

FIFTEEN YEARS "HARD"

What "Alexander's Ragtime Band" Means To Originator Of "Music and Memory".

Session

Special to the "Record"

By

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WHEN a man has a good idea, there's usually a good reason for it. Inspiration is the afterbirth of experience.

Neatest radio idea to come out of the blue for many moons was Alex. Scott's "Music and Memory" session heard from 2ZB on alternate Sunday afternoons at 3 o'clock. The story of why *that* session was born is as strange as the session itself is apt.

"Most people *do* associate certain times with certain events in their lives," said Mr. Scott when I asked him where the brainwave came from. "I've found that out in a dozen ways.

"But the real germ of the idea of a 'Music and Memory' session came from an experience of my own. A painful experience.

"As long as I live I will never forget 'Alexander's Ragtime Band.' I first heard it on a hurdy-gurdy outside a courthouse in Paterson, New Jersey, just as a judge sentenced me to 15 years' imprisonment along with a fine of 10,000 dollars!"

AT that time Mr. Scott was earning a precarious livelihood by editing a local weekly paper, and here is the story as he told it to me. While I glanced over a bulky album pasted with front-page stories. Once "Alexander Scott" made banner headlines in every newspaper of note in America. Some even ran him in quarter-page cartoons.

"MY newspaper," he said, "was a harmless, insignificant rag with hardly any circulation. I had come from New York at the instigation of a friend to take the job on. He thought there were possibilities in the thing for me, and that if I didn't make a name for myself, as a writer, I would at least gain experience. He was right. I did both—got the name and experience. I landed in jail, got my picture in every paper in the U.S.A. and even made bits in the overseas cable news.

"It was like this. Only a few weeks after I took over the little paper, a great strike broke out in the silk industry in Paterson, New Jersey. Soon there were 80,000 silk workers out.

"What a chance for a young, budding, descriptive writer looking for a place in the New York magazines! Out I went with my camera and pencil.

"What I saw made me very angry. The police had lost their heads, they were running all over the place chasing anybody who looked like a striker.



ALEXANDER SCOTT

The judge said to him, "Fifteen years' hard labour and a fine of 10,000 dollars."

"Several highly respectable journalists and a big business man from New York, not at all in sympathy with the strikers, were arrested and charged with 'sassing' policemen.

"I WROTE up a story and printed some pictures in my little rag and poked fun at the police. All the New York dailies who had sent reporters did the same; but what happened to me was just a shame. Five

thousand copies of my little paper were confiscated by the police and I was thrown into the cell.

"Out on bail, a day or two later, I went to a justice of the peace and swore a warrant of arrest against four police officers on a charge of theft. They had confiscated my papers without a search warrant. The New York dailies made a terrific joke out of this: 'Four policemen arrested,' and so on. Later, I was charged with inciting hostility to the Government, and was sentenced to 15 years' hard labour and a fine of 10,000 dollars.

"Pretty good. Oh!—and I certainly wished that I was out on that hurdy-gurdy riding round with 'Alexander's Ragtime Band.'

"EVERY newspaper in America condemned the sentence—and the Paterson police—and published in full the offending article and pictures, which were mild compared with their own criticism."

"Fifteen years' hard labour! The Press of America made such a fuss about the business, however, that when we took it to the Superior Court of New Jersey, the indictment was thrown out, along with the sentence, and the judges complimented me on the stand I had taken to uphold the American Constitution.

"We hear 'Alexander's Ragtime Band' quite a lot these days—those old tunes are still the best—and every time I do, I see that scowling judge giving me 15 years!"

Four Policemen Arrested!