

# LISTENER

Incorporating N.Z. RADIO RECORD

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## Paying for Music

A CORRESPONDENT wants to know "precisely what the Symphony Orchestra has cost the public during its opening season" and whether "a small country like ours can afford such luxuries." The first question should not have been addressed to us, and there is no answer to the second that will satisfy everybody. The blind are not interested in sunsets and the deaf would not go out of their way to support a thrush against a crow. A large proportion of every community are blind aesthetically, and another large proportion deaf. It is possible to argue, therefore, that those who want symphony orchestras should pay for them, and that if they can't pay for them without assistance from others they should be content with chamber or string orchestras or go without orchestral music altogether. It is foolish to sneer at people who talk like that, but it is necessary to resist them. Those who believe that music is more than a luxury and that life without it would be more brutish and dull have an unassailable case; but they throw it away when they turn uppish. They also deceive themselves when they think that the majority are on their side. There is probably a potential majority that could be rallied to their support with wise preparation and bold leadership; but it is not a majority now; and it is greatly to the credit of a government when it stands firmly for any art without the certain approval of most taxpayers. We of course don't know how much the orchestra is costing the public. It is doubtful if anyone knows yet, or ever will know to the last penny of overtime and rent and the last stick and string of equipment. But we must not suppose that the time is drawing near when the orchestra will be paying its way. Very few (if any) orchestras pay their way. But schools don't pay their way. Universities don't. It would not be easy to prove that health services do. We must pay for music as we pay for all those other civilising influences—because they are civilising.

## LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

### "LA GRANDE ILLUSION"

Sir,—I think that G.M. himself is labouring under a "Grande Illusion" if he believes that this film should be shown as an anti-war film by Unesco. Admittedly the acting and the production are magnificent, but the picture was made when Germany was wooing France's friendship and collaboration (1938) and it shows what a jolly or heroic thing war can be, if only everybody behaves like a perfect gentleman. B. DASH (Wellington).

"The film was not suggested as being suitable for sponsorship by Unesco because it is an 'anti-war' film but because it 'puts emphasis on the things that unite us rather than on those that divide us.' The correspondent's other objection was adequately disposed of in the review.—Ed.)

### THE ORCHESTRA

Sir,—The Prime Minister is threatening us with a conservatorium of music on top of the National Orchestra. Would it not be better to tell us first what the

and the Pendulum" you will see that this is somewhat distorted. Actually, the man is tied down beneath the pendulum; and it is not until after the rats have rescued him from that peril by gnawing through the bandage that secures him that he is almost driven into the pit by the walls becoming red-hot and closing in on him. By then the manipulators of the pendulum have hauled it up through the ceiling, where he need fear it no longer.

J. F. D. PATTERSON (Gisborne).

### WOBBLING SOLOISTS

Sir,—The timely criticism by F. K. Tucker on the "wobbling soloists" must surely be welcomed by all who like to hear soloists use their voices as God made them, not as modern trainers mis-make them. Juveniles are natural copyists and after hearing Madame So and So sing in this "oo-y-oo-y-oo" style, they imagine that it is just "the thing"—to

### Explanation to South Island Readers

Copies of last week's "Listener" bound for the South Island arrived in Wellington from Auckland as usual on the morning after printing (Saturday, October 25), and were taken to the ferry wharf for shipping that evening. They did not make the trip to Lyttelton until the following Wednesday evening (October 29). We very much regret this delay, which was due to the weather and other circumstances entirely beyond our control.

orchestra is costing us? Can you say precisely what it has cost the public during its opening season? If the amount is nearly as big as I suspect, is it not a question whether a small country like ours can afford such luxuries?

MIDDLEBROW (Wellington).

(We refer to this letter in our leading article.—Ed.)

### OBSOLETE OBOE

Sir,—Some weeks back your correspondent "ALTO" was inquiring about an obsolete member of the oboe family, intermediate in pitch between oboe and bassoon. I have not since noticed any reply to his query so perhaps he may be glad of one. The name of the instrument he seeks is no doubt that of the oboe d'amore, which was built to sound a minor third lower than the ordinary oboe and its natural scale was that of B natural major. The tone of this instrument, being softer than the ordinary oboe, lay somewhere between that of the latter instrument and of the cor anglais in quality.

W. G. McALONAN (Papatoetoe).

### "A SPLASH OF COLOUR"

Sir,—It was with great enjoyment that I listened to the adaptation of the story of Vincent Van Gogh's life, under the title of "A Splash of Colour." In my opinion we need more of this type of cultural education. Not only do plays like this bring to life great artists such as Van Gogh, but also they reveal human idealists who struggled valiantly to keep faith with their beliefs. Anyway, after listening to this poignant life story I feel I must read the book just once more.

E. L. THOMPSON (Runanga).

### PIT AND PENDULUM

Sir,—In your issue of October 10 you allude to "the man in Poe's tale of horror—sweating between the pit and the pendulum." If you read "The Pit

and the Pendulum" you will see that this is somewhat distorted. Actually, the man is tied down beneath the pendulum; and it is not until after the rats have rescued him from that peril by gnawing through the bandage that secures him that he is almost driven into the pit by the walls becoming red-hot and closing in on him. By then the manipulators of the pendulum have hauled it up through the ceiling, where he need fear it no longer.

FRED C. S. LAWSON (Matakana).

### WAS IT BLOOD?

Sir,—Your recently published article by the Dutch artist Theo Schoon describing some of the ancient rock drawings in the Waitaki Valley brings to mind a statement published some years ago by the Rev. J. G. Laughton. It had been reported that the body of a man in a sitting position had been found under a rock painting, and Mr. Laughton said it had been put there as a human sacrifice. The painting must have been there for about 500 years, the paint being of the blood of the sacrifice. I am interested to know whether the statement concerning the pigment used is supported by our New Zealand ethnologists. Will someone be good enough to reply?

F. C. CAMPBELL  
(Palmerston North).

### OPERA BROADCASTS

Sir,—The other night it was my pleasure to listen to an excellent performance of *Il Trovatore* from 2YA. Unfortunately, the announcer omitted to give the names of the artists and the orchestra both at the beginning and at the close of the opera. Anyone who is interested in opera is entitled to this information. I should also like to protest against the frequent interruptions by the announcer in order to acquaint listeners with the whys and wherefores of a scene about to be played or an aria to be sung. Why cannot a fairly comprehensive synopsis be given at the beginning and, if necessary, at the conclusion of a performance and the

listener be left to enjoy continuity during the time allotted to the opera—which, anyway, is interrupted for the Sunday Evening Talk, the Weather Report and the News, both in English and Maori?

R. SPENCE (Wellington).

### A BOOK REVIEW

Sir,—I wish to compliment "John Buckley" on his very fine review of *The Life of Pope Pius XII.* by Charles Hugo Doyle. His work revealed careful study and a deep interest in his subject which combined to produce a review of high literary merit.

However, sir, I would like to clear up any misunderstanding which may have been created by the reviewer's penultimate paragraph. He expresses regret that there is no *Imprimatur* or *Nihil Obstat* on the book. I would like to remind him, and your readers, that these authorities are given to books on doctrine and not to biographies or histories. Moreover, the *Imprimatur* and the *Nihil Obstat* guarantee doctrine alone and not style.

STUDENT (Wellington).

### ANTI-SEMITISM

Sir,—I have this minute finished reading in *The Listener* a talk given by the Rev. Professor C. A. F. Knight, entitled "Race-hatred Continues in Europe," and I am moved by gratitude for his masterly and rational analysis of the causes of anti-Semitism.

New Zealanders would do well to listen carefully in the interests of tolerance to such men as Professor Knight, before they condemn parrot-wise these refugees who need our understanding, and, yes, our love and gratitude. They need our understanding and love because only that can cure them of the bitterness and aggressiveness caused by years of persecution. They deserve our gratitude for this reason—that they bring to this raw new country the culture of music, art, and intellect which they have salvaged from the chaos of Europe.

Our men who fought the Nazis are given every help to rehabilitate themselves in civil life. This is their right. Will any New Zealander, once he has thought the matter out, deny that right to the stranger in his country who has fought cruelty, oppression, and persecution from that same enemy, all his life?

Imagine, if you can, the past of these people as a race. You know their present chaotic wilderness. Their pipe-dream of Palestine has become a nightmare of frustration, and their reaction is correspondingly abnormal because of the abnormal lives they have been forced to live.

Please let them live here in peace, and let their children grow up with ours in happiness and security, and when it is said, "He is a Jew," say "Forget it. He is just another man!"

L.L.H. (Ohinewai).

### ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

*Fair Play* (Karori): The Devotional Services are arranged by the local Broadcasting Committees, consisting of clergymen of the various denominations which participate. At 2YA, for instance, the denomination you mention conducts the morning Devotional Service on only three to four occasions each month.

### NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Beryl Bird (Tauranga): Suggestion passed on to proper quarter.

Lloyd Brown (Mt. Eden): Film not reviewed in *Listener*; comment on it therefore not admissible.