

Sir,—“Now, don't switch off—you are going to like this.” These were the words of a 2ZB announcer bringing in the late Sunday classical concert and presumably scaring off all folk who don't wish to be the subjects of Uplift. The same could be said of the apologetic little “Classical Corner” of 2YA's early morning. The little islands of music, coming in a sea of mere noise, are most refreshing to the enthusiast, and we hope net the interest of some who do not usually seek programmes of this type. But would it not be wiser to “clap roundly into them,” without including in remarks which imply that a certain offensive air of refinement is about to prevail?

Something may also be said on the design of such programmes. A short session of short bits is mean in effect, and any intended resemblance to a miniature concert programme is not apparent to the hurrying listener. A single work of the brilliant type—*Pines of Rome* and its brother suites, Stravinsky's *Nightingale*, or Boyce Symphony, stays much longer in the memory.

ROY COWAN (Wellington).

### THE LILIAN DALE AFFAIR

Sir,—Your correspondent in the September 16 issue on the above hits the nail on the head. In lieu of “A Story of a Scoundrel,” a better phrase would be “A Story without an ending.” Surely no serial should be dragged on over three months. One is inclined to get bored if the end is not reached within a reasonable period.

In regard to the advertising, that is chucked in for good measure, and takes one's mind away from the theme of the story. The sponsors of this programme are by no means unique. Most offend to a degree far beyond good taste. There seems to be no dignity in the introduction of advertising. A simple one for instance would be: “Good evening, 7 o'clock, *The Lilian Dale Affair*, presented with the compliments of the makers of . . . Products, which include” (give one or two, no more, on any one evening). Then, when the episode is finished: “The Manufacturers, Messrs. . . wish you good-night until 7.0 p.m. on . . .”

Thousands of listeners would appreciate good clean entertaining programmes and less of the advertising.

A GOOD PRODUCT ADVERTISES ITSELF (Christchurch).

Sir,—As one of those who have been “provoked to anger” by “*The Lilian Dale Affair*,” may I respectfully ask whether you were nodding when you wrote, or approved, the remark that this radio play is “a fairly free version” of *The Small House at Allington*? No one knows better than you, Sir, that it is ~~not~~ a “version” at all, nor even a caricature since, except for the audacious piracy of Trollope's names, its pretended origin is unrecognisable.

A.H. (Dunedin).

### ENGLISH USAGE

Sir,—Would *The Listener* give rulings on a few points in English usage? In the first case, would the Weather Office not be following more correct practice to speak of temperatures as “high” and “low” rather than “warm” and “cool”?

Next, a few pronunciations from frequent broadcasts and from platform utterances. Certain very important persons in broadcasting and educational circles speak regularly of “colleague,” “project” (noun or adjective), “produce” (noun or adjective), all with long “o.”

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

Is it not the case that “project” and “produce,” when used as verbs have long “o” and stress on second syllable, and when used as nouns or adjectives have short “o” and stress on first syllable? Is stress on the first syllable correct or permissible in the word “research”? What is the length of “o” in the word “domicile”?

STUDENT (Otago Central).

(We hasten to stand aside for Mr. Fowler, who says: “Pronounce as your neighbours do, not better. For words in general use, your neighbour is the general public.”—Ed.)

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Sir,—Having listened to every “quiz” session on the air in New Zealand, I would like to express my appreciation of that conducted by Lyell Boyes, who simply asks the question and gives the answer without fuss. I look forward to this session weekly and only wish that the other “Quizmasters” would take a leaf from his book, eschewing extraneous verbal meddling and the building up of their own personalities at the expense of those who enter these competitions.

K. J. SVENSON (Wellington).

### CHURCHES IN RUSSIA

Sir,—It would take too long to deal with all the sophisms that “C.V.B.” has managed to cram into his recent letter, but one or two samples will suffice to illustrate his dialectical methods. He dismisses “F.K.T.” as glibble for accepting Kravchenko's testimony that there is religious persecution in Russia, and then bases his own belief that there is no persecution on nothing better than the testimony of the Webbs and the Dean of Canterbury.

To destroy Kravchenko's authority, “C.V.B.” states that he was “called on to defend his abuse of his native country.” The facts are that in the case in question Kravchenko was plaintiff, not defendant; he was suing a French newspaper for libel; and he won his case. “C.V.B.’s” appeal to our patriotic instincts is amusing. In his book Kravchenko had not abused his native country, but simply told the truth about its system of government. Since “C.V.B.” has apparently been relying on the French newspapers his friend supplied him with (*Humanité*?), it is no wonder he has formed so distorted a view of the case which he claims to have “followed so closely.”

The value of the Webbs's testimony may be gauged from this, that after stating that there is nothing that can properly be called persecution, they continue: “The Soviet Government refuses to print or to import religious books. Practically all seminaries for priests are suppressed. The churches are forbidden to carry on charitable or recreational work. The children of priests are denied access to higher education. There is frequent arbitrary closing of particular churches. Priests and others active in religious work are sometimes summarily arrested and deported on grounds they do not understand.” The Webbs were probably not consciously dishonest, just too woolly-minded to recognise persecution when they saw it.

Religion, according to “C.V.B.,” “opposes to scientific advance its home-made myths.” The home-made myth is no doubt much inferior to the factory-made article.

“Belief in a supernatural,” we are told, “hinders scientific progress.” If this is

so, it is curious that so many of the great scientists, e.g., Newton, Faraday, Pasteur, have been deeply religious men. But “C.V.B.” probably conceives of scientific progress as a steady advance to something like Aldous Huxley's “Brave New World,” and I quite agree that belief in a supernatural is a hindrance to that sort of scientific progress.

Finally, will he please explain how Communism, which explicitly denies the existence of any non-material reality, can find a place in its system for “spiritual values”?

G.H.D. (Greenmeadows).

### BREAKFAST VOICES

Sir,—Until recently I have enjoyed the breakfast sessions from the southern National stations. Pleasant recordings, well arranged, have been the order of the day. And they still are. But must we have them spoiled by the intrusion of announcers' sprightly comments? We have the neat and natty, the kittenish, the hearty back-slapping, the faintly fatuous, and the downright asinine—all of which may strike no jarring note when heard against their natural ZB background, but are anathema to many YA listeners. It may be the backroom boys having their bit of fun while the regular announcers are enjoying their breakfasts. We are not enjoying ours so much.

CUT THE CACKLE (Benhar).

### POETRY FOR HOUSEWIVES

Sir,—I would like to join with Sonja Davies in asking for more of “What Poetry Means to Me,” as I too have enjoyed to the full Mrs. Pritchett's and Mrs. Jefferies's programme. The listener who really does appreciate this type of programme is poorly catered for. I suggest that these two artists have proved that they know, love and understand poetry, and it is rather a shame that they are not given wider scope and a place in the evening programmes. Although I have enjoyed this session very much, may I plead for more of it at a time when I am not surrounded by potato peelings and the burnt offerings which go to make up the family luncheon?

S. J. STRONG (Nelson).

### CARA HALL'S CONCERTO

Sir,—I thought that the peak of artistry had been reached by Helmann and the NZBS Orchestra in the Rachmaninoff No. 3 Concerto, but I say without fear of contradiction that Cara Hall and the Orchestra reached an even higher peak. It was the most perfect piece of artistry of its kind I have heard in 60 years of association with, and active service in, things musical in New Zealand. The NZBS has done a great work in letting us hear so much of such first rank artists as Lili Kraus, Moura Lympany, Isador Goodman and Alexandr Helmann. The public of New Zealand are deeply grateful, and will now want to hear more of Cara Hall.

O'DONEL DAVIS, L.R.S.M. (Nelson).

### HUMOROUS WRITING

Sir,—In *The Listener* of October 28 there was an article by F. L. Combs which I enjoyed. I wish you would publish more of his articles. Humour is so rare. For one good humorous writer there are a thousand serious writers. Humour works wonders. There would be less sickness in New Zealand if there were more laughter among our sober

people. I wish someone would draw up a list of the 100 most humorous books in the world. Now that Hitler is dead, I don't know the most capable one to do it. I suggest three: Shakespeare's *Henry IV.*; Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*.

The Health Department might help in the good work by prescribing a dose of good humour.

P. W. JACKSON (Wellington).

### CHILD ON THE FARM

Sir,—Thank you for publishing Susi Robinson Collins's delightful word picture, “A Child on the Farm.” I believe I know the very farm of which Susi has such happy recollections, and I remember Susi going home past my grandfather's place after attending Sunday School in a tiny schoolroom on many Sunday afternoons. I, too, was a child in those days with various cousins and brothers and sisters. I used to love going to grandfather's, rambling down through the orchard and over the bridge to the flourmill, or playing by the creek. Such fascinating country to the child!

ELLEN S. RICHARDS (Temuka).

### PLAYS FOR COUNTRY LISTENERS

Sir,—I sympathise with “Frustrated Farmworker” when he pleads for more plays. I, too, am living in the country where there is a picture-house which doesn't show every night. I came from Australia, and I badly miss the plays which would last at least an hour.

I am utterly weary of the current hit-tunes which are plugged day after day. Surely it isn't too much to ask for a one hour's play in every week?

I bear in mind the fact that the minority must suffer for the majority. However, sometimes the voice in the wilderness is heard. I hope mine will be.

HELEN HALL (Waipukurau).

### VERA BENENSON

Sir,—I wish to thank the NZBS for the excellent piano recitals by Vera Benenson. The complete lack of publicity given this artist in *The Listener* puzzles some of us. No doubt we should have known, on seeing “Vera Benenson (piano) Studio Recital” that (this lady is famous in Europe and America, that the Albert Hall and the Berlin Philharmonic know her well, as do conductors like Leonid Kreutzer and Dr. Kunwaldt and Herman Abendroth. But those of us who don't go overseas often would appreciate it if *The Listener* would give us a lead in these matters. It would have been good to hear Miss Benenson in some Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert. She has played all the major piano concertos of Schuman, Mozart and Chopin with the big European orchestras. Our own National Symphony Orchestra would have been proud to play with her. Perhaps, before she leaves the country, Miss Benenson could be persuaded to arrange a return visit?

LISTENER (Christchurch).

(Information about Vera Benenson was printed in *The Listener* on September 9.—Ed.)

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Auld Reekie (Ruakaka): Sorry, the political notes make it ineligible.

F.K.T. (Gisborne): The quotation comes from the episode of the lunatic next door in *Nicholas Nickleby*.

C. Wilson (Hamilton): The photograph you mention was not available. We cannot print the other series in the meantime.

Listener In (Dunedin): No. Consideration will be given to increased hours of transmission when the technical staffing position improves.