INTRODUCTION.

After the absence for several years of a regular literary publication containing original work by students of this University we take great pleasure in presenting to you the first number of "Experiment", which we hope will serve this purpose.

Our intention is to publish both poetry and prose; and, as can be seen from the contents of this issue, we have drawn no barriers -- political, religious or otherwise -- save that the work has, in our opinion, literary merit. The Editors (The Committee of the Literary Society) offer no criticism of the material published, but constructive comment will be greatly appreciated and printed if felt to be of general interest.

We thank all contributors for their support but would point out that limitations of finance necessarily prohibited the inclusion of all contributions offered to the Editorial Committee. However, further consideration will be given to this material. While extremely gratified by the response from students the Committee notes with regret the absence of any work of a critical nature. We would therefore appreciate for future issues reviews of significant publications, (e.g. The Oxford Anthology of New Zealand Verse), analyses of literary trends in New Zealand and elsewhere, and other articles of general literary interest.

Victoria University has the proud tradition of having fostered many of New Zealand's leading poets and critics. With this publication we hope to assist in a revival of this tradition and we look forward to your future support in our endeavour.
THE CLASSICIST

A Dream Sequence.

The composer is seated at a dark oak table, oval in shape, receiving light from the high window over his right shoulder. With his left arm fully extended he would be just able to touch the last few treble notes of the clavier.

Recently the composer has been working through the afternoons. Those who have watched the composer working have been surprised by his speed and fluency; it is almost as if he were writing a letter. He may make many beginings but, once satisfied with his direction, the notes that come are inevitably right. Gifted with extraordinary auditory imagery he hears these notes without moving to the clavier, to play them. He writes a complete movement for the leading part, not stopping to fill in the accompaniment until later.

During winter these are quiet hours in Vienna, especially in the fashionable quarter where there is a fashionable time for drinking, for weddings, for funerals, and all occur every day. Perhaps because of the quietness the composer is more liable to notice sounds which do penetrate his room; normally these distractions would cancel each other out and he would not hear them.

Every afternoon there is one sound which does make him pause. The clavier vibrates very briefly in a dissonant way. Outside in the Rauhensteingasse a coach passes by. The steel tyres strike a sound from the cobbles which, on reaching a certain intensity, induce the clavier's soundboard to resonate. Although the effect is jarring, the original sound of the wheels is a pleasant one, of rich timbre - something to do with the springiness of the ashwood spokes, something to do with the rapid metronomic trot of horses, imposing set tempo.

The composer enjoys the purity, grace and precision of his afternoon street music. It makes him think of a blue steel axe ringing as it bites into sweet timber. He cannot be sure when he heard such a sound; but axemen have always gone into the forest between mountains striking pure bangles of sound from trees that have grown concentrically
noblter year by year, a pure sound of blue steel with the harmonic overtones of graceful timber, echoed by precisely-chiselled cliffs of stone. Here in the Rauhensteingasse, the sound of the passing coach is echoed by stone houses.

The coach has turned the corner and an intersecting wind curtails the sound. Its passing has been more than a momentary interruption, for the composer pushes slightly aside the sheets of manuscript on which he has been working. As he rises from the high-backed chair we see that he is rather shorter than most men; his cheeks are a fraction hollowed - maybe it is only the effect of a shadow - and the tight pressure of his lips manifests itself in the two creases - we had not noticed them before - delineated downwards from the corners of a remarkably expressive mouth. If we should meet his gaze we would be soothed by its steadiness; the eyes are those of a child, yet very old and very wise. Chronologically his age is 35.

The composer has crossed to the window where he draws aside the lace curtains and contemplates the empty street, just as he has done each other afternoon after the coach's passing. Although the coach is out of sight we know instinctively that its occupant is a woman. She is both beautiful and a stranger.

The composer has known many women, those of London, Paris and Vienna, who have made him an idol even whilst he was still a child. They were women who moved through palaces and halls with a friction of silk and with laughter which they juggled, ever so lightly, in their swan-like throats. And they tapped to music, though some few measures in arrears, with Japanese fans of fine cane and crisp rice paper.

So many people have loved the quiet child genius - how could he help impressing so many women?

If his perception of human nature had been misty, or his experiences of people vague, the ideal would have been less selective and thus more obtainable. But the same genius which allows him to handle fluently the intricate relationships of harmony and polyphony allows him to conceive the logical relationships in human behaviour. At the same time he feels baffled by the illogical features, the incon-
sistences of the people he meets; he can no more understand an illogical world than write a wrong note.

If Count so-and-so is tone deaf and hates music, why does he keep a kapellmeister with full orchestra and trimmings? Ostentation, of course. But even so he must be crazy! The composer recognises the sham immediately; others do not. They and the Count are happy in their illogical world.

Because he is a genius the composer is able to fashion his own world. In it he achieves a happiness which, in a few scribbled bars, is so intense that he can communicate it to the lady in the coach and to us.

Standing where we are, in the moonlight and the shadows cast by romantic biographers, we recognise instinctively again, how the absence of that passer-by will be the motive, potentially at least, of every andante written in that room above the Rauhensteingasse.

The composer has previously written music because he was commissioned to write it. A master in all fields - operatic, instrumental, ecclesiastic - he writes music neither on chance inspiration nor for posterity but because he is a musician. He will not usually compose a piece unless he is sure of the fee! He did once write songs for a young artist, but perhaps only for her voice.

The present work is also commissioned. Yet it will be addressed to someone quite different.

Already he has written of this aristocratic lady whom he has never seen........
"I can't describe what I have been feeling - a kind of emptiness, which hurts me dreadfully - a kind of longing which hurts me dreadfully, which never ceases, and which persists nay rather increases daily."

The composer stands beside the clavier, one hand resting on the polished top which is dulled by a fine layer of dust. The month is December, the year 1791 and the place, as we know, is Vienna. These details are even less important than the dust which the composer blows softly from his fingers, amused to see how lightly it falls. He resumes his
place at the dark oak table strewn with manuscript. Somehow he will try to answer, with all the purity, grace and precision that his own genius masters, these same qualities he hears when the beautiful stranger passes by each afternoon. In her eyes he will see the pure glimmer of blue steel, in her walk and stature the grace of ash boughs and in the sculpture of her limbs and features the precision of chiselled stone.

Later in that month of December snow is falling heavily. A coach turns into the Rauhensteingasse. It is the same one that has traversed the street so often this winter, causing that odd acoustic response from the composer's clavier. Today the sound is muffled by snow and ceases as the coach draws up at the entrance of the composer's apartment in that fashionable quarter of Vienna where there is a fashionable time for drinking, for weddings, for funerals, and all occur each day.

It is not an ordinary kind of coach. Through its long glass windows the lilies seem made of wax.

The aristocratic lady is nowhere in sight.

But four attendants, dressed soberly in black, climb the stairs with measured steps of propriety. Before they enter the shuttered room there is just time for us to slip across to the oak table where the sheets of manuscript have now been gathered into a single pile, the waxed paper showing a white rectangle in the near-darkness. It is just possible to make out the work is a requiem.

Of the beautiful stranger to whom it sings we know nothing, except that, like the composer, she is a classicist and that the touch of her hands is cool and forever.

GORDON CHALLIS
LOVE LYRICS.

1.

Sunday in the Park.

Are you watching love, can you feel
A sympathy for Sunday in the tutored trees.
See how they go, the lovers or a child in tow
Sleeveless in the sun to feed the swans.

Though the world brings candy to your mouth
You are no legend, white and mute as they.
You talk of cheating time, its hard to be gay
When from yourself you run away .......

So give what you can love, habit will bind me
Only the dance not the dancer will bind me.
Hear how my devil cries, "Get thee behind me."

Can you forgive me, that faithless I love you
Only as well as the times you allow me.
See how they go, those colour clothed children
Marching like conquerers with laurel in their hair.

While old men shuffle and shrink in the shade
Airing their youth again, "Listen" they say;
"We tell you that time is but a stranger
Who might if we stop him, ask us the way."

So give what you can love, habit will bind me
Only the song not the singer will bind me.
Hear how my devil cries, "Get thee behind me."
Mosaic.

Inspired by each others lips
On rented beds the lovers lie,
Exchanging tokens of their task
In kiss for kiss and sigh for sigh.
Flesh prevailing over all their wants
Night by night and lie by lie;
Faults are known but soon forgiven,
Softly sings a lullabye.

In retreat from dreams of Athens
The sensitive are left to die,
Musing on the marble terrace
Where cypruss flame and herons fly;
That history will repeat itself
When rivers of the soul burn dry,
Faults have grown but all's forgiven,
Softly sings a lullabye.

But my love when all infringes
On your young and startled eye,
No longer can the heart in dreaming
Mend the ache or pass it by;
And when I, traitor to my anger
Lick my wounds and long to lie.
Faults are sown not soon forgiven,
Softly sings a lullabye.
Again a Night Wind Breeding Sighs:

Again a night wind breeding sighs, hurries me
Past doorways dimmed to a midnight arbour,
Where two lovers in the same spiral chase
Carol their kiss from throat to throat.

A grievance in the shadows turns their eyes
My footfalls passing break their crimson tide
And leap between the spire of their limbs,
Night has no trusting order, they cannot hide.

The Fire Station clock beats twelve against the sky,
They reel into the dark while whispers hurry by.
For tense and teasing fingers other than their own
Grope at their bubbling wish and send them home.

P.G. BLAND
Life A Dream?

He who said:
Life was a dream,
Was wrong.
Life is a struggle.
There is idea versus vacuum,
Achievement against impotence,
Success and failure.
Reality fights imagination,
Sanity wrestles with mania,
Reason with impulse,
Logic with unrestrained emotion.
Yet,
While this vital conflict
Rages within the subconscious,
Outwardly there is calm.
And superficial fools
Like he who said
Life was a dream,
Call life a dream.
Dimmed lights,
Congested crowds move
Phantom - like.
Excitement fills the air.
Hushed talk, snuffed cigarettes -
Bodgies approach the prey.

Then suddenly:
Wailing tune, first soft,
Then swelling, trembling,
Suspected in suspending space,
Curling, sobbing, crying -
Intreating, begging,
Cajoling, commanding,

Sweet, tempestuous, tempting.

Drawn magic
First here, then there, then everywhere
Puppets in a trance,
Lips parted, eyes ablaze, chests panting,
Every fibre expectant
Float dancers forward.

RYTHM CHANGE!

Trumpets blaze; drumbeat tortures the air.
Saxophones phantom - fury howling,
Emotion eruption, physical craze.
Entwine limbs, Gordian knots,
Biological puzzles unfathomable.
Creation lost, unsavable, unpreserved.
Escaped unpleasantness ........
Snatched moments, space unhalting
Un man forgetfulness.
Search forgetfulness forgotten.
SOMETIMES THE HANDS OF CHILDREN.

Sometimes the hands of children -
Strangers' children
Clutching after smiles, so clumsy,
Shyly shielding eyes, new eyes,
Parting curtains, watching
- Have made me seem the stranger.

Sometimes these hands with laughter -
Ancient laughter
Mounting through the limbs they lathe
- Will map the bone's, deep bone's
Volcanic contours which
In red flesh-darkness they alone can read.

Always the hands of children,
Grown old quickly
Threaten, calmly now, that curled
Convulsive grasping of
Five furrows of the arid earth;
Threaten, tamely now, that splayed
Spreadeagled framing of
Four segments of the headlong sky.

GORDON CHALLIS.
CHRISTMAS DAY.

And they brought gifts
Materialism
Indifference
And beer.
Wholely being
Share this car
Four hundred pounds
With life bizarre
And travaille
In revulsion from the star.
Chased hard slobbities
Who fashion
Your frigid souls for cash
Not passion
Cock at two crew
Travaille Christ be born anew.
Here is keg beer
Mary New Year
You die shrilly
With four rounds drown
The little bastard remotely
Indifferently.

TREVOR KING.
FAIR WEATHER.

The truck came up the drive, the cans swaying and banging dully. The boy stood in the separator room watching his boss opening the paddock gate, then he walked quickly through the bails down the race towards the pig-sties.

The farmer looked up as the boy approached. "Then scowling, "You shifted that drum out like I asked you to, didn't you?" The boy hung his head, "I'm sorry," he said, "I forgot." "Forgot", jeered the man, and jerked the lid viciously from a can. The whey at the sudden suction slopped out into his boots. "You're a bastard aren't you?" his lips set, "Aren't you?" The boy grabbed a bucket and started to mix some pollard with the whey; his hands trembled so that some of the white meal fell on the ground.

The farmer jumped off the tray of the truck and walked up to the boy. "Look at me", he snarled, jerking the bent head up. Tears were in the boy's eyes. "What the hell are you blubbing at? I haven't touched you yet." The boy tried to turn his head, but the man jerked it back. "Don't we feed you well, work you decent hours, and pay you well?" Ah! Don't we? You're an ungrateful little bastard, aren't you?" He shook the boy. "The missus tells me you were arguing with her at tea last night."

"I wasn't arguing", protested the boy tearfully. "What did you say? You weren't arguing? I'll be the best judge of that. What did you say to her?"

The boy started to stammer, "She said I should have lived in her young days - the teachers then put the fear of God into useless things like me, and I said, if we fear we hate, And we are supposed to love God."

"You hate," the man spat. "You haven't got the guts to hate a mouse, have you?" Then the boy, with an air of strange pride - "No I haven't," he said.

The farmer pushed him against the sty fence. "Get along and feed the pigs, jump to it, and remember that I don't want to hear any more of your bloody nonsense." He swung
up on the truck again. The boy filled the trough and turned. "I'll leave," he said. "You can get someone else."

The man's shrewd eyes met those, tearful yet determined, of the boy. "I'll be well rid of you," he said, slipping into the cab of the truck. Then, slamming the door, "You young fellows from the city are all the same; you haven't the guts to stick anything. Well if you can't stick it, get out." He slipped the truck in gear and backed out of the paddock.

At dinner time the farmer sat and over each mouthful glanced surreptitiously at the boy. He knew that if the boy left he would be hard to replace; none of the local lads would work for him, they knew him too well. But he was not particularly worried. He had planted seed in the earth and that had taught him something; all you needed was the right earth and fair weather. Well, the boy had a spell of fair weather in the morning after the storm, and the seed planted in his head should grow; it had grown last year.

After finishing his meal the boy got up, and shoving home his chair looked at the farmer. The farmer looked up at him, "Had a good dinner son?" He queried benevolently.

"Yes, thank you," the boy replied. He was thinking - the old man has his spells - he wasn't so bad, but he didn't want to be fed well, nor paid well, only show a little kindness. He would show him that he could take it.

At the door the boy turned, "I'll stay," he said briefly then went out.

The farmer grinned to himself. It had worked again. He looked at his wife. "You know, isn't it peculiar, I shifted those ewes again this morning, for the seventh time this month; they still broke away at the gate. Sheep never learn by experience."

His wife, abstracted, polishing the stove, smiled vaguely at him. "Perhaps they don't want to, Henry," she replied.

R. A. KNOX
THE CROSS.

The child began to scream in the night. For that day he had learnt of Christ on the Cross. He had learnt that day of nails piercing hands and feet - and nails, hands, feet and wood were things he knew and these were what he saw in the dark that night, so he screamed until his mother came to see what was the matter with him. She turned on the light and everything vanished - just his room and his mother and the light and he sobbing and panting in remembered terror. He told her about Christ on the Cross and the hands and the feet and the nails and he knew that she did not understand what it was that had frightened him. She smiled and tried to soothe him, and as she went out she left the light on.

The child lay back in his bed. There was light and his mother moving about the house, and where there was light and sound the child was blind and deaf. Then the noises stopped. The child looked up at the ceiling and the frame of the lampshade cast a shadow from the centre of the ceiling to the middle of each of the four sides, in the shape of a grey cross. The child began to scream again - louder and louder and his mother did not come. He leapt out of his bed and ran screaming to his mother's bedroom and it was dark and empty and he ran about the house searching for his mother and she was nowhere - terror in the dark of the house and Christ, Cross, nails and pain in the light of his own room ...........

When his mother came home from the pictures, she found every light on throughout the house, except in the child's bedroom, and the child lying on his side on the living-room floor, fast asleep. He lay with his left hand stretched out on the floor, fingers clutching upwards, and between them blood had trickled thickly onto the grey carpet. When she had gently spread the child's fingers, a pool of blood was in his palm, and in the blood the head of a nail.

J.R. SADLIER.
THE ROPE.

There had been a reluctance to move from under the warm blankets earlier, the breath misty in the still candlelight had also been expelled on doubting the sanity of midnight rising. But then, the blue-flamed primuses, the promise of a fine day written in bright stars above the lonely peaks; warm clothes, breakfast and cups of tea; these things had replaced torpor with at least an anticipation of enthusiasm. The ridge had been attempted before but the parties were always defeated by adverse conditions.

The leader of the party, sipping the hot tea from a green-jacketed thermos warming his thighs, looked down past his clinkered boots to the glacier below. There, remote and tiny, was the red roof of the hut they had left. He remembered the bewilderment of the tourists over their ambitions for this unclimbed ridge. "Why not climb the mountain by one of the easier, usual routes?", one lady had asked. "The main thing is to get to the top. Isn't it?" "I suppose it is." (One could not communicate the incommunicable, he thought, then decided that was wrong. There was no incommunicable; that myth was due to the inability to find the formula of communication. The mystics identity with their God, the consciousness unfolding to contain the universe, was this communicable? No. This one thing seemingly impossible to make real to another was identity, one's own identity. But if the form was there, outside one somewhere would find the understanding complement. That was why there would never exist the optimists golden age; education could not create lenses only polish them.)

He lit his pipe and lay back looking at the sky.

To the west on the small rock eyrie where the three men rested, the ridge proper swept away in an ascending curb of ice, like a tilted sickle cutting at the clouds. This curving sickle of ice, blue-white in the rising sun like newly quarried marble, stretched up to a summit so graceful and small it seemed but a cloud.

The leader sighed, knocked out his pipe and stood up, his clinkers grinding on the white veined rock. (The frozen
blood of the mountains). Standing there he could see the wilderness of ranges stretching into the distance to three sides; there in the northern horizon a piled cloudbank suggested a higher, whiter world. His two companions also rose and the three checked the thin life-line that linked them, body and purpose, together. Ice claws strapped on, they gave a last glance at the hut far below then moved off along the ridge.

The going was easy for a start, a steep fan of hard snow leading up to where the climb would really begin. Feet moving in slow rhythmic time the three moved upward. The second man on the rope felt the strain of the steepness in his ankles as he put his feet flat for the greatest grip of the claws. He thought wistfully of suggesting to the leader a zigzag course but refrained in dogged pride. The end man moved in a species of mindless ecstasy, whistling a fragment of music soundlessly over and over. He grasped his axe remembering how cold the metal had felt in his hands flushed from the early morning exertion. Now he felt capable of anything under the risen sun.

The first avalanche of the morning shook the air with a distant roaring. The leader glanced at the snow-cloud in the slopes of the range across the glacier. (The music of falling mountains). He reached the point of the fan and stopped, waiting. The other two climbed up to him taking in coils of rope as they came. "Here it starts," he said, looking dubiously at the ridge. His companions glanced at him and were silent. The leader tapped his boots one by one with the ferrule of his ice-axe to dislodge any snow that might have balled up in his crampoms. Then he looked at his friends. Their eyes stared back expectantly through their goggles. "Hum!" he said, then to his second man: "Give us a belay, Harry."

The man grunted and drove the shaft of his axe in up to the head. Around this he looped the rope attached to the leaders waist. "Ahuh!" The leader moved out on the thin ridge seemingly oblivious of the twin gulfs to either side. (Now it has begun. Cornice. Have to move off the crest. Hell of a place to be in a high wind.) He started to cut steps along the uncorniced side of the ridge, while the sastiagi ice, thousand hooked, tinkled away into the void at the
blows of his adze.

"Six feet," called the second man, intimating that the length of rope had almost run out. A few more steps and the leader stopped, digging in the shaft of his axe. Then his second moved out to join him. "A man could fall two thousand feet here and not bounce one. Nice and exposed." The leader smiled then moved away along the ridge running out another length of rope. The second man watched him go, ignoring the chips of ice pelting his body as the steps were formed; he was more concerned in feeding the rope slowly from his hand around his axe. When the leader had gone as far as possible, the patiently waiting third man came up to the second. As he reached him his face, excited, contorted in semi-mock alarm, "Lets go home to momma. Whew! What a PLACE to be!"

On they went as the sun climbed higher in the sky; never relaxing caution for a moment, though conscious, intensely conscious, of the void about them; of the sun, the sparkling air, and the valleys far below with blue streams in glaciers quivering with light. At the curve in the ridge the cornice tapered in to non-existence and the sastrugi gave way to smooth solid ice. Tirelessly the leader chopped steps, swinging easily from the hip; one, in the pick would sink —— a quick jerk and a piece of ice detached from the parent mass; then a few trimming blows and a foot moved forward. All used pick belays now to guard each others progress, the surface being so solid that only a pick could enter an inch or two —— and that with a hard blow. The rope that tied them together with greater intimacy than the umbolical cord the child to its mother, was zealously watched as it slithered slowly around the belaying axes.

They had been moving for almost two hours when the first hint of danger came. It came from the north in the form of a cooling breeze to the leader's hot face. He paused and licked his dry lips, looking away to the northern horizon. The snowy bank of clouds that had lain masking the distance was now moving towards them. (How fast?) And preceeding it came this chill harbinger of danger. (To be caught here in a high wind!) He decided quickly. "Weather making. We'd better turn back." His companions, now moved within conversing distance, agreed.
"Blast!" The third man gave vent to the feelings of the party. "There'll be other days," the leader said, but he felt the same disappointment. (Who would have thought?.... Ah well!)

They started to retrace their steps with careful haste, the leader now coming last.

The wind blew softly first, but strengthened when about two-thirds of their return journey was accomplished.

The last few hundred feet they travelled in a nightmarish trance, heads averted, leaning into the blast to keep upright, all the while feeling the mountain shudder with the furious rush of air. Eyes watering and hands numbing they fought the wind as if it were a live thing, their jaws grim, teeth clenched, muscles tense and straining. The leader felt the movements of his companions in the dimness ahead communicated in sympathetic jerks and trembles in the rope held fast in his hand. Those intimations of the human mitigated the feeling of being alone in a scene utterly alien. As he sucked at the flying air, endeavouring to breathe he realised suddenly that the alieness consisted solely in the impersonality of the menace.

Off the ridge and down the fan of snow they battled, vague shapes in the flying snow. They hastened now to be in the lea of the droning, drumming hell. The leader began to feel elation over the conflict nearly ended. (Safe you winds! Safe you chanting flanks!) His ecstasy was shattered by a sudden loud cry below. "Hold!" Despite the wind it seemed echoed from a thousand throats - "Hold... Hold... Hold... Hold...!" Though the cry rang demanding and desperate the leader felt no alarm; felt only the need to act swiftly, instinctively, as he had acted a hundred times before. He half turned and with a powerful thrust drove the shaft of his axe into the snow, throwing the rope in his other hand over it in almost the same motion.

Nothing happened for a moment's space, then came another faint cry from below and the rope started to slip snakelike away. He let a few coils disappear then slowly applied pressure, the rope breaking the fall, cutting deeply into his flesh. As he felt the rope stretch and quiver his mind
partly relaxed, then another noise dulled by the wind and
the rope leapt back against the axe to lie limp and lifeless.

The leader looked at it stupidly a few seconds then
started shaking with horror. "No!" Frantically he
jerked on the line; the frayed end came up to his feet.
He screamed into the wind, screamed many times, hoping; but
no answer came. From side to side he looked his head nod-
ding sagely, his expression almost that of an idiot; then he
moaned and sank to his knees pressing his face against the
cold steel of the axe in sad desperation. He knew that he
would return safe to the hut in the valley, he knew he would
lie in the warmth looking out at the moonlit peaks; he knew
that, as certainly his companions would not; would never do
these things again.

A vast bitterness filled his throat. "Why? Why?"

Then he realised that his question was pointless. He
saw in a vision Man building his cities, his roads and
bridges; his philosophies and religions; saw him trying to
shape the universe to his image in his longing to belong.
But he did not belong. Beyond the prison of the mind and
longing was the utter finality of the not human. The rope
was broken, and now he was alone.

R. A. KNOX.