

he did. It was a far cry from those days of penury to the recent past, when he was wont to inhabit hotel suites full of Easter tulips and command fees that, in his youth, would seem boundless wealth. Chaliapin was a great singer, an incomparable actor, the master of make-up, a fine thinker, and an able writer. For him to pass away at the by no means advanced age of 65 is a great loss to the world of music.

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of airing even the mildest opinion. For him to reply: "But, my dear fellow, it simply isn't done," gets us nowhere. This stand-off attitude smacks of laziness.

Among other letters that appeared during the period under review were a number wherein listeners wrangled among themselves and/or dealt with matters of not strictly radio interest. These were not taken into account. There is a theory that the correspondence columns of the Press may be likened unto Hyde Park in London, where cranks and fanatics blow off steam to their hearts' content. I don't think really many cranky letters find their way into print. In the "Record" file I read practically none, though that may have been a tribute to the sub-editor. Here, if I might make bold to suggest, is an instance where the pen is really mightier than the Hyde Park "sword." Nobody can be exact as to what actually constitutes the average New Zealand listener. And when we really do discover him we must not too hastily conclude that he is an ungrateful grumbler.

A public service so vast, far-reaching and so intimate as radio is certain to draw adverse criticism of all degrees and kinds. But the fact remains that the postbag is no certain way of deciding which are popular and which are unpopular items.

The writer of letters to the "Record" is no more representative than he is unrepresentative. Are not mostly all these correspondents just a little different in a way from their fellows? Without going so far as to dub them abnormal, it's safe to say they have just that something about them that distinguishes them from the general run of their neighbours. And in conclusion, while the demonstrable benefits of all this reader correspondence may be hard to produce, it would be a mistake to close the columns of the Press to those who had either a brickbat or a bouquet to hurl at our radio services. Shutting out letters would simply arouse suspicion and give rumour, that "blunt monster with uncounted heads," undeserved encouragement. The listener one meets on bus, tram, ferry, howling green or at the club has his likes and dislikes, and will suffer no hindrance in expressing his opinions freely and with spirit. The New Zealander (as becomes a true Briton) delights in a little grumble, but he is not slow to bestow even generous praise where he feels it is deserved. Writing to the papers, however, is a horse of another colour—he usually leaves it to the other fellow—and usually it falls to the lot of "Mr. Anon." A pity. A great pity. Perhaps someone should establish a "Times" for ~~our~~ retired colonels.

"Queer Street," by John Donald Kelly, was the title of the play presented from 4YA studios last Monday night. The production this time was in the hands of Gordon Niven, and was another of the sketchy type of plays which have been 4YA's mainstay in this class of entertainment recently. The story was concerned with a successful burglar whose daughter became most inconsiderately engaged to a policeman. Father was not going to let this stop his nocturnal activities, and he carried on. Some amusement was introduced when the burglar and his pal outlined to the policeman a plan of their activities on a forthcoming "job," only they converted the plan into a plumbing work. On the night in question the burglars were disturbed by the police but the one who caught it in the neck was the daughter's policeman. For—stop me if you guess the rest—he was but another burglar and he was using the brains of the girl's father to put him on the good things. It wasn't a particularly bright play by any means, and the manner in which the players handled it did not make it any the brighter. Fortunately it lasted only 15 minutes.



I am quite sure it is not good tactics in a radio talk to speak a phrase like "the penitent king's hesitant immobility." There would be nothing wrong with it in written work, but in spoken work it is too much for the average human ear to ask the average human brain to cope with.

DON'T OVERTAX OUR POOR EARS. before the next words follow hot on its tracks. This is my main complaint against an otherwise first-rate talk in the NBS "Whirligig of Time" talk on "The French Revolution," by David Hall. I liked a lot of things about this talk. I liked the way he revived those old corpses by pleasantly referring to them in good, straightforward modern terms. It cheered me when he spoke of poor, thick-headed Louis the Sixteenth, and when he spoke of Louis the Fourteenth as a capable megalomaniac I was able to find modern parallels quite easily. Yes, Mr. Hall, I liked your talk, though you rather lost the thread of the narrative toward the end and became a bit diffuse; but I do think you should remember you are not writing a good essay. You are giving a talk.



Gradually, a young Christchurch pianist, Mr. Sefton Daly, a devout disciple of rhythm, has been improving his technique. I heard him four or five years ago; I heard him again more recently at a social gathering, holding a party crowd spell-bound. Then, the other night from 3YA, he gave listeners a number of his own compositions. This improvement was remarkable. Mr. Daly, although not possessing the brilliance of the late Raie da Costa—he rarely attempts particularly rapid work, preferring a slower melodic rhythm—proved himself, to my mind, a worthy contemporary of

RHYTHM IS IN HIS FINGERS.

some of the great English and American rhythm exponents. His work was clean, excellently modulated and full of expression. This was his last broadcast before leaving for Australia. He has a visit to England in view.

Slow and deliberate, the talk on Barcelona—chief manufacturing centre of Spain and the target of Franco's Italian and German-manufactured bombs—by the Rev. W. S. Rollings, from 2YA last week, was well worth the attention of every listener with more interest in international affairs than a desire to know the latest in "swing" from the United States. He told listeners the facts about Barcelona and its Catalan inhabitants in such a soft smooth way that these same hard facts became easily digested mental food. It was easy to learn from him that Barcelona had one third of the maritime trade of Spain on its quays, that the city had a population equal to that of all New Zealand and that the Catalans were mainly "workers" fiercely resentful of Fascist rule. Why was it so easy? That is a secret that even good radio talkers can't themselves tell you. It just happens that it is so.

THEY CAN'T TELL US WHY.

Comparable with the "Yes, We Have No Bananas" craze and the more recent musical epidemic which made the music go round and around, is the present popularity of the number "You Will Remember," from the film "Maytime." Sung first with gusto and feeling by Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald, it has since been repeated an unconscionable number of times by them and other vocalists from both the National and the Commercial stations. We certainly will remember. I think I can say with very little exaggeration that in the past few weeks there has been hardly a station in the country which hasn't rewarded my tuning-in with a rendering of this number at some stage of the programme. A very charming number in itself, but apt to become a little annoying when programme organisers forget the old Greek motto, "Nothing in excess."



For some time past, station 4YO has included in its Monday night broadcasts the recorded feature "Snapshots." In this feature the musical items are usually heralded by an anecdote. Sometimes the connection—for apparently there is always meant to be a connection—may be seen easily, but those occasions are few and far between. The jokes are hastily and unskillfully "put across," and quite often the point of them is lost in the so-called "snappy" dialogue that serves as a breather between items. Usually NBS recorded presentations have some merit, but there isn't very much to be found in "Snapshots." The music without the jokes would provide better fare.

SNAPSHOTS NOT SO SNAPPY.