



HERMIONE GINGOLD

Sir,—In your issue of October 11 Miss Barbara Cooper challenges a statement she attributes to my script for *Theatre of Music*. I can only suggest that she listen to her radio more closely before throwing down the gauntlet with such careless abandon.

Miss Cooper has evidently inferred from the words "On one famous occasion" the two Hermiones starred together that I meant this to be taken as the only occasion. Not at all. The occasion itself was famous because Miss Gingold and Miss Baddeley burlesqued a play of Noel Coward's so outrageously that the author was highly indignant. In fact, he came perilously near to uttering that famous Victorianism, "We are not amused."

The play in question, by the way, was not *Fumed Oak*, as Miss Cooper so forthrightly declares. It was *Fallen Angels*—a point on which the script left no room for doubt.

PETER HARCOURT (Wellington).

Sir,—May I be permitted to make a correction to Miss Barbara Cooper's letter on Miss Gingold? The show in which the two Hermiones, Gingold and Baddeley, appeared as co-stars was not *Sweet and Low*, but *Sky High*, at the Phoenix Theatre. *Sweet and Low* was the first of a series of three revues, the other two being *Sweeter and Lower* and *Sweetest and Lowest*, in which Miss Gingold starred with Henry, Kendall at the Ambassadors. The sea-shell scene Miss Cooper refers to was one of the highlights of a brilliant show which, in spite of the talents of the two Hermiones, was not a financial success, only running for about 16 weeks. As one of the cast and stage manager, it is pleasing to know all our efforts to amuse have not been entirely forgotten, if a little dimmed, with the passing of time.

GEORGE GOWER COOMBES
(Auckland).

TALKS IN PRINT

Sir,—I would like to express warm appreciation—even if a little belated—of the fact that you saw fit to publish in *The Listener* of August 23 the Rev. G. A. Naylor's splendid talk on the ministry in the "My Poor Boy" series. Mr Naylor himself is to be congratulated on the high quality of all his broadcasting, and on the depth of penetration he brings to the subjects he discusses. May I be so bold as to suggest that perhaps you could see your way clear to publish his earlier talk—the first in the New Zealand Attitude series—entitled "The New Zealand Attitude to Religion"? This was a particularly splendid talk, and if it existed in some tangible and accessible form I am sure that it would cause much interest and arouse more than a little discussion. I would go so far as to say that Church fellowship and discussion groups could use it to their very great profit in seeking to understand more clearly and realistically the religious attitude against which the Church in this country carries on its work. I asked several people—some

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

beyond my own locality and district—if they had heard this talk, and not one of them had, and it wasn't because they were not interested in the subject.

In making the suggestion that I do I am not pushing for any special preference for any one man who broadcasts, so much as suggesting that talks of a stimulating, provocative, and informative type covering a number of subjects would be well received by *The Listener* readers. If *The Listener* were to do this it would be following in a very worthy way the English *Listener*, which regularly publishes articles that have previously been broadcast. Several of the published talks I have taken the time to file, and find myself from time to time referring to them as invaluable sources of information. As a point of interest I have also filed Mr Naylor's published article on the ministry.

C. A. MITCHELL (Kaikoura).

(The BBC *Listener* does not have to print programmes. Nor must it hesitate to publish talks in fairness to stations which have not yet been able to broadcast them. But we do what we can, and would gladly do more.—Ed.)

THE FORSYTE SAGA

Sir,—As William Tingey says, Galsworthy wrote six novels dealing with the life of Soames Forsyte. But the term "Forsyte Saga" was used by the author as the name of the trilogy consisting of the first three only. The main theme of the "Saga" is the story of Soames and his first wife Irene, who disappears from the scene at the end of *To Let*; by which time all the old Forsytes are dead. The second trilogy, which the author named "A Modern Comedy" is very different from the first. The scene in England in the uneasy twenties; Soames is still alive, but the "Comedy's" true hero is not he, but his son-in-law Michael Mont, a young Tory politician of much the same age and background as Britain's present Prime Minister. Finally, the name of the third trilogy is not "End of the Story," but "End of the Chapter." The difference is great, for while England lasts the Forsyte story will never end.

P. A. J. WATSON (Helsensville).

SENIOR CHOIRBOYS

Sir,—I have long been of the opinion that the voices of senior college boys, between the ages of, say, 15 to 18 years, in concerted music, are invariably coarse, toneless and untuneful. This opinion is confirmed by referring to a record in the NZBS library, and included in the hymn and devotional service sessions occasionally. The hymn is "O Brother Man" to the tune of "Intercessor," and sung by an English college. Such records are not pleasant to listen to; in one verse particularly the choir is very flat, and finishes well below the note of the accompanying organ.

A.J.S. (Wellington).

BRASS BANDS

Sir,—In Radio Review (October 11) R.D.McE. lists as one of his pet aversions "Brass bands with ideas above their station." If his stated dislike had been for brass band music as such, I should not take issue with him—we are all entitled to our dislikes. But the musical snobbery evinced by the words "ideas above their station" rouses me to anger. Just what is "their station"? The playing of a few "corny" overtures, waltzes and Sousa marches at garden parties? Apparently Vaughan Williams, Holst, Elgar, Bliss, John Ireland, Herbert Howells and Percy Fletcher thought otherwise, for they have written some fine works for this

medium. One, of course, must accept certain limitations—the variety of tone colour cannot approach that of a large (and expensive) symphony orchestra, and technical difficulties deprive it of the top octave. Nevertheless, the playing of selected transcriptions and serious "original" works can be a stimulating musical experience. At least three orchestral conductors—the late Sir Henry Wood, Sir Malcolm Sargent and Sir Adrian Boult—have found it so, when invited to conduct brass band concerts in the Albert Hall.

JOHN SCOTT (Auckland).

ARE HUSBANDS NECESSARY?

Sir,—Truly life differs in different settings, as also do ideas of what is worth while and what is sheer waste of time. To explain my point: this is spring and life is busy down on the farm. After a hectic morning spent mothering up a batch of lambs and generally assisting my farmer among the flock I came in to have a cup of coffee and to listen to the National Women's Session. The topic—"Are Husbands Really Necessary?" Well, well, well!

To begin with, nature has decided that matter, so surely better use could be made of the panel's time and energies. Quite detachedly I could not help contrasting a country woman's life and ideas. The job is there to be done and one does not quibble about it. If our husbands can manage meals on time during a busy spin, one is duly thankful, and as for dishes—well, at least they get done before the next meal.

During a visit to one of our largest cities I was struck by the appearance of the drifting crowd. Dozens of people passing looked lonely and disillusioned. What about the panel going out and mothering up a few of those obviously lost souls?

M.T.J. (Seaward Downs).

LOOKOUT

Sir,—Apparently in the *Lookout* lottery Mr R. M. Hutton-Potts has more than one marble. His commentary on the Altrincham episode seemed very competent, and since then the NZBS has apparently been unable to see past him. We have no desire to condemn Mr Hutton-Potts, but his views are those of a New Zealand newspaperman—invariably conservative. A variety of opinion should be voiced.

IAN SIME.

BRIAN MCENTEE (Nightcaps).

(By the end of October Mr Hutton-Potts will have broadcast twice since he spoke on the Altrincham episode. In the same period there will have been seven other speakers.—Ed.)

SPANISH POLITICS

Sir,—What a pity that Laurie Lee's excellent *Black Saturday, Red Sunday*, was marred by the intrusion of an unpleasant piece of political malice at the end. He captured something of the Andalusian genius: it brought surging back to me the sights and sounds of an intense and vital world known 10 years since. But then, not the voice of Spain, but of an angry young English radical came trumpeting forth. Spanish politics are notoriously controversial, but surely airing one's prejudices should be confined to the coffee house and not smuggled over the BBC or NZBS.

G.W.R.A. (Auckland).

A MIND RARE AND RICH

Sir,—Your editorial under the above heading made sorrowful reading. Although regretting the absence of any articles under the initials "G. leF. Y."

in recent issues of *The Listener*, I had imagined the writer abroad again, and had looked forward to being delighted by another series similar to *A Country Like Home*, or even to a really important New Zealand book. For in his power to penetrate the external circumstance and illumine the spirit, Guy Young had no equal here. An instance which comes to mind was his memorable account of the occasion of the defeat of the Maoris by the Springboks at Auckland.

I must have missed the issue in which his short story "The Balance of Power" was published. I wonder if you would consider republishing it.

W.A. (Sheffield).

CRUMBS AND STONES

Sir,—After one has kept off *The Listener* week after week with its supersplashed Aunt Daisy story, continued ad nauseum in the interests apparently of radio advertising, it is a great pleasure to see two plus features to offset the serialised minus. *Lookout* entitled "Home Thoughts from Abroad," by Miss A. M. Gorrie (tucked away on page 30) is first-class stuff from a discerning observer of world affairs, and should stir us out of typical New Zealand smugness. One looks forward to another instalment. Also in *Radio Review*, R.D.McE. has some pithy comments that are as refreshing as they are unusual in pages of *The Listener*, though not fortunately unknown.

ACCOUNTANT (Auckland).

(The crumbs of praise, although heavily concealed, are received with thanks.—Ed.)

STATION 1YD

Sir,—May I lodge a protest about the decision of the NZBS to have advertisements on 1YD? This station provided a programme of light music, to which it was a pleasure to listen whilst relaxing after a hard day's work. It was really a change from blaring "ads," the stock-market report or the news (which is usually depressing, anyway). And now, what has happened? It has advertising!

Is the Broadcasting Service so short of cash that it has to commercialise 1YD, the "radio oasis," and now send one vainly turning the knob in the hope of finding some pleasant background music? I'd much rather that the radio licence fee was increased.

BLUE-EARS (Hamilton).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Grandmother (Whangarei): Thank you. Afraid the subject is a little outside our field, but will pass on your suggestion.

R.M.D. (Masterton) and *C. W. Waite* (Patumahoe): Sorry; your letters arrived after the correspondence had been closed.

F. J. Baker (Paparua): (1) See footnote to letter on same subject printed last week. (2) Continues a special arrangement instituted many years ago.

C.M.L. (Christchurch): Much appreciated.

K.M.A.H. (Auckland): Thank you.

E. R. Lovegrove (Putaruru): It was published by request, but your complaint is well grounded, and similar action will be avoided in future. Thank you.

