

# TWENTY-NINE THOUSAND RECORDS

## Everything From A Symphony To A Massacre

**R**ECORDS, records, records, marching over shelf after shelf and through album after album in the library of 2YA Wellington. In fact, twenty-nine thousand records, as varied as the colours in Joseph's coat. They form the domain of Dorothy Tighe, the station's librarian, whom a representative of *The Listener* interviewed the other afternoon.

No need to stress just what an important job hers is. Records, of course, occupy a very large percentage of broadcasting time. That is why the rule in the 2YA library is "Nothing without system." Each disc is carefully catalogued under different classifications—title first, then, if it is vocal, under type of singer, and so on. With each overseas ship bringing fresh recordings, the library has emulated Topsy, who just grew and grew.

### In the Early Days

No one has watched more closely this growth than Miss Tighe, for she joined the broadcasting world before there was a National Service, when individual companies held control. Thus she remembers the days ("It seems almost like yesterday") when recordings were played on an ordinary cabinet gramophone with the microphone in position above the turntable. Sometimes, indeed, an absent-minded operator forgot to wind the gramophone up, and then . . .

In those days, radio was almost as unknown a field as Tibet is still, and the work had a strong savour of adventure about it; Miss Tighe used to do every conceivable type of work—from cataloguing discs to actually broadcasting recitals.

"Yes, I think we have all the greatest works—there are nearly three hundred albums in the library—all the symphonies, chamber music, and complete and abridged operas," said Miss Tighe, in reply to a question. "Then, in recent years, have come recorded serials and dramatic features—there are a good number of those, and they're all kept in a

separate library and requisitioned as required."

### Requests From Listeners

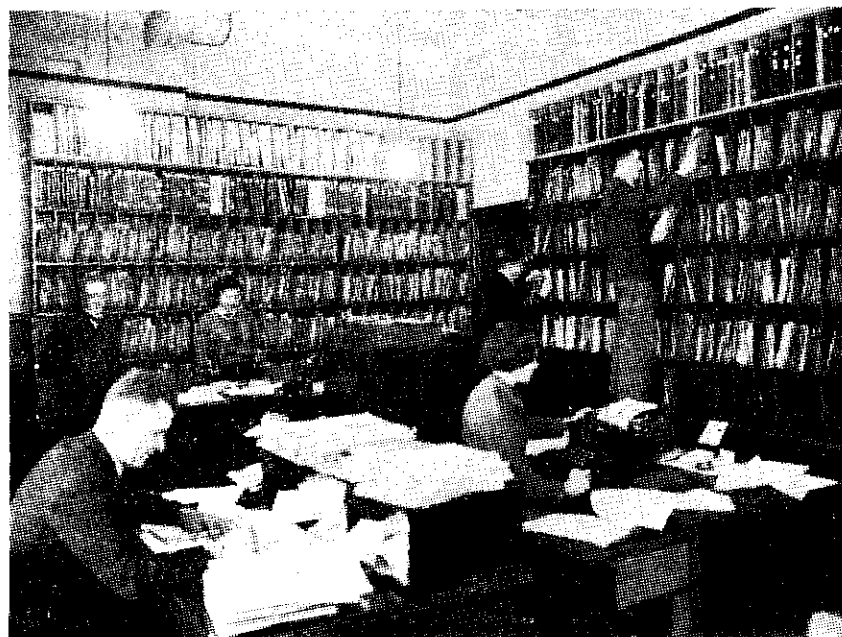
Once, says Miss Tighe, the station was inundated with requests from listeners for their favourite recordings. In fact, these requests have now, officially, at any rate, to be refused. Station 2YD's "Listeners' Own" session handles most request items. But she remembers there was very often a touch of humour about listeners' demands—such as the day a fan wrote in asking for "that song about the vulgar boatman."

For Sunday programmes there is a special separate library of hymns and sacred music; the Children's Hour similarly has its own library of suitable records. An interesting section now in process of being built up is the Historical Library where voices of celebrities past and present are captured forever in wax.

### Special Effects

Not least interesting is the library of records of "effects"—what an earlier generation of play-lovers knew as "noises-off." In the modern counterpart is to be found every conceivable type of noise—from train crashes to lapping waters or a massacre.

Then there's a peculiar, nondescript category of records—such as Gandhi speaking on his philosophy,



A corner of the 2YA Records Library

Kingsford-Smith's arrival after a record-breaking flight, Chichester's England-Australia flight, Ramsay MacDonald on Robert Burns, a speech by the Duke of Windsor when he was Prince of Wales, Nellie Melba's farewell speech, Admiral Jellicoe speaking at a remembrance festival, and a message to the Islam world by His Highness the Aga Khan; and many more.

Dorothy Tighe will be leaving the NBS shortly to get married. Although her work looking after this record library has not always been easy, she has found the task in many ways a fascinating one—and she is not sure whether she's sorry or glad to be going.

## MUSIC FROM THE PAST *The Art Of Arnold Dolmetsch*

Early this year the death occurred of Eugene Arnold Dolmetsch, the composer. As a tribute, Zillah Castle and Ronald Castle, who are members of the Society of Recorder Players, England, will present "To Arnold Dolmetsch," a programme of music for recorder, virginal and violin, at 9.15 p.m. on Tuesday, June 18, from 2YA Wellington

**A**RNOLD DOLMETSCH was a Frenchman, born in Le Mans, on February 24, 1858. His surname, by a curious coincidence, is closely allied to the German word "dolmetscher," which means "interpreter." It seemed, therefore, to be the destiny of a Dolmetsch to interpret the music of a more spacious past.

One of the rarest and, perhaps the sweetest thing remaining with us in music, a memory of those days when music-making was carried on extensively in intimate domestic circles, has been the quiet persistence of the Dolmetsch family to keep alive the charm of old viols, virginals and recorders of Elizabethan times. There is something so exceedingly refined, quaint and

rare, in hearing them in performance. Arnold Dolmetsch studied the violin under the great Vieuxtemps, at Brussels, also at the Royal College of Music, London. He became interested in teaching and joined the staff of the Dulwich College, London, but this was merely a step in the direction of his

real job in life. He began to collect and repair and play on old instruments, with old music which he revived for the purpose. He went to the Chickering piano factory in America, later he had a department in the Gaveau piano factory in Paris, and ultimately he returned to England, when he installed a workshop at Haslemere, in Surrey.

For many years Arnold Dolmetsch and his family, world-famous experts on old English music, manufactured such instruments as lutes, viols, recorders, clavichords and harpsichords. Such is the family's passion for their art that they may often be found wandering around in Elizabethan costume. They play the entire range of the instruments they make, and every year hold a festival of old music.

Down at Haslemere, under conditions far removed from the push and bustle of today, the Dolmetsch family re-established in its own household the domestic conditions of earlier centuries. To these festivals musicians from all countries in the world came to hear at first-hand old English music played on the old-style instruments, and interpreted by a foremost authority, craftsman and artist.

For all Arnold Dolmetsch's very long residence in England, he never wholly succeeded in learning our language. The almost comical effect of the broken English in which he addressed his audiences came to be recognised as an essential part of the entertainments, and it certainly endeared him to everybody.



A "consort of viols," played by the Dolmetsch family. Arnold Dolmetsch is third from the left