

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

(continued from page 5)

SCHUBERT LEGENDS

Sir,—Last Friday evening, August 27, during "Franz Schubert and His Music" from 3YA, we were told the story of the composition of "Hark, Hark, the Lark"—written in a café on the back of a menu, etc. A few minutes later in the same programme, we were told that Schubert's "Serenade" was composed in exactly the same manner, with but a slight variation in phraseology. Even the sentence "I have the most divine melody running through my head; if only I had some ruled paper" was repeated *in toto*.

Surely both these compositions, delightful as they are, cannot claim such a romantic story.

"QUAM DILECTA" (Dunedin).

(Authority exists for each story—Dr. Sigmund Spaeth for "Hark, Hark, the Lark," and George T. Ferris for the "Serenade." It is possible that the circumstances of one composition have, in the passage of time, been attributed also to another.—Ed.)

CHURCH BROADCASTS

Sir,—On what authority does Mr. Philpot state that the majority of listeners do not find the services convincing? Has he taken a referendum? We are told "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." However, some of us living in isolated places, and others confined to house or hospital through sickness can seldom obey that literally, much as we would like to do so, but when listening to an ordinary church service by means of radio we can feel that we are actually taking part in spirit, and many ministers recognise this, and include us as their unseen congregation (which is of course a gathering of people). If we know that only minister and choir are present in the studio we are listeners only, not participants. EGLISE (Croixelles).

"CARMEN"

Sir,—If your correspondent J. L. Kelly took the trouble to read Mérimée's *Carmen* he would see that it is not the novel but the opera that is filled with the "soul convulsions of the exotically romantic egotists." The novel is not even the product of a "soul convulsion." Mérimée's genius was too precise, cynical, and self-critical for that. The novel is exotic, but it hasn't the flashy, cheap, pseudo-Spanish colouring that Meilhac and Halévy provide (tempered of course with a little Victorian prudery).

And if Tchaikovsky desired a libretto like *Carmen*, all I can say is "Poor Tchaikovsky." Again, where are the moral blots in Mozart's operas comparable in size to those spattered all over *Carmen*? If there are any, does that imply we should reject Mozart's works? The music to Mozart's operas and even Tchaikovsky's, when considered apart from the stage settings, can stand on its own feet and as great music can mean something. Bizet's music to *Carmen*—never! E. F. KAYE (Wanganui).

MENTAL SURVIVAL

Sir,—Your correspondent E. Satchell, Auckland, believes in "The probability that the mind . . . does indeed survive death." Such a belief can only be

based on metaphysics and is such doctrines of supernaturalists that are presented as dogmas (to which he subscribes) and not those which abide by the laws of nature. The mind is an abstract term embracing phenomena which we call mental, but we do not have mental facts in addition to the mind, but mental facts only. Supernaturalists take their metaphysical abstraction (the mind), assume it to be an independent agency in man, and then proceed to build up their theories on something that cannot come within their perception. Science, on the other hand, observes facts and then formulates a theory in line with the facts observed. If the mind was independent of the body it could not be affected by such things as injury, sunstroke, chloroform, intoxicating liquor, etc. Without the brain there can be no mind and both are dependent on the body. "Behaviourism," to which he refers, is one of many "psychologies," but without mind, soul, or consciousness, and therefore cannot be psychology—and a psychology with an immaterial mind cannot be a science. ARGOSY (Te Awamutu).

"A SPECIES OF MOA"

Sir,—With reference to L. Fullerton Johnson's letter and your footnote thereto may I enquire where I can find it authoritatively stated that the Notornis is "a species of moa"? With the generic term Notornis I am quite familiar, not so with the specific.

F. C. CAMPBELL
(Palmerston North).

(When Thompson wrote it was customary to regard notornis as a species of moa. Since then it has been classed as a rail.—Ed.)

MUSIC AND SPORT.

Sir,—Recently the Rachmaninoff Concerto No. 2 being broadcast from 2YC was broken off in the middle of the Third Movement in order that we might hear Winston McCarthy commenting on a football match. This sort of thing is enraging to listeners, and shows lack of courtesy on the part of those responsible.

BARBARA AITKEN (Wadestown).

HOURS FOR PLAYS

Sir,—Your correspondent G.E.N. (Matiere) has raised a point which I would like to emphasise. Why are plays and music of special interest often given so late in the evening? Perhaps the most outstanding example of this is the way in which grand opera is presented on Sunday nights. The three-quarters-of-an-hour break in transmission makes it almost impossible for the average country listener, or the mother of a young family, to hear the end of any opera. I have now heard the first act of many works, and would appreciate it very much if I were allowed to listen to the last acts at a reasonable hour.

May I suggest that, during the classical hour, instead of so much chamber music, at least one day a week might be devoted to the presentation of a grand opera in its entirety, in serial form, if necessary.

The short excerpts given in the *For My Lady* session only whet one's appetite for more.

"COUNTRY LISTENER"

(Okato).

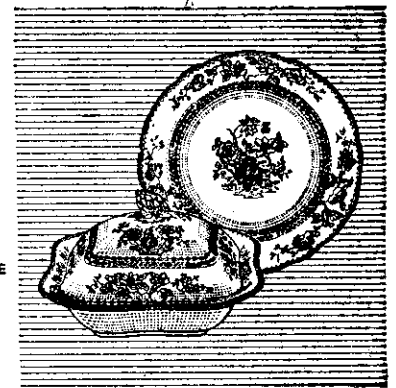
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