

LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

Every Friday Price Threepence

NOVEMBER 1, 1940

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For Subscription and Advertising Rates see Page 54.

War Aims

IT is a good sign in general that questions are being asked about our war aims; but only in general. Some of those who ask why we are fighting ask because they are obstructionists and are annoyed that we are fighting at all. They are certainly not bewildered patriots asking because they do not know.

They do know. So do the rest of us. A few dreamers, a few pedants, a few fanatical idealists may still be sighing for a formula, but the average man is as clear in his mind about the war as he is about his work, and a great deal clearer than he has ever been about most of life's problems. He knows that if he doesn't work he will not eat, and he realises as clearly, and much more painfully, that if he doesn't fight he will not remain free. It is either defeatism or the most dangerous of all brands of subversion to say that he doesn't know why he is fighting, or what he is fighting for.

Even if he did not know he knows what he is fighting against. He has ears and eyes. The radio services of the world overtake lies told in print, and the printed opinions of trained correspondents correct the extravagances of the air. Never in history before has it been possible to follow a war from day to day, and even from hour to hour, and to know that we are never very far from the truth; but it is possible in this war. We don't require to be scholars or to possess second sight to know what Germany has done to average men in Europe.

Mr. Churchill did not tell the whole story when he declared the other day that we are fighting for survival. But he told the only part of it that need agitate us for a month or two. The time may come when we can fight two wars at once—Hitler's and our most advanced thinkers'; but it has not come yet. It is as well to remember too that dead men tell no tales at all, and do not often build brave new worlds.

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 Correspondents must send their names and addresses even when it is their wish that these should not be published.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.

VULGAR IS AS VULGAR DOES

Sir,—Mr. L. D. Austin has expressed freely his abhorrence of what he describes as certain extreme types of modern music. He condemns them as vulgar illiteracies which appeal only to those whom an admirer of his has designated "half-asphyxiated morons."

I do not wish to discuss whether such estimation of the music is correct or not; but I would like to ask your correspondent to explain why he considers vulgarity and illiteracy reprehensible in music but commendable in prose. Or, and this is a corollary of the foregoing, will Mr. Austin explain why we should punish a painter for purloining paint, and reward a shearer for stealing sheep?

Mr. Austin may wonder why I put these questions to him. The explanation is that while condemning composers for being vulgar and illiterate, he himself expects to be applauded when, in his prose, he does not hesitate to follow their pernicious example.

Perhaps he will say that he does nothing of the sort, but the evident zest with which he uses such vulgarities and illiteracies as "Sez you!", "Oh yeah!", "Mr. Editor, I never said no sich thing!", "Lady, you done 'me wrong!", etc., would make such an assertion contrary to common sense.

So far as I am aware the influence of the majority of musical critics is negligible. But I am acquainted with only a very small percentage of the earth's population, and maybe your correspondent numbers his admirers by the hundred thousand. Even if such be the case he has no justification for being unethical in his prose, though this results, I believe, from nothing more heinous than a very desperate attempt to be extremely modern.

I am not concerned here with whether it is right or wrong for a composer or anyone else to be vulgar or illiterate. I wish only to stress the obvious fact that when a critic condemns in others what he praises in himself he is palpably ridiculous.

In conclusion, I ask you to be so kind as to give me space for the following:

If the critic who shrieks at the mote
In the eye of his brother, could not
The motes in his own,
He'd leave writing alone,
And weep for the stuff that he wrote.

—JOSEPH C. McEVOY (Dunedin).

WOMEN AND COURAGE

Sir,—What's this? A Boswell with no Johnson?

Or is Mrs. Boswell's Johnson of femininity this kept domestic, this wiver of husbands, this cooker and cleaner, this washer and mender; this automat who sees the world through the kitchen window, this paragon of innocuity who suffers so beautifully, this voter who keeps her politics in the nursery, this heroine who sits so quietly while men make wars, this brewer of tea?

It does not sound like the good Doctor. . .

THID (Somewhere in N.Z.)

APPRECIATION

Sir,—Whatever you do, please do not change one item of *The Listener*. There are a number in the community who will never be satisfied however you

change about to suit them. I think the whole trouble lies in the fact that it is too interesting, and a little side-track would be welcome. Apart from its programmes there is a lot of information not found in any other paper. I wish to thank the radio announcers for our favourite pieces that we have asked for over the air; also the publication of songs such as "There'll Always Be An England," and a few others. Often we know the tunes, but not the words. I would dare to suggest a turn from the staff would be delightful;

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even if some of them are not professionals, I'm sure most would prefer that to records. Though they may lack polish they would be natural and that's what we do want. —M. W. REPA (Opotiki).

Sir,—Two votes of thanks and one request: (1) The introduction of the NBS Strings to the Dinner Music Session is the most welcome change for years. (2) We are grateful for the elimination of artists' own introductions and comments. The performance, for instance, of one well-known lady completely spoilt our pleasure. But (3) Must we have the News-reel in its present form? It is a muddle of local and (largely stale) BBC news. —LOUIE J. and FRANK A. CARLING (Mapua).

Sir,—As I am an enthusiastic reader of *The Listener* I am writing this note of appreciation. I find that the programmes are so well set out that I can always listen to music I enjoy. In my opinion *The Listener* covers the radio programmes better than any paper I have read. Also I find the articles you publish both entertaining and informative. Would it be possible to print something about Willem Mengelberg, my favourite interpreter of Tchaikovsky?

—ANDANTE (Devonport).

LESSONS IN MORSE

Sir,—In all the lessons on Morse published in your interesting journal, the alphabet is shown, quite rightly, thus: —, —, —, etc. There was a telegraph instrument used (many years ago) on British railways called the single needle. This of course is out of date probably, and almost unknown in New Zealand, but I mention it because the alphabet was always written thus: ./, /., /., /., /., /., /., etc.

I suggest that learners could, if they desired, correspond (for practice) in this manner, which is quicker to write, takes up only a fraction of the space, and you will agree, is much neater.

—RETIRED TELEGRAPHIST (Howick).

OLD-TIME AND MODERN DANCE MUSIC

Sir,—On looking through *The Listener's* programmes for October 13, I notice that in the whole programme only one hour of old time dance is supplied for the whole week. On Saturday night the 19th instant every YA station has a dance programme and all modern music. Every night of the week two of the YA stations have modern dance music. I do not wish to criticise modern dance music; it may be all very nice for those who like it; but why the huge monopoly? Why must it be jazz every night of the week? There are thousands of listeners who would very much welcome more old-time dance music. It certainly is not a credit to the broadcasting authorities to give such a monopoly to modern dance music.—OLD TIME DANCER (Hamilton).