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Music and Money

IT is everywhere agreed that there are things Governments must do whatever the cost may be: provide schools and hospitals, for example, and maintain law and order. In a slightly less urgent category are services which, though no one questions their necessity, Governments supply as circumstances permit—universities, research centres, art galleries, music schools, and so on. Here it is permissible to ask what the cost will be, but not to ask too anxiously or too long. Millions may live by bread alone, but no one should, and it is therefore very pleasant to be able to announce in this issue that the National Broadcasting Service has been able to resume its war-interrupted plans for establishing a full-time national orchestra. That is not merely good news but (to the musical at any rate) exciting news, and the immediate necessity is to avoid reading more into it than the official announcement actually says. It does not mean that the orchestra will be assembled next week and start playing the week after; nor can it mean that when it is assembled the orchestra will be comparable with any of the famous combinations in the world's great music centres overseas. We must walk before we run, and our first steps forward will be laborious and costly: how laborious and how costly readers will begin to understand if they read the footnote to the official announcement on page 6. The estimates given by the *New Statesman* are of course for London and only remotely applicable to New Zealand conditions, but they do emphasise the fact that a full-time symphony orchestra is almost as expensive as a battleship, and a much more delicate mechanism to create and maintain.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS**DEMOCRACY**

Sir,—Is your correspondent sure that he is not confusing "democracy" with "majority rule"? Democracy is government of the people by the people; majority rule is merely an expedient, an "arrangement, not a principle, in which truth must often be on the losing side." The larger and more varied the representation of responsible and honest opinion and the greater the tolerance of the majority the nearer to democracy. The confounding of democracy with majority rule is one of the chief reasons why no government can be truly called democratic.

I cannot understand your correspondent's horror of nationalism, which is after all only another word for patriotism; or I should say that I don't see why he thinks nationalism is such a vice in us and such a virtue in Indians and Indonesians unless he uses "nationalism" and "imperialism" indiscriminately. If he means imperialism I agree that it was the majority rule of imperialists who ignored the advice and wishes of the minority that is largely responsible for the state of affairs in India and Indonesia.—UNREPRESENTED (Dunedin).

2YC PROGRAMMES

Sir,—Is it not time that we had a change in 2YC's early evening programme? For several months we have had the same monotonous thing: "Sylvester and Bradley," "Voices in Harmony," "Cuban Episode," etc. Instead of the same thing week after week, perhaps a bit of variety could be introduced: a quarter-hour with Tenors, Baritones, Sopranos, Light Orchestras, Waltz time, Marching time. Then perhaps we could visit Scotland for a session, then Ireland, England, Italy, etc. That would have the effect of varying the sessions a little. We could then turn to variety within the sessions also. Voices in Harmony seem to use about three combinations whereas three or four times as many are available and would lend a bit of colour to the session if introduced.

On second thoughts, perhaps I should not have written this, for if by some chance the programme is made a bit brighter along the lines of my suggestions, I may find myself so attracted that after tea, instead of getting out and doing my garden, I will be sitting inside listening to the wireless. Listening to 2YC.—"MINGO" (Trentham).

A BAND PERFORMANCE

Sir,—I was appalled at the performance given by a band broadcasting recently from the studio of 3YA. We South Canterbury listeners have very little choice of stations to tune in to and at least hope for tunefulness for our extremely high radio fees. It is a great disappointment that we are unable to have our own station and enjoy our local band.—PARK LANE (Timaru).

PRONUNCIATION

Sir,—New Zealanders are taught English by teachers born in the Dominion of parents also born here. Consequently they tend to pronounce words as they are spelt. The trouble is that while English pronunciation has changed with the centuries orthography has been static—

a perfectly absurd position. Radio, which gives access to every ear and intellect, is a unique weapon for universalising our mother tongue and eliminating dialects and oddities, but that is some task when we speak one language and write another. Isn't it ridiculous to regard as sacred archaic spellings which often bear little relation to the spoken tongue?

G. H. SCHOLEFIELD (Wellington).

Sir,—Why all this discussion about pronunciation? In a language with as many dialects as English there will always be differences of opinion, yet who is to say who is right and who is wrong? Even the BBC seems incapable of making up its mind. Moreover, a language is not static—it is a living thing, and living things change. Hence we now have "ski" instead of "she" and the accented syllables in such words as

More letters from listeners will be found on page 25

"municipal," "orchestra" and "adversary" jump about in a disconcerting fashion. Yet each pronunciation has been current for a considerable period.

Half of the speech faults of New Zealanders are the result of laziness and all the education in the world won't overcome that.

As for the "harsh-voiced boy" who spoke of "Biz-ett"—good luck to him! That is at least preferable to the pseudo-cultured longerie, Shongsong, Treest, daybootongs, and Deboozzy of the average announcer, which are neither French nor English.

This, of course, does not excuse the racing announcer who insists on horses being "bought into line" at every meeting: one of the three "R's" must have been dropped from his education. Anyway, George the Wog has a succinct word which covers the whole controversy (not quite sure of the accented syllable in that word) very aptly: "maleesh." I'm sorry I can't give the "a" the full, guttural, Arabic value, but actually I think the Arabs are wrong—they should pronounce it the way I do!

BRUCE F. R. SCOTT (Timaru).

Sir,—Much has appeared in your columns about pronunciation. Why the fuss? Here is the word—there is the Concise Oxford. I recommend it to New Zealanders. Why emulate the ostrich?

J. B. HYATT (Karori).

"SALOME"

Sir,—Permit me to add my comments on what has been noticed by many in G.M.'s film criticism page—namely, his only too obvious prejudice against American films because they are American. Many do not consider it worthwhile reading his page on this account. In fact, I know of more than one person who does not take *The Listener* on account of its bias and one-sidedness. However, being of Scottish descent, I aim to get my threepence worth, and wade through even the intolerance displayed by G.M., although it frequently

strikes me that the tone of the magazine would be higher with a little more fair play in the film criticisms.

"FAIR PLAY" (Northcote).

Sir,—Your correspondents bring me to G.M.'s defence. First let the writers of that letter glance at the summary of stand-up claps for 1945: America 10, England 5. Sit-down claps: America 31, England 7. Surely that tells a story. Second, let them think over these extracts: "It (*Citizen Kane*) is still, I believe, several years ahead of its time." "Thus (in *Wilson*) at one leap almost, a major Hollywood studio has reached maturity, has shown itself capable of assuming adult responsibilities and, although it would be rashly optimistic to assume that it will remain on this peak for long, the American cinema has shown us AGAIN what it can do when it tries (the capitals are my own)." It is really unnecessary to compare films from both countries. Each produces shoddy films and each produces masterpieces which could not be made in any other country. Could America produce such things as *Western Approaches*, *Love on the Dole*, or *Henry VIII*? Or could England produce *Heaven Can Wait*, *Citizen Kane*, *Fantasia*, or *Lifeboat*? As for *Salome Where She Danced*, an English magazine gives just as painstaking an account of the apparently meandering story as G.M. does. The majority of *Listener* readers believe that G.M. gives praise and abuse where they are due and that he is quite internationally minded about it.

R. K. PARKES (Hamilton).

Sir,—“Abuse No Criticism” (Wellington) complains that G.M. in his reviews of American films is an “unjust and bigoted critic.” I owe a great deal to G.M. He has taught me to appreciate a film more for its technical than its popular side. If he doesn't like a film, I have always found his reasons to be good, clear, and concise. His critic doesn't seem to realise that a film review must necessarily express the views only of the reviewer. He writes of a picture as it seems to him. Why launch a tirade against G.M.'s work “in toto” simply because G.M. has apparently trodden on one reader's corns in regard to *Salome*?

For myself, I don't always agree with G.M. For example, I consider *English Without Tears* one of the most delightful pictures I saw in 1945. G.M. however let the Little Man slump right down in the chair for this film, but I would think twice before attempting to criticise his review, because I think that, in 90 per cent of the cases, G.M. does a difficult job very well, and has proved himself a just, intelligent and worthwhile critic.

Following G.M.'s lead, and taking note of his comments and opinions on a film, I think I have raised my own standard of film preferences. I know that I would rather go to a film directed by Renee Clair or Hitchcock, no matter who the players were, than see one featuring some of the brightest stars in the Hollywood firmament. I have also found by experience that one British film is worth to me ten from America.

"NEON" (Gisborne).

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT

C.N.T. (Takapau): Appreciated. But (1) we were never 2d; (2) we are not now 4d. Our price has always been 3d, post free through any money order office in the Dominion.