



THE MUSICAL CLIMATE

Sir,—I have only just seen Mr Richard Hoffmann's statement that "New Zealand audiences are sadly out of touch with the world of new music." That is certainly not true in the field of chamber music. I am enclosing some selections of programmes presented by the Federation which I hope you will be able to pass on to Mr Hoffmann before he starts giving New Zealand an undeserved reputation for ultra-conservative musical tastes. There is hardly a programme among them which does not prominently feature an important contemporary work.

To call our audiences "largely social ones" is a complete misjudgment of our musical public, and shows a surprising lack of insight in one of whom one would expect at least some feeling for New Zealand's musical temper. After listening to music in many places overseas, I have found our audiences, on the whole, far more venturesome in the exploration of new fields of musical enjoyment than their counterpart in some old-established centres of culture, such as Italy or France or even England. The recent outstanding success of the Parrenin Quartet, specialists par excellence in contemporary music, proves precisely Mr Hoffmann's point that "New Zealand is a young country which should be receptive of new ideas." It is.

I agree with Mr Hoffmann's complaint about the "unimaginative programmes given here by famous concert artists from overseas," but the reason for these is not what he supposes. Some famous artists have no imaginative programmes in their repertoire because they find the demand for them negligible elsewhere. But in most instances we have their concert management to blame, which does not know its own public and misleads the artist into believing the sort of misconception which Mr Hoffmann appears to hold.

F. TURNOVSKY,
President, N.Z. Federation of
Chamber Music Societies.

(The programmes have been forwarded.—Ed.)

MENTAL HEALTH AND SICKNESS

Sir,—"Another of Them" assumes firstly that I am strongly opposed to his colleague's views and that that is why I am criticising his type of argument, and secondly, that I am completely ignorant of current theories on personality formation. He is justified in neither of these assumptions. I have not expressed my views on child-rearing. I criticised his arguments, not necessarily his conclusions. I know enough about the factors which contribute to the formation of any personality, whether considered healthy by the medical psychologist or not, to know that they are many, complicated and not fully understood or agreed upon by the experts and that not the least among them is the individual heredity of the person involved. In half an hour of talking around the subject I think "Medical Psychologist" should have said something of this nature instead

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

of oversimplifying the whole problem. Mothers must have been left with the impression that their children's mental health depends entirely on how they tackle feeding schedules and toilet training.

His TB argument does not parallel the mental health one. Assuming the conventional view of causation, the tubercle bacilli are the necessary cause of overt TB, i.e., no bacilli no TB, but one cannot say that a person who has not had a permissive childhood will not develop mental health. In fact, to quote from C. W. Valentine, "Most of the brothers and sisters of young delinquents are not themselves delinquent." And again, "The majority of children from broken homes do not become problem children."

"Adaption to life as it is," begs the philosophical question, "What is life?" How can you say what is "adequate adaption to life as it is" if you don't know what life is? If you believe that life is a dog eat dog affair, getting along with one's fellow human beings hasn't much to do with adequate adaption. Actually "getting along with one's fellow human beings" is just the sort of unscientific phraseology which I have been condemning.

Studies of "whole populations" are done via reliable samples, as "Another of Them" well knows. Of course, they take considerable time and effort, but they are nevertheless being done all the time by conscientious psychologists who believe in testing their hypotheses before inflicting them on the public.

BARBARA BREWER
(Raumati South).

SNOBBISH ON PRINCIPLE

Sir,—I think maybe Miss Campion's little essay on snobbery in her Auckland Letter of August 23 required more space than she was able to spare. Leaving aside All Black captains (the only alternatives she mentioned) I can think of people with other qualities and characters which to me raise them "head and shoulders" above many intellectuals I know.

Is it not possible that her son's grandfathers' greatness resided in something other than purely intellectual attainments? Yes, and Rex Fairburn's, too. And lots of mothers and fathers and a few labourers and some other intellectual nonentities I have met.

I wonder if the pretension of an intellectual aristocracy is not as outdated as its equivalent in terms of social snobbery—and whether it may not, by its very arrogance, help to produce the stubborn anti-intellectualism which Miss Campion deplores.

HENRY WALTER (Wellington).

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Sir,—According to a N.Z. Truth report of August 20, the recent National Party Conference resolved by a large majority to urge the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate and report on all questions relating to television and on "the advisability of perpetuating the present State monopoly of broadcasting."

This item of news is of national importance, and it is therefore all the more surprising that, so far as Dunedin is concerned, neither daily newspaper mentioned the matter.

I submit, Sir, that it is far more realistic to direct public attention to this question, than to the question of how best to set about resurrecting the dead Legislative Council. The New Zealand system of cabinet government

makes an effective second chamber quite impracticable; but there are various other ways of securing the important end aimed at by the advocates of a second chamber. One of the most important of those would be to remove the stuffy hand of politics from the microphone.

What might best replace the present system of political control of broadcasting, and how the urgent problems posed by the coming of television might best be met, are questions to which there are no ready-made answers. That is why it is vitally important that a Royal Commission should carry out a thorough investigation of these matters, as a preliminary to action. And, as a speaker at the National Party Conference pointed out, in doing this New Zealand would follow a precedent set recently by Canada and Australia.

E. A. OLSSEN (Dunedin).

PARLIAMENT AND 2YC

Sir,—Congratulations to the editorial staff of *The Listener* in endeavouring to forestall adverse comment on the game of musical chairs played by the programme department of the NZBS, due to Parliamentary broadcasts.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that during the session most country listeners to 2YC are cut off altogether from contact with the YC programmes, or are forced to listen to the other YC programmes through a haze of interference, both from local disturbances and also from Australian stations which seem to crowd the ether.

If we are to accept this shuffling of programmes I do feel that it is not beyond the resources of the NZBS to provide a more powerful transmitter for 2YC's broadcast so that listeners do not have to endure an uninteresting evening programme during the Parliamentary session.

INCONSTANT LISTENER
(Feilding).

IRON CURTAIN OPERA

Sir,—The letter from Bill O'Reilly in your issue of August 30 is an excellent example of how a Communist reasons things out. The late Charlie Fox is alleged to have been an admirer of the Imperial Soviet Union and its subjugated neighbours, the so-called "people's democracies." He bequeathed £6000 to the New Zealand Players. Therefore the New Zealand Players are in duty bound to be admirers of the Soviet Union and its satellites. If by word or act they prove to be otherwise they are guilty of a flagrant misuse of funds, and are possibly in the pay of American capitalists! Long ago the Communist hierarchy defined the central dogma governing the new morality: whatsoever helps Communism is good, whatsoever hinders it is evil. He who is not with me is against me. I suppose even a man bearing the ancient Celtic name of O'Reilly has a right to imagine any land held in the grip of Soviet Imperialism to be paradise. But if Bill during the past decade had not been so busy meditating on his earthly paradise, as a watersider he could not have failed to notice the arrival in this country of such large numbers of refugees who had escaped from his own paradise. And who are these people? The big capitalists who had been exploiting the workers, and from whom the Soviet forces had liberated them? Oh, no. They are ordinary working people like Bill O'Reilly, people for whom the big American capitalist cares little, but for whom the big Soviet imperialists care less. They

could open Bill's eyes for him, if he could persuade them to talk; but they cannot believe that Soviet agents are not still at their elbows.

TOM COUSINS (Wellington).

THE WOMAN IN THE CAVE

Sir,—Your editorial of August 2 aroused certain thoughts in my mind. What is "normal" experience? Surely the normal people are the ones who approach most closely to fulfilling the purpose for which man was created. "Normal" should not be confused with "average." The average at present would appear to be abnormal, as you in your remarks show you are aware. It is when our "censoring minds" control our actions that we are normal. Was the case cited not just a result of the refusal to listen to the censoring mind?

Perhaps a gaol sentence is not the answer to such problems, yet the time has surely come when we must realise that such occurrences are more often than not the consequences of wrong thinking and wrong acting on behalf of the person concerned and could be controlled by them. They are not the innocent victims of abnormalities visited on them by their Creator, but the victims of their own thoughts and actions and of the society around them.

Do we not see these results all about us? It is only a step further from the "memories which would cause shame and embarrassment" to the woman in the cave and the abnormal practices of today such as obscene letters, the much publicised juvenile delinquency and the bodgies and widgeys reputed to take the law into their own hands.

ONLOOKER (Hastings).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Guy Powell (Dunedin): Sorry, too long, and other correspondents have covered much of the same ground.

Pipebandsman (Dunedin): Thanks. It is hoped by various means to set a higher and more consistent standard in studio broadcasts and to make better use of recordings. But please note that performances by the overseas bands you mention can only be broadcast if they have been recorded, either commercially or by the BBC.

Ardent Listener (Christchurch): (1) The line used in networking that series is not available earlier. If it were, the programme would not be placed before 9. Your statement about the habits of "most of the older age group" is as likely as not to be contradicted by the next generaliser. (2) The Sunday afternoon sequence will be studied whenever a new variety series is to be begun. (3) The suggestion about "escapes" from poetry is impracticable, since (in spite of overlaps) the reception fields of the four stations are different. (4) Sometimes all right; sometimes all wrong, because A, which will follow X happily, is out of place before it. So we'll see.

Ad Captandum Vulgus (Christchurch): Aren't you a little severe? If cuts were necessary, they were replaced by Highlight entries. The programme for August 19 was included among the Highlights. On August 20 there was nothing to interest you. "Jazz at the Savoy" was in the programmes for August 21. On August 22 the BBC Jazz Club was highlighted. And there was a highlight on August 24. Replays of programmes reviewed in "First Hearings in Jazz" are now listed at the end of the article each fortnight. The trouble with the sort of liveliness you ask for is that it so often goes with inaccuracy. But thanks for your good (in parts) opinion.

