

BEACHCOMBING

MUSICIANS tend to be a wan and sickly lot. They are night workers, feverish travellers, under-rested, wrongly-nourished hotel livers; they practise in seldom-aired studios, taking their instrument out of their embouchure only to replace it with a cigarette. This is a depressing picture of occupational malaise, but a few find ways out. I knew a pianist from one of the more dreadful industrial towns of Ohio who was sick all the time. Finally he transplanted himself and what remained of his life's savings to a health ranch in northern Mexico, which was where I met him. He had enough money to last him three months, but he stayed six. By then he was in good health, and truly insolvent. He married a girl who had no money either, and went to live in San Diego. Things were grim for a month or two. Then his wife was left a seaside house at La Jolla, a very tonky area just north of San Diego. They let the spare bedroom and turned the rumpus room into a teaching studio. One or two tonky pupils appeared. My friend got himself a steady job at a late spot within half an hour's drive; close by southern California standards. Now he has a good routine: teaching from 7.0 p.m.-11.0, then playing for the late customers till they're ready to go home, say 4.30 a.m. He drives back to La Jolla, has his supper and sleeps till mid-morning. Then he staggers down to the beach, still in a stupor of sleep, carrying a jorum of fruit juice. He plants himself between two rocks and sleeps as long as he feels inclined under a beach umbrella. When his wife has finished her housework she joins him, and they spend the afternoon on the beach, swimming and taking snorts of fruit juice. He is never sick and rates his sun tan an invaluable professional asset. So much for southern California. Back to New Zealand. I used to see Nancy Harrie years ago when she worked in a music shop in Christchurch. She was a lively pianist, but so frail she was in danger of blowing off the piano stool every time she turned a sheet of music. She plays several kinds of radio jobs in Auckland now, and lives on the North Shore by the beach. She's not transparent any more, although she's no discuss heaver yet.

Outbursts

AUCKLAND is not like the rest of New Zealand. Others have suspected this and mentioned it. Let me add to the body of evidence with two short emotional incidents. Emotional incidents, except within certain well defined limits, are very rare in the rest of New Zealand.

1. An admirably succinct paragraph in the daily press gave the whole of the first incident. The police prosecutor tells of a sailor who broke into a furniture shop: "He was found asleep on a couch in the shop window," said Mr. Hedley. "An engineer's hammer was found in his coat pocket. He admitted breaking the door panel and also the window, and said he wanted somewhere to sleep. He also said he was afraid, but the police could not understand what he meant by that. Nothing was missing from the shop. He had not been drinking."

Consider the cops discussing this odd fellow who had been driven by fear, a strong emotion: "Joker says he's scared."

"What's he scared of?"

"I dunno."

"Joker must be a bit loopy. Snoring off on a couch like that. Breaking a window . . ."

"Can't understand a joker saying he's scared of nothing."

It's a pretty shameful admission. In the south, if you have a childlike fear of the dark and want to dive into a warm bed, you don't talk about it. If you're a cop, you certainly don't talk about it or try to understand it. You label it crime. So does the law, which cops have to obey, too.

2. At the exhibition of Henry Moore's work at the Auckland Art Gallery, a viewer was suddenly overcome by emotion and cried in a loud voice: "Nonsense! The man ought to be shot." He then stamped out of the gallery. And this outburst, mind you, was over something so trivial as art. Art—lumps of sculpture. What foreigners do their blocks about it in places like Paris. Wouldn't it!

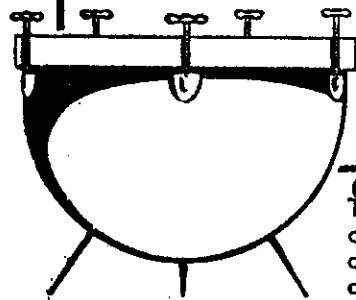
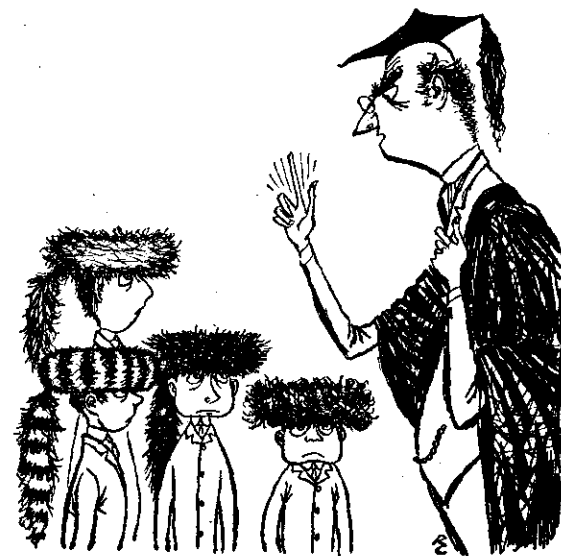
Nonconformist

THERE were five trucks in the Birkenhead ferry queue at 12.30 p.m. that day. Each driver had his

(continued on next page)

"All summer," she says, "I get the housework done early, and then I take the two children down to the beach with a rug and some tomato sandwiches, and we stay there the rest of the day. I have a long swim and I feel so much fitter than I did. . . . I love the North Shore." Take hope, musicians! Come north, musicians! It can be done.

"He would probably have a quiet chat with the boys"



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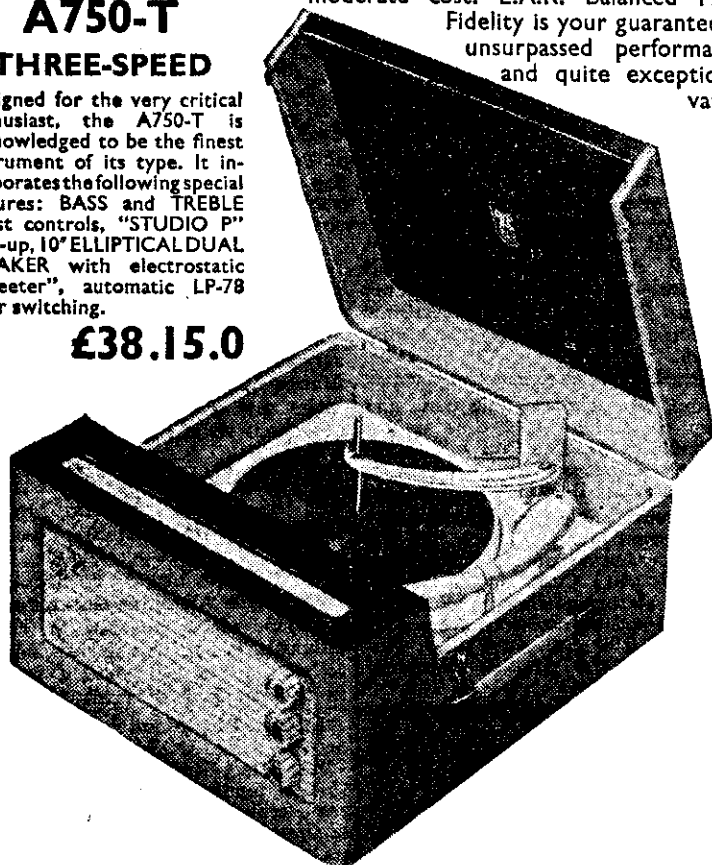
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