

Songs of ALL TIME

IN THE WAKE OF THE WEEK'S ...BROADCASTS...

LATE in December, 1876, Fred Sullivan, brother of Arthur Sullivan, fell ill, and for three weeks he lingered, to die on January 18, 1877. It was at Fred's bedside that Arthur wrote "The Lost Chord," during one of the final vigils.

One night—the end was not very far off then—while his sick brother lay to a time fallen into a peaceful sleep, and Arthur was sitting, as usual, by the bedside, he chanced to come across some verses of Anne Proctor's with which he had some five years previously been much struck. He had then tried to set them to music, but without satisfaction to himself.

Now, in the stillness of the night, he read them over again, and almost as he did so, he conceived their musical equivalent. Slowly the music took shape, until, becoming quite absorbed by it, he determined to finish the song.

Even if in the cold light of day it was to prove worthless, it would at least have helped to while away the hours of watching. So he worked on at it.

As he progressed, he felt sure this was what he had sought, and failed to find on the occasion of his first attempt to set the words. In a short time it was complete and not long after in the publisher's hands. Thus was written "The Lost Chord," perhaps the most successful song of modern times.

Brother Who Died

The brother, who passed away during that far distant January, had seemed predestined to a career on the stage. He had the humour of the Sullivans; he, too, was an expert musician, playing the cello. Intended and educated for the profession of an architect, he preferred to "draw houses," not in that capacity, but as an actor.

It is very likely that the younger brother's fondness for appearance in theatricals was fostered by the example of the elder. Fred had already made a big success as the learned Judge in "Trial by Jury."

Indeed, Gilbert had created the role of Dr. Daly in "The Sorcerer" with him in mind. Had he lived, he would doubtless have been prominently identified with the famous series of operettas that he had helped to launch.

Fred Sullivan, the wag, "the life of the party" wherever he went, was loved with great fondness by his famous brother and his passing left its mark on Arthur Sullivan.

Mrs. Ronalds, a fine singer, with an amazing personality, and also a deep understanding of music, had the honour of being the first to sing "The Lost Chord." She became associated with the Empress Eugenie's circle at the Tuilleries, where her wonderful voice and rare beauty attracted the attention of two capitals.

These were the words she sang:

Seated one day at the organ,
I was weary and ill at ease,
And my fingers wander'd idly
Over the noisy keys.

I know not what I was playing,
Or what I was dreaming then,
But I struck one chord of music,
Like the sound of a great Amen.

It flooded the crimson twilight,
Like the close of an Angel's
Psalm,

And it lay on my fever'd spirit,
With a touch of infinite calm.

"The Lost Chord" went straight to the hearts of the great British public, where it has remained ever since.

3YA listeners will hear "The Lost Chord" sung by Walter Preston, baritone, on Tuesday, Jan. 31.

RECENT death of Dorothy Donaldson, of Oamaru, took from New Zealand, one whose life was a triumph over adversity. Blind and deaf, she yet succeeded in writing beautiful poems, and she was ensuring for herself a future when her death came. Some weeks ago Jill of 4ZB read from Dorothy Donaldson's poems, but I missed the session. Then the other Sunday, Jill gave a second recital, selecting over half a dozen cameos, masterpieces of beautiful writing. Jill presented these very effectively, I thought, never over-emphasising as is the manner of so many elocutionists, but giving the right light and shade.

The pieces were all sincere, containing the inevitable note of wistfulness to be associated with the writings of persons afflicted as Miss Donaldson was, and urging for a keener appreciation of things to be seen by those who could see, and for a greater understanding of our fellows. I liked particularly "Colour," "Journeying," "My Silent World," and "Joy Bird." I hope Jill will give us more of these poems in the future.

Pros and cons of radio performances and concert performances have been thrashed out times without number, but usually from the standpoint of the audience. What do the performers themselves think of it all? Of course, while radio artists miss the enthusiasm and plaudits of the visible audience, they also escape the half-filled halls and, worse, the unspeakable instruments masquerading as pianos, and the dubious delights of draughty, cold and damp "back-stage" accommodation of many halls. Radio artists have also a "sure and certain" hope of payment, and they have their fan-mail. Viola Morris and Victoria Anderson must have won the accumulated gratitude of listeners to their programmes during their recent tour, and if it were possible to confront them with it, they would be overwhelmed. The work these two have done in leading listeners down so many unfamiliar but delightful by-paths of old English song, leads many to hope fervently that they will pay us a return visit soon.

RADIO WORK HAS ITS POINTS

It's very nice to be versatile. Young Allen Wellbrock, clever rhythm pianist, who is often heard in solos and with various musical combinations at 3YA, performs also on Sundays, but in a very different atmosphere. He was at the organ at St. Matthew's Church, Christchurch, when the service was broadcast the other evening, and I could not help being struck by the variety which he infused into both his voluntaries and accompaniment work. There is a good deal to be said for a musician being able to combine the two styles of work. Though his church playing was at all times reverent and thoroughly in keeping, it drew a little now and then in style from the "moderns" and was distinctly refreshing when contrasted with some of the, unfortunately, over-solemn offerings which many church organists believe to be correct. But he has to watch his step, and keep a line of demarcation in the musical part of his brain.

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BAND THAT HAS FOLLOWING

Dick Colvin's band, Monday night dance specialists from 4YA, has a tremendous following among listeners. I am a lover of dance music as a whole as listening entertainment, but I must admit that Colvin's band has something about it that raises it into a listening status. I do not think that that comes about because it is a flesh-and-blood organisation, but simply because it is so thoroughly capable in presenting straight dance music. There, I am certain, is where its appeal lies. It gives us dance music in the form of orchestral music, rhythm and technique being magnificently defined. A short time ago the band introduced a feminine vocalist who sang the choruses of pieces played. Without desiring to say one word against her accomplishment, I believe that she did not help the band's performances. One lost the



THESE THREE — Jim Walsh, Bob Lewis and David Horne, of Christchurch—they're all in their very early 'teens—have been conducting a Children's Radio News-reel from 3ZB ever since the station opened. Idea is to present for children news of the day. Lately, too, they have been giving plays for children.

feeling of listening to an orchestra when the singer's voice predominated. Colvin's band is good enough to stand up by itself.

Auckland baritone Robert Simmers sang very acceptably at 2YA recently. If there is one thing about Mr. Simmers that is so satisfying, it is that he is thorough.

ROBERT SANG TO ROBERT

He was thorough in his musical beginnings. He had no fewer than three masters in his native city—Johan Wieleert, Barry Coney and Cyril Towsey. His eight years in Australia were spent in studying at the Conservatoriums, in Sydney and in Melbourne, travelling with J. C. Williamson's companies, and doing concert and radio work, not forgetting recording for Parlophone. He has appeared in the productions of the Operatic So-

ciet, is a member of the Dorian Choir, and an active member of the Society of Musicians in Auckland. At one appearance at 1YA, Mr. Simmers had the unique experience of hearing himself sing over the air while waiting for his turn to appear at the microphone. Listeners, of course, were unaware while enjoying a record by Robert Gilbert, baritone, they were so soon to hear the same voice proceeding from Robert Simmers. Robert Gilbert is the professional name of Robert Simmers. One wonders what Robert thinks of Robert.

How many times have you heard the equivalent of this when there have been several people in a room where the radio's been playing: "Tauber singing?" Oh, yes, know his voice anywhere. It might be Tauber—or any of the thousands of recorded artists who are heard from time to time. It's an easy, and safe, thing to say when the announcer has just given the name of the artist. It's not so easy when you haven't got that name. Proof is to be found in the commercial stations' feature, "Do You Know Your Tenors?" Even though singers are limited to a class, he's a pretty good man who can nominate the three who contribute to each session. I thought I had a fairish knowledge of voices, but I've been bluffed, and I know other listeners who should possess greater knowledge than I, have been led astray. Try your own luck yourself some night.

DO YOU KNOW THE TENORS?

Most pleasing tenor heard on the national network for a fair time is Thomas E. West, often heard at 3YA. Of basses and baritones, Christchurch has a fair supply, and several are of tip-top quality, but of tenors there is a dearth. Thomas E. has learned the art of being neither throatily Italian nor chorally English. He manages to evade all the musical clichés, produces a fresh, keen young voice, always a pleasure to listen to. He was broadcasting in Australia a short time back, proposes to go to the Commonwealth again shortly.

HIS VOICE IS PLEASING

"Radio Pie," NCBS contribution to the "Made in New Zealand" campaign, may be weak in some respects—notably the humour, which strikes one as being a little forced—but it is a step in the right direction. Obviously modelled on "Mirth Parade" lines, "Radio Pie" yet offers more variety than the popular American feature. Artists are mainly ZB stars, and it is plain that the commercials have a few lights in their midst, and it's good to think they are not being hidden under the bushels. I have heard the three programmes so far put over by 4ZB, and I must say that I like to see endeavours being made to break away from imported material. "Radio Pie" is in its infancy; it is bound to improve as it goes along. No one makes a new thing perfect at the outset, but the pie hasn't been so badly baked so far.

RADIO PIE IN THE BAKING

Miss Adeline McGrath, pictured on this page last week, was captioned 4YA's programme organiser. She was programme organiser to 4YO.

It is unnecessary—perhaps dangerous—in medicine to be too clever.—Dr. Robert Hutchison, President of the Royal College of Physicians.



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