

by the Derwent," from 4YA last Monday in a strictly non-critical frame of mind. I had begun

NOT MUCH ROOM FOR SENTIMENT. to wonder if listening critically had destroyed my appreciation of recent plays. I haven't solved the problem yet, because, whether or not it was because of my attitude, I found the play enjoyable. It was sketchy, being broken up into six sequences, spread over the years 1913-1937, but the sketches seemed to hang together quite well. The theme was idealistic, and really concerned one man's intense desires for a grand and glorious peace, his first hopes being bitterly crushed when the war broke out. After the war he found things no better, for, as we all know, the last 20 years have not been exactly a peaceful peace. The story switched from Tasmania to England and back to Tasmania, where the idealist found his peace by the Derwent River in company with a pre-war love. I liked the sentiment, I liked the way it was handled, and I certainly did like the voice of the man taking the part of Leonard Henderson, the idealist. Possibly all these likes came about because I had made up my mind not to be critical. I don't know. I do know that other people I've spoken to considered the play sentimental rubbish. I suspect the idealistic theme did not appeal; there isn't much place for sentiment and idealism in the world to-day.

★

All too often in the "concert halls" of New Zealand one finds a stock piano that tonally is far from up to the mark. The keys are hammered by all and sundry, and, although there is no lack of tuning ex-

APPALLING PIANOS IN CONCERT HALLS. perts, their services are called upon only for special occasions. And so when

Miss Cara Hall, winner of the 1937 Royal Academy of Music scholarship, and a welcome performer over the YA stations, presented a pianoforte recital in the Jellicoe Hall, Christchurch, the other night, she was very much "up against it." But the very fact that she had to play on a poor piano redounded to her credit. From this instrument she drew tonal qualities that were amazing. Radio listeners know already what Miss Hall can do

(Continued from previous page.)

on the body work of her car.

But in no case has an interviewer attempted the really personal touch. It is "human interest" that gets the public. Listeners want to know what the man (or woman) eats, drinks, the type of house he lives in, what he does with his spare time, the books he reads, and the music that he enjoys. Women, especially, love this kind of thing. And women make up a great bulk of the listening public.

Speaking from experience, I would say to the would-be radio reporter in New Zealand: Get you man to confess that he has low-brow tastes and your fan-mail will increase ten-fold. When interviewing the "great," however cynically you may view the job, ask him to own up to his weak points. That kind of thing does not dorp a man from his pedestal to the floor; it makes him human.

with a piano in first-class condition. Brahms, Bach, Schumann and some modern arrangements were on her programme, which was altogether delightful!

✱

Week in, week out, year in, year out, J. T. Paul sits himself before 4YA's microphone and proceeds to discourse for 20 minutes on "World Affairs." Mr. Paul has a pleasant, unhurried

HE MUST BE A STUDIOUS MAN.

style of speaking, yet he always carries conviction, and seems to be an unquestioned authority on world affairs. It doesn't matter what happens in Europe or elsewhere; no matter how confusing and conflicting cable messages may be, Mr. Paul quietly elucidates things for the listener. I admire Mr. Paul and his dissertations, but I admire him most of all in those quiet weeks when the most exciting cable news is a Hollywood romance; for, unperturbed, Mr. Paul delivers something instructive on the domestic affairs of European countries. I don't know, of course, but I strongly suspect Mr. Paul eats his meals with encyclopedias and cables propped all about him, and spends half his time with his head wrapped in wet cloths and drinking caffeine and aspirins as he struggles to make order out of chaos and present facts in such a manner that even the dullest of listeners can fully understand "World Affairs."

★

Time and time again critics have castigated the commercial stations for their "low-brow" presentations. After all, the very term means only a flick of the lines that grace or mar the forehead of the

OFF-SETTING THE LOWBROW

average human being. That it has its high-brow moments more frequently than the critics know, has been demonstrated recently by 3ZB. Granted, this station goes in for a good deal of dramatisation, but it enters that field with a due sense of responsibility and the fitness of things. There has been a very noticeable improvement lately, both in the choice of music, as a background for serious matters, and in the writing of script which, to-day, is excellent. When this station sets itself out to do a dramatised job, it can be relied upon to turn out a really artistic effort, in spite of its youthfulness on the air.

★

What I want to know is: Why do NBS announcers attempt to thrust upon listeners the strictly correct pronunciation of Maori words when referring to places or to steamers.

JUST TO START AN ARGUMENT. It's being pedantic, to say the least.

Authorities generally agree that what common usage decrees is correct. Why should NBS announcers say what is very nearly Mahono, when everybody else says Maheno, with emphasis on the "he." Wakari, in Dunedin, is Wa-karry to everybody excepting the 4YA announcers who make it Wa-ka-ri. No doubt the latter is more strictly correct in Maori, but ninety-nine per

cent. of Maori names are uttered in an Anglicised form, and that Anglicised form should be good enough for announcers. I have even known people wonder just what place is meant because an unfamiliar pronunciation had made it sound like something else. I agree it is a matter for argument, yet I insist that common usage makes a place-name correct. Not that NBS announcers are consistent. Everyone says Timaru with emphasis on the "Tim," but I haven't yet heard an NBS announcer say Tee-ma-ru, which should be more nearly correct.

Occasionally, very occasionally, Mr. Gil Dech, conductor of 3YA Orchestra, appears nowadays in public, for his duties keep him busy at the studio. Recently, however, he was guest

HAS SET THE CITY BY THE EARS conductor for the Christchurch Laurian Club. Undoubtedly he and his orchestra set

Christchurch by the ears, for the playing was of the finest heard here for many years. Mr. Dech, as well as being a fine musician, is a man of very genial personality and his orchestra supports him to a man. Several of the members were with him at the Laurian Club's recital, which was all to the good for the club.

✱

Announcers at 4ZB have been pilloried lately by newspaper correspondents objecting to the too familiar manner of making announcements. The protests have been rather em-

PLEASE, NOT BY THEIR CHRISTIAN NAMES. phatic, but it is a question whether they are fully de-

served. NBS announcers are too formal and unbending in their manner of speech, and there is room to-day for brighter announcing. NCBS announcers provide this, but admittedly, there are times when they do go too far. Lately, in announcing election meetings candidates have been freely referred to by their Christian names, and such broadcasting familiarity does jar a little. Freedom in announcing is welcome, but, please, 4ZB, do not overdo it.

Listeners who liked the traditional Maori numbers given from 1YA by Rangī and Hine early last week will be interested to know that these two fine harmonisers are not Maoris, but

MAORI SINGERS WHO ARE PAKEHAS. pakehas. You would never tell it, because they have the correct Maori in-

tonation, and present their songs in the proper Maori style. These two young ladies some time ago made a tour of the North Auckland province and collected all their material on the spot from the kiangas. So fine was their broadcast that many people telephoned the station to ask who the Maori singers were. One man, obviously a Maori, telephoned, "What the name of these girls?" Knowing that the duo were supposed to be anonymous the operator stalled and said he was unable to find out at the moment. "Orright," said the Maori at the other end of the phone, "but I think I know them." As a fact he did not know the singers. But he had heard the same songs sung by maidens in his own pa.