

## THE MYSTERIOUS UNIVERSE

Sir,—Listening to the BBC talks on the nature of the universe as postulated by Fred Hoyle and some others, one is not at all convinced that there is any more in these assumptions than in any other "Anti-God" evolutionary theory. In fact, they are as empty of confirmation as "the holes in the Milky Way" referred to. Mr. Hoyle's conclusion that "human intelligences are powerful enough to penetrate deeply into the evolution of this quite incredible universe," combined with his admission that "we still have not the slightest clue to our own fate," seems meaningless to me. My belief is that the signal failure by the evolutionary school of thought in producing any documented evidence supporting the "monkey origin" of God's highest creation, man, has turned their attention to the mighty universe as a field that would lend itself to the imaginations of man in his denial of the simple yet profound pronouncement found in *Genesis*. There is no hypothesis in this majestic pronouncement, appealing at once to the astronomer, scientist, poet, preacher and humble peasant as the revealed word of the Creator himself. No more fitting conclusion can be found than in the words of the Psalmist: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork."

A. STENBERG (Palmerston North).

Sir,—Man's conceit never fails to impress me; it is so boundless and wonderful—and wholly ludicrous. He is the magician par excellence, only he believes that his creations are actual realities. With each new advance in physical knowledge he proceeds to wrap round himself another fold of the garment of illusion.

He not only declares the existence of a creator but even describes its very essence and attributes. It is something either personal or impersonal, according to religious disposition or philosophic bent; his conceit demands that it be one or the other.

Even Bernard Shaw, whose thought was more objective than that of any man of his time, postulated a Life Force to give meaning to his own existence. He was thus no less gullible than the average man whose religious beliefs he despised and attacked. But in the race for other-world conceptions the clod and the intellectual must always remain equal because there can never be an occupant in the judge's box.

Man will not face up to the cold fact that his subjective worlds are firmly based on physical knowledge which in turn, in the last analysis, is grounded in sensation. Of the nature of the external world he can never have the slightest inkling. Outside and beyond the affairs of man his subjective theories have no correspondence, relevancy or meaning.

Mercifully, man goes into oblivion full of the conceits, illusions and delusions that vex and console and fortify him during this transient life.

GORDON R. BEYNON (Auckland).

Sir,—“Ex Nihil” accuses you of a materialistic bias in a letter from him which discloses beyond measure a bias in the opposite direction. How can the dreams of a thinker beyond the days of science compare with the facts disclosed by the photographic plate from the modern telescope? In the days of Thomas Aquinas, whom he mentions, the thinkers of his quality were burning to death other thinkers of a slightly

# LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

different kind. Surely a little reason (rationalism, if you like) is better than such unreason, admired by “Ex Nihil.”  
J. G. HADDOW (Auckland).

## BROADCAST PLAYS

Sir,—As one of many listeners who prefer plays to musical programmes, I am concerned to notice during recent months an almost complete absence of BBC play productions. While the improvement in the work of the NZBS players is encouraging, their efforts in the direction of character plays such as Jacobs's, and fantasies of the type of *October Night*, show clearly that they have a long way to go, in order to reach overseas standards.

One hears that you are very averse to publishing anything approaching criticism of radio programmes. May I suggest that, as you represent the sole means of exchange of views between a host of listeners, this policy should be reviewed?  
W.B.B. (Auckland).

(One hears many things that are not true.—Ed.)

## PETER LLEWELLYN'S TALKS

Sir,—I would like to say how much we have enjoyed Peter Llewellyn's talks. They were entertaining, witty, critical and good-humoured. Far from resenting the criticism, we welcome it and agree wholeheartedly.

We were much amused with “George is all right, but —.” I heard a group of people discussing this talk. Some of the women present were indignant, but quite a few admitted that Mr. Llewellyn was right. Women *did* complain about their husbands—were, in fact, disloyal. Two of the women added that they were sure that their husbands would not talk about them. One bachelor was convulsed with laughter and said that the men where he was working talked so much about their wives that it had put him off marriage for life. It would be interesting to hear what Peter Llewellyn thinks about that. Anyway, we do hope we shall hear more of these talks.

MRS. GEORGE IS ALL RIGHT,  
BUT — (Kumeu).

## THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY

Sir,—The abandonment of the Nixon talks surely exhibits ignorant and impertinent partisanship carried to absurdity. Were the high-handed decision not so belated and so serious, the incident would be merely pathetic, perhaps ludicrous.

Mr. Nixon's talks were (a) scientific; facts were widely selected, balanced, examined, and dispassionately presented; (b) lucid; the speaking voice, vocabulary, diction and arrangement captured interest and were of a refreshingly high order; (c) significant—never were such considerations more so; (d) moral; surely the amorality and escapists have ample opportunity for expression in “cultural” and common media. Are we not weary of selfish and imposing triviality?

It would be interesting to know who is pleased by the cancellation. To whom was embarrassment caused? Did the sincerity of the material and its presentation arouse consciences, with resultant angry protest?

D. MCCLURE (Auckland).

Sir,—I should like to add my protest to those of your previous correspondents at the curtailment of A. J. Nixon's splendid talks on the Family and Society. It

is sadly ironic that, at a time when more or less veiled attacks on the family are frequent, a voice raised in its defence should be silenced through the well-meaning but misguided zeal of an organisation pledged to support it. It is difficult to see to what these women took exception. Do they consider the family not a suitable subject for radio discussion? Yet it is a constant subject for women's session discussion panels, usually with far less scientific objectivity and clear thinking than Mr. Nixon brought to the problem. It is to be hoped that the ban will be lifted and this most excellent series heard from all centres—it is too good to be heard from one station only.

JOYCE REID (Auckland).

## RETURN OF EB AND ZEB

Sir,—Even the emergence of the Pink and White Terraces could not afford me more gratification than the recent throwing up of “Eb and Zeb” at Rotorua. These country storekeepers and Hector Q. Smith's tall yarns gave us genuine fun before the war, and I hope the welcome eruption at Rotorua will mark a step towards restoring some of the pre-war features of our radio.

Is it possible that Frank Watanabe the houseboy, came through the war without mishap and has now realised that his Japanese leaders were very bad wicked men and that his friends the Hon. Archie and Hipplewater, Epstein and Murphy are ready to welcome him back into the fold? Even, that disagreeable cuss Scudder could not upset the harmony if the party coalesce again and give us more of their adventures over the air in New Zealand.

B.M. (Oamaru).

## CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

Sir,—After reading Frederick Page's interesting article, “New Music in London,” in your issue of July 6, I am wondering just where he stands on the subject of modern composition. Has he any definite views about the matter, or does he merely “sit on the fence”?

The question is both pertinent and important. It is pertinent, first, because in his article there are obviously some inconsistencies and contradictions—either expressed or implied—and secondly because of the fact that Mr. Page is currently engaged upon a series of broadcasts comprising the entire *Well-tempered Clavier* of J. S. Bach. This latter circumstance is comforting and reassuring, since it tends to allay whatever fears might otherwise be entertained concerning Mr. Page's musical beliefs.

The question is important because of the high position held by Mr. Page in the educational sphere of music in this country. As lecturer at Victoria College he cannot fail to wield powerful influence upon embryonic musical taste; consequently, his true attitude towards the preservation of law and order in harmonic creation becomes a paramount consideration.

Mr. Page rightly divides modern musical manifestations into “goodies” and “baddies,” though one may not altogether agree with his respective allocations. Bad music is so rampant today that it constitutes a dangerous menace

to artistic health—I allude to the type of concoction which violates every aesthetic canon and all the rules, written and unwritten, of harmony and musical syntax. This kind of composition is subversive in every sense of the term; under the pretence of establishing a novel and progressive idiom it actually sows the seeds of decay and aims at destruction of all the standards built up during nearly three centuries of musical growth.

The time has arrived, Sir, when genuine musicians and music lovers as a body should unite to face this peril that threatens the art they love, and take collective steps to combat it. As W. H. Hudson once wrote, the sense of the beautiful is God's greatest gift to the human soul, and the opportunity of passing that gift on to others is one of life's supremest privileges. Frederick Page's status in the musical community offers him that privilege, and as one who has the highest respect for his outstanding abilities, I urge him most earnestly to cast his vote against musical anarchy.

L. D. AUSTIN (Wellington).

(Abridged.—Ed.)

## GLASSES OF WINE

Sir,—The photograph of the leaders of *Twenty Questions* with liquor glasses in front of them would be to hundreds of householders, as it was to me, just disgusting. Who gets away with this sort of thing? It is quite possible that the leaders were not drinkers, but the idea given to the readers and especially to our young people is that they are. It is criminal in New Zealand to sell to those under 21, but is it not just as criminal to tempt the younger folk? We see it constantly in the movies, and in the U.S.A. in television. The liquor habit is such a dangerous habit to begin that those who have the welfare of the people at heart do everything to discourage the habit. *The Listener* is an interesting paper, and I am glad to see many of the good articles, but I get a shock when I see encouragement given to the vices that destroy a nation.

NEPHALIST (Palmerston North).

(“A man cannot make him laugh; but that's no marvel; he drinks no wine.”—Ed.)

## “CATCH THAT SPIDER”

Sir,—I wish to protest about the children's serial, *Catch That Spider*, at present running. Up to the present, the serials chosen have been reasonable and suitable for children, but *Catch That Spider* is definitely unsuitable, and was probably chosen by some person who has no children and who has never had to pacify children who awake in the night suffering from nightmares.

KAIKOHE MOTHER (Kaikohe).

## SILENT PRAYER

Sir,—“Back Blocker” is oppressed by the chiming of Big Ben which for a few seconds reminds us each week to pray for at least a period of sixty seconds. “Back Blocker” will find the words of that oldest of prayers, the Kyrie eleison (“Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy”), each repeated three times will find a rhythm in those jangling bells—also that to work is to pray.

ANOTHER BACK BLOCKER

(Atareg).