

LIGHT MUSIC

Sir.—After 20 years or more of experimentation, the New Zealand Broadcasting Service has now settled down to a fairly standard routine in its radio programmes, and perhaps an appraisal of one aspect would not be out of place. Leaving aside for the moment plays, news and talks, and confining myself to music only, may I say that as one who loves the music of the great masters, but who is not too highbrow or pretentious to appreciate and enjoy the lighter or middlebrow type, I am probably representative of thousands of listeners.

It may be conceded at once that opera, symphonies, concertos, sonatas and chamber music receive a just proportion of time; and the authorities will doubtless point out by reference to *The New Zealand Listener* that light music also receives its fair share of time. It is, however, in the definition of "light music" that I take issue with the NZBS, for my contention is that included in so-called "light programmes" is all the rubbish obtainable—stuff which is not music at all in the true sense of the term, but which is an insult to the intelligence of all people above the moron level. Readers will know to what I am referring, vocal crooners, wailers, shouters, and instrumental discord perpetrators. In consequence, true light music tends more and more to be squeezed out of the programmes. Under the title of "light music," "lunch session," etc., we are too often, not getting overtures, musical comedy selections, light classical numbers, bands, "straight" songs by tenors, baritones and sopranos, light choral works, suites, marches, waltzes or even good old English comic songs. In short, the programmes are tending more and more to be of two types instead of three types—heavy classical, light tuneful music, and mere noise. (It will willingly be conceded that the noise-lovers pay their licences and are entitled to due and reasonable attention, but in fact they receive treble consideration: i.e., their own share, plus an unwarranted encroachment on the time of the middlebrows, plus a full measure from the commercial stations.)

Some light music possibly may be of a "sugary" nature—Victorian, Edwardian, dated. This is no argument for its curtailment. At its best, light music can be inspiring: at its worst it is at least tuneful and soothing, and does not provoke sinister inclinations to homicide. Whether motivated by sincerity or by affectation, the superior intelligentsia can show their contempt for the Philistines by listening only to the orthodox classical—or, of course, if they wish a change of diet, there are always Bartok, Hindemith, and the moderns experimenting in quarter tones.

To summarise: the NZBS is, on the whole, doing a good job, but should devote more attention to the middle man, make use of some of the thousands of records which surely must be in stock, and present them in sessions separate from, rather than mixed in with, the very light periods. Is this not a reasonable and constructive request?

F. M. PRICE (Auckland).

EVOLUTION THROUGH SEX

Sir.—A suggestion by your frequent correspondent G.H.D., at the end of his letter headed "Evolution Through Sex," deserves to be ignored, but is so typical of the kind of moral panic seen since the inquiry into juvenile delinquency that it is time some kind of order was restored. He says: "May it not be that one cause of juvenile delinquency is the purely naturalistic outlook on life

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which many of our children derive from their contact with evolutionary biologists?" Now I, for one, would be happy to learn that New Zealand children generally were being given the benefit of the knowledge of experts in all sciences—together with instruction in comparative religion instead of the narrower kind of indoctrination performed by one or two churches at the present time. I am confident that, far from tending to produce delinquency, the valuable information gained—plus the insight into scientific method, would broaden the interests and intellects of children and help to give them a healthier outlook on the functions of the human body.

Let us not forget that a Christian society produced the recent "wave" of so-called delinquency. It would be interesting to know if any comparable outbreak ever occurred among the Maoris. The cruelty, unhealthiness and stupidity of many of the sexual taboos and moral restraints imposed by Christianity themselves condition the types and number of social deviants.

O.S. (Titirangi).

THOSE DARK GLASSES

Sir.—It was with great interest that I read Mr. Malcolm Cholerton's reply, published in your December 20 issue, to Dr. H. B. Turbott's health talk. I can quite easily see, layman though I be, that Dr. Turbott's description of opticians would be misleading and might unintentionally cause clients to lose confidence in their ophthalmic optician.

For several years now I have received treatment from both an ophthalmologist and an ophthalmic optician; the latter, who considered that a specialist's advice was required, sent me to the former. Out of a family of four, all wearing glasses, I am the only one needing the advice of an ophthalmologist, but we still retain the greatest confidence in our ophthalmic optician.

In my opinion the indiscriminate selling of dark or tinted glasses, without a prescription from one of the above, should cease. A large percentage of the people seem to use "blackouts" instead of glasses tinted to remove all tiring glare, but in no way interfering with either vision or natural landscape colouring.

A.W. (Picton).

UP FROM THE SLIME

Sir.—If "Awake" was as careful as he recommends me to be, he would have noticed that in my first letter I spoke of evolution as a theory, and said we could not prove either absolute beginnings or endings. If "Awake's" theory about Genesis is correct then Sunday should follow Saturday each week, but at periods of—how many thousands of years? The theist or Bible believer is faced with the fact that Bishop Ussher on a Bible basis calculated that God made the heavens, the earth, the seas and all therein—including Babelgeuse 25 million times larger than our sun, one human male, unclothed, and a flying or walking serpent that could speak a language humans could understand—all this just 4100 years ago. The established sciences of astronomy, anthropology, and geology tell us the earth has existed for at least 2000 million years; life on it for 1100 million years, and man—man the tool-maker—probably 500,000 years, while his near-human or pre-human ancestors existed long, long before that.

For the Bible believer God is a supreme intelligence, infinite in capacity

for creation, whose work cannot change. If Genesis and Bishop Ussher are accepted, surely we may ask how infinite perfection came to create an imperfect universe including imperfect man. And if his work is not subject to change, how do we explain the vast geological and climatic changes that have occurred, the rise and disappearance of prehistoric creatures, and the varied species of men?

Evolution is a scientific theory by means of which scientists are trying to pierce some of the mysteries of life. Genesis is a theological theory aiming to give meaning to life. But the Bible believer either cannot or will not face the fact that human life has no meaning except that which humans have given to it. Man has invented religions, philosophies, sciences, arts and social codes, the practising of or conforming to which gives his life some meaning. The mystery, marvel and miracle about man is that he can, so to speak, stand back and survey himself and the universe.

Scientists are not seeking "a missing link" but whole chunks in the chain of evidence connecting man with his ancestors. They hope eventually to find enough to enable them to do it as effectively as they have traced the horse from a creature with three toes on each foot.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).

Sir.—The opponents of evolution must necessarily believe its opposite—special creation. According to them all forms of life, both animal and vegetable, appeared on earth suddenly, but they are never prepared to offer an explanation of how this came about. The wide distribution of animal and vegetable life throughout the earth would entail "special creation" in every environment suitable to a particular form of life. For example, the polar bear, to continue living at all, must have appeared in Arctic regions, and the fish on which it lives must have arrived at the same time, with its sustenance also immediately available. The anti-evolutionist cannot escape these conclusions. His "special creation" must apply to a complete earth.

Another matter that has to be considered is that of the animal forms that have become extinct. If we regard life as the result of intelligent creation, what can we think of the wisdom, or good intentions, of a creator who put the monsters of the reptilian age on the earth, without providing for their continuing existence? The story of life on the earth has been, and still largely is, one of "adapt or perish." The idea of benevolence is completely absent from it.

Your correspondent G.H.D. has written slightly of the influence of

LONGER TEST BROADCASTS

BROADCASTS of the fourth Test match, England v. Australia, at Adelaide, from January 28 to February 3, will be extended, with 2YA giving daily commentaries at 2.25-3.0 p.m., 3.45-4.5, 5.0-6.30, 6.50-8.35. This is in addition to the usual broadcasts, namely, 1YA and YZ link on the last quarter-hour of each period of play, plus summaries, at 3.45-4.5 p.m., 6.15-6.30 p.m., 8.15-8.35 p.m. The scoreboard for the day will be given at 9.0 p.m. and at 7.18 the following morning.

rationalism on the intellect. The intellect suffers serious hurt from the blighting influence of religious dogmatism. That this is so, is shown by the fact that educated people can still be found who regard the creation narratives of Genesis, Chapters 1 and 2, as historical.

C.P. (Invercargill).

"ROBINSON CRUSOE"

Sir.—Your film critic's able review of *Robinson Crusoe* offers food for thought. There is a mystery attached to the original story which has never been explained. How came Defoe, the grimy journalist and servant-girl's novelist, to write a book that has achieved worldwide success? One may cite Defoe's career, his secondary novels, his journalistic instinct, and the whole Alexander Selkirk business; but these account only for a clever book—they do not explain the unique autocracy of *Robinson Crusoe*.

Here is a story that has touched mankind; yet it has no heroine, no love-interest, and not a single passage or episode to evoke tears or laughter. It is generally considered to be the best of all stories for boys, yet it was written primarily for adults. As generation succeeded generation of readers, the book's lack of psychological interest withdrew it more and more from adult attention, while its details, strung on one significant thread of fate—its preoccupation with the plain facts of everyday routine existence—proved an irresistible magnet to the juvenile mind.

It is clear that in the writing of this story Defoe was influenced by personal experience. He had known loneliness, and a debtor's prison may well have seemed to him as a desert island. When bidding farewell, in 1712, to the readers of his *Review*, he wrote: "I have learnt more philosophy in the school of affliction than at the academy, and more divinity than from the pulpit; in prison I have learnt to know that liberty does not consist in open doors. . . I have seen the rough side of the world as well as the smooth, and in less than half a year I have tasted the difference between the closet of a king and the dungeon of Newgate."

Here, surely, is the basis of Crusoe's melancholy. His figure, with its goat-skin cap, its umbrells and its parrot, has known only one temporary rival in later history—that of Charlie Chaplin, with bowler hat, twirling cane and tooth-brush moustache. But Crusoe remains an imperishable memory.

L. D. AUSTIN (Wellington).

LOUIS MACNEICE

Sir.—In David Hall's recent talk on the best contemporary poet, he mentioned Louis MacNeice as coming from North of the Border and being a Scot. Surely MacNeice comes from Ulster, north of the Irish border?

M.O'L. (Upper Hutt).

(He was born in Belfast.—Ed.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Stumped (Mangakino): See panel this page. Debater (Patutahi): It really exists.

A. H. Hatful (Awakeri): Recording not very successful and use of it uncertain.

J.E.F. (Oamaru): Daniel Jones, who records first the two short-vowelled forms (pyanno, pianno), records also the two with the long vowel (pyahno, piahno), and notes that the two last are "frequent among professional musicians."