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We must honour our musical gifts

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MUSIC may indeed soothe the savage beast. Like an old lion Paul Keating has risen majestically to deliver a eulogy for Geoffrey Tozer (Comment, *The Age*, 2/10). This is a poignant story told with painful precision. It is not passion misplaced - it is the truth that could not be buried and forgotten. Loss may cause despair but it was the words of Keating that gave hope. If only all politicians could grasp that it is not always about money. The nature of genius is generosity and Tozer was a gift to the nation. If we do not have the intelligence or grace to honour such gifts, the loss is truly ours.

Kerry Millman, Frankston

Power of snobbery

I READ the letter "United through Arts" (*The Age*, 3/10) with initial excitement because it ticked all my boxes about the value of creativity and the educated life. I am an artist and have been a teacher. There is no doubt that the arts hold the key to many satisfactions and pleasures. Sadly, the writer showed that education can also breed contempt, ignorance, superiority and fear. The generalisation that "pop culture and football divide" demonstrates the destructive power of snobbery.

I love football, as do many other so-called educated Australians. It has the power to unite across all backgrounds. It does not judge, it contains and codifies violence and competition and it creates the kind of fun that can be shared by many.

And what about pop culture? As my daughter said to someone who was surprised that someone so intelligent should read "trash mags" ... "It seems that people who are unsure of their intelligence cannot bear to have fun, share with the common man, stay in populist touch or just play."

There are many examples of educated and musical tyrants who have committed terrible crimes. Nothing is gained by slinging off at a whole group because of the behaviour of a few. And nothing is ever gained by an us-and-them attitude. I would be more inclined to look at alcohol use, poverty, powerlessness and contract labour.

Carol Oliver, Daylesford

No VCA staff fired

BY BRINGING together the faculty of music and the school of music of the former VCA, the University of Melbourne has given students access to combined staff resources and the combined assets built up over more than a century - musical instruments, technical equipment and the treasured Melba Hall. These resources need to be managed over two campuses to avoid duplication. No staff have been "fired" (*Letters*, 3/10). Staff will be distributed in the restructuring to provide the best support to all students.

Professor Sharman Pretty, dean, faculty of the VCA and music, University of Melbourne

Mimicking techno band

ARE Melburnians deaf? The Melbourne Symphony showcased Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 6 in Hamer Hall on Friday. While the orchestra played sensitively and vigorously, the sound was so loud that the finer moments of