

Listening While I Work (10)

By "Materfamilias"

WERE you to ask me what was my most notable listening of last week I would reply, "A recording of Beethoven's 'Adelaide' which I heard quite by chance one afternoon, and which has been running through my head ever since." Were you, however, to ask my family, they would undoubtedly answer for me, "That recipe for fruit marshmallow pudding that you heard." That was also an unexpected windfall, for on a wet Friday morning I decided to hear what the A.C.E. had to tell me about *Planning Ahead*. After all, housewives spend a good deal of time planning what they will do If and When and After the War. A new carpet? Curtains? A washing-machine? A new sunporch, a new house, or even a new baby? But this time the planning was short-term and concerned food. I would have turned the speaker off with the arrogant thought in my head "I know all about that!" had I not been caught by an admonition not to rest content with all the favourite recipes that I knew. The family, the voice implied, would dwindle, peak and pine if they were not given plenty of variety in their food. So although I doubted whether even butter rationing and egg shortages are likely to have a slimming effect on family contours, I listened. And I picked up several hints and a pudding which will probably remain the family favourite until a twinge of conscience sends me back to my recipe book, Aunt Daisy, or the A.C.E.

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WHY *For My Lady*? I don't want to reopen the old controversy about ladies and women. For myself I would come down heavily on the side of the women. But the *For My Lady* programmes come as a special highlight in the housewife's morning. It is the MY that does it, I suspect. My lady sits on a cushion and looks at her lily white hands. You and I and Mrs. Brown scrub potatoes with dirt-stained hands at the sink, but for a brief 20 minutes or so the NBS plays what my children would call a game of kidding us that we, too, sit on silk cushions at half-past ten in the morning. From 9.0 to 10.10 a.m. the programmes are, generally speaking, designed as a pleasant background to encourage the housework along. At 10.10 a.m. we have the devotional service, and the Church being no respecter of persons, would hardly address itself to Ladies only. But for half-an-hour until 11.0 the housewife can get her cup of tea, sit down, be My Lady until the A.C.E. or the Home Front or some other talk comes along to remind her that she still has to cook and clean and mind the health and manners of her family.

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SOUTHLAND and Otago last week heard about husbands and wives who are notable because they have worked together on stage or in Hollywood and still remained devoted to each other. Auckland listeners, on the other hand, heard the story with illustrations of the world's great orchestras. Wellington listeners last week had a *For My Lady* programme entitled "Inquisitive Mood."

Being inquisitive. I listened with some interest. I did the thing properly. I got my cup of tea and sat on my best chair and looked disdainfully at the mending basket (mending would have spoilt the effect of that ringing "She shall have music" that helps in the My Lady build-up). I enjoyed my inquisitive mood, though I confess I was left more inquisitive than ever as to why it was called an inquisitive mood. Musical curiosities yes, but inquisitive? However, the programmes that I heard were recordings of famous musicians giving duet performances with themselves, and as I had never heard anyone either singing or playing a duet with himself, I found it very interesting as a curiosity. But my inquisitive mood is not yet satisfied. I look forward to Thursday's *For My Lady*, which brings *Colour Mood*. What? I wonder. *Rhapsody in Blue* or *Blue Danube*. Or purple passages from the lives of great musicians. On the whole, I find Moods more entertaining than the stories of Opera Houses, or Orchestras, or Organists, or Violinists. But the famous comedian series will remind you of records that you have laughed over in the past, and if you are lucky, bring you some new laughs too. We 2YA ladies had a series on famous comedians a few weeks ago. The trouble with comedians is that there are not enough of them, and that there are not enough records. At least it seems to me a long time since I heard a new "Gert and Dais" or Stanley Holloway record, but perhaps it is not fair to judge by one's own favourites.

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