

Thank you for the music: Vijaya revives radio

By

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Remember the swinging sixties and seventies... when the radio held the prime place and was coming into every home with popular choice programmes, morning shows and musical clocks. Remember Sunday Choice, Holiday Choice and all those interesting quiz programmes? Well, those were the good old days before radio programmes were overtaken by TV.

But now, there's good news once again. And the brains behind the radio revival is Vijaya Corea — veteran broadcaster, evangelist and now Director General of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation.

Joy

Reviewing the progress of the SLBC over the past few months after he took over as DG, Vijaya Corea said his ideal and goal was to bring joy to the hearts of people through music



Mr. Corea: goes for variety

and more music. He hoped all the new choice programmes that began from May 1, would encourage more people to switch on their radios and be filled with all the joy

that music brings. His vision brings to mind the words of the bard "If music be the food of love — play on, give me plenty of it." It also re-echoes the message of the Abba fa-

vourite, "Thank you for the music, the songs I am singing, thanks for all the joy they are bringing."

A key role in these revived choice programmes is being played by the

young announcers who are being specially trained. Vijay, widely regarded as one of Sri Lanka's best announcers, says announcers are not made — they are born with silver mike in the mouth.

Glued

"When producing a request programme the announcer must be chatty and should possess the knack to make the listener be glued to the radio. Each one develops his or her own style after the basic training in our Training Institute. However, when I joined the SLBC in 1964 I did not undergo any training. I just found myself in front of a microphone doing my own thing and thanks be to God it worked out well."

"Announcers are creative artistes and just like you can't put a paint brush in the hand of just any man and tell him to paint, you can't just put anyone before a micro-

phone and expect him or her to communicate. You must possess the gift and talent, which then can be developed to demonstrate professionalism," Vijaya explained through the wealth of his more than 25 years experience.

Mr. Corea said radio must become an interesting mode of entertainment. Research had shown there was a lack of variety in the programmes. There was a need to capture listener interest by re-introducing popular programmes with more public participation through requests. There was also the need for a change in transmission times.

Explaining the reasons for the re-introduction of Housewives Choice, Mr. Corea said, "Here I considered the housewife and changed the hours of the morning and afternoon transmission. This is because I realised that the housewife has chores until 2 o'clock, when she could take time off to en-

joy the music of her choice for one hour till 3 p.m."

For variety Mr. Corea said they had introduced a choice programme for old favourites and also a one-hour greetings programme on Sunday from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. which gives listeners a chance to greet one another on their birthdays, anniversaries and other occasions.

Doors opened

Mr. Corea said the response received from listeners was tremendous, because everyday the SLBC received piles of postcards, mainly requests, for songs and also letters of appreciation.

The SLBC has also opened its doors to organisers of dances to have their first session of music broadcast 'live' from the venue of their dance. This would of course be on Saturday nights from 10 p.m. to 1 p.m. on 'Ballroom of the air'.

In introducing new

programmes, the SLBC has not forgotten the lovers of classical music. They are being catered to every Sunday night on 'Music of the Masters'.

It is almost natural for Sri Lankans to break into Bails on happy occasions. So the SLBC has introduced the rhythm of the Bails, which goes on the air every Sunday at 1 p.m.

If that's his primary motive, then what's his secondary motive? Replied Mr. Corea, "Well by making everyone happy and thereby ensuring a definite audience, to see an increasing number of advertisers seeking to buy airtime to make their products, services and ideas known to the public. Now this has already begun to happen."

Mr. Corea is confident of a bright future for the SLBC, if it strives to make the listeners happy. For all he is and all he is doing Vijaya takes no personal credit, but says it all flows from the grace of God.