

## Pirate Critic

(Continued from front page.)

(classical) works is not already there, it can soon be stirred." Evidently, then, our musical standard is not quite so high as claimed. So our musical friend gently advances the old idea that, through our broadcast programmes, the listening public should be "educated" to a higher appreciation of classical music.

If our little "Pied Piper" friend had only a little more experience of listening, he would have been familiar with the various wars on this subject that have been waged during the past few years. He would have learned how keen the public is to be "educated" by highbrow music; how, for instance, it revelled in the performance of the famous trio from 2YA, and how rarely is any complaint made as to programmes being too classical and too highbrow. Had that experience been available to the all-comprehending mind of this critic, he would, we imagine, have been less childish and didactic in his references to classical music. With that mental complacency which is the outstanding characteristic of so many musical folk, the "Pied Piper" pipes to this effect—as though he alone had knowledge of classical music and it was his divine mission to raise the common herd to enjoyment of these fields of Elysian delight: "The public is satisfied

with whatever music it hears simply because . . . it has never demanded the opportunity of hearing anything better." Could anything be more futile? "Would to God it were" we hear the programme organiser say on this point.

HOWEVER, the "Piper" gives us the assurance "that there is no music less dull than the music of the classics." How cheerful! Seriously, though, the "Piper's" pipings need not be traversed in undue detail. On his own confession of his inadequate training of but five nights' listening, he cannot expect experienced listeners to take seriously his recommendations. Briefly, however, those recommendations are: (1) More classical music; (2) better artists; (3) better gramophone records; (4) "absolute control of the musical programmes to be in the hands of a capable body of musicians."

Neither the singular unoriginality of these views nor the logic displayed in his writings entitle "Pied Piper" to much consideration or respect. For instance, this is an example of his reasoning power: "This week was selected at random. It may be safely assumed, therefore, that it is typical of the year, and similarly that Christchurch programmes are typical of all those broadcast from other centres." On this reasoning "Pied Piper," on reaching Wellington and enjoying five days of our recent southerly weather, would

"safely assume that it is typical of the year, and, similarly, that Wellington weather is typical of that prevailing in other centres." There is no ground in logic for reasoning from the particular to the general. On the contrary, all logicians emphasise that such a step is dangerous, and that general assumptions can be made only with a backing of very wide general knowledge. "Pied Piper" may be a musician; he is certainly not a logician.

On major points an adequate reply to "Pied Piper" was made in the columns of the Christchurch "Sun" by Mr. A. R. Harris, General Manager of the Radio Broadcasting Company, and this review may fitly be concluded by quoting those points in their due place. As to the fourth suggestion that a capable body of musicians should be entrusted with the absolute control of the musical programmes of this Dominion, we can only say, "God defend New Zealand!" Trained musicians vary in their likes and dislikes more than most people, and the method proposed of turning musicians loose to effect the musical education of the harmless listener would not be welcomed by the listener himself.

## Points in Reply

POINTS from replies made by Mr. A. R. Harris to "Pied Piper" may be briefly summarised as follows: Mr. Harris stated that "Pied Piper" had a wrong conception of the broadcast service. The primary object of that service was to organise and broadcast that which was available, having regard to the general desirability and acceptability of the material to be broadcast, as well as the practicability of putting it over the air. Broadcasting had opened up an entirely new channel of service, and its objects would best be served by restricting it to that service. The company were neither parvenus nor anarchists, but orthodox enough to believe that programmes should follow modern ideas and current events. Instead of endeavouring to educate the public's musical taste, it was obviously more sound to leave this to the musical profession and educational institutions, and to co-operate with them. If they were to concentrate on educating the public, they would not be functioning as a broadcast service, and would be diverting or stifling interests that could be widened in other directions. If, on the other hand, the Broadcasting Company made available, as far as it was practicable to do so, that which was already available to a limited number, such as broadcasts of classical or operatic music, Shakespearean plays, concerts by amateur organisations, and other public functions or heavy or light entertainment, sporting events, lectures to the farming community or church services, it gave variety, and, under proper regulation, increased diversity of interest, tending, not only to stabilise, but also to establish national consciousness. This was not to interfere with studio concerts of high-class music, but there was a sameness about them from which it was impossible to escape.

On the suggestion that the company should employ certain artists nominated by "Pied Piper," Mr. Harris stated that the majority of these had been broadcast. Of the remainder, some had been offered engagements, but had not been available, and, in one particular case, the person concerned had

only recently been available, and a contract was made before "Pied Piper's" statement was written. The company was keeping in touch with all available talent in all centres.

As to gramophone records, on which point "Pied Piper" had stated the company did not make the best selection for broadcasting them immediately they were issued, Mr. Harris pointed out that the use of gramophone records was limited to 25 per cent. of programme time. The company did receive samples of the whole of the recordings imported to New Zealand, and these were competently reviewed and those suitable broadcast at all stations immediately, either during the dinner, evening or dance sessions. The company used sometimes up to 2,500 records per month. If "Pied Piper" had checked up the facts prior to making his statement, he would have had to listen in, not only to the one station, but to all four stations simultaneously, for from six to seven hours per day, and sometimes up to ten or twelve hours per day, in order to ascertain what was broadcast. On this point it was commented that "Pied Piper" might enjoy a number of records presented to him in return for a boost criticism of the classical and operatic numbers, and, in his articles, might see fit even to advertise the radio set lent him and the concern supplying him with that particular set; but, in doing this at the expense of the Broadcasting Company's programmes he needed to be sure that he was not allowing a personal interest and prejudice to distract him from taking a wider view of the broadcasting service. The attack by "Pied Piper" was unreasonable in that he apparently expected to listen in for one week and get a plethora of classical and operatic music to suit his own particular taste. Because he did not get that he attacked the broadcast service through the columns of his paper, which was not a practice that would commend itself to listeners who were paying for the service they were getting, and who appreciated the definite advance that had consistently been made in the service supplied over recent years.

It only remains to be added that Mr. Harris's reply to "Pied Piper" was materially curtailed by the "Sun," and only partly published.

## A Broadcasting Litany

THE following broadcasting litany was composed by a correspondent of "Wireless Weekly":—

From mezzo-sopranos who sing "Land of Hope and Glory."

From male elocutionists who reproduce "The Green Fly on the Little Yellow Dog."

From female elocutionists who emit "Twas only a Red, Red Rose."

From baritones who sing "The Floral Dance."

From philosophers who laugh at their own alleged humour.

From the following gramophone records, "The Wembley Tattoo," "In a Clock Store," and "The Whistler and His Dog."

From clergymen who are aware (all too aware) of their unseen audience.

From "Silver Threads Among the Gold" in any or whatever form whatsoever played, hummed, or only mentioned.—

Good Lord, deliver us.

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