

Pessimists and Pianos

(Continued from page 1.)

discordant. A member of a choir singing these new compositions feels, in fact, something like an "atmospheric effect," and he is discouraged. . . .

Chamber music is very popular in England at present. Because it requires only a limited number of performers, it broadcasts clearly, and for the same reason amateur musicians find it a most acceptable and easy way of playing together. In England some forty or fifty years ago many little villages had their own orchestras of sorts, which would perform at fetes, public functions, and commonly during church services. It was an excellent idea, but unfortunately, with the increase in church organs, they died out. I hope they may be revived.

Yes, taken generally, I have noticed a slight decrease in the number of pupils sitting for music examinations this year. This, however, is no doubt due to the present financial depression, and not to the influx of mechanical music. The decrease, also, is almost confined to those who have just commenced learning—usually children of seven or eight years of age. It is quite understandable that parents feel compelled at present to postpone the child's musical studies. After all, music is a luxury, and in times of financial stress luxuries are bound to go by the board.

When broadcasting first became popular in England, home learning did decrease for a while, but was soon revived. Boys especially were greatly taken up with their new hobby, that

of building receiving sets, and for a while they lost all interest in their musical instruments. It was not as if they cared for what they heard. They didn't. The fact that they had succeeded in hearing New York, for instance, on a home-made set was what mainly interested them.

But all this was just a phase. The novelty soon wore off. Amateur playing is now immensely popular in England, and is getting a bigger hold than ever. Institutions such as the Royal Schools and Trinity College of Music are each year turning out more and more qualified musicians, and good musicians at that. I remember a few years ago it was sometimes difficult

to find a good horn player. Now there are plenty of them.

Wind bands, too, have improved wonderfully. At one time a bandsman was not necessarily a musician in the true sense of the word. Now he usually is. More often than not it is found that over half the personnel of a good military band can play both a wind and a stringed instrument.

Singers? Well, it is on this subject that I would like to offer a criticism. Nowadays singers seem to consider that their performance is not complete unless they introduce a wobble into their songs. I don't refer to New Zealand vocalists in particular—if anything, they are slightly less addicted to the habit than those of other countries. It is very common in England, where they should know better. Frequently, singers don't sing in phrases, but in single notes, and these hit the unfortunate listener in a series of gusts.

If one heard the melody, and were asked to write it down, it would be almost impossible to do so with confidence. In places it would probably be a whole semitone out. The first thing any singer should learn is to have complete control of his, or her, lungs. Once they have done this, they seem to disregard it completely, and introduce an unstable wobble into everything. They probably think it is emotion, whereas, of course, it is instability. Perhaps also they think it sounds professional. Well, so it does—professionals do it also. But it is none the less regrettable.

Another common fault among singers is that of word exaggeration, or of emphasising syllables that should not be emphasised. I remember listening to a lady singer over the wireless when I was up north recently. She was singing "Where the Bee Sucks," and sing-

ing it well, but she would accent wrong syllables in certain words. It was probably done for the sake of clarity, but, for myself at least, the song was ruined. . . .

Our Spelling Bee

Interest in America

FROM the New Zealand agents of Stewart-Warner Radio (Hope Gibbons Ltd.) we have received an interesting piece of news. Our spelling bee has received considerable publicity in the United States. It appears that when Mr. Spring selected a Stewart-Warner radio as his prize for winning the competition the news was communicated to the American manufacturers, who thought fit to make the announcement public. The last mail brought several publications in which the news appeared. One of these read:—

"Being a good speller brought no such reward in olden times as it does now. When great-grandfather spelled down his rival in the little log schoolhouse the prize, like as not, was a dictionary.

"But, recently, prowess in orthography won for Philip H. Spring, of Wellington, New Zealand, not Noah Webster's book of words, but a complete library of home entertainment—a Stewart-Warner radio, which will bring to his fireside volumes of the world's best music, opera, comedy, drama, sports and world events.

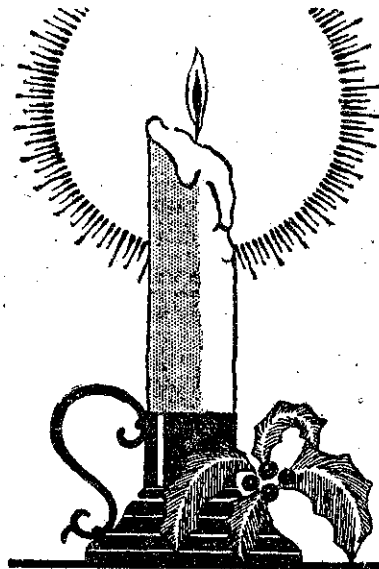
"Mr. Spring won the spelling contest conducted by the 'Radio Record,' the official organ of New Zealand's broadcasting system, and his letter to Hope Gibbons Ltd., distributors for the Stewart-Warner Corporation in Auckland and Wellington, explains how the 'Avon,' one of Stewart-Warner's new console models, came to be first prize.

"He says, in part: 'Winning the spelling bee competition entitled me to make a free choice of the best radio obtainable. After making exceedingly careful comparisons for tone, power, selectivity, and gramophone reproduction, I decided that yours was by far the best instrument.

"Being, too, a keen radio amateur and knowing something about commercial radios, I consider the Stewart-Warner one of the neatest and best set out chassis units I have seen. I look forward to many happy hours with my newly-acquired radio.'

"The Avon model chosen by Mr. Spring is a beautiful console of American walnut, strikingly embellished with actual wood carvings. A bold central arch, slightly depressed below the actual front surface, provides an area for the dignified embossed bronze escutcheon plate of the set and for the scrolled speaker grille. The latter is topped by a carved rosette typical of the Jacobean period. Equipped with the new Stewart-Warner screen-grid radio and dynamic reproducer built-in, it is an outstanding example of modern radio engineering.

"Mr. A. B. Gibbons, managing director of Hope Gibbons Ltd., New Zealand distributors for Stewart-Warner, writes: 'Naturally we are very proud that Mr. Spring chose a Stewart-Warner and we are confident that the performance of the 'Avon' will more than justify his enthusiastic praise.'



We Must Apologise!

"Radio's Clearest Voice" will Not be Heard as Soon as We Expected

We are sorry to disappoint the Radio public, but, owing to the enormous success of the NEW SET in the domestic market, the Factory finds it impossible to keep up to date with its export orders.

The Greatest Radio in All History
will be Announced Early in February

---WAIT FOR IT!---