

a guard was approaching. This allowed us to dismantle the aerial and pretend to be asleep.

ON THE MOVE AGAIN

HER instinct in these cases seemed almost human; and she made it possible for us to do things—things important to our survival—which otherwise could never have been done. In May, 1944, we were warned that we would soon be moving from Medan by sea, our destination unknown, and no animals allowed. What about Judy? We had got away with it before, so why not again? One of us had a suitcase. Daily we trained Judy to stay quietly in it closed for hours at a time. At first she complained, but soon it became a game.

On June 22 came the orders to move. Luggage had to be restricted to one small sack each. We could never hope to get the suitcase past the guard. However, six men abandoned their meagre possessions and swore to the guard that their joint baggage was in the case. It worked, and Judy went aboard with us—never a whimper from the case. The ship, the Van Wearijk, was an old Dutch coaster. There were no lifeboats. A thousand of us were batten down in the holds. There were no sanitary arrangements. Ventilation was one small hatchway. But Judy was in her element—aboard a ship, among her pals, and no guards to trouble her.

At 2.0 p.m. on June 4 we were struck by two Allied torpedoes, and the ship sank in three minutes. Two hundred and forty men were drowned, but Judy was pushed to safety through a porthole which we broke with an iron bar. I shall always remember her with her forepaws over a spar to which three of us clung for four hours till we were picked up. We were taken to Singapore. When we came ashore one of the guards who had already arrived tried to bayonet her, as she should not have been with us. But she was saved again by Banno, who had left Medan some months before and was on the wharf when we arrived.

After a month in Singapore we were taken back to South Sumatra up the Kampar River, and our last year was spent building a railway through a jungle marsh on the east coast of Southern Sumatra, from Pekan Baharu to Rengat—about 200 miles. Now we were driven to labour 12 hours a day, seven days a week, right on the equator with meagre rations of only rice and tapioca. How the railway was built through the most noisome marsh in the world—a marsh where the deathly smell of decay and corruption was everywhere, where every form of dangerous and revolting animal and reptilian life abounded, and how disease and death in its most shocking forms stalked us all along the route—is not for this talk. It is enough to say that only 40 per cent. of those who went there returned.

But through all this Judy followed us, a constant example of what even a dog, far from the native heath of her ancestors, could endure. She became a vital inspiration to us to carry on, and in the darkest days one heard often the expression, "While Judy can take it, so can I." I do not exaggerate when I say that this dog, by the example of her courage and will to live, saved many of us who would surely have died.

(The Commercial stations will take note of *Animal Welfare Week* this Friday, September 30, with a special talk, "Man and the Animals," by Bryan O'Brien. It will be heard from all ZB stations and 2ZA at 7.30 p.m.)

N.Z. LISTENER, SEPTEMBER 30, 1949.



NINON VALLIN

AT REHEARSAL—Ninon Vallin with her associate artist and accompanist Henri Penn

IF you want to interview Ninon Vallin you will enjoy the experience most if you can speak French too—an accomplishment which few New Zealand journalists seem to have the time to acquire—but even in a three-way conversation it is impossible not to be impressed by her vitality and friendliness. When *The Listener* met her in Auckland the other day, Henri Penn (an old acquaintance who is travelling with Madame Vallin as her associate artist) was interpreter, but the personality of the veteran soprano needed no translation. At 63 she seems not to have grown old, but rather to have attained a richly gifted and graceful maturity.

Besides music she has two abiding interests and enthusiasms. As with all her countrymen, the first of these is France; the second is the land. When she is not on tour, her own home is deep in the countryside outside Lyons, one of the loveliest parts of France, and the house itself is a farm homestead which dates back to the 15th Century.

Farming is a subject on which *The Listener* itself feels at home. Was the farm a large one? she was asked.

"For France, yes. It is of about 20 acres, and we have a little of every-

thing. We keep horses for riding and for work; we have chickens and cows and dogs, and much fruit—cherries and peaches, apricots and grapes."

Madame Vallin's love of country life includes a special fondness for horses. While she was in Auckland she paid a visit to the racing stables at Takanini, and during her present tour she is hoping to spend a few days on a New Zealand farm, perhaps near Christchurch which is the New Zealand city she liked most on her last visit. This time she hopes she will like it even more.

"Christchurch is lovely," she said, "but last time it was winter, and very, very cold. Now it is spring and everything should be green."

She hopes to see more of other parts of New Zealand too—especially the country districts—but the cities will claim her for most of her time here. As before, she is making a point of meeting as many French-speaking residents, and visiting as many French clubs as possible; she also hopes to learn something of University life in New Zealand, and of the part music and the arts play in it.

(Listeners to 1YA will hear Ninon Vallin on Tuesday, October 4, when the first hour of a public concert will be broadcast.)

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