

Working to Music

WE print on another page "certain basic conclusions" reached by a BBC researcher into the effect of broadcast music in factories. Some, but so far not much, research of the same kind has been carried out in New Zealand; a little by ourselves. We have, for example, been assured by some factory managers that music "speeds up production," and by several factory workers, male and female, that they (1) like to hear it, (2) are hardly conscious of it, (3) feel better when it is going, and (4) can't hear what they are doing when "the thing is on." We suspect, too, that not much more than this has so far been established in Britain, though it is interesting to know that notes have been taken for nearly three years, and that the "Music While You Work" programme has been found an annoyance only when the conditions have been unfavourable. The worst set of circumstances, it would appear, has been the playing of "unsuitable selections—music the workers don't know, melodies that will not "ride over factory noises," extremes of fastness or slowness. Oddly enough, too, it has not been found that quicker rhythms carry output with them, and it will be interesting to see what effect this has on industrialists who have encouraged the scheme in the belief that production would be insensibly accelerated. Where output has been increased the explanation seems to be that cheerfulness has been increased: which is another way of saying that friction and fatigue have been reduced. After all, very few of us spend our days doing the things we most want to do, or we would hardly know fatigue; but the next best thing to the delight that physics pain ought to be the quiet joy that makes us unconscious of it. Perhaps, too, it is safe to assume that most of those whose ears would be agonised by dance bands, accordions, and Viennese waltzes contrive somehow to keep out of machine rooms and to earn their bread in other ways.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

PRAYER OVER THE RADIO

Sir,—Our Lord, as reported in St. Matthew, Chapter 6, verses 5 and 6, expressed His disapproval of practices of this kind. He used rather a strong word to describe the guilty parties.

CHRISTIAN (Golden Bay).

"FOR THE MUSIC LOVER"

Sir,—Let's Get It Straight" did not go far enough on the subject of 2YA's *For the Music Lover* session on Sunday afternoons. In a recent one, among trifles of the "Poems—Songs of India" type was "Vocal Gems from Carmen" (with Edith Evans, too. She should know better). Such programmes surely please neither "music lovers" nor "lesser breeds without the law."—"TWO HEARTS IN A WALTZ REFRAIN" (Wadestown).

MUSIC LOVERS

Sir,—Music originally meant a series of beautiful sounds combined in melodic and harmonic form to delight the ears of those who loved cultural art. Through the centuries, music developed to a high standard maintained by generations of brilliant composers.

Then came the 1914-1918 debacle when the world went mad. After the orgy of killing had ceased, most of the survivors remained mad, and set to work to destroy and distort all that was beautiful in music, art and literature. A generation grew up knowing little of beauty, accustomed to hearing the hideous screeching and wailing of jazz, revived from the savage past, and culminating in the present world chaos.

Did not Voltaire once remark that if most of the stars were planets inhabited by wise people, then this earth had most assuredly been reserved for the habitation of fools?

There are still people who love beautiful music, but the fact that they have to go back to the great masters of past centuries to find it, shows very conclusively how little the modern mind has progressed. Perhaps the world will some day return to sanity, and then we may hope that beautiful music will be restored to its rightful place.

C.M.L. (Christchurch).

HOUSES FOR THE FUTURE

Sir,—I conceive of a house as a place of shelter from the elements but as free and open as it is architecturally possible for it to be." So speaks your New Zealand architect.

Why bedrooms and so on must be private instead of having glass from ceiling to floor like the other rooms is beyond my comprehension. After all is said and written, nobody desires privacy in this land of the free, and it would be so nice (wouldn't it, dearie?), if we could only see the Browns doing quite ordinary things such as scratching the head or wrestling with the baby's recalcitrant napkin, or should we sometimes say the recalcitrant baby's napkin?

Oh, no, Mr. Architect—please do not place any limits on this brilliant idea of freedom, space and glass partitions. Look how simply wonderful it would be if I

could watch the comings and goings of all and sundry without having to indulge in the undignified custom of creeping behind the curtains like a thief in the night. For the love of Mike do not let us drift back into the old-fashioned English conception of regarding the house as a home where one might for a brief period shut out undesirable features and relax without being closely observed by "Peeping Toms."

"Away with these anti-social characteristics and up with the shop front windows" should be our building slogan, and while we are on the job, what about cutting down all those hedges and other unnatural obstructions between gardens? You know, it is ever so difficult to see what the next-door neighbour is doing without being caught peeping through the fence. Of course there is a possibility that he might be minding his own business—such is the retrograde nature of some individuals—but we must not permit that type of person to hinder the march of progress and publicity.

ALBERT E. YOUNG (Rotorua).

TOO MUCH TALK?

Sir,—The letter from "Effigy" of Auckland has encouraged us to write and say that we feel the same. The working man awakes to news, lunches to news, and dines to news. It even follows him to bed. What good entertainment filters sparingly over the air does so during working hours (so we are told), and in such places as sawmills, cheese-factories and other (noisy) industries, listening to it is quite impossible.

We do not wish to deny people the news altogether, but why have so much on so many stations at one time? Perhaps if some people didn't talk so much, and did more, this war would be considerably shortened.

Recently we listened to a Military Camp Concert relayed for too short a period from Station 2YA, and the applause given by the hundreds of servicemen in attendance should convince anyone that this is the type of entertainment to suit the majority, as it takes all classes of men to make an army. When a Parliamentary session is on the air, it is seldom interrupted for the News, then why interrupt good programmes such as the above-mentioned concert?—"IN THE MOOD" (Eltham).

Sir,—I desire to join issue with "Effigy" (Auckland), who presumes to so fully understand the wishes of New Zealanders in general, as to the nature of programmes for broadcasting, that the demands material alteration so as to largely cut out the various "talks" in favour of an endless stream of musical items, mostly records ranging from the classics to all kinds of "sob stuff."

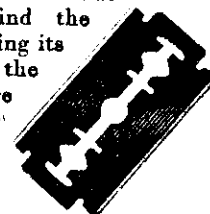
Personally I, and doubtless very many others, run through *The Listener* each week to see what really worthwhile information is afforded of what is happening, particularly overseas. May I assure "Effigy" that very many listeners have no desire to imitate Nero, who, it is said, "fiddled while Rome was burning."

"AS YOU ARE" (Dunedin).



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