

# ODDS AND ENDS FOR BETTER LISTENING

## Mighty Melchior

Listeners over New Zealand national stations frequently hear Lauritz Melchior, massive Danish tenor, probably the world's greatest Wagner tenor. He will be heard in the presentation of "The Valkyrie" from 3YA Christchurch on Sunday evening. Tristan, Siegfried, Lohengrin, Parsifal, and Tannhauser — these are the mighty Melchior's meat. Many of Wagner's heroes were huntsmen. Melchior himself enjoys nothing better than the hunt. The deer-skin costume he wears as Siegfried is the skin of a deer he shot and skinned himself on a hunting trip in Germany. When he can get away from the Metropolitan Opera, New York, he goes shooting in the woods of Maine or North Dakota. In New Brunswick once he shot a bear, had it dressed and smoked, and toted the meat back to his apartment in Manhattan. For weeks the Melchior home was cluttered up with shanks and shoulders. They hung in closets, cupboards, even out the window high above bustling Broadway. Lauritz tried to eat it all, but the task was too great. Friends nobly assisted by carrying away and loyally devouring large hunks of meat until the supply was exhausted.

Kleinchen — "Little One" — is Melchior's wife. She does not like hunting, but likes her husband. Says she: "I am a married woman, and very happy. I try to make a nice home."

Melchior spends his summers in Germany. On an island in the middle of a lake, near the former Polish border, he inhabits what was originally the fortress of a medieval robber baron. The rustic pursuit calms Melchior's soul. There he likes to dress in *Lederhosen*, hunt his own land for rabbit, red deer, or pheasant. On these expeditions he carries his little brass hunting horn, blowing blasts on it like fabled Siegfried himself.

## Dummies

Wartime Paris is too full of half-empty theatres for the likes of managers and directors: the lack of audience gave broad faced Gustave Quinson, director of one theatre, an idea. He hacked out cardboard dummies of soldiers, sailors, French and English celebrities, and propped them up in boxes and along the first row gallery. Alone in one box sits Allied Chief Maurice Gamelin;

## HOW MUCH DID YOU KNOW?

These are the answers to the questions on page 27

**SUNDAY:** Ben Jonson, author of the play "Catiline, His Conspiracy" (1YA at 9.25 p.m.)

**MONDAY:** Olive Groves, or Mrs. George Baker (1YA at 9.47 p.m.)

**TUESDAY:** The late John Tilley, entertainer (3YA at 9.36 p.m.)

**WEDNESDAY:** Debroy Somers, of Debroy Somers Band (2YA at 8.52 p.m.)

**THURSDAY:** "Silver Threads Among the Gold" by Danks (1YA at 9.49 p.m.)

**FRIDAY:** Essie Ackland, contralto (3YA at 9.50 p.m.)

**SATURDAY:** Billy Cotton, of Billy Cotton and his Band (3YA at 9.25 p.m.)

Recorded Personalities in Caricature (8): Billy Cotton, dance band leader.

alone in another, Chief of Staff Alphonse Georges. High up, opposite the stage but ignoring it in favour of a papier-mache lady, sits Neville Chamberlain. Others on display are Josephine Baker, Mistinguette, Tristan Bernard, Lord Gort and many poilus, tars and Moroccans. During intervals audiences get a big kick out of identifying the dummies. But the broad-faced theatre director is getting long-faced; there are still far too many empty seats.

## The Bridges

Recently arrived from Australia is a note from the Bridges Trio, giving news of their activities there during the past few months. When they returned after their New Zealand tour they were signed up by the late Frank Neil and appeared in Melbourne with an imported company headed by the Mills Brothers. Newspaper critics in Sydney and Melbourne gave honours of the shows to the famed brothers, George Wallace, and the Marimba Trio, under which name the Bridges have been appearing. The Trio finished their contract with the show at Christmas, then stayed in Sydney to broadcast with the ABC, and are now playing a season at the Capitol Theatre. They have had a busy time entertaining officers and men of the 2nd A.I.F.

## Australia Annoyed

Australian radio magazines just arrived display a good deal of annoyance at the decision of the Commonwealth Government to appropriate a quarter-

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Now, with a war to fight, the Government has appropriated this reserve and left the ABC head office staff scattered in various buildings around Sydney, paying, in the words of the Postmaster-General, "high rents for second and third rate properties."

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