

# Complaint to the Broadcasting Commission

We believe that the Concert Programme of Radio New Zealand is, increasingly and willfully, failing to maintain ALL NINE of the broadcasting standards they must meet.

We have noted below why and how the standards have been breached. It is difficult to specify the name of the program, and the date and approximate time of the broadcast, given the increasing proliferation of the offending program in time and scope (viruses do that). But for formal purposes, the heart of the complaint could be described as originating with “Upbeat”, a program that is unfortunately broadcast every weekday and then re-broadcast at many other times.

We have tried to be positive and suggest solutions not just problems. We hope that the Concert Programme can be persuaded to mend its ways.

## Standard 1 – Good Taste and Decency

Complaint:

In everyday conversation and public broadcasting alike, it's uniformly acknowledged to be in **bad taste** to talk endlessly and repeatedly about matters of no interest to captive listeners. But that is what the Concert Programme increasingly does to us and its other listeners, as Eva Radich and her boring “Upbeat” dialogues proliferate through the schedule like a malicious and unstoppable computer virus.

**Decency** is more subjective, and often thought about only in terms of morality. But a secondary definition of decency is “things required for a reasonable standard of life”. For us and many others, a civilized **music** programme is one of those things. A “talk” programme cannot meet this requirement.

The Concert Program schedule is not just itself breaching this standard, but encouraging the spread of **bad taste** and **indecent** throughout society. We now habitually refer to Ms Radich as “Evil Eva”, and after hastily turning her off we fantasise about how to shut her up, in ways that would definitely breach any standard of **good taste** and **decency**.

Remedy:

Remember what the Concert Programme is there for: “concert”, i.e. (mostly) **MUSIC**. Help us and other listeners retain a truly upbeat mood, and respond to programmes with positive thoughts that do not undermine **good taste** and **decency**.

## Standard 2 – Law and Order

Complaint:

Turning the radio on to find Evil Eva blathering away yet again, often at an unexpected time, fills us with rage and violent feelings. The Concert Program is directly encouraging, indeed inciting, recourse to crime, and thereby undermining public **law and order**.

Remedy:

Allow Evil Eva only a strictly limited quota of time each week. If necessary, download an anti-virus product, quarantine her in an encrypted file and ship it to the nearest **law enforcement agency** by mail **order**.

### Standard 3 - Privacy

Complaint:

The sudden and unexpected eruption of yet another instance of Evil Eva blathering away, just when we were quietly enjoying good music, is definitely an invasion of **privacy**. Furthermore since we normally listen at home, that also constitutes **home invasion** – a serious crime for which judges normally impose heavy sentences. And when we listen in the car, we feel carjacked – another serious crime. Most seriously, repeating her programmes on Sunday morning violates the spiritual **privacy** of listeners just when they should be focusing on their personal moral development.

Remedy:

Cease repeating programs that were bad enough the first time. Issue **privacy** and public health warnings 10 minutes before any Evil Eva program outside her normal timeslot.

### Standard 4 – Viewpoints

Complaint:

It is perfectly acceptable, and indeed enjoyable, to occasionally hear an interesting and qualified person talk credibly about musical matters (for example on “Composer of the Week”). But quality **viewpoints** come only from people who have genuine standing and talk about something of interest to a substantial cross-section of their listeners. Far too many of Evil Eva’s interlocutors do not meet those criteria. At best they qualify as "world-famous in Ekatahuna", and of interest only to Ekatahunites (if indeed any of them care).

Remedy:

Screen all interviewees and speakers to ensure that they really have **viewpoints** comprising both something to say and some skills in saying it (not uh, you know, like really, well, etc....)

### Standard 5 – Accuracy

Complaint:

It is **inaccurate** to continue to refer to the “Concert” programme, suggesting music will be played, when a growing proportion of airtime is devoted to talk rather than music. That constitutes fundamental and deliberate misrepresentation.

On a related theme, the increasing incomprehensibility of Concert Programme announcers also compromises **accuracy**. For example an item for discussion might intend to refer to “ten men” but instead refers to “tin men”, conjuring up alarming and **inaccurate** images. Best-loved melodies become “beast-loved”, **inaccurately** suggesting cows being milked to the music of Mozart. (In mitigation, we do realise that such incomprehensibility reflects a wider problem. A visiting Australian musician who was transferring to a domestic flight upon arrival in New Zealand told us of his bewilderment and panic when he was unable to locate, never mind report to, the "Domestic Chicken".)

Remedy:

1. Return to core business, and play (mostly) music
2. Send all Concert Program announcers to a speech training course (as you once did)
3. Make Peter Sledmere the standard for other announcers to aspire to

Alternatively, achieve **accuracy** by renaming the Concert Program “Eva’s Chatroom”.

## Standard 6 – Fairness

### Complaint:

Of course programming should sometimes surprise and even challenge listeners. And it may be difficult to resist the societal trend towards banal and narcissistic chatter. But it is utterly **unfair** to subject long-standing and loyal listeners who love their music to low-density uninteresting blather, just to be trendy.

### Remedy:

Ensure that diversification adds value and is more than just "something different". Aim to develop programming that customers will enjoy, even if it might not have been their first choice. For example the Australian Broadcasting Commission's equivalent of the Concert Program seems to locate and play not only the old favourites but also a **fair** selection of interesting music that is often novel and rarely dissonant. Stop letting the Wallabies win on the musical playing field!

## Standard 7 - Discrimination and Denigration

### Complaint:

In her frantic race to fill the ever-increasing airtime allocated to her, Evil Eva shows an increasing lack of **discrimination** of any sort (in the sense of critical judgment). And that certainly **denigrates** and **discriminates** against (in the sense of treating differently) the many more interesting people who might occasionally feature on the Concert Program.

### Remedy:

Practice positive **discrimination**. Set a benchmark for the percentage of music (i.e., NON-TALK) time and stick to it. Establish a set of value-adding criteria that potential interviewees must meet to displace music. Leave the task of generating endless waffle to the National program, local radio and inane "talkback" channels.

## Standard 8 - Responsible Programming

### Complaint:

Yes we know that the Concert Program is only following modern trends in media egotism and self-absorption, whereby commentators become more important and take up more airtime than the game itself. And yes we know that an increasing proportion of "news" and other once-informative media content now comprises sound-bite twitters, spurious polls of readers and viewers with too much time on their hands, and mis-spelled commentaries by young "journalist" interns who are poorly paid (if they are paid at all). But please be more **responsible** than to join the race to the bottom...

### Remedy:

Modify traditional program formats more **responsibly**. Set a standard of "intelligent life" that contrasts with the increasing inanity of (anti-)social media. Work to develop a new generation of thoughtful and cultured listeners who value **responsible** music programs.

## Standard 9 – Liquor

### Complaint:

The breaches of broadcasting standards outlined above are enough to drive anyone to drink. They are thereby likely to encourage irresponsible and dangerous **liquor** abuse amongst your listeners.

### Remedy:

Remember that it is listeners and viewers who (however indirectly in this case) pay media salaries. Don't just send us a meaningless "Thank you for your feedback. We need to recognise a diversity of views... blah blah blah" response. Please instead take this complaint seriously and try to halt the decline in broadcasting standards. We would love to celebrate that outcome one evening with some refreshing **liquor** - we will even send the Concert Programme a bottle and propose a toast to Eva Radichally-Reformed....

John Mendzela

Elisa Mendzela

