

JAZZ IN NEW ZEALAND

Sir.—As a teenager (16 years of age) I wish to reply to Mr. L. D. Austin on the question of jazz music. I have no intention of debating his premise, that what he has stated about jazz is an "incontrovertible fact," but just merely wish to make the following points in defence of my tastes.

It is possible that jazz may be considered to be the modern folk music of the Western world, and I mention it as the opinion of a musically knowledgeable contemporary. I think I may be considered a normal 16-year-old boy. I like jazz music, and have made a study of it, and have a small library of records. I agree that some of the "pop" music we hear over the air is nauseating. Nevertheless, however personally unacceptable to me this type of music is, I wish to be tolerant enough to admit that tastes other than mine must be catered for. This point of view is not intended to convey the impression that I am in favour of a general lowering of the cultural standard.

MONTE WEBB (Wellington).

Sir.—In his savage attack on jazz in *The Listener* for August 17, L. D. Austin states he has no intention of entering into argument on the subject, but I feel that I cannot let such an unsupported criticism pass without any comment.

Obviously Mr. Austin is an intellectual snob of the worst type. He cannot have any knowledge of the music he is attacking when he states that it is broadcast in quantity from YA and Commercial stations. What he is referring to is the "popular" music broadcast by these stations. This type of music owes much to the jazz developments of the past few decades, but is far removed from the true jazz forms. I might suggest that Mr. Austin listen to VOA's *World of Jazz* or the very late night jazz programmes broadcast by a few, very few stations. I might also suggest that before indicating his ignorance on the subject, Mr. Austin should take the trouble to learn what form good jazz takes. I myself prefer jazz, but I would never indiscriminately attack classical music or its lovers.

Jazz is the one true art form to come from the United States, and provides chances for improvisation, exhibitions of technical skill, and pure expression of the artist's emotions unequalled in any other art form. I do not wish to debate the rival qualities of classical music and jazz; to my mind both have many qualities which can only be appreciated if one takes the trouble to understand them. I recommend to Mr. Austin that he take this trouble in regard to the jazz idiom. J. P. MATTHEWS (Napier).

Sir.—From what Mr. L. D. Austin stated in the last few words of the final sentence in his letter to the *N.Z. Listener*, dated August 17, I gather that, at long last, he is throwing in the towel in his campaign against jazz. I view with dismay the pronouncement by Mr. Austin, for we have been highly entertained for over sixteen years by his views on jazz. The cessation of vituperative remarks about jazz will leave a gap in the Press which no other person we know of is capable of filling. Will Mr. Austin please reconsider his decision?

T. C. NICHOL (Wellington).

WHA DAUR MEDDLE WI' ME?

Sir.—Seething with righteous indignation after reading "The Plain Man's Guide to Plain Gardening" in your issue of August 17, I am constrained to express myself as forcibly as I can in protest against this denigration of Scottish staple diet. I shall be obliged if you

N.Z. LISTENER, AUGUST 31, 1956.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

will grant me as much publicity as possible to my gentle castigation of the author of this article. It is to be hoped that he does not express the Government's official view, or I should fear for the breaking down of New Zealand-Scottish relations. "Compost is to the soil what porridge is to the Scot—the only thing necessary to keep it in a state of rude health" . . . "Recipe for a sort of all-purpose fertiliser haggis—a base dressing for the New Zealand Garden."

If Burns and Boswell lived today, We'd see their faces hardening, And what a lot they'd have to say On "Plain Man's Guide to Gardening." The "Chieftain of the Pudden Race" Is not a theme for mirth. Porridge is on a higher plane Than compost, N.Z. earth. "Where better men . . ." James Boswell cried,

When Johnson spoke of oats, And the English bloodstock, woe betide Their glossy, shining coats If oats were lacking. So the Scot Would lack in health and courage. He'll not survive if we deprive Him of his morning "Parritch."

New Zealand gardeners, then, take heed, Tread not upon the thistles, You'll find 'tis not a noxious weed When Scotsmen's anger bristles.

INDIGNANT SCOT (Te Awamutu).

YOUTH CONCERTS

Sir.—The National Orchestra is doing a fine job in the musical sphere of New Zealand. James Robertson has raised the standard, under his baton, until it now stands very high and measures up to overseas standards. The Orchestra never fails to inspire its audience, whether theatre patrons or listeners, by the many varied programmes arranged.

It was with jealousy, mixed with anger, that we listened to the Youth Concerts from Wellington and Auckland. During the Proms Concerts, when many hundreds were turned away from the Civic Theatre in Christchurch, we felt that we were entitled to a Youth Concert, too.

R. S. CLARKSON (Christchurch).
(The possibility is definitely in mind.—Ed.)

MOTHERS AT WORK

Sir.—It was with considerable interest that I heard a panel discussion on that highly-contentious subject of married women, and specifically mothers, who work. Our pundits, both political and social, have subjected the general public to much instruction that has ranged from Utopian nonsense to a clear-headed presentation of the considerable issues involved in this social phenomenon. I consider that this panel discussion came squarely into the latter category.

The panel emphasised that the central issue involved was economic. Not the economics of "keeping up with the Joneses," as suggested by your correspondent May Daniel, but the economics of supplying families with necessities. It is a hard, cold, unpalatable fact of life that many mothers must work to maintain that irreducible minimum in their standard of living.

Any medium of information which continues to emphasise this point is coming to grips with the problem.

PATRICIA CHRISTENSEN
(Wellington).

Sir.—I am grateful to the Wellington panel (July 8) who so competently showed why mothers are forced to work because of economic necessity.

Eva Peron used to address the crowd "We the shirtless ones." The shirtless ones today are the mothers, depending on "the crumbs that fall," or whatever they can scrape from a husband's mini-

mal allowance. I shall not take space for further exposition of this. The panel was astute enough to recognise a very serious state of affairs in that millions of mothers are seeking paid employment. Why not find some way of solving this social problem? Give the wife the justice demanded by any worker—an adequate, or at least some return for her labours. One tires of the eternal tributes to a mother's importance in the home. Let her be sure of some security in the home.

Dr. O. C. Mazengarb recently pointed out that the Legislature might take a hand in improving and preserving family life in New Zealand. "If married women are to be encouraged to stay at home," he said, "they should at least have the assurance that if the husband fails to provide for them the Courts will do justice to the widow." Why not the wife before it is too late? No wonder the women feel compelled to buy a home of their own or make some provision for their old age. Once upon a time marriage meant "to have and to hold." The women of today realise there is now no such assurance, so who can blame them for relinquishing the dedication and consequent material poverty of their mothers? E.P. (Christchurch).

CULTURAL RETROGRESSION

Sir.—With many culture lovers of my acquaintance, I am perturbed by the general symptoms of cultural retrogression in this country. One ominous sign of this decline is the growing support given by the *New Zealand Listener* to red type. Red type is the negation of cultural refinement; its influence is debasing and corrupting and, despite all that may be argued to the contrary, there is nothing but cultural evil that can result from its pursuit. The volume of pernicious red type displayed on the front page of the *New Zealand Listener* is simply appalling. The anomaly that the Minister of Broadcasting is also Minister of Education becomes daily more absurd.

I have no intention of entering into any argument on this matter; what I have stated is an incontrovertible fact, and there is no more to be said about it as far as I am concerned.

J. E. MAUTNER (Wellington).

NZBS PLAYS

Sir.—There recently appeared in *The Listener* two letters complaining of the "harsh and monotonous" voices of some of the studio players. It is to be regretted that neither writer tempered his somewhat caustic criticism with a note of appreciation of their acting ability. However, we had a hearty laugh over

BACK TO NORMAL

RUGBY returns next week to such a strenuous normality that details of all the important provincial matches could not be squeezed into the Saturday "Highlights" space on page 25. Here, then, are broadcasting arrangements for the big games on September 8:

- 2.0 p.m. 1XH: Waikato v. Thames Valley.
- 2.30 1XN: Northland v. Taranaki.
- 1YA: Wellington v. Auckland.
- 3YZ: Nelson v. West Coast (Seddon Shield).
- 2.45 3YA: Canterbury v. South Canterbury (Ranfurly Shield).
- 4YZ: Southland v. Wanganui.
- 4YA: Otago v. North Otago.
- 3.5 2ZA: Hawke's Bay v. Manawatu.

the first writer being "forced" to listen to the plays. Evidently he did not realise that, to put himself out of his misery, he had only to rise from his chair, dash to the radio and apply finger and thumb to the little knob. If the exertion of rising and dashing proved too much for him, he could easily move his chair alongside the radio, when only finger and thumb action would be necessary.

Although as a family we are fond of music, when it is good, we look forward to and much enjoy the studio plays. I feel that we and many others owe a hearty vote of thanks to the selector, producers and players for the delightful entertainment they give us week by week. The plays are well chosen, full of interest, and many of them need very delicate and artistic handling. This is achieved in a manner that would do credit to the lauded BEC.

We wish them all success in their work and look forward to many more delightful hours in their company.

SATISFIED FEILDINGITES
(Feilding).

THE RED PLANET

Sir.—What's the idea of spoiling the serial *Journey Into Space* now in its 11th episode on 2ZB by publishing a résumé of its conclusion (page 7, August 17)? I suppose a similar dénouement will soon be made about *World in Peril*. As suspense is surely the chief impelling factor in listening to serials I can only conclude you are under Red Martian influence in wishing to discourage us from listening to the warning of the forthcoming invasion from outer space.

STARRY EYED (Wellington).

(A great many people have already heard *Journey Into Space* from National Stations, and some of them are known to be making the journey for the second time. Our backward glance—a necessary introduction to *World in Peril*—is unlikely to spoil the story for listeners who are still on Mars.—Ed.)

ON THE SEVENTH DAY

Sir.—Your correspondence on the seventh day is just too silly for words. If the matter is examined scientifically, man has at some time emerged from a lower intelligence. At some suitable stage for his own convenience he introduced the day of rest. It was man-made, and what is man-made can be changed. To quarrel about what day, or how the day is to be spent, is simply childish. When will the human race grow up?

P. J. ALLEY (Christchurch).

"ALL DAY SINGING"

Sir.—On behalf of my family may I thank Mr. Henry Walter and the NZBS for the wholly delightful and unusual programme *All Day Singing*, now, unfortunately, concluded. In this admirable series the songs were aptly chosen and well sung, and the commentary brief, wise and clearly spoken. May we hope that these programmes will be repeated from other stations or, better still, that a further series can be presented in the near future. NELSON LISTENER.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

C.W.T. (Kimbolton): Sorry; more are received than can be printed.

G. Blaikie (Invercargill): The fact is regrettable, but it is a fact, that what you "naturally visualised" is technically impossible. Let's Be Honest (Wellington): Your letter has no signature.

G. Edwards (Wellington): As soon as it can conveniently be arranged; but it may not be very soon.

Felicitia (Wellington): Sorry; letters should be confined to single topics.

R. C. Harkness (Wanganui): The point is one on which the Service is very careful in its own productions. If you will specify any that exemplify your complaint, a more precise reply would be possible.