

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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## A Civilised Wage

G. B. SHAW, who is now 88, asks in an article in a recent *Observer* how much money "everyone ought to have to keep civilisation safe and steady." Theoretically, he says, the basic income should be the same for everybody, since equality is the only theory that will "prevent the ruptures and compound fractures, the internal strains, conflicts and civil wars caused by the division of society into financial classes." In practice, however, that would mean (in Great Britain) about four shillings per head per week, and only about 0.001 per cent of people on that financial level would break out of it and equip themselves for jobs of direction and control. Four shillings per head per week, he argues, would "mean cultural sterilisation, ending in a relapse into primitive tribalism," and the problem is to fix, and provide, an income for everybody large enough to "produce prime ministers, higher mathematicians, historians and philosophers, authors and artists, in addition to ploughmen and dairy-maids." In Britain to-day he thinks that the amount necessary to provide an "intellectual proletariat" might be about £800 a year, and since this is far beyond the national quotient it could be paid to, at most, about 10 per cent of the population. In other words the road to equality starts from inequality, since the remaining 90 per cent of the population can approach the favoured 10 per cent only by increasing the amount available for division, and security, by which he means social stability, will be reached only when we reach intermarriageability. Though a person with £50 a year cannot marry a person with £5000 — it would be "downright miscegenation since the two figures produce two different human species" — there is a cultural (i.e. financial) point at which marriage with anybody is possible. So the struggle is between the progressive Levellers-up and the catastrophic Levellers-down, and the Progressives (Shaw says) will win when they learn their political business.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, OCTOBER 27

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

## SCHOOLS' MUSIC FESTIVAL

Sir,—Will you kindly allow me to correct an error in your article "Forward the Six Hundred," which appeared in your issue of October 13. The composer of the song "Aotearoa" is H. Temple White, and not Alan Heathcote White, as stated.—T. J. YOUNG (Kelburn).

[Our attention has also been directed to this error by Alan Heathcote White. Although Mr. White is not the composer of the item "Aotearoa," he is having several items broadcast soon, including "Maori Legend," the third movement of his "New Zealand Symphony," which will be played by the R.N.Z.A.F. Band from 2YA on October 27.]

## RADIO SERIALS

Sir,—May I join the happy band discussing radio serials. I think the editorial in this week's *Listener* sums up the situation—after all, parents can switch off the wireless or send the children to bed, but that does not alter the fact that many of the serials should be scrapped and the rest reshuffled. Why not change some of the morning features—*Emma*, *How Green Was My Valley*, etc., to the evening? We busy housewives have very little time to listen in the morning.

"Headmistress" and "Psychiatrist" made the most constructive contributions to the special article, and I am sure there will be many who will agree with them. It seems a pity that the splendid feature *Wild Life* is not on at some earlier session. It is instructive and entertaining, and I hope will continue for a long time.

One more plea—where has *Baffles* disappeared to?

P.E.S.T. (Masterton).

## "BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST"

Sir,—I wish to protest strongly against the long-awaited presentation of Walton's oratorio "Belshazzar's Feast" being transferred at the last moment from 2YA to the (in Auckland) almost-inaudible 2YC. The announcement that this splendid modern work was at last to be heard in New Zealand aroused the interest of music-lovers everywhere, and here in Auckland a number of us stayed home specially to hear the presentation which was to have taken place over 2YA. To our disgust we found that its place on the programme was taken by the Parliamentary broadcast, and we were forced to listen to the oratorio from 2YC through a bedlam of static and interference. I have been told that a daytime performance of "Belshazzar's Feast" was given over 1YA the same afternoon, but this is useless to the great majority of listeners who are working at that time. Might I therefore suggest that the oratorio be repeated over an Auckland station in the evening?—H. R. L. BLANKS (Auckland).

[We are informed that "Belshazzar's Feast" will be heard in due course from all the main stations.—Ed.]

## THE BACHS

Sir,—Like your correspondent A. M. Finlay, I, too, was disappointed at the supplied footnote in a recent correspondence column dealing with J. S. Bach's great Mass in B Minor. I had always taken it for granted—wrongly, it now appears—that our NBS acquired a copy of all the great recorded works as they

were issued by the companies. The B Minor Mass, recorded by H.M.V. on 17 records, has been listed in the catalogues for some years, and is still available to order, according to inquiries I have made from dealers. This beautiful work is sung by Margaret Balfour, Elisabeth Schumann, Friedrich Schorr and Walter Widdop, with the Philharmonic Choir and the London Symphony Orchestra. Is it too much to hope that our NBS, which must spend hundreds of pounds annually on records which are forgotten before six months have passed, will yet come to light with the £7 or £8 needed to secure Bach's greatest work before it is withdrawn from the catalogues?—H. R. L. BLANKS (Auckland).

## SERIALS FOR CHILDREN

Sir,—It has been suggested that because children do not take their serials seriously these do no harm. I wonder if years of inferior cinema entertainment and of sensational literature have turned us into a generation of adults who negatively provide our children with education and entertainment that do no harm rather than that which does good.

By good I do not mean the story with a moral or containing health and sociological propaganda: I mean something more vital and permanent than that. I consider that a child who listens regularly to a serial and does not take it seriously is more harmed and wronged than one who does. At the best he is liable to become a satirist or a cynic. While aware that cynics and satirists have their place in this world, I dread the fate of a future New Zealand Shaw, Swift, Butler or Wyndham Lewis, for even 10 years hence I cannot imagine a New Zealand editor taking kindly to them, and in the whole flock of literary geese there is no goose so pathetic as the satirist who has had his wings clipped by editorial shears.

Anyone who has seen a normal healthy child moved by stories of nobility, unselfishness, fortitude and by the sorrows of others must realise that in the average serial we are giving him a stone when he asks for bread.—MOTHER RAMPANT (Dunedin).

## ORGANS AND "ORGANS"

Sir,—Since the Americans took over 12M there have not been so many recordings of organ music relayed locally. Is the organ so very unpopular? Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra are a very fine team, but they cannot compete with the grand organ in rendering the works of Bach, etc.

Further, is it not odd that two such dissimilar instruments as the organ and its off-shoot, the Wurlitzer or cinema organ, should be known both by the same name? Where the performer's name is mentioned, there is no confusion, but where the programme indicates, for instance, "organ selections," people who like music are apt to be disappointed. (The above sentence is purposely ambiguous, that I may give offence to none).

Because the Church or Grand Organ was first in the field, I suggest that it retain the title of "organ," and that an alternative name for the Wurlitzer be announced.—R. S. JARDIN (Takapuna).