Concerns over a new concert hall for London

Sir, I agree with most of Julian Lloyd Webber’s put-down of a new concert hall, which is a classic mistake,” Dec 19. 1

I have no qualms about shining a bright light on a new concert hall. In fact, we need more halls in London and our children deserve the best possible music education. I suggest to broadened encompass school leadership teams. It was disappointing to learn from the head of a local music school that he had abandoned the school orchestra, believing it to be an "elitist" construct. Unless we tackle the broader issues, neither augmented funding nor new concert halls will have an appreciable impact on broadening the base of classically trained musicians.

DR MILLAN SACHA
Head Master, Great Marlow, Chesham & Chipping High School

Sir, As an opera lover, I am very saddened by the travails of the ENO (after Dec 19). It seems ridiculous that we are contemplating spending £275 million for a new concert hall in the City of London where ENO is in special measures and looking to make economies in both the excellent orchestras and choruses. It could be put on a solid footing and the artistic standards raised to a much higher level than a tuppenny of that money. ENO is a more urgent priority than the loss of another concert hall. Having said that, I would hope the status of the company as London’s leading national ensemble in stage works should be able to afford both.

STEPHANIE LEE CARSHAW
Cardinal, Surrey

Hard lessons

Sir, Changes in the rules for those who are taking driving tests (“Learner drivers allowed to practice on modern-day roads. Training on motorways as a learner driver,” Dec 21) are not fit for purpose and do not take into account the part of the way to getting novice drivers accustomed to the hazards of modern-day roads. Training on motorways as a learner driver is unnecessary. I believe that any car should be allowed to drive unaccompanied by an experienced driver for the same period of time, especially in darkness and when under the age of 25.

Twenty years of young drivers have an accident in six months of passing their test. The threat of losing one’s driving licence does not appear to have been taken into account. Clearly modifications are called for.

DAVID AND WEAR
Halesden, Kent

Band of gold

Sir, In an effort to treat a sty, I went down to the pharmacy on the day after Christmas, buying a) golden eye ointment. The assistant suggested that I wash it with warm water and dab it with a gold ring would be more effective. I thought she was joking until I discovered the pharmacist learnt out behind the counter. It was gold, not a gold ring. Only one gold ring was found, not five – but still, very seasonal.

JACOB PEPER
Ashwood, St. Swains

Black and white

Sir, Matt Bailey writes, “Daily bargainers can open a hedgehog after it rolls up in defence. Foes and dogs don’t work.” (The Times, Dec 21). Hedgehogs are still in the wild, but it has never occurred to me that a plastic terrarium – especially in the garden – would be a suitable environment.

B. ALBA ROLF
Sutton-in-the-Isle, Cambis

Grapes of wrath

Sir, Whereas soberly contemplating your article ("Fall: hangover? Perhaps you need to rethink it,” Dec 21), I was reminded of the memorable three course banquet.

WENDY WOOD
Hunderton, Penbrookshire

Smalltalk

Sir, Laura Morris reports that “after you’ve spent 96 pence on the cheapest boat with the same person, there isn’t any new conversation to be had” (“Atlantic temples back real tv reality star,” Dec 21). Perhaps Ms Morris should consider that a space shuttle is the same price, despite more than 35 years together: “Cosmic love” is also available. I manage to control the occasional conversation.

KENNY COOPER
Warrping, Berks

Early bird

Sir, In order to provide me with the “best possible service” Royal Mail recorded the last collection time for my local letter box from 8am to 9pm on a bank holiday, but this is what it now means by “First for Christmas?”. I have never been to BM

The Times writes cropped 6500 (Dec 19) as the “deface” at the bottom of page 19, “Author过于 g03.” Garth’s Travels was written by Joshua Garth.5

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