

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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## Five Men

IT is a sobering thought, as we point out on page 7, that the fate of New Zealand for generations to come rests at present in the hands of five men. As far as anybody knows it rests safely there. Each of the five is a leader who has been proved under strain and difficulty. Each has captured the imagination of the public as well as the confidence of his own men. Each has the kind of ability that supplements the abilities of all the others. Each has health, force, and drive.

But in a narrower sense still our destiny is in the hands of one man, General Sir Archibald Wavell, the Commander-in-Chief, and the real question is, Does Sir Archibald rank with the world's great Captains? If he does, the battle is already won. If he does not it is by no means lost, since leaders can be changed, and limitations in one commander are likely to be balanced by shortcomings in another. But victory then comes slowly. It has after all not often happened in history that armies have been led by men of equal genius on both sides, and it would be a sensation if that were the case now. We must suppose that our position is what a nation's position usually is in war—dependent on character and talent rather than on genius—and that relief will come to us not as the result of a scintillating series of victories that leave our enemies crushed and confused, but that it will follow a long series of attacks and withdrawals, with victories and defeats on both sides. And for that kind of warfare we can weigh Sir Archibald Wavell in his own scales.

In three lectures on the art of generalship delivered in 1939 at Cambridge he laid it down that a good general must be human, or he will not inspire affection; must have moral and physical courage, or he will lack serenity in danger; must be young enough to be alert and open-minded; but above all must have common sense—knowledge of what is and what is not possible. Knowledge of the art of war is of course assumed in any soldier of senior rank, but it does not make a general. To use his knowledge for victory he must be able to anticipate the moves of war and in the meantime to take its shocks. These things Sir Archibald has shown that he can do, and if the question arises whether he must not, at 58, be losing some of his elasticity, it is at least half of the answer to recall that Marlborough won his most brilliant victory at 51, that Turenne's best work was done at 63, and Moltke's between 66 and 70.

## 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 in 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.

### MORE OR LESS NEWS?

Sir,—I note a request for a further news session. At present we have sessions at all the main listening periods of the day, viz., 6.0 a.m., 7.0 a.m., 8.45 a.m., 12.15 p.m., 1.15 p.m., 6.15 p.m., 7.0 p.m., 9.0 p.m., and 11.0 p.m. We also have, and had long before radio, a perfectly good daily press, which gives a fuller and more complete news service without distractions to others who have already heard or read it. Broadcasts intended for Africa, the Americas, and the East are practically identical with our own, but are all picked up and re-broadcast to us. The result is that a listener seeking entertainment during the main listening hours has to listen to nine repetitions of the same "news" or else turn his set off. The old slogan may well be applied here: "Enough is as good as a feast."

"NEWS READER" (Waikato).

### WHERE ARE GILBERT AND SULLIVAN?

Sir,—I sympathise with your contributor "Iolanthe," but secretly rejoice over the reason for his misery. To have to endure the agony of "the complete operas of Gilbert and Sullivan" would be almost unbearable. Even the veiled cloak of nationalism with which he shrouds his appeal, and which seems to be the motive of his curious request, does not deter me from suggesting that "Enough is as good as (or better than) a feast." By all means let us have judicious doses of Gilbert and Sullivan for those who are still interested in music of the "hurdy-gurdy" type. Such an ingrained tradition will, no doubt, take some considerable time to rectify.

Wagner "came out" of Germany; so did Beethoven, Mozart, Bach and most other kings of composition. Let us keep them with us until we have reached that happy state of enlightenment when the intrusion of any suggestion of nationalism into the sphere of music will be unthinkable.

"HANS SACHS" (Melling).

Sir,—The cry of your two excellent correspondents "Iolanthe" and "Philomathes," "Where are Gilbert and Sullivan?" caught me practically in the act of writing myself with that object. Until quite recently, one station or other throughout the country was in the practice of broadcasting an hour of this unique entertainment every week—this hour, as it were, "went the rounds." If at times there was an exasperatingly unnecessary quantity of announcer's script, or an unaccountably poor selection of tunes, at least "Iolanthe" and I were gratified, and our jaded musical palates gladdened. This practice is now discontinued. Why? Surely not to give it a rest—Savoy Opera is one thing that never, never stales.

Certainly, the Wagner situation has improved—it is pleasant to have something to commend, instead of disparage. As the "Giant of Bayreuth" was a fine poet, the cleverest musician, technically, who ever lived, and before all, a great dramatic genius, so Sir Arthur Sullivan was an "absolute" musician as ever was—like Brahms, or Grieg; and Music-drama is to Comic Opera as a star to a candle. But any attempt at a comparison, as your musical correspondents must realise, would be not only absurd, and an admission of ignorance, but really wrong. Put Wagner aside for a moment. The Savoy Operas are so English—let me stress it. There has been no other expression (perhaps "exposure" is better) of the national character to beat them. Isn't that what we

want? Or is it more patriotic to endure hours of American Negro trash, and propaganda songs by German Jews? Must we forge our humour and leisure from the miserable alloy, in preference to the clean, true metal?

"Philomathes" is quite right. England can produce composers as great in their own way as Wagner—but not in his way; that is the point. But the old English composers exist all right, and we do need them. The madrigal-singing is a splendid idea, and merits immediate support. What we must realise is that Wagner and Sullivan and Morley and Bryd, etc., do not clash—they help one another, and we need them all to help us.

• DAVID ALTON (Auckland).

### SATURDAY PROGRAMMES

Sir,—I was cheered to see "Figaro's" letter in your columns complaining of the low standard of the programmes broadcast on Saturday evenings; yet the complaint would come with even more justice from an Auckland, for Wellington has at least its 2YC to turn to for music. Perhaps "Figaro" can imagine the despair of those in the Auckland district when they read in *The Listener* the details of their Saturday night fare. Take this from a recent issue that happens to be before me at the present, whereas from 2YC was announced the Elgar violin concerto and a Sibelius symphony, from 3YL a most sumptuous evening including concertos from Handel, Haydn and Beethoven and a Mozart symphony, and from 4YZ the Elgar piano quintet, Aucklanders had to choose between the uniformly trivial programmes of the YA stations, dance music from 12M and variety from 1YX.

In this same issue of *The Listener* under the heading "Buns and Beethoven," you quoted Mrs. Goddard's enthusiasm for the work of the BBC at present in making good music available at all times for the mental relaxation of the people. Yet the idea still persists among those who control our Auckland programmes that the whole of Saturday must be given over to sport and frivolity. There are many thousands of us who have no heart for leaving our homes in search of frolic, nor yet for tuning in to inanities. When will the NBS become realistic enough to face the fact that a musical service which was inadequate enough in times of peace is infinitely more so in our present situation.

"ALMAVIVA" (Auckland).

Sir,—Allow me to support the opinions expressed by "Figaro" in a recent issue. Surely it is possible to have some good music on one of the main stations on Saturday evenings. Indeed that should be the case every evening. During the past few weeks there have been very few classical symphonies from the YA stations.

Is it not yet possible to restore the Programme Summary formerly published?

A. MARSDEN WOODS (Whangarei)

To our correspondent's final question we answer, very sadly, no.—Ed.

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

"FEEBLE-MINDED" (Christchurch). So are we, or we would have allowed you to make your point when it was timely. Now it seems very ancient history.

"IRRITATED" (Dunedin). The things of which you complain are not approved officially, but accidents happen when staffs are continually changing.

J. W. Lankashear (New Plymouth).—We do not print circular letters.

"OWAKA" (South Otago).—No soldier is charged a fee for the privilege of calling New Zealand. If you know of a member of the forces in the Middle East who has paid for his place before the microphone he has paid his money to another soldier who has won the privilege by ballot and for some reason or other has not wished to exercise it.

"OLIVER" (Te Awamutu).—No space for the controversy that would follow.