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"Pied Piper" Plays the Part of a Radio Pirate

Amusing Bubble of Bombast Blown by Christchurch Critic



IN the silly season some newspapers, particularly those addicted to sensation-mongering, exploit extraordinary ideas to fill their columns with what is fondly hoped to be "live copy." Evidently with some such objective one "Pied Piper," describing himself as "Music Critic" of the "Sun," a newspaper published in Christchurch, recently turned himself loose for the first time on radio broadcasting. Not being the proud possessor of a wireless set—not even a humble crystal, which we take to be a grave reflection alike upon the emolument derived from his exalted office and the critic's mental attitude to modern developments—"Pied Piper" borrowed a 5-valve set from a music dealer who had recently added to his activities a radio department. This, apparently, was quite easy, because there is rather more than a suspicion that the same dealer frequently and regularly supplies "Pied Piper" or his newspaper with gramophone records for the purpose of "review." Possibly, out of the fullness of his heart, on receiving a favourable "review," the dealer would generously allow the critic to retain the record, which, of course, if correct, adds definitely to the independent and disinterested nature of the critic's comments, not only on gramophone music, but in all allied fields, such as mere radio broadcasting.

EQUIPPED with this new 5-valve set, "Pied Piper" determinedly set out to critically analyse the programmes dispensed nightly by 3YA. He brought to the task that alert, discerning mind which had ever kept him in the forefront of modern

progressiveness—what a pity he had not learned years ago that there was such a thing as radio broadcasting and invested the few shillings necessary to instal even a crystal! It would have added so much to his general knowledge. Never mind, better late than never. He resolutely set himself to analyse those programmes in order to give to the waiting world his mature views on their suitability to the musical digestion of his fellow-citizens.

The joke of the Christchurch attack is that, according to our information, "Pied Piper" played the part of a pirate in prying into the programmes. . . He was not a licensed listener. He borrowed a set outside the terms of dealers' license issued to the firm concerned. In those circumstances he is liable, we believe, to prosecution. Will the Department please take the necessary action?

For five nights, hour after hour, he sat there listening, noting, criticising! What a strain on his mentality. Nevertheless, nobly he stuck to his task. He had a duty to perform. Those readers of his: How keen they were to know whether "Pied Piper" approved of this musical fare. It would not do to disappoint them. Fortunately, "Pied Piper" is gifted with a mind of extraordinary versatility—one of those lightning minds into which all evidence of sight and sound may be fed, to be readily sorted and summarised to permit the right

conclusion to flow in ordered sequence of majestic language from a ready pen. It took him but five nights to equip himself for discoursing brilliantly to those waiting thousands of "Sun" readers.

SHALL we glance at the conclusions of this wonderful mind? It is a dull world, my masters, and this joke is too good to be passed by without full appreciation.

This is what the wonderful mind of "Pied Piper" found in the five nights' intensive study of 3YA. First, like a generous soul, he admits that "a week's listening told me much, but by no means everything. . . . Most important, it has impressed upon my mind how powerful is the influence of radio on the musical life of the Dominion at a time when that life is most urgently in need of stimulation." How remarkable that this musical life should so require stimulation, since a little lower our friend commits himself to the statement: "It is a fact that the general standard of musical culture is higher in New Zealand than in Great Britain." Surely that is very satisfactory—why, then, the urgent need for stimulation? However, let that pass. "Pied Piper," with that irresponsible gaiety that is his inheritance, presses gaily on with his task. "If I criticise," he says, "it is merely because the work could be made so much more effective, more stimulating. . . . Why should the New Zealand public be denied the opportunity of hearing works that are worthy of it?" Why, indeed? But our friend, in spite of his acclaimed high standard, thinks it well to add, "If the appreciation of these
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