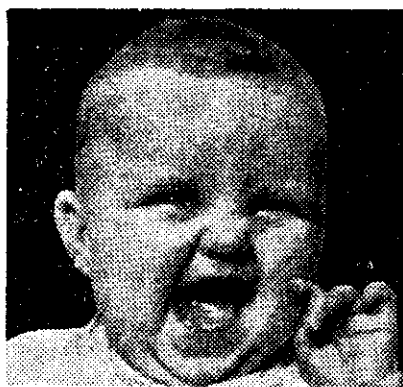


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LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(continued from page 5)

RUPERT BROOKE'S POPULARITY

Sir,—A contribution to your Views-
reel asks sympathetically why the poetry
of Rupert Brooke still has an appeal. It
is a pertinent question, and I think the
answer is both simple and important.
Rupert Brooke still goes to the heart
of many people for four reasons: (1)
He was a genuine poet. (2) He illumi-
nated themes in which people are always
interested. (3) His verse is easily under-
stood. (4) His verse is easily remem-
bered. There is, of course, a certain
school to which his continued popularity
is perplexing and annoying. There was
an illuminating discussion on the matter
in the English Listener during the
second world war. One priest of what
may be called the Coterie-verse school
denied him more than the slenderest of
gifts, and said his sentiments were on a
par with "There'll Always be an Eng-
land." To this gentleman, who enjoys
a high reputation as a critic (in some
quarters), it might have been replied,
first, that a large proportion of the
great poetry of the world is simply the
transmutation of commonly held ideas
by the poet's art, and second, that, es-
pecially England was fighting for her
life and very heroically, there was noth-
ing wrong with the sentiments of
"There'll Always be an England." But,
of course, one of the things critics of
this school dislike, and I fear detest,
is popular feeling. You must not share
the sentiments of a crowd about any-
thing. For a work of art to be popular,
or easily understood by the Philistine,
is enough to condemn it. But, as one
admirer of Rupert Brooke said in this
Listener controversy, it is better to be
a Philistine than a prig. Good poetry has
been written about the second war, but
there has been no Rupert Brooke. That
is to say, no one has written with the
combination of qualities I have men-
tioned. This is another reason why
Rupert Brooke continues to be read
and valued.

A.M. (Wellington).

CONCERT REPORTING

Sir,—The report of Lili Kraus'
Recital in your issue of July 5 con-
tains some such curious expressions that
I feel I must make some small protest
against this type of journalism being
used when reporting concerts, as a great
deal of it is meaningless and leads us
nowhere.

Such expressions as:

"There isn't a bar where the music
is diverted from its own shape into
pianism."

"There are no aimless or perfunctory
bars, and she is never caught resting in
that no-man's land of mezzo-forte. If
she is there she is on her way some-
where else, the path clear in her mind."

"The seasoned concert-goers of Auck-
land had been going around saying that
they were walking on air, that they had
drunk the Milk of Paradise, and so on,
and indeed that is what they looked
like."

"They had started to write to their
friends in the South to tell them that
they must on no account miss Lili Kraus,
and found that in the end they had a
page of truly wonderful adjectives in
front of them, and a literary effort unfit
even for a School Magazine."

Again quoting from the report we
find: "It is easy enough to say what
is wrong with a person's playing, but

when it is right—in the complete sense
that hers is—there are no words.

"What Lili Kraus does is simply to
deliver such moments, nearly all the
time she is playing, far more continu-
ously than any other musician I have
ever heard."

The final paragraph is perhaps the
climax of this meaningless writing. We
read: "As she moved up to the Rondo,
there was a pause, and then it was like
seeing a seaplane taking off from the
water, almost out of earshot, watching
it and now hearing it, too, coming
closer, gathering speed without haste,
the sound coming in louder and louder
gusts, until with a sudden roar, it was
right overhead. When I came to myself,
I marshalled up other performances of
the Waldstein. Besides this they were
like the noise of a motor-cycle, when
a young man starts it up and rides it
round and round the block. Wrapping
them all up in this simile, I threw
them overboard for ever."

No School Magazine that I know
would welcome this type of reporting,
and it is not only the opinion of the
writer, but of many others with whom
he has discussed the report, that most
of it means nothing, and does not add
to the prestige of the very good
pianist who is in our midst at present.

C. R. SPACKMAN (Dunedin).

(We bow to our correspondent's superior
knowledge of school magazines.—Ed.).

N.Z. NATIONAL ANTHEM

Sir,—In reply to "New Zealander"
(Greymouth) with reference to the non-
performance of the New Zealand
National Anthem at public functions, I
would like to advise him that the Royal
Dunedin Male Choir has for many years
opened its concerts with the singing of
the first verse of this fine piece of music.
Our third and fourth concerts for this
year are set down for September 9 and
December 2, and as Station 4YA broad-
casts the first hour of the programme I
suggest that your contributor makes a
note of these dates and tunes in at 8.0
p.m. to 4YA. R.D.M.C. (Dunedin).



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