by Arthur Gilligan on the weather and prospects. This will be summarised and included in the 9.0 p.m. News link.