

Name Withheld 4

Dear Sirs, I have been a listener since the early 50's and World Service listener since 1959. I used to live near Chelmsford and have retained contact with some ex-Marconi employees. Some Chelmsford radioamateurs before 1920 broadcasted train timetables, and alterations to same; this was eventually deemed tedious so Nellie Melba and a base-baritone, Lauritz Melchior, were invited to liven things up. The BBC developed out of all this - after a fight with the Post Office - to inform, entertain and educate. I think that humour every day is helpful indeed, even the odd bit of bad taste. Satire must not degenerate into mere hate-making. Good books and plays entertain, sure, but great authors educate us. We must not lose sight of that. Light music can lift the mood, sure; serious music needs serious attention, Bach's Lutheran masses differ from Beethoven's Catholic ones, and Mozart's concern for the problems women have with men cause one to be careful when asked 'Who is the best composer?' (For me the big 4 are Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert.) Above all, the BBC must guard its independence. I've heard folk from the USA saying that they've given up on Fox and even CNN but are relieved that the BBC's on line. Don't cramp your style!