

NEW ZEALAND

LISTENER

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Per Ardua

OUR heading, as most readers will know, is the first half of the motto of the Royal Air Force: *through difficulties*. The other half is *ad astra: to the stars*. Taken together they mean that the path to glory is hard; may be long; must be rough. Sometimes it is so hard, so long, and so rough that the bravest can hardly endure to the end. But the stars shine nowhere else. Britain and France to-day are on that road. They know, and will seek to find, no other. It will be hard. It will be so long that some will never see the end. Some of those who come to the end will have fainted many times by the way. But there will be no turning back. Behind them are slavery and moral death. Ahead—and they are facing the fact that it may be weary years ahead—a light in which their children will live and work again as civilised beings.

We repeat that the way may be long. To expect anything else is madness. But it is worse than madness to think that the end will never come. It is cowardice and treachery. If there had been cowards and traitors in Dunkirk, Leopolds and Quislings in Paris and London, twenty Allied divisions would now be German navvies. They are French and British soldiers still because they looked defeat in the face and laughed at it.

And they are far more now than mere soldiers. They are a light and an inspiration through all the battles to come. Whatever struggles lie ahead, Allied armies will remember Dunkirk and fight on. Right may not always be might, but faith cannot fail to be.

Per ardua to-day. *Ad astra* when Dunkirk has cleansed us of our last craven doubt.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

Letters sent to "The Listener" for publication should be as brief as possible and should deal with topics covered in "The Listener" itself. Correspondents must send their names and addresses even when it is their wish that these should not be published. We cannot undertake to give reasons why all or any portion of a letter is rejected.

TALKS FOR WOMEN

The Editor,

"The Listener."

Sir,—All favourable comments upon your paper heartily endorsed. I agree with a recent writer that special talks could be given for women on broader subjects; for example, excellent subjects are prepared by local business men for delivery to accountancy students. Women personally can hardly intrude into such a Man's Domain, but the matter, while slightly technical, is intensely interesting, and of everyday practical importance.

Nearly all the talks to women in the mornings for some time past have been repetitions, but we do still enjoy them. We listen to all broadcasts from Parliament House in session during the day, and enjoy many educational and humorous items.

Yours, etc.,

D. SUTHERLAND.

Nelson,

May 27, 1940.

BRITAIN'S HONOUR

The Editor,

"The Listener"

Sir,—The following extract from a review of General Dawes' Journal (just published) will be of interest to those readers whose spiritual home is still within the British Commonwealth:

"At the height of the financial crisis of 1931 Dawes knew from the inside of the desperate pass to which British finances had been brought: and his comment was: 'Clouds and darkness now surround this brave and devoted people in their national life, as often before: but again they are girding themselves for the supreme effort which the situation makes imperative.'"

That is an eloquent and discerning tribute from a neutral. It was written in 1931. Is it not prophetically applicable to 1940?

Yours etc.,

INTEGRITY.

Dunedin,

May 28, 1940.

DANCE MUSIC

The Editor,

"The Listener."

Sir,—So the Diehards have revived the thirty-year-old controversy about dance music! Surely it hasn't occurred to these fossilised persons that there are thousands of people on this earth who really LOVE dance music.

Another thing — are the Diehards true music lovers? Do they know a good symphony from a bad one? Can they appreciate the difference in effect between Handel's harmony, and that of Debussy? Do they revel in the development of a Bach fugue, as well as thrill to the mystic beauty of Delius and Scriabin? Do they? Surely not!

Why can't there be more tolerance toward dance music? There are hundreds of people who don't appreciate classical music, yet don't make asses of themselves by decrying it. Certainly there is much in dance music that is trite and cheap—but to condemn the lot of it on those grounds is almost as bad as condemning the whole of Sibelius's music because of his "Valse Triste," Ravel's music because

of "Bolero," Beethoven's music because of his "Minuet in G"—or even Gershwin's music for his "Love Walked In." Admittedly that is stretching the point somewhat, as the works mentioned are perhaps more hackneyed than unworthy of the composers' reputations—still, a little hyperbole here and there can do a lot toward impressing certain people.

Anyway, when such musicians as Stokowski and Koussevitski have an intelligent and understanding appreciation of modern rhythm music, can't the Diehards realise there *must* be something in it?

Yours, etc.,

R.C.

Timaru,

May 27, 1940.

MODERN MUSIC.

The Editor,

"The Listener."

Sir,—First I must apologise for my statement concerning Tchaikovsky, which I made in all sincerity. Unfortunately I did not realise my mistake until some time later when listening to 2YA's "Centenary of Tchaikovsky." (Yes, I often listen to Sunday evening classical programmes.)

In reply to A.A., I would ask him not to judge the height of modern musical art by the mass of popular songs we hear to-day, but by such modern composers as Duke Ellington, Gershwin, and Hoagy Carmichael. Percy Grainger (he has a smattering of musical knowledge) compared the Duke's "Creole Love Call" and "Black and Tan Fantasy" to Delius and Bach. In a more recent statement he said: "I can appreciate jazz just as much as the classics. All music is good if it is sincere and natural. In some jazz and swing music I have heard recently there was much more sincerity than in some of the so-called classical music."

However, I think the main cause of all our disension was summed up in a statement by John Dempster, Australian Music Critic (classical), who said: "As in other cities, music lovers in Adelaide are divided into two all but warring camps; the alleged intellectuals and the supposed froth and bubble musicians. Neither section understands the other, with the result that mutual ignorance breeds unreasonable antagonisms."

Half the trouble lies in the fact that too much reliance is placed by everybody on the broadcasting of both symphonic and swing music. Admitting all the wonders of radio, lovers of jazz can be assured that they actually receive a dim reflex of a symphony by merely hearing it over the air. To attend a concert by Jim Davidson (Australian Dance Band Leader) is, apart from being downright good fun, a most interesting lesson in modern orchestration and counterpoint."

Yours, etc.,

R.J.H.

Wellington,

May 27, 1940.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

A. A. Lind.—Propaganda.

"Larrycan."—Too personal.

E.P.—Complaint noted.

"Speak English".—Extravagant with a name; impossible without one.