

they sold most of their surplus belongings, and for a time took boarders at their house in Parnell.

"I remember so well our airy-fairy style," says Aunt Daisy. "We lived and ate as we had always done, which was pretty well, but the boarders only paid about £1 a week, so we didn't make any money. And Dad never got a job again."

DAISY kept up the pressure. She wanted a full-time radio job—with full-time salary attached. She deluged the Broadcasting Company of New Zealand with letters urging bright new programmes. She knew just the person to do them—Daisy Basham. Finally, while staying in Wellington with her sister Katie, she received a letter from A. R. Harris, the Broadcasting Company's general manager. He had been impressed, he said, by the hundred or so letters he had received from her. Would Mrs Basham please come to Christchurch to see him? He might have a proposition to make.

With rising excitement, Daisy took the overnight ferry to Christchurch. Without pausing to admire the Avon, the Cathedral, or even the Old English tradition, she made straight for Mr Harris's office. Harris received her politely and told her bluntly that his company was in the last year of its contract with the Government. Hoping for a renewal, the company was making a special effort with its programmes. On Wednesdays 2YA did not broadcast at all. The job might be just right for Aunt Daisy. Would she fill the "silent day"?

Thus began Aunt Daisy's professional career. She conducted classical music programmes on Sunday and Monday nights, and helped to fill the great silence of Wednesday with programmes for children.

At first, Daisy's musical programmes consisted mainly of singing. She had able assistance with these from Mrs Wilfred Andrews and Mrs Amy Woodward, but the station's broadcasts were notably short of orchestral and instrumental material. The only musicians broadcasting "live" were Signor Truda and his Orchestrina. This provoked Mr Harris into an angry directive:

"Can't you get away from this everlasting singing! Mrs So-and-So will now *ren-er* such-and-such! It sounds like melting fat! Get some instrumentalists."

So Daisy rounded up players. She induced Sister Placidus, of St Mary's Convent to allow her best pupils to broadcast. These youngsters, mostly violinists, played for the thrill of it. There was too little money for payment of fees.

Amateur performers were sometimes an embarrassment. "We had to be on our guard," says Aunt Daisy, "because people would ring the studio and say what a lovely singer they'd heard the previous week. A *beautiful* soprano. Couldn't we *please* put her on the air again? Clive Drummond would usually manage to trace the caller, and she'd be the soprano's mother, or sister, or some other relation!"

To the children's session Aunt Daisy introduced the Cheerful Chirpers. "They weren't organised regularly," she says, "but the children would come in and I'd let them sing. I'd write the words on a blackboard. They'd sing 'White wings, they never grow weary, they follow me cheerily over the sea.' And all the old songs, 'The Old Folks at Home and 'Poor Ole Joe.' Years afterwards I've had women come up to me and say, 'Aunt Daisy, you don't remember me, but I was a Cheerful Chirper.'"

Borrowed from the famous march of the American Civil War, the theme song of the Cheerful Chirpers began—

Listen now to 2YA, we'll sing a cheerful song;  
Sing it with a spirit that will start the world along;  
For now the children's session's more than twenty-thousand strong;  
Big friends and little friends of Rad-io.

Broadcasting was growing, too. Many of its defects had been overcome. It was becoming the powerful medium that was to breed a new race of politicians said to have one ear to the ground, the other glued to the radio, and nothing whatever in between. As with television in our day, certain highbrows condemned radio as an opiate that dulled the finer senses. The compact majority saved to buy a set, sometimes paid a licence fee, and tuned in to whatever was going. From the country's most powerful station, 2YA, they often heard an enthusiastic woman's fluent conversation. Aunt Daisy was on her way up.

(To be continued)

## Ask Aunt Daisy!

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*To the First Lady of radio,*

OUR SINCERE BEST WISHES

In 21 years of broadcasting, Aunt Daisy has brought pleasure to many, many thousands of listeners. She has become more than simply a radio voice: she has become a friend who visits nearly every home in the land with wise, kind, honest help and advice. The homely truth of the matter is that everyone has a "soft spot" for Aunt Daisy.

They know, too, that whatever product Aunt Daisy recommends bears her *personal* approval, which means that she has tried it and likes it. This personal approval includes, of course, the Cadbury range of fine products.

Cadbury's are very happy to have been associated with Aunt Daisy in daily broadcasts for 21 years and they hope that this association will continue for many years to come.

*Cadbury Fry Hudson Ltd.*

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