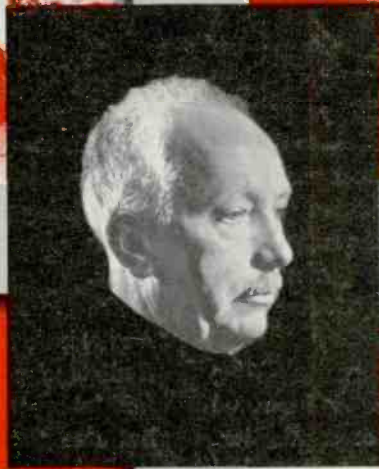


High Fidelity

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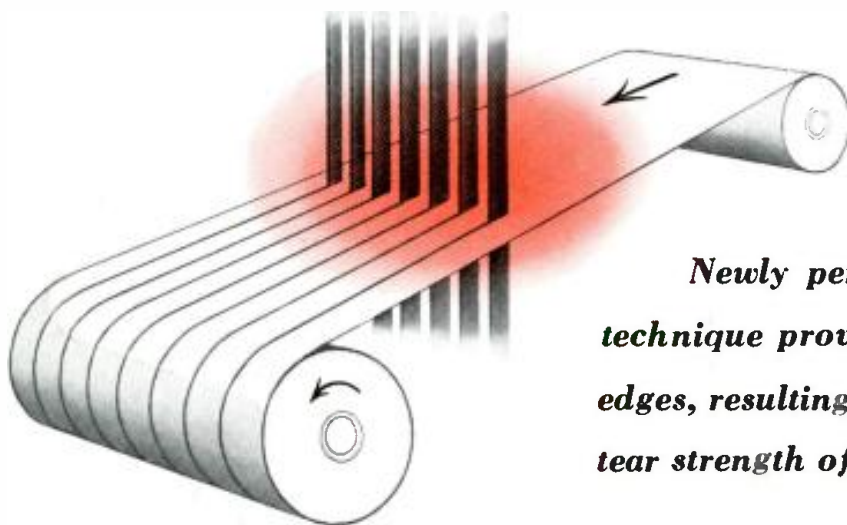
RICHARD STRAUSS ON MICROGROOVE

by C. G. Burke

THE MAGAZINE FOR MUSIC LISTENERS

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GIVES **audiotape** EXTRA STRENGTH



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High Fidelity

THE MAGAZINE FOR MUSIC LISTENERS

Volume 4 Number 2

April 1954

This Issue. Despite foul canards to the contrary, not all high-fidelity-music lovers spend their summers at home, perspiring and playing records. Some travel; their letters tell us so. For those who do and those who wish they could, what better goal than the home-town of Richard Wagner, the prototype of all audiomaniacs? He was, for instance, the only man ever to contrive — at Bayreuth — a horn-loaded enclosure big enough to contain a 110-piece orchestra! No wonder his flag flies royally over a whole town. Long, we say, may it wave.



The photograph of Richard Strauss which decorates the cover, surrounded by Don Juan, Don Quixote, Till Eulenspiegel and Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, was taken in the composer's later years by George Kossuth.

Next Issue. Charles Fowler tells how to shop for a tape recorder, with emphasis on the new crop of home-type hi-fi (?) recorders. And Roland Gelatt tells of the origin and growth of the first industrial giant in phonographic history: the Victor Talking Machine Company.

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AUTHORitatively Speaking

A. R. P. Wrathall, author of the Bayreuth story which starts on page 26, is a youthful Englishman currently engaged in writing record-sleeve notes, publicity releases and other such literature for Nixa, the British company which brings the blessings of Westminster, Vanguard and other U. S. independent disk producers to the U. K. He says of himself: "I was raised in Brussels on Ravel and Delius; came in 1939 to England, where I found Elgar and Walton. Had an elaborate education culminating in a History degree at Cambridge . . . National service with the Black Watch in the Ruhr and Berlin, during which I discovered Wagner and the bagpipes: the two are more closely connected than at first seems obvious. I sold my bagpipes ultimately to buy my typewriter, then took the job at Nixa to pay for typewriter ribbons to tie up my bonny brown hare-brained ideas . . . Hindemith I revere, Native Dancer I look forward to seeing at Ascot . . . protocol maddens me; wine gladdens me . . . Enough?" Enough.

Paul Sampson, who oversimplifies high fidelity on page 29, is a 27-year-old Minnesotan now engaged in covering the cultural life of the Nation's capital for the *Washington Post*. He describes himself, (Lucely) as balding and serious of mien, and as a lover of New Orleans jazz, Goodman swing, Mozart and Bartok.

Frederic Ramsey, Jr., remembered for articles on "talking books" and on Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter in *HIGH FIDELITY*, now has 1) shaved off his beard and 2) vanished into the hinterland to research the folk origins of jazz on a Guggenheim fellowship. He wrote "What Shall We Do With Jazz?" (page 32) before he left.

As for Emory Cook, the famous producer of *Sounds of Our Times* disks, he was in Mexico while we were printing his groove-gremlin article (page 38). He has plans, we hear, for a record of surf-sounds, and for a new version of the summer thunder-storm.

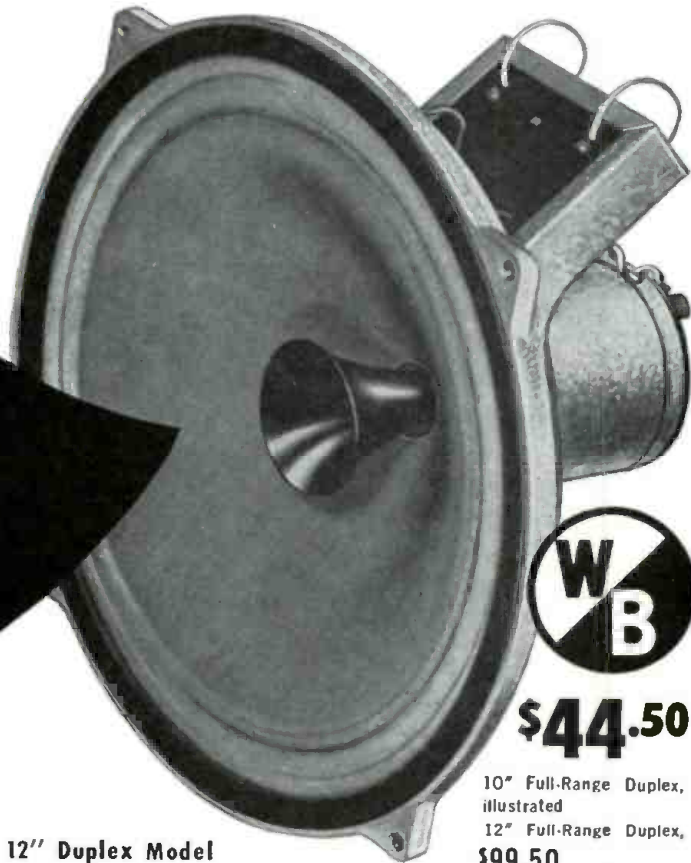
Dr. Gilbert Plass, who investigates the physics of binaural sound in an article on page 78, is an assistant professor of physics at Johns Hopkins University, also a veteran high-fidelity enthusiast.

William C. Bohn, who needles the record companies from a reserved seat over the conductor's head (see page 37), has been an electronics-minded music-lover since the age of 11, when he designed and built a short-wave receiver. He has sung in glee clubs at prep school and at Harvard; is a member of AES, a fanatic concertgoer and — for the last two years — owner-operator of Bohn Music Systems, New York City. He served as a Merchant Marine radio officer in World War II and the Korean action, getting torpedoed and decorated in the former.

Reviewer David Randolph and his wife are conducting a group musical tour of Europe this summer. It's to last from July 2 to August 25, and to touch at such points of musical interest as Glyndebourne, Stratford-on-Avon, Rome (opera at Baths of Caracalla); Florence, Salzburg, Lucerne and Paris. Per person cost is \$1,464. The group's number is limited, but at this writing there were still openings.

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Absotively

Every now and then a reader writes in to ask why we don't stop all this nonsense and just tell people which is the best piece of equipment. A recent 3-page letter asked, among other things, "Is it illegal for someone to advise someone else that this or that speaker or amp is the best in its price class?"

This particular letter landed on Associate Editor Roy Allison's desk. In his reply he summarized a lot of thinking on this subject so well that we want to quote this paragraph, verbatim:

"First, let me point out that those who hesitate to say specifically that any one speaker, cartridge, amplifier, or what have you is the best in its price class are not necessarily evading the issue, but are trying to be fair. It is definitely not true that any component can be rated best without qualification; it is true that the best component for any given application is determined by the other equipment with which it is to be used, by the room it is to be used in, by its baffle and location in that room (in the case of a speaker), and (above all) by the personal tastes of the listener and how much he can afford to pay for the component. Selection of the 'best' audio components is more involved and subtle than selection of a 'best' automobile; yet, after all the years of intense competition in the automotive field, look at the large number of automobile types available even now!"

Precisely! And — even the consumer testing organizations don't always agree on what is "best".

UHF TV Conversion

With UHF television stations popping up, more and more people are asking "What do we do now?" A tip of the hat to the February issue of *Science and Mechanics* magazine for an article about converting TV receivers to UHF, with particular emphasis on antennas and their installation.

A. F. of L. A.

We might also entitle this piece "C. F. at A. F./L. A." — which would indicate, correctly, that C. F. took himself off to attend the Audio Fair at Los Angeles in February. For those who are interested in his personal welfare, we might hasten to report that he has fully recovered from the double shock of attending a Fair and of leaving Massachusetts in a blizzard, and arriving in California with the thermometer at 86° F.

The Los Angeles Audio Fiesta, as it was

Continued on page 9

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For the first time available singly, 27 copies of each of the Limited Edition Recordings listed below have now become available (for various reasons, mostly due to import restrictions abroad) to the Society. In order to win new friends, the Society is offering these recordings to readers of *High Fidelity* to acquaint them with these fine discs and with the operation of the Society. Orders will be filled on a "first come, first served" basis and no more than 3 records will be sent to any one person.

What makes these recordings so rare?

For one thing, they are not available in any store. Nor have they ever been available singly before. They were pressed in an edition strictly limited to only 3,000 numbered copies for distribution only to members of the Concert Hall Society who subscribe to an entire series of these recordings.

The music is rare. In many cases, *no other* recording of the music exists anywhere. In almost every case, the composition is one that is seldom heard in this country.

The performances are outstanding too. The artists were chosen for their special skill in interpreting the particular composer.

Finally, only the most advanced recording techniques and acoustical designs are used to give to each recording a fidelity, a "concert hall realism" and a presence of tone which combined with the most meticulous musical supervision make of each Limited Edition Record an individual masterpiece such as would be impossible to achieve with mass production techniques.

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3. **AARON COPLAND:** Piano Concerto ("Jazz" Concerto) 1926. Leo Smit, pianist; Radio Rome Symphony Orch.; Aaron Copland, cond.

4. **ERNEST BLOCH:** Four Episodes for Small Orch. Radio Zurich Symphony Orch.; Thomas Scherman, cond.

5. **CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI:** Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda; Sonata Sopra Sancta Maria. Hugues Cuenod, tenor; Dora Abel, soprano; Derek Olsen, baritone; Radio Zurich Orch.; Walter Goehr, cond.

6. **BENJAMIN BRITTEN:** Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge, Op. 10. Lausanne Chamber Orch.; Victor Desarzens, cond.

7. **RALPH VAUGHAN-WILLIAMS:** Concerto Accademico. Louis Kaufmann, violinist, Radio Zurich Symphony Orch.; Clemens Dahinden, cond.

8. **ROBERT SCHUMANN:** Piano Quartet in E-Flat, Op. 47. Ray Lev, pianist; members of the Guilet String Quartet.

9. **LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN:** Concerto in D for Piano and Orch., Op. 61 (original version of the violin concerto). Artur Balsam, pianist; Winterthur Symphony Orch.; Clemens Dahinden, cond.

10. **HENRY PURCELL:** Fantasias in Four Parts. Concert Hall String Orch.; Walter Goehr, cond.

11. **NICCOLO PAGANINI:** String Quartet in E. The Guilet String Quartet.

12. **JUAN CRISTOSOMO ARIAGA:** String Quartet No. 3 in E-Flat. The Guilet String Quartet.

13. **ANTONIN DVORAK:** Symphony No. 3 in F, Op. 76. Netherlands Philharmonic Orch.; Walter Goehr, cond.

14. **THE SONS OF J. S. BACH:** Four Sinfonias by J. S. Bach's outstanding sons. Concert Hall Chamber Orch.; Maurits van den Berg, cond. Carl Philipp E. Bach, Sinfonia in C. Johann Christian Bach, Sinfonia in E-Flat; Sinfonia in D. Wilhelm F. Bach, Sinfonia in D Minor.

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16. **CONCERTI for Oboe and Strings in D Minor and F. Egon Parolari, oboist; Winterthur Symphony Orch.; Clemens Dahinden, cond.**

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15. **BELA BARTOK:** Contrasts (1938) for Violin, Clarinet and Piano. Daniel Guilet, violinist; Herbert Tichman, clarinetist; Ruth Budnevich, pianist. Allegro Barbaro; Suite, Op. 14. Frank Pelleg, pianist.

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19. **NUZIO CLEMENTI:** Piano Sonata, Op. 40 No. 2. Artur Balsam, pianist.

20. **GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN:** "Don Quichotte" Suite; Suite in E Minor for Flute and Strings. Aurele Nicolet, flautist; Concert Hall Chamber Orch.; Thomas Scherman, cond.

21. **ALBAN BERG:** Seven Early Songs. Kathryn Harvey, soprano; Zurich Radio Orch.; Walter Goehr, cond.

22. **Four pieces for Clarinet & Piano, Op. 5.** Herbert Tichman, clarinetist; Ruth Budnevich, pianist.

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FM-AM TUNER, Model 50-R

Same features as 70-RT above, but designed for use with external preamplifier-equalizer such as 50-C. Hum level better than 100 db below 2 volts output. Fully shielded and shock-mounted. Self-powered. **\$164.50**

MASTER AUDIO CONTROL, Series 50-C

16 choices of record equalization, plus separate bass and treble tone controls, loudness balance control. Five inputs and input level controls, two cathode follower outputs. Chassis only, **\$89.50** · With cabinet, **\$97.50**

25-WATT AMPLIFIER, Model 70-A

50-watts peak! More *clean* watts per dollar. Less than 1/2% distortion at 25 watts (0.05% at 10 watts.) Response ± 0.1 db, 20-20,000 cycles; 1 db, 10 to 50,000 cycles. Hum and noise virtually non-measurable! **\$99.50**

50-WATT AMPLIFIER, Model 50-A

100-watts peak! World's *finest* all-triode amplifier. Uniform within 1 db, 5 to 100,000 cycles. Hum and noise 96 db below full output. IM distortion below 2% at 50 watts. Highest quality components thruout. **\$159.50**

"50" HORN, SPEAKER ENCLOSURE

NEW! Regardless of the speaker or enclosure you are now using, the "50" Horn marks a revolution in performance. Can be used with any 12" or 15" single, coaxial, dual or triaxial speaker system. **\$129.50**

PREAMPLIFIER-EQUALIZER, Model 50-PR

Professional phono equalization facilities at low cost! Independent switches for LF turn-over and HF roll-off. Output lead up to 50 feet. Can accommodate any low-level, magnetic pickup. Self-powered. **\$22.95**

HI-LO FILTER SYSTEM, Model 50-F

Does what ordinary *tone* controls cannot do, for it suppresses all types of noise with an *absolute minimum* loss of tonal range. High impedance input; cathode follower output. Use with any equipment. **\$29.95**

Prices slightly higher west of the Rockies

WRITE TODAY FOR COMPLETE SPECIFICATIONS

FISHER RADIO CORPORATION · 45 EAST 47th STREET · NEW YORK, N. Y.

NOTED WITH INTEREST

Continued from page 6

called, can be written down in the annals of hi-fi history as an outstanding success. It lasted three days; estimates of attendance range between 22,000 and 28,000, which is considerably higher than the year before; manufacturers were delighted with results; the customary number of eardrums were shattered; a good many people discovered high fidelity for the first time, and a good many people also discovered that what they had at home was really very satisfying after all. C. F. talked himself hoarse again, and was sincerely touched by the number of people who came in to the HIGH FIDELITY toom to say nice things about the Magazine.

As far as we are concerned, the outstanding exhibit was not one of sound but a movie: a 16 mm. color film, with voice commentary, prepared by Hollywood Electronics, one of the leading hi-fi dealers in Los Angeles. The film answered the question, "What is high fidelity?" It showed older radio-phonographs and explained why they gave low fidelity; it showed typical hi-fi equipment, told what the various components did, and illustrated with a few attractive installations how the equipment could be blended with the interior decorative scheme of the home.

The film fitted in with some of our basic thinking: that audio shows should not only bring new items of equipment to the attention of those who already know about hi-fi but, even more important, explain the basic concepts of high fidelity sound reproduction to those who have not progressed beyond the stage of wondering what the words "high fidelity" mean.

Therefore, a kudo to Hollywood Electronics for creating this film and showing it at regular intervals throughout the Fiesta; and to John Cashman, President of Radio Craftsmen, for his alertness in seeing the value of this presentation and arranging to buy the film so it could receive more widespread distribution. As soon as Mr. Cashman lets us know when, where, and how the film will be shown, we'll publish the schedule in HIGH FIDELITY.

We shall not attempt to check through all the exhibits for what's new . . . for one thing, the show was so crowded that it was difficult to see what some people were exhibiting and for another, this column and the "Tested in the Home" reports cover most new equipment. However, here are a few highlights: Revere showed a redesigned T-10 which operated at 7½ ips but provided for sound take-off *ahead* of the output stage (very important feature) and which accommodated the big NARTB reels — one hour per track. If they have managed to keep wow and flutter down to reasonable levels, this is going to make a most interesting piece of equipment for the home hi-fi enthusiast.

Bell Sound showed a revamped 2199-B (their \$75 amplifier) with several new features; a TITH report is forthcoming. They also had an FM-AM tuner, a first for them. Nice looking job; it should help to round out their line. — Bradley Mfg. Co. (11 West Magnolia Blvd., Burbank, Calif.) was selling

Continued on page 10

**AT
ALLIED**

**high fidelity
is NOT expensive**



the
Golden Knight
**24-WATT DELUXE
HI-FI AMPLIFIER**

**±0.75 db
20 to 40,000 CPS
UNCONDITIONALLY GUARANTEED
FOR ONE FULL YEAR**

THE FINEST FOR LESS. This is the amplifier designed to provide optimum performance in limited-budget home music systems. Delivers very wide response with extremely low distortion; has plenty of reserve power for authentic reproduction of peaks. Important features include: specially designed output transformer with interleaved windings for virtually distortionless output; input for mike; selector switch for proper loading of G.E. or Pickering cartridges; equalizer for accurate playback of all records; separate bass and treble tone controls.

Specifications. Rated output: 24 watts. Frequency response: ±0.75 db, 20 to 40,000 cps at rated output. Harmonic distortion: less than 1% at rated output. Intermodulation: less than 0.5% at normal listening level, less than 2% at rated

output (60 cps and 7 kc tones; 4:1 ratio). Hum and noise: 80 db below rated output. Speaker out. imp.: 8 and 16 ohms. 4 inputs: 1 magnetic phono, 1 high-imp. mike, 1 tuner, 1 aux. (for crystal phono, tape, TV, etc.). Controls: Off-on-volume; Bass (calibrated from +16 to -16 db); Treble (+16 to -16 db); Input-Equalizer Selector (Aux, Tuner, Mic, Flat, AES, and NARTB). Controls at top of chassis: G.E.-Pickering input switch; also bias, output balance, hum balance controls (screw-driver type). Tubes: 3-12AX7, 2-6L6; 5U4G rect. Entire chassis is beautifully finished in satin-gold. Size: 8 x 14 x 9" deep. Complete with tubes, connectors, instructions; with control shaft extenders and removable lucite panel. For 110-130 v., 50-60 cy. AC. Shpg. wt., 30 lbs.

93 SX 321. Net. \$79.50

"GOLDEN KNIGHT" HIGH FIDELITY MUSIC SYSTEMS

COMPLETE PHONO SYSTEM



A super-value, true high fidelity phono system, ready for custom installation. Includes color-coded cables, plugs, hardware and instructions for quick, easy hookup. The complete system includes: the "Golden Knight" amplifier (described above); the famous Electro-Voice SP12-B 12" Radax Speaker (with built-in "Whizzer" high-frequency radiator); the precision-built Garrard RC-80 3-speed record changer, and the General Electric RPX-050 triple-play cartridge with dual-tip sapphire stylus. These top-quality matched components form a superb high fidelity installation at a truly modest price. For 110-120 volts, 60 cycle AC. Shpg. wt., 60 lbs.

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FM-AM-PHONO SYSTEM

Same as above, but includes the new KNIGHT Model 727 FM-AM High Fidelity Tuner for complete radio-phono entertainment. Tuner has dual built-in antennas, FM RF stage, minimum drift. Shpg. wt., 76 lbs.

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An *Altogether* new idea for music lovers!

The new craftsmen
"Assembly"
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DID YOU KNOW that buried away in your own phonograph records there's a treasure of beautiful music you probably have never heard? It's true! Today's High Fidelity recording (and broadcasting) techniques bring you music with a clarity and tonal range never before possible outside the concert hall.

To enjoy this full measure of realism, you need an instrument capable of reproducing all the music without distortion—a High Fidelity home music system.

Now, in one package, the world's most respected name in High Fidelity brings you a complete system of perfectly matched units—the Craftsmen "ASSEMBLY."

You get the performance-proved Craftsmen FM-AM Tuner and Amplifier

... two new Craftsmen speakers coaxially mounted and 3-speed record player with dual sapphire magnetic pick-up... many accessories, too.

The Craftsmen "ASSEMBLY" is waiting for your critical ear in the sound rooms of a Radio Parts Supplier near you. Drop in today for a demonstration of distinctly better listening.

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Ask your Supplier for a copy of this 24-page booklet by Deems Taylor—or write to us, enclosing 10¢ to cover handling and mailing.



high fidelity by craftsmen means distinctly better listening

The Radio Craftmen, Inc., Dept. HA, 4401 N. Ravenswood Ave., Chicago 40, Illinois

NOTED WITH INTEREST

Continued from page 10

station, WDUQ (91.4 mc) tells of their activities: on the air 14 hours a day; morning and afternoon programs devoted to in-school listening, good music in the evenings. Dinner music is programmed between 6 and 7, then features — such as opera Tuesday evenings, chamber music Thursdays, collectors' records on Fridays, and so forth. The WDUQ concert hall runs every night, time depending on other features.

Good listening . . . here as in many other parts of the country.

Record Sleeves

In the item about the Los Angeles Audio Fiesta, we mentioned plastic record sleeves. You know the fancy polyethylene sleeves which are used by some of the record manufacturers to protect their records? Well, now you can buy just the sleeves, and use them on your more valuable disks. They come in two styles: light weight to fit around a record-liner or jacket, and heavy weight to fit around the record and slip inside the cardboard jacket. Either style is available in three sizes, for 7, 10 and 12 in. disks. Typical prices: 100 light weight album sleeves for 12-in. albums cost \$3.43, postage paid. For more information on this worthwhile accessory, write Bradley Mfg. Co., 11 West Magnolia Blvd., Burbank, Calif.

HF, VHF, UHF, SHF

While on this subject, we might bring to the attention of readers the suggestion in the latest copy of the *Journal of the Audio Engineering Society* that fidelity be classified into four categories. Qualifications are technical and stringent, but nomenclature is going to make Bob Stephens (see below) have nightmares for a week: high fidelity, very high fidelity, ultra high fidelity and super high fidelity.

Cabinet Design Sheets

James B. Lansing Sound (2439 Fletcher Drive, Los Angeles 39, Calif.) has just issued two data sheets giving complete design details for two of their most popular enclosures. No. 31 is for two fifteens and a tweeter in a corner-type enclosure; No. 34 is of rectangular shape and is designed around a single 15-in. speaker and a tweeter.

Confused by "high" fidelity?

If you've been confused trying to find a precise definition of "high fidelity," perhaps Bob Stephens, president of Stephens Manufacturing Co. (Tru-Sonic loudspeakers) has an answer for you. He says, in essence, don't call it high fidelity. His choice: "true fidelity." He has, as a matter of fact,

Continued on page 14

THERE'S NO SPEAKER SYSTEM LIKE IT...

the
deMARS
Loudspeaker system

**AUTHENTIC BASS REPRODUCTION
AND GENUINE CONCERT HALL QUALITY
IN A COMPACT DIRECT
RADIATION SPEAKER SYSTEM.**

"I have developed a new loudspeaker system incorporating the "Styrocone" speaker, capable of reproducing the sounds of musical instruments from the lowest bass notes through the entire tonal spectrum, into the highest frequencies. This unit is distinguished by naturalness of sound reproduction and resulting excellence of musical definition, which permits listening at concert volume without fatigue. These characteristics are obtained in a unit so compact that it is eminently suitable and practical for home use."

Paul A. deMars



**Model S
Basic System
\$250***

**Model SC
Corner Style
\$450***



**Model SW
Wall Style
\$450***



Basic system is mounted on wooden baffle board 22" x 32".

Enclosures are custom-built of finest, genuine solid furniture woods, all hand-finished in mahogany, walnut, or blonde, to your preference.

*FOB Lawrence, Mass.

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<p>Q. What is the deMars speaker system?</p> <p>A. A multi-cone system with a single voice coil mechanism, supported by an array of very high frequency direct radiators.</p>	<p>Q. What kind of loudspeaker system is the deMars?</p> <p>A. It is a direct radiation system as distinguished from acoustic coupling devices, such as horn types or acoustically baffled systems.</p>
<p>Q. How does the deMars system achieve better reproduction?</p> <p>A. Through the multi-cone principle, which presents the optimum vibrating surface for each area of frequencies over the tonal spectrum.</p>	<p>Q. Why was this new type of direct radiation system required?</p> <p>A. To obtain authentic bass response in the home within acceptable sized enclosures, and independent of location in the living room.</p>
<p>Q. What distinguishes the deMars system from all others?</p> <p>A. It incorporates a new device, called the "Styrocone", which enlarges the vibrating surface beyond that of any other single multi-cone type unit known today... much larger than any other direct radiation system on the market.</p>	<p>Q. What is the advantage of a direct radiation system, such as the deMars?</p> <p>A. It performs better than other types of speakers, except when they are coupled with horns or baffles of prodigious size... and, it is much more flexible and practical for economical installation.</p>

Q. What is the opinion of the critics?

A. The new deMars system has been tested under many and varied room conditions. Critics have been unanimous in their enthusiasm.

Q. Is the deMars system available, and what does it cost?

A. Yes... it is available now, in three models, each built under Mr. deMars' personal direction. The basic system comes pre-assembled and mounted... can be installed quickly and without difficulty by simply connecting 2 wires.

— MAIL COUPON TODAY —

deMars Engineering & Manufacturing Co.
360 Merrimac Street,
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Gentlemen:

Enclosed is my check — money order — for style.....

Send me your illustrated literature on the deMars Speaker System.


Send information as to where I can hear the deMars Speaker System.

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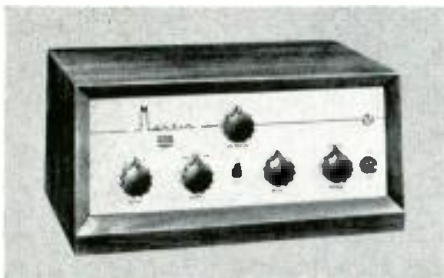


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True Tone-Balance



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True "tone-balance" is most essential to your full enjoyment of music. MARTIN High Fidelity instruments give you the necessary flexibility of control to assure you of the precise "tone-balance" your ear demands. There's no greater pleasure in High Fidelity than MARTIN true "tone-balance".



Model 352CA Control Amplifier . . . gives you these essential features . . .

- Absolutely hum-free stable operation
- Simplified operation (feminine music lovers please note)
- Stepless treble and base controls

Plus . . . Loudness control, tape recorder output, multiple input, extreme high gain.



Only Model 352A Amplifier combines all 3 of these essential qualities in one amplifier . . .

- Wide Frequency Range
- Unusually Low Distortion
- Enduring Quality of Construction

MARTIN advanced engineering assures you the best in High Fidelity.

New AM-FM Tuner, Model 153-T . . .

- Finds Stations Faster
- Locks-in Stations Positively
- Wider Reception Range

Martin's top quality pre-amplifier "built-in". No drift, more effective AFC; greater sensitivity, better than 1 micro-volt AM and FM.



MARTIN Amplifiers available for rack mounting and with various output impedances for laboratory use.

WRITE TODAY for FREE Brochure on New MARTIN Amplifiers and Tuners



... BUILDING THE BEST
... IN HIGH FIDELITY

H. S. MARTIN & COMPANY, 1916-20 GREENLEAF ST., EVANSTON, ILL.

NOTED WITH INTEREST

Continued from page 12

banned the use of the term "high fidelity" in all future advertising, publicity and promotion copy dealing with his line of speakers. "There are no degrees of death or pregnancy," Stephens announced. "Neither are there degrees of fidelity. Furthermore, there has been confusion in the minds of many whether the term means fidelity in the high ranges only or the utmost degree of fidelity." The term, true fidelity, as used by his organization explicitly means absolute faithfulness of reproduction throughout the entire sound spectrum.

Well, that's one way out of a tangle, but we're afraid that pretty soon we'd have liar's fidelity, true . . . truer . . . truest fidelity, and so forth.

And we'll also admit — and deplore — the fact that high fidelity means, for some, higher and higher highs and that's about all. But the final answer is likely to be an educated, mature buying public.

Hi Schools

Bill Poor, of Sterling Radio Products Co., in Houston, Texas, wrote us recently to say, "Re your article on 'Junior Fi,' we've got hi fi here in our Junior Hi(gh)."

Seems that Houston's \$2.5 million Burbank Junior High School was opened four years ago, complete with low fi. Shocked hi-fi enthusiasts, including W. H. Powell, principal of the school, put their heads together and evolved a plan for a cooperative effort on the part of the school's wood-working class and Sterling Radio. Result was a portable phonograph cabinet, fitted with a Webcor changer, GE variable reluctance cartridge, Bogen DB-10 amplifier, and a University 6201 speaker in an R-J-type enclosure. Success was immediate; subsequent activities have included the construction of two folded-horn enclosures, for 15-inch speakers, for use in the school auditorium and a special, three-speaker, infinite baffle enclosure mounted on rubber casters for use on or off the stage.

Good use is being made of the equipment: each morning, for half an hour before the start of school, a hi-fi concert is given. Daily bulletins are published announcing the records to be played the next morning. At present, these concerts attract several hundred students.

Shades of the one-room school house. Bet the kids didn't arrive *there* early!

The Thrill That Comes Once . . .

HIGH FIDELITY contributing editor Ed Wallace wrote us a while ago about amplifier and other kits. Asked if we thought, in spite of his professed (and apparently genuine) complete lack of experience, he could get a kit to work successfully. With a slightly nasty smile, we wrote back, "Sure, Old Man. Go right ahead!" The saga of a lifetime is told in two postcards:

Card No. 1: "Dear Charles: I bought a Williamson amplifier kit and if it goes as

Continued on page 104

**ULTIMATELY,
EVERY PERSON WHO OWNS OR PLANS TO OWN
A FINE HOME MUSIC SYSTEM MUST FACE THIS QUESTION:**

**“Shall I buy a Turntable
or a Record Changer?”**

The following statement represents the point of view of one of America's leading manufacturers of professional recording and playback equipment.

The choice between record changer and turntable is, for the most part, entirely personal to the user. It depends upon what he wants. If it is merely the physical comfort of hearing hours and hours of just music, without manual intervention, then the choice would be a record changer. On the other hand, if it is his desire to enjoy the utmost in sound quality, then a quality turntable is certainly indicated. In broadcast studios, for example, where reproduction quality is of prime importance, turntables are used exclusively.

The Record Changer

The record changer is an extremely clever device, and much ingenuity has gone into its complex mechanism. It originated in the days when 78 rpm was the only popular record speed, and the playing time of a 12-inch record was only about 4 minutes per side. A complete 40 minute musical composition required at least 10 sides or 5 records. The record changer made it possible for these records to be played automatically, without the need for getting up every three or four minutes to change records.

The Long Playing Record

The long-playing, microgroove record has changed all of this. Each side of a

12-inch long-playing record disc provides about 25 minutes of music. The same 40 minute composition now requires only two sides of a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm 12-inch record. The long-playing record has also brought tremendous improvements in the quality of recorded sound. As a result, the older 78s are rapidly becoming obsolete among serious music lovers.

The High Quality Turntable

The turntable is basically a simple device. A manufacturer who desires to create a high quality instrument can devote all of his engineering skill to the one important function of the turntable: its rotating motion. A Rek-O-Kut turntable, for example, offers the closest approach to perfect motion; with virtually no rumble, wow, flutter, or other mechanical distortion.

There are other important advantages to the turntable. Once the angle between the stylus and record is established, it remains constant for all time. In the case of the record changer, this angle varies, depending upon the number of records stacked underneath the record 'in play'.

A turntable has a 'live' spindle, meaning that it rotates with the table and the record. The spindle of most changers remain stationary so that

there is an element of wear introduced whereby the spindle hole of the record may become enlarged, and cause off-center wow. Similar wear can result as the record is dropped, and it slides down the long spindle.

A third advantage peculiar to Rek-O-Kut is that the turntable itself is machined from aluminum castings. Aluminum is unaffected by magnetism, and therefore, the turntable exerts no 'pull' when used with a magnetic cartridge. With steel and other magnetic materials, the magnetic pull may actually cause the stylus to 'ride the groove' with a pressure considerably greater than recommended.

Conclusion

High fidelity is rapidly becoming a part of our home life. This is expressive of the typically American desire for the enjoyment of finer things. As specialists in the field of professional sound reproduction, and having served this field for years, we welcome the fact that this wonderful experience is now being adopted in the American home.

Rek-O-Kut precision turntables are among the finest in the world. Every detail of their construction is carefully engineered to provide the finest quality record reproduction. Whether you now own or plan to own a music system, we urge you seriously to consider one of the several Rek-O-Kut turntables. You will find that it makes all the difference in the world.

Literature on Request

Export Division: MORHAN EXPORTING CORP.
458 Broadway, New York 13, N. Y.
Cable: MORHANEX
In Canada: ATLAS RADIO CORP., Ltd.
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THE REK-O-KUT COMPANY

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WITH
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SPEAKERS

MODEL 206AX

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206AX 15" coaxial
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FEATURES

- ★ 7½ lbs. Alnico Magnet
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- ★ Low Frequency Cone Resonance—35 c.p.s.
- ★ Frequency Response 30 to 18,000 c.p.s.

For emotionally satisfying... thrilling new sound sensations, music critics choose Stephens Tru-Sonic True Fidelity Speakers. Made by the Nation's number one pioneer in *High Fidelity* reproducing equipment, these outstanding Speakers will give you years of distortion-free listening pleasure.

Producing pure, clear tones of mellow richness, Tru-Sonic Speakers are a creation of advanced design and master craftsmanship. Frequency response is smooth and distortion-free from 30 to 18,000 c.p.s.

The International Standard. Write for descriptive literature and specifications.

STEPHENS



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SIR:

To Mr. David Kahn, of Silver Spring, Md., I say: "Why be a layman?" If he had devoted as much time to studying the subject as he did to writing his gripes he would no longer be a "layman."

As for: "... let hi-fi come out of its cloistered halls and beam its appeal to the masses" — quel blagh; or, in words of two syllables, God forbid! NO, I am not in sympathy with Mr. Kahn's plaintive bleat. There will be more than enough popularization with its attendant threats to integrity of technical standards without HIGH FIDELITY giving aid and comfort to the enemy.

And any time you want to go back to the bi-monthly schedule you will have my applause.

B. Tatum
Burlingame, Calif.

SIR:

HOORAY FOR YOU ON TWELVE ISSUES PER. WE LOVE THEM ALL.

E. J. Mills
White Plains, N. Y.

SIR:

I have been reading your magazine just about since it began, and therefore feel myself more or less entitled to put my two cents worth into the Readers' Forum, and also make a suggestion or two.

High fidelity reproduction techniques have entered the home of the average hi-fi man within the last five years or so, but it is just starting to really get rolling now. This should be evidenced by membership in the SME. It is also getting to be big business, as can be seen by the astronomical increase in the quantity of hi-fi equipment advertised in your magazine.

There are, however, a very large number of people who like myself, do not live in a center sufficiently large to house a "Sound Studio," and to have the necessary technicians, theoretical and practical, to ensure that our sets get the proper maintenance and treatment. We are, I suppose, doctors, lawyers, grocers, etc., mostly without involved electronic training. I have found that our radio service men are generally completely ignorant on this subject, and in fact seem to want to have nothing to do with anything that isn't TV. We must therefore look after our own sets, and that means that we must get ourselves educated.

I have a million questions, and no one to answer them. They range from definitions of such terms as intermodulation distortion, harmonic distortion, cause, effect and remedy of same, translation loss and many others. Actually HIGH FIDELITY Magazine got me into this mess, and I expect you to at least help me get out of it.

Continued on page 19

Now... the ultimate in Record Reproduction



THE *Ferranti*
RIBBON PICKUP

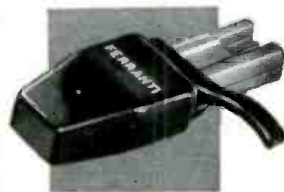
EXCLUSIVE FERRANTI DESIGN FEATURES

- Low mass high compliance ribbon movement.
- *Unequaled tracing accuracy.
- Arm resonance removed from audible range.
- Elliptical Diamond Stylus.
- Self Protecting Stylus Suspension.
- Double Ball Race Arm Bearing.
- Built In Arm Rest.

*The Ferranti Ribbon Pickup will reproduce, with negligible distortion, a frequency of 20,000 cps recorded at maximum level on a 5 inch diameter shellac disc at 78 rpm.

Ferranti is proud to introduce this high performance pickup designed by D. T. N. Williamson. Clearly destined to earn the same enthusiastic approval as the world famous Williamson Amplifier, its brilliant realism of reproduction is matched by the quiet elegance of its style.

Precision manufacture by specialists in delicate aircraft instruments insures continued *full* fidelity from your favorite records. Completely integrated design, from stylus to arm mounting, giving flat response from 20-20,000 cps, with extremely low distortion and negligible record wear.



Plug-in heads with diamond styli for 78 rpm and micro-groove records.



WRITE FOR FULL TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

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McIntosh

There's More *Listening Pleasure*
from *Any* record with the

C-108 Professional Audio Compensator



The abundant flexibility of the beautiful new McIntosh C-108 Professional Audio Compensator assures you of the most listening pleasure from all of your records. Five bass turnover switches and five treble attenuation positions as well as variable bass and treble controls compensate for all recording curves — those in use today and any that may be used in the future. A rumble filter diminishes or completely eliminates turntable rumble, especially annoying when listening to older records. An Aural Compensator Control maintains proper bass and treble loudness when you play your system at low volume level. *The C-108 for the first time combines beauty and abundant flexibility with ease of operation.*

FREE BOOKLET

Send for illustrated brochure on record company compensation curves.



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READERS' FORUM

Continued from page 16

You have probably got the largest group of good audio men in the country there. Why don't you start some sort of information and question and answer service, either by mail, or in the magazine at least for your subscribers. We are desperate.

Ross H. Laml
London, Ont., Canada

We've been trying grimly in our question-answering Readers' Service department to keep abreast of such questions. But more and more are coming in; many are similar, so we're working out details for an Audio Forum department in HIGH FIDELITY, wherein general questions, of interest to many readers, will be answered. We hope to begin this in May. — Editor.

SIR:

Mr. David Randolph's recommendation of Bach's *B-Minor Mass* for a basic Bach collection ("Building Your Record Library" — May, 1953) appears to be open to argument. The issue in question is Westminster WAL 301 recorded under Scherchen by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra and Akademie Kammerchor.

Unquestionably, Mr. Randolph's background is impressive, and his experience as a choral conductor must enable him to arrive at a sound judgment of any important oratorio performance. He thinks the above is a fine recording.

For the benefit of your readers and many Bach collectors, I beg to submit a dissenting opinion, introducing myself as a professional musicologist and associate professor of musicology in a New York graduate institute (merely in order to show that a reasonable degree of competence in musical judgment could be conceded to this writer as well).

Both performing organizations were — in pre-war Vienna — known to be mediocre; during World War II they deteriorated considerably in quality and precision. No indication has been found so far that they are climbing back to their reasonable previous standard. The recording in question was recently offered over a local radio station and we had kept the evening free and the telephone shut off to enjoy a rare musical treat. We were not able to stand more than about 10 minutes of the broadcast; then we turned the set off and raced downstairs for a violent walk to cool off our desperation and disappointment. We had found the performance near amateurish, distorted, full of choral and vocal flaws, mishaps. Long stretches were sung badly off pitch, which made listening very unpleasant to our professionally trained ears, and we regretted deeply that Hermann Scherchen's one-time distinction which has become somewhat questionable in recent years, was again discredited by a performance seriously below his stature.

What should the reader's reaction be in the face of two so strongly opposed opinions? Not more and not less than the conclusion that the musical qualities of this

Continued on page 20

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READERS' FORUM

Continued from page 19

recording are controversial and disputed. Before he decides to buy, he should compare with other available editions and find out by himself which of the two opinions he is inclined to share.

F. A. Kuttner, Ph.D.
Jackson Heights, N. Y.

Mr. Randolph, shown Dr. Kuttner's letter and asked if he wished to reply to it in this column, said that (1) he'd like to but lacked the time, since he was organizing a European tour, and that (2) he retained his original high regard for the Scherchen Bach *B-Minor Mass*. A haphazard poll of HIGH FIDELITY staff members familiar with the recording reveals that they, too, like the Scherchen version, though none of them claims to be an expert in Bach's music or choral singing. It is worth pointing out that two new versions of the *B-Minor Mass*, issued by Angel and Urania, recently have made their appearance. — Ed.

SIR:

In reply to the letter of Mr. Albert Sadler from San Diego, Calif., I will say that if it is correct to say Mr. Toscanini it is generally better to say "Maestro" Toscanini.

MORE THAN ANY OTHER MUSICIAN IN THE WORLD TOSCANINI DESERVES SUCH A TITLE.

In my opinion it is absolutely ridiculous to assert that such a title as "maestro" is reserved only to God (Jesus-Christ). God is a supreme master, a master of all things who cannot be compared with human beings. Toscanini is not a god, he is simply and finely a maestro. God is God that's all, and it seems enough to me. Don't you think so Mr. Sadler?

In this world, among human beings . . . sometimes we find great artists, very great artists, scientists, and different peoples of great achievement who have raised themselves from mediocrity, standard, and routine. Among them a few ones must be called master in their art, and then, the term maestro is perfectly correct. Toscanini is one of them, the greatest of all, the Prince of maestros.

To illustrate this assertion here an example: A work so well-known and so often played as Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite* is quite an adventure for the music-lover who listens to music for the first time under Toscanini's direction. A Toscanini record is always an experience of great interest for the listener.

Two great men cannot be compared when they practise distinct professions. Beethoven is no more great than Plato, Einstein or Toscanini. Beethoven is a very great composer, a genius among composers, and Toscanini is a very great conductor, he can be also called a genius of his kind. A poet has just said: "Comprendre c'est egaler." A composer like Beethoven can be a poor conductor. The composition is a thing, the art of conducting is another thing.

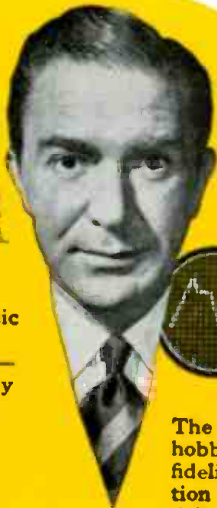
It is not true to say that the conductor is

Continued on page 23

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READERS' FORUM

Continued from page 20

something less than the composer. In considering the performance of music itself, the conductor has the same importance when he is great.

THE GLORY OF MUSIC IS EVER IN ITS PERFORMANCE.

In considering this fact we can say, that a great artist like conductor Toscanini is more than a servant to the music world.

There is no great music without great performance.

For a right performance a masterful direction is required. For this matter few conductors must be called "maestro."

Beethoven's Ninth can be worst or great. Composers and music-lovers are at the mercy of interpreters. Thanks to God, to NBC, and to RCA Victor in giving us Toscanini!

Paul Dupont
Montreal, Canada

SIR:

Mr. Don Basilio may take heart: there is at least one kindred spirit among the readership of HIGH FIDELITY — me. I, too, once attempted to listen to WQXR from the heart of Michigan, and finally mastered the situation by moving to Connecticut, where the WQXR programs come through nicely via Hartford's WDRC-FM.

However, Mr. Basilio's bane, the absolute obliteration of AM reception by interference from nearby television receivers, has caught up with me here. For all the superiority of FM, it has to be admitted that there are times when it is desirable to listen to an AM program, especially when there are no FM transmitters within 40 miles, and the New York network AM stations come through with bell-like clarity — when certain of my neighbors are *not* enjoying the dubious blessings of TV (I am not yet positive just who the sinners are, but I have a couple of pretty good ideas). Most of the time, however, the caterwauling and banshee howling that erupt from the speaker you wouldn't expect to hear this side of Bald Mountain.

Can it be that this unhappy situation is a dastardly plot on the part of the television manufacturers, designed to force the entire population into buying their products by destroying the usefulness of all AM radios?

Maybe the solution lies in countermeasures. Some brilliant radio engineer could probably devise an AM tuner circuit which would ruin television reception in the vicinity as effectively as some TV receivers now spoil AM reception.

On a more practical plane, I would like to know if there is anything I can do to improve things without acts of violence against the neighbors. Can I expect any better results from a hi-fi FM-AM tuner (in the \$150 class, say), or should I shelve my improvement plan, and concentrate on records.

Somebody must have a solution, and I, for another one (besides Mr. Basilio) would like to know what it is.

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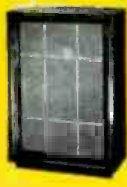
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AS THE EDITOR SEES IT

THIS issue of HIGH FIDELITY has, for us, particular significance: it is the first "extra" one. At last we are publishing a monthly and, to one who has long been in the publishing business, that makes things feel right. We are now wearing a full suit of clothes, not just a pair of slacks. And the suit has slipped onto our shoulders far more easily than we had anticipated. The editorial staff has speeded up admirably; advertisers have responded with unexpected enthusiasm. Thus, instead of starting with thin "extra" issues and building up to an even balance throughout the year, this one is surprisingly hefty — and the future looks bright indeed.

THE foregoing items about ourselves seem to have put us in a mood to take a look around at the high fidelity equipment and phonograph record industry. We returned, recently, from the Los Angeles Audio Fair, thus giving us a feeling that a cycle has been completed again: the three big Fairs have been held, the winter is well out of the way and spring, in most parts of the country, is just around the corner.

So where are we? The record industry has completed the greatest year in its history. Sales of a single classical album topped the hundred-thousand mark. A hi-fi demonstration album, released not long ago, gave promise of equally high sales. Thousands of new disks made their appearance; the index of records reviewed by this Magazine in 1953 includes more than 1,500 entries. And it might be said that hundreds of composers made their appearance; not new composers, but ones whose works had not been available to the home music listener at all or to any great extent.

Perhaps the most significant news of the record industry, from the point of view of the home listener striving for optimum sound reproduction, is that contained on page 50 of our previous issue: quietly and without fanfare, the record companies have been moving toward a standard equalization curve. What this means is that our children, instead of our grandchildren, will have two less knobs to twiddle with. Those with a sizeable record collection already will still need multi-position bass turnover and treble de-emphasis controls but will use these controls less and less as new records find their way into home collections.

In the equipment field, two aspects seem significant: competitiveness and the vest-pocket amplifier. Time was when the differences between amplifiers, for instance, was marked. There wasn't any comparison between one make and another, between one price class and another.

Today, the differences are becoming less and less noticeable, there being several fine pieces of equipment in each price class. The less expensive units are coming closer and closer to performance standards of the more expensive ones; refinements and operating facilities more and more significant. The problem for those of our staff who prepare the "Tested in the Home" reports is more and more difficult and delicate.

Partly as a result of this competitive situation, the second significant development took place: *multum in parvo*, the *parvo* applying to size, primarily, price secondarily, but scarcely at all to quality or what we have called "operating facilities." These are the vest-pocket amplifiers, boasting all the features and almost all the quality of their big brothers, but trimmed down to a point where they are easily mistaken for a man-sized preamp-control unit.

The improvement in general quality has occurred throughout the hi-fi equipment chain, from phonograph pickups to loudspeaker enclosures. The big enclosures are better, the small enclosures much better, and speakers are better.

Subterranean rumbles continue to be heard in the field of pre-recorded tape. An occasional reel, with fi hi-er than a good LP, makes an appearance; the back rooms are full of scuttlebutt, and becoming so very full that it seems unlikely that more than a few months will go by before they overflow into action. (Memo to the men in those back rooms: the fi on records is better than it used to be; better make those pre-recorded tapes really good!)

Speaking of tape — this aspect of the hi-fi business is beginning to break its bonds. Quality of the packaged units has improved rapidly, and manufacturers of tape recorders in the under-\$200 class have at last begun to look up from their desks and see the high fidelity army marching across the horizon. One or two production lines are in operation, more are coming; the audio shows of next fall will have some exciting exhibits — and we'll round up the present situation in the May issue of HIGH FIDELITY.

Last, but not least: binaural. More and more records are gradually coming on the market; binaural amplifiers and preamps are coming from all sides; BN tapes are not far over the horizon; binaural FM-AM tuners are now a fact; broadcasters are watching a little, programming a little. Main difficulty: no program material to speak of, since the good music stations are just about the only ones doing anything with binaural and most, if not all, their time is devoted to recorded music. Like tape recorders, binaural is gathering strength.

So — is that where we are? Seems that way at the moment. Settling down in some areas, simmering and almost ready to boil in others. — C. F.

Bayreuth: MIDSUMMER MAGIC

This account of a young Englishman's pilgrimage to the 1953 summer Wagner Festival was too lively, it seemed to us, to waste in autumn print, so it was saved for use in spring, when imagination awakes and even Rhine Journeys seem not out of the world

by RICHARD WRATHALL



IT WAS a distinguished London medical specialist, trained by the demands of his profession to avoid inaccurate or pointless utterance, who said to me: "So you are going to Bayreuth. You will be very impressed." This was a thoughtful prophecy of what would be; it was not sarcasm. For though he had put aside what he considered to be monster-music of Wagner in favor of the more subtle French school, he acknowledged that the Wagner stage was one, purgatorial as it might be in his eyes, through which no self-respecting music lover could help passing, and one which some might choose never to abandon. He had been to the Bayreuth Festival before the 1939 war. He had known it therefore at the time when the word of Richard Wagner was accepted literally and obeyed unquestioningly, and when the producers at the Festspielhaus were impartial executors of his testament, being thus denied the right to an interpretation of their own. All that I knew of the Bayreuth atmosphere I gleaned from my medical friend, and the nearer the train came to Bayreuth, the firmer was my conviction that to turn about suddenly in the street would be to catch a glimpse of the Master, a few yards behind, smiling blandly or perhaps doffing the red velvet cap. But Bayreuth today is too up-to-date for magic of this kind. Instead, the first notables to be seen were the representative of the American Express Company and the U. S. transportation officer at the station of his garrison town, to which the U. S. occupation force accords no

preferential treatment, or at least have not heretofore.

The war has made great changes. The town was excessively damaged by bombing, which the Wagner home, Wahnfried, did not escape. Modern reconstruction inside the villa extinguished Wahnfried as Wagner knew it—only the original facade remains. Then it was used as a mess by the U. S. Army; here lived strangers where before there were only Wagners. Meanwhile in the Festspielhaus, highest temple of the faith, the old scenery, cherished from year to year, has been lost, looted or broken. On the sacred stage army camp shows were held; orchestras and piano-players, invisible like the Wagner orchestra in the recesses of a spacious pit, punched out dance music smooth and smoochy. In the auditorium gum was chewed, and shrill catcalls echoed, suggesting, but unconsciously, the anguished screams of Kundry, hitherto the only deliberate discordance heard within the theatre.

All these things prologued the emancipation of Bayreuth. Wieland and Wolfgang Wagner, the gifted grandsons

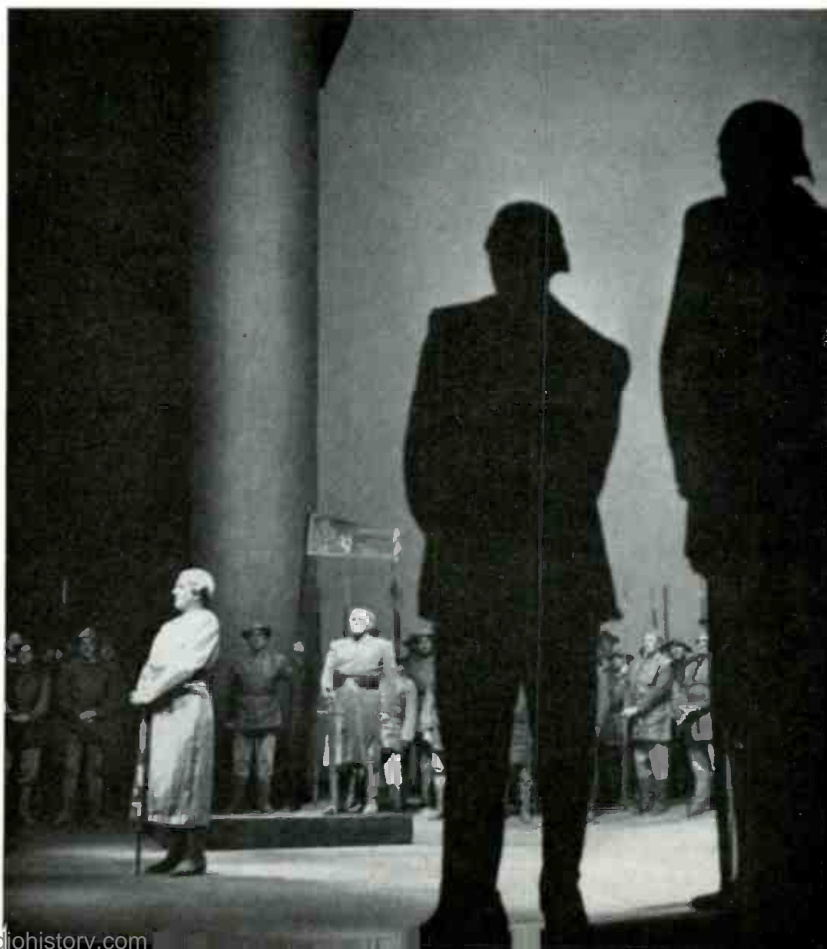
As a service to readers, HIGH FIDELITY has arranged to make available without charge an informational booklet about the Bayreuth Festival. Address your request: HIGH FIDELITY Magazine, The Publishing House, Great Barrington, Mass. A list of other foreign summer music festivals begins on page 87. A U. S. festival list is in preparation.

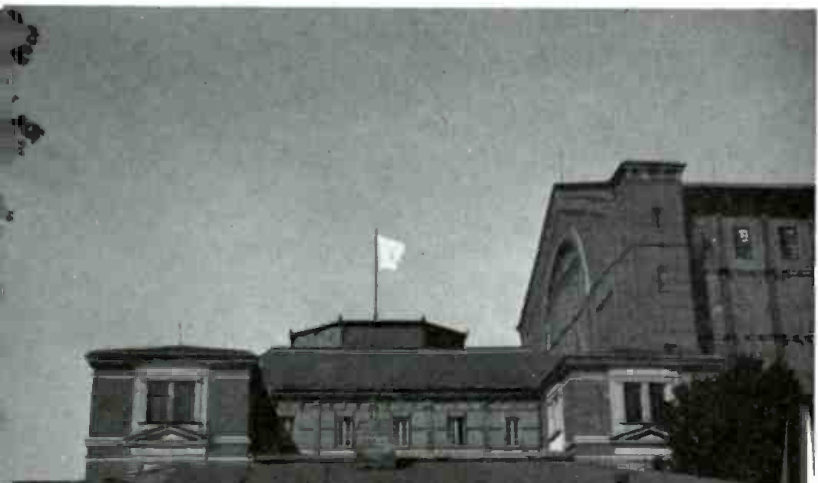
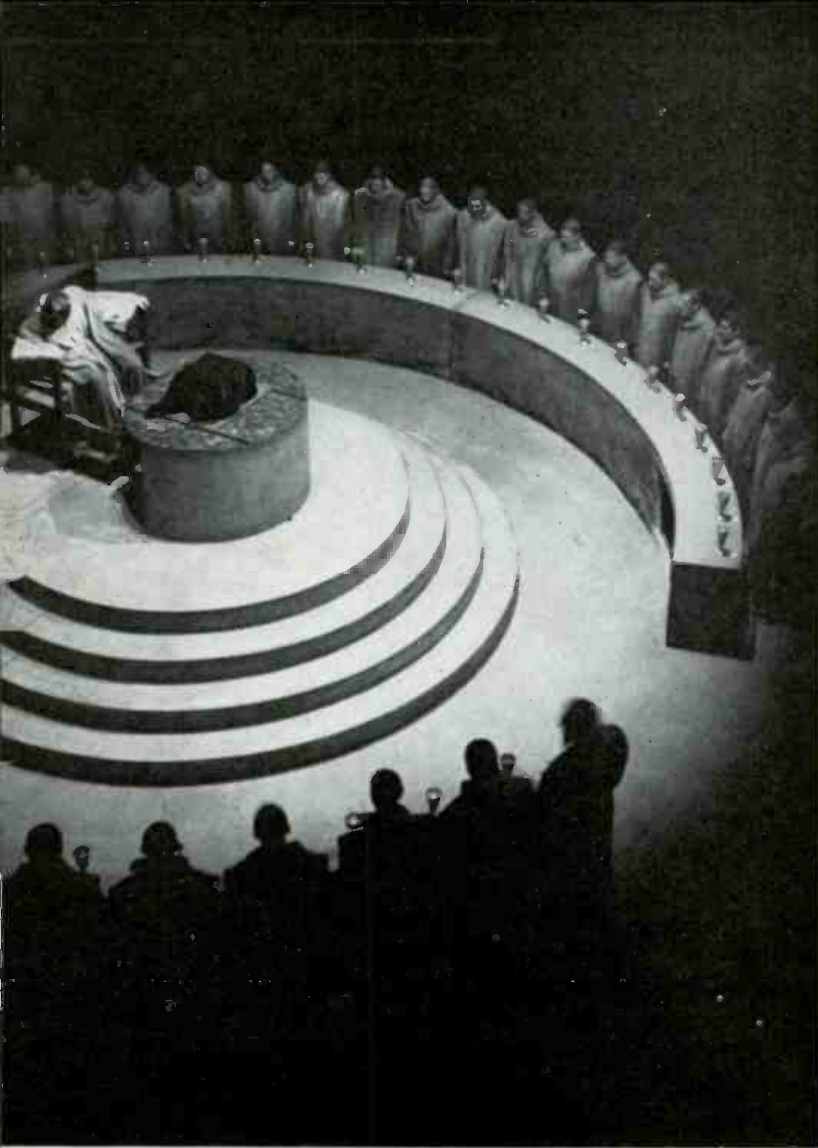
of Richard Wagner, were not immune to the change in atmosphere, and their work as directors of the Festival marks the "liberalization" of the cult, especially in the actual production of the Wagner operas. Tradition plays a part still, but it no longer dominates exclusively. Economically it was found impossible to replace the missing scenery, so solid sets made way for stage effects by gauzes and lighting, which at times — particularly in the *Parsifal* production by Wieland Wagner — touched on the miraculous; this being precisely as the Master would have wished it and known it, had he enjoyed the technical developments of the present day. In this wonderful new *Parsifal*, suggestion is everything. Only the pillars and circular prayer-stalls of the Grail scene are tangible; lighting coaxes the imagination to provide the rest. Gone is the revolving set in Act I; gone too the dove, so often a graceless, stuffed bird, replaced today by the powerful suggestion of lighting and upturned eyes. In the *Ring* there are no longer horns on the Walküre helmets, for the lighter the helmet the easier and the better to sing in it. Also a careful reconsideration of the text has led to the transformation of Hagen from an incredible ancient villain into a vital and sinister hoodlum, of the same age as Siegfried. These are typical departures from the old policy of strict observance come-what-may.

To the townsfolk of Bayreuth the Festival period is naturally one of increased activity and profit, yet store-keepers do not seem interested in the family at Wahnfried, who are a direct cause of the boom. News agents sell photographs of the children of Wieland and Wolfgang — a fourth generation of Bayreuth Wagners — without being able to tell you their names. They do not consider the Wagners of 1953 to be the ruling family of Bayreuth. Yet their grandfathers had once looked upon Richard Wagner as its uncrowned king, partly, it is true, because of his friendship with the King of Bavaria, but, more especially, in appreciation of the superlative genius of the man, and of the rarity with which such genius is set down among us. Wagner achieved in Bayreuth a condition approaching divinity during his lifetime, for, like Napoleon on St. Helena, he was the creator of the legend which he intended for posterity. The Bayreuthers were not slow in absorbing it. Today it is different; the Wagners are not aloof; they live much more according to the regular pattern of life in their native town. There is no aura of mystery about them, so interest has waned.

This is not to say that there is no indication for the casual visitor that Bayreuth is the Wagner town. The main street is the Richard Wagner Strasse; to get from my lodgings to the Festival performances, I ambled along the Nibelungen Strasse, past the junction of the Meistersinger Strasse, under a signpost indicating the Richard Wagner Krankenhaus, and finally up the luscious avenue

Strikingly akin to the musico-psychological devices employed by Richard Wagner to create atmosphere are the light-and-shadow effects contrived by his grandsons, Wieland and Wolfgang, for today's Bayreuth productions. Above, at right, the finale of Parsifal, illumined by Grail-glow. Beneath: Lohengrin, Act I.





of chestnuts, bordering grass and flowers, which is the Siegfried Wagner Allee — the only approach to the mighty Festspielhaus. And if Wagner no longer dominates the town spiritually as much as he did, his Festspielhaus continues to dominate it geographically. Perched on the hilltop, like an outsize bird, of deliverance or of prey according to choice, it is an immense building of wood beams laid horizontal, vertical and diagonal among pale red bricks, suggesting walls of crazy paving. In overall shape it recalls the granaries of the Middle West. At the front, on ground level, is a terrace overlooking the single avenue from the town. Here the audience gathers before the performances and in the course of the long intervals; women almost all in long evening dresses; men in a hundred travesties of the tuxedo, for which it appeared the bow tie alone is a *sine qua non*. Worship starts at four, and there is a touch of unreality about such formal dress under a roaring afternoon sun. Beyond the terrace throng the townspeople, crowd-gazing and bullied by a perspiring force of the local constabulary. There is already a fever of excitement when the brass section of the orchestra appears on the balcony over the central door, to play a fanfare. For each act of each opera there is a different fanfare, chosen by Wagner to summon his audience. Above the bustling scene, on a tall mast, billows a white flag concealing in fluttering folds a red "W," ornately and roundly embroidered upon it. Perhaps it is in these few minutes of expectancy, before the doors close on the prelude to Act I, that Wagner looms strongest as a living spirit. In conversation one hears "Wagner says" or "Wagner thinks" and it is meant in the present tense.

Inside the Festspielhaus, a black hood, shaped like a breaking wave, conceals from the audience the conductor and his orchestra in a positive dungeon of a pit; built to hold 150 players it goes deep under the vast stage. Backward of the hood the rows of seats rise quickly, arranged as an amphitheater in the Roman style. Along the walls, like grapes on a vine, clusters of lights in globes of frosted glass flicker and fade. Pretty program sellers in neat, pale blue dresses draw the doors shut and vanish. The only lights are the bleary exit signs and at stage level a magical glow from the orchestra pit. Suddenly the music rises as if from nowhere and the existence of any human agency within the pit is betrayed only by the fleeting shadow of the conductor's arms, thrown occasionally high up on the proscenium arch. Passively the gorgeous velvet curtain hangs until stealthily, almost sensuously, it parts in the center to be gathered upwards and inwards to the wings. Almost every stage setting is dimly lit; then come the voices and a straining of the eyes to see where from. For 1,800 Wagnerites this is the moment of fulfillment.

Continued on page 87

Simplicity in scenery is the rule throughout. At top, left, Act I, Scene 2 of Parsifal. Below it, Lohengrin makes his last-act farewell. At bottom is shown the Festspielhaus, from the right of the main entrance. The octagonal gallery surmounted by the Wagner flag is used by brass players to summon audiences inside.



HI-FI OVERSIMPLIFIED

by PAUL SAMPSON

EXCEPT for the sexual behavior of the human female, a timeless topic recently reviewed by Dr. Kinsey, few subjects have received so much space in our popular magazines lately as something called hi-fi (I presume that the readers of this magazine are familiar with the subject and need no further definition). Every week brings a new article, or perhaps it is the same article with a new author, telling us in glowing words just how we can bring the New York Philharmonic "right into our own living room" (as if it weren't crowded enough already with all that television has brought into it; we still have a catcher and a leftfielder left over from the World Series) or how we can now hear *every* sound created at a musical performance, including the un-musical grunts of Mr. Pablo Casals. The article is usually accompanied by a diagram, simple enough for even an MIT graduate to follow, showing the various "components" in a "basic" hi-fi rig. Somewhere near the end of the article, the enthusiastic author tells you that all the components are available from your neighborhood drugstore for something like \$23.68 and that with some good old American ingenuity you can put them together yourself. (The price, of course, does not include a cabinet, and it is assumed that your wife will not mind a few pieces of audio equipment strewn around the living room that evening when the members of the Philharmonic — in white tie and tails — come in to play.)

Finally, so that you will be better prepared to discuss the whole thing intelligently with your druggist, there is a separate description of each component. It goes something like this:

Cartridge. Sometimes termed the "pickup," but because of its connotations, this term is losing favor among sound engineers. The pickup is the heart of any good sound system. It consists of two basic parts, er, components — the crystal and the needle. You may save money here by using the crystal from that old car's whisker radio set up in the attic. Of course, the cat's whisker itself is not hi-fi and you can't use it. Now you have the crystal. Easy, wasn't it? Next, the needle, or stylus, as it is called by the audio experts. I prefer the term "needle," since stylus is too closely associated in the popular mind with Babylonian cuneiform writing. This leads to confusion. Cactus needles undoubtedly are the best, though in a pinch a diamond needle will do. Remember, the needle vibrates as much as 21 million times a second. It's got to be good. Raise your own cactus plants and your stylus, oops, *needle* problem is licked.

Cost: Nothing for the crystal if your attic is well-stocked, or 39 cents, net; 79 cents for a dime store cactus.

Turntable. This should be round and should revolve rapidly or slowly, depending upon the record you're playing. The turntable is the heart of any good sound system. The motor driving it should be of the six pole, very reluctant type. A motor with fewer poles — actually eight is optimum, but, remember, this is a *basic* set — will cause distressing wows and rumbles. A little soda will help the rumbles. The record changer is very important or unimportant, depending on what you are doing when the record ends.

Cost: \$5.00.

Amplifier. A boxlike device with a lot of tubes and wires. Careful of the tubes. They get hot. The amplifier is the heart of any good sound system. Some authorities say the amplifier should produce 10 watts of power at three percent distortion . . . but this is getting too technical. Besides, 10 watts is obviously not enough. The average electric light bulb is 100 watts, isn't it? Of course. And certainly an amplifier does a more complex job than a light bulb. Your amplifier should produce a minimum of 100 watts of power and — let's not get too technical — but the less distortion the better.

Loudspeaker. Here we enter the bewildering realm of tweeter and woofer and coaxial and bifocal. Forget everything you have read about speakers, but, remember, the loudspeaker is the heart of any good sound system. Once again, your attic may be a treasure trove. An old horn-type speaker if properly mounted and coupled with the above listed quality parts, er, components, will produce all the bass and treble you and your dog can hear.

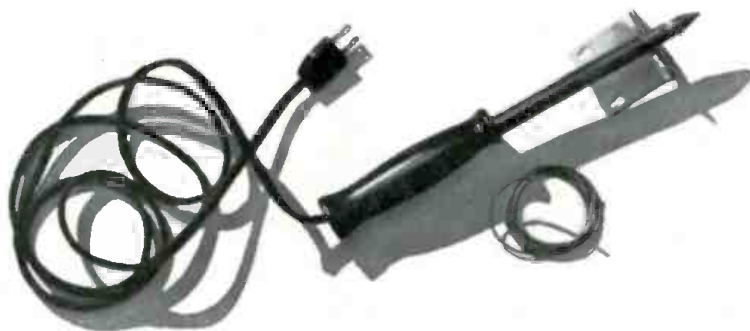
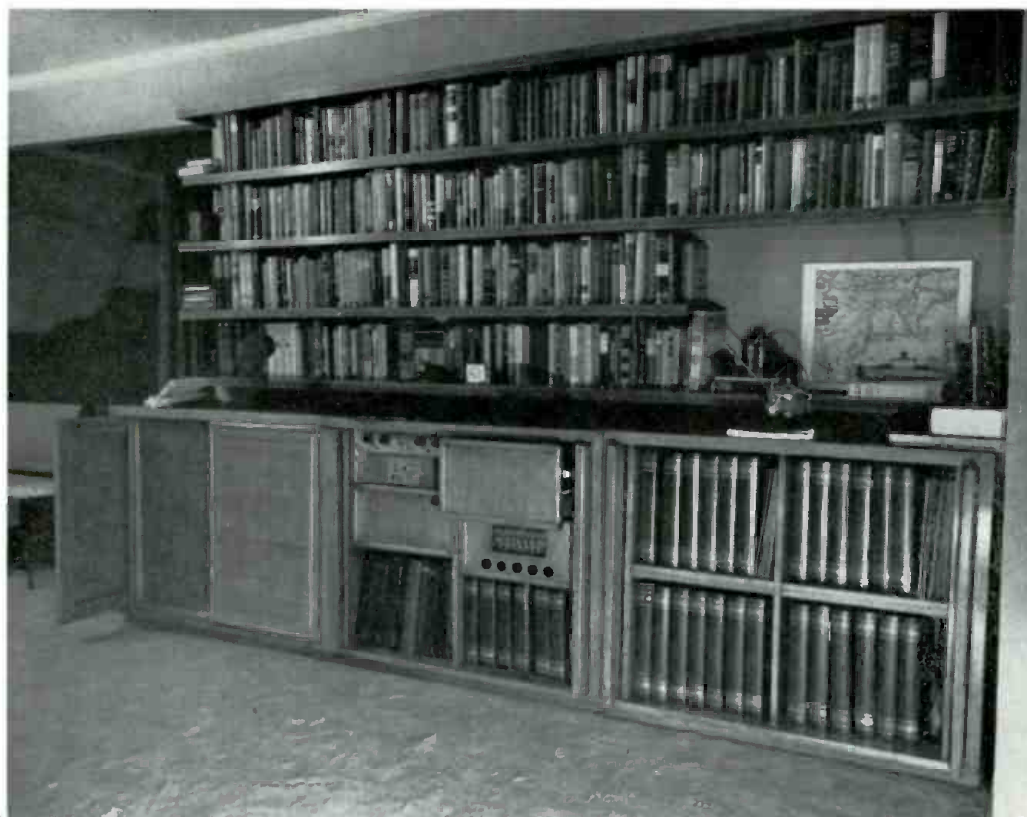
The enclosure is the most important part of the speaker system, in fact, some engineers say it is the heart of your sound system. For best results, mount the speaker in an old orange crate. The sound filters through the slats with a maximum of 2 percent distortion, compared to the 3.2 percent of the obsolescent bass reflex enclosures. Some authorities prefer banana baskets for speaker enclosures, but I feel that their slats are a little too closely spaced, resulting in a muffled tone. (There's always the danger of tarantulas, too.)

Cost: A little scavenging in the attic, or a good second-hand store will let you have a horn speaker (those with fluted ends are the best) for \$2.50.

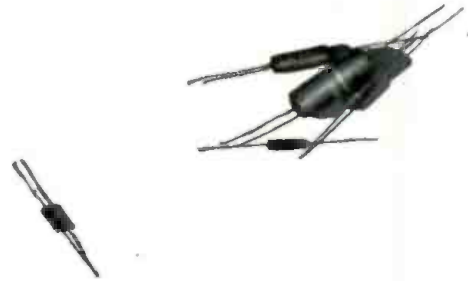
There you have it. After a simple wiring job you're all ready to go. Just pile the components on a bookcase somewhere but above all, don't buy an expensive cabinet — it will only hide the fact that you have hi-fi. Turn them on and there it is — concert hall realism in your own home. Happy listening!

Custom Installations

DIRECTLY below is a music system designed for his Long Island residence by Paul R. Asb, of the Espey Manufacturing Company. Components include three Wharfedale speakers, Ferranti pickup, Espey tuner and amplifier. At lower left is the hand-rubbed pride and joy of Roy R. Mumma, of Pittsburgh. It drives an Altec 604-B, mounted elsewhere. Also present but not shown are matching cabinets for TV and for record storage, all in blond Korina wood.



N. H. Moore, Palatine, Ill., packaging engineer, himself built the cherry-wood cabinet that houses his rig, at right.



The two pictures of the magnificent installation at the left should be visualized back to back (flower vase is reference-point). Control panel swivels to face either room. Briggs-inspired speaker-enclosure is brick, behind its facade. Owner-builder is Z. L. Bakoss, South Charleston, W. Va. Below is Klipschorn installed by H. B. Prescott for Mrs. Mildred Nims, Northfield, Mass., and gaily decorated by the lady herself.





**WHAT
SHALL
WE
DO
WITH**

Jazz?

IN THE past decade, almost too much has been said and written about jazz — with the result that more now needs to be said.

"Yes, I was once a jazz *aficionado*," a serious-minded young American composer told me recently, "but I soon found out that all the jazz people ever did was flap their suspenders at you and shout 'Man, dig that Louie!' I have since suffered a strong disaffection for the music."

Possibly he was a little *too* serious-minded. Indeed, for "serious," some people might substitute the less complimentary "stuffy." Still, his chief complaint was directed not so much at jazz as at its camp followers. And there is just possibly something there to complain about. They do pose a problem.

It begins with a dilemma, but that is just the beginning. The dilemma grows out of the fact that jazz was neglected by academicians for years, because of its undeniably gaudy origins. This built up an intolerance which is still with us. To combat that intolerance, those outside the academies have had two answers, neither of them very objective. One, that jazz is admittedly low, degenerate, and lacking in heredity or status, but that this makes it all the more appealing. "How many of today's Shakespeare scholars," they challenge, "would have dared the pit in Shakespeare's time?" The point is pretty well taken; Villon might not have made a comfortable drinking companion for members of the French Academy. But such arguments should not be over-worked, and this one has. In fact, it has generated some of the most purple polemics to see print since the mauve decade.

The second answer to academicians has been to the effect that jazz music, admittedly humble in its primary stages, can by scholarly incantation be elevated to a more dignified status. The omnibus of contemporary musicological jargon is rolled out of the garage, brushed up a bit for good measure, then sent careening down the highway, hell-bent for Parnassus and mighty careless

BY FREDERIC RAMSEY, JR.

of simple pedestrians along the way. Is there, please God, no simple way to get at the subject? Does every one interested have to run a gauntlet of "experts" and be intimidated by dogmatic statements and their reverse, the equally dogmatic rebuttals that accompany them? Does one have to wade knee-deep in prose-grass to get at a fact?

For the time being, it would appear that one does. Let us turn our backs, then, on this situation — our backs being turned will not affect it either way — and probe at some of its origins.

To begin with, our awareness of jazz is relatively new, if we care to look at it in historical perspective. Its roots may go back to the day the first Africans were dragged onto the North American Continent and its related islands; its first outpourings may be confined to the latter part of the 19th century; its birth-pangs and teething were suffered in the early part of the 20th. It has existed a little over 50 years; almost no record of this existence was set down until it had been played for close to 20 years. Then, a white orchestra, deriving its style from jazz as it had been played in New Orleans, finally got to New York and was recorded in 1917.

Setting aside one of the controversies that rages over jazz' origin — whether early jazz was ragtime, or early ragtime was jazz — the fact remains that no one wrote or recorded anything about a jazz performance prior to this date. Nor did the word "jazz" as applied to this music (which we shall not attempt to define, for fear of getting hung up on another controversy) come into any sort of general use until the years *circa* 1917.

As a word, it has been traced to West Africa, where it meant the act of sexual connection; and to Shakespeare's English, where it referred, as adjective, to a chase (jazz) hawk. Variant interpretations assign it to the French verb *jaser*, to converse. Perhaps there is a link to the African meaning in the English legal use of the word "conversation" to denote sexual intimacy.

Use of the word to designate an as-yet-undescribed music was intended to be insulting; it grew out of a rivalry between the established union musicians of Chicago and a group of newcomers to that city. Tom Brown's "Dixieland" Band from New Orleans did not have clearance with the union, and its membership, quick to respond to a cultural challenge, started a whispering campaign. They said the band at Lamb's Cave played "jazz" or "jass" music. That was in 1915.

Whether it was this name-calling that quashed any study of jazz, or whether it was just let alone because no one cared, does not need to be established. The word must have done something; aside from a few blurbs in the popular press, one does not encounter too many references to jazz in bibliographies of the 1920s or early 1930s. One might except from this an early monograph by Nicholas J. G. Ballanta-Taylor, "Jazz Music and its Relation to African Music," which appeared in *Musical Courier* in 1922; and "Jazz Structure and Influence," by Aaron Copland, published in *Modern Music*, 1927. Neither author seemed inclined to amplify his first effort.

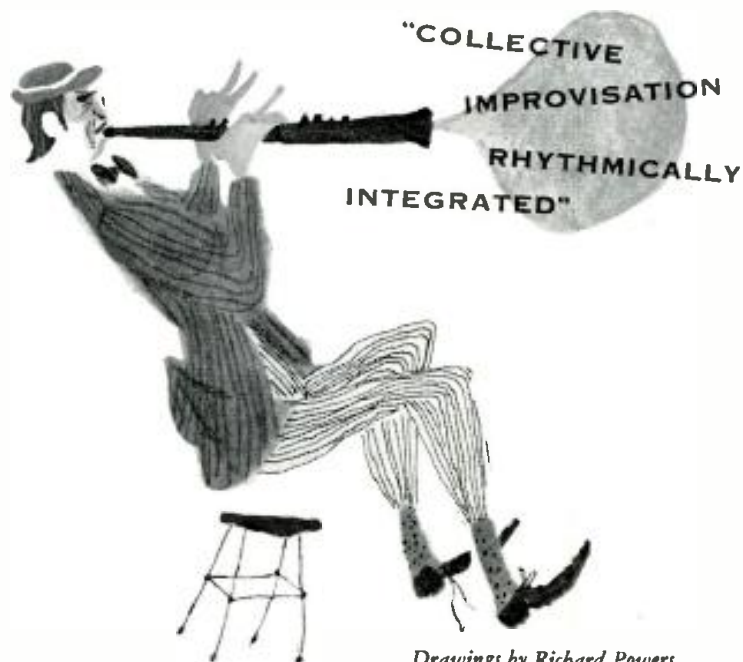
Jazz, then, for the decades from early 1900 to middle

1930, was pretty much let alone, allowed to grow without a literature of criticism, and the chronicle of its development was not kept in writing. It was, however, kept in another medium — the phonograph record. By early 1922, numerous small, independent record companies had been formed in the Middle West, and had discovered something interesting. Whatever the cultural status of the word "jazz," its use on a label, to designate improvised music played by small bands, was a pretty sure guarantee of record sales. Consequently, a great deal of the "new" music (then going into its third decade) was preserved on record.

From 1922 until 1935, jazz continued to be played by competent musicians, always a little apart from, yet always dependent on, the growing phenomenon of popular sheet music and popular dance bands. So much so that by 1936, when the word "swing" was applied to the music that had evolved from its predecessor, many musicians from New Orleans, like the music they had played, had become dispersed across the land, and were for the most part isolated practitioners in either small or large combinations.

In 1934, the first book to delineate with any accuracy the development, on records, of jazz music, appeared in France. Its author, Hugues Panassié, brought to the task a musically trained, analytical ear — one of the most acute that has ever turned to jazz, as his earliest writings, which had appeared in a French literary review, *Orbes*, will testify. In France, *Orbes* had been among the first to publish Arp, Duchamp, Stein, Henry Miller. To its editor, Jacques-Henri Lévêque, goes credit for a literary "first" of jazz.

Panassié, taking a long-distance bite at the whole field realized immediately that his first book, titled *Le Jazz Hot*, would have to be dependent on phonograph records. "A new expression in the art of music," he wrote, "has its counterpart in a new mode of preserving that expression. Fortunate, indeed, that the phonograph was invented about the same time jazz first appeared."

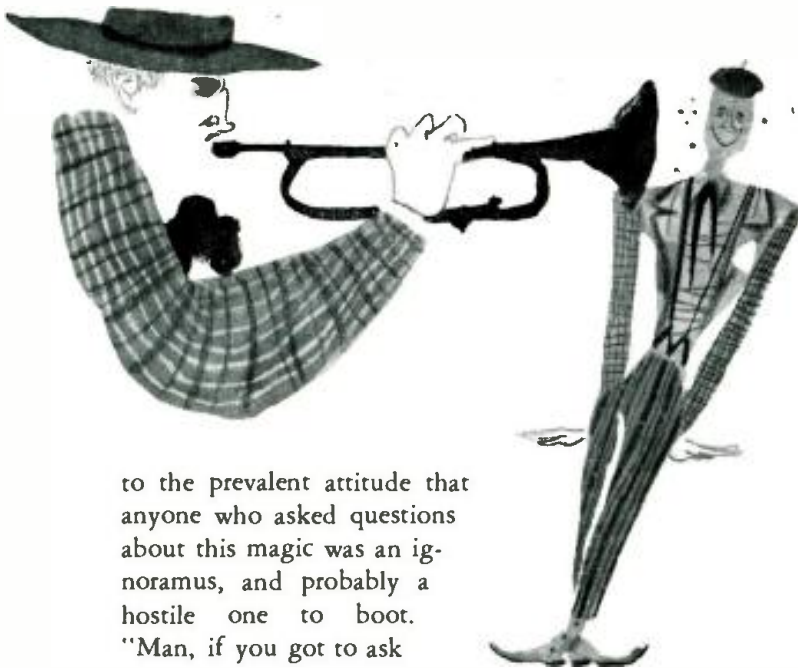


Panassié made constructive contributions. He separated and analyzed, as distinct from popular or semi-classic music, the jazz that had derived from New Orleans; he focussed attention on the then existing records of jazz, and by so doing, was probably a major influence in rescuing them from destruction when they were destined for the junk shop and ash heap; and his obvious lack of first-hand documentation stimulated others to follow up his research. This happened in 1934.

Since that date, the literature of jazz has expanded prodigiously. And with each successive expansion, the number of "specialists" devoted to jazz has increased. And with increasing numbers of specialists, special attitudes toward jazz have developed in almost geometric progression. It is these attitudes which have done so much to alienate persons like the young composer we met in our first paragraph.

Let us take the plight of an individual, any individual, who approaches the music with curiosity and an open mind. If he had done so *circa* 1937, he probably would have been involved immediately in a controversy as to what "swing" was. He would have been treated to several slick definitions of "swing" — "collective improvisation rhythmically integrated" is credited to Benny Goodman, and it's one of the better ones — and he would have been dragged, perhaps, to Carnegie Hall to hear the Goodman and Basie bands. There, he would have made the acquaintance of other "converts," and asked to "dig" their private collections of recordings.

If he met performers, he would soon have been exposed



to the prevalent attitude that anyone who asked questions about this magic was an ignoramus, and probably a hostile one to boot. "Man, if you got to ask what swing is, you'll never know." And that was that.

Where curious outsiders were concerned, musicians had withdrawn into themselves. Their music had been attacked by founding fathers and arbiters of morals, and they were not pleased to have the sins of their era deposited on their doorsteps. So when any "stranger" asked questions about their music, they were likely to respond in the cant or argot of their trade, leaving the intruder to con-

template a net filled with an unintelligible "water haul." On and off their stands, "ickies" and "squares" — terms for anyone not in the know — were anathema. This was their only way to strike back, but it did not help anyone to learn more about the music.

To press agents and reporters, musicians turned the other cheek. Along with some of the derogatory remarks that made headlines, an occasional bit of commendation had appeared. After so long a diet of bitters, the sweets tasted mighty good. They became conscious of their "reputations." Thus a press interview with any jazz musician, around 1937, was likely to produce the astounding information that the interviewee, alone and with only a tin can, reed, or brass mouthpiece, had "invented jazz." Musicians knew very well there was no written history of jazz. So, in 1936 and 1937, a bewildering lot of them gave out statements to the effect that "jazz started in Chicago," "jazz got its start in Scranton, Pennsylvania," or that "when we played in that back room in Tulsa, Oklahoma, we didn't know what we were doing, then. But it was jazz, all right."

So this was the era of Brooklyn Jazz, New York Jazz, Pennsylvania Jazz, and Jazz from the Heart. And in 1938, Dorothy Baker's *Young Man With a Horn* did much to crystallize the awestruck attitude of those who had sat at the feet of the modest but loquacious pioneers of jazz.

These years probably saw the beginning of most of the current jazz cults. An interested individual coming into contact with jazz enthusiasts of that day was accepted only if espoused immediately and unequivocally the position of the particular clique. Once immersion had been effected, the saved soul went straight on and out of this world.

The years 1938 and 1939 also saw publication, in rather quick succession for a field previously so neglected, of *American Jazz Music*, by Wilder Hobson; or *Jazz: Hot and Hybrid*, by Winthrop Sargeant; and of *Jazzmen*, a collaborative effort by seven contributors and two editors, Charles Edward Smith and the present writer. Each book approached the subject differently, and yet each pointed a way that future investigation might take. Hobson's expansive work was a trenchant running commentary, salted down with some of the first historical accuracy known in the field. Sargeant's book, sharp in its analysis of musical form, disappointed cultists when its author let them know that he considered jazz "an art without positive moral values." "At its best," Sargeant wrote, "it offers civilized man only a temporary escape into drunken self-hypnotism." *Jazzmen*, the third book, ignored musicology and went in rather heavily for field-reporting, some of it (in the light of later and more thorough research) inaccurate.

These three books were only a prelude to the work that was still to be done. They had little or no effect in holding back the rising swells of cultism that had rolled into being in the late 1930s; their torn and bleeding texts served only as battlegrounds.

Again, let us imagine the hypothetical individual trying to get at jazz a few years later. In the 1940s, he would have encountered quite different manifestations. The area of specialism had now

Continued on page 94



IN ONE EAR



By JAMES HINTON, JR.

Crystal-Ball Game, Anyone?

In spite of the wonderful speediness of transmission possible to modern means of communication, news and rumors of news of musical happenings still seem to take an unconscionably long time crossing the Atlantic. And in spite of the demonstrated virtuosity of record makers in the techniques of engineering and merchandising, it takes even longer for recordings of those happenings destined to be preserved for future generations in the grooves of vinyl plastic disks to follow along, clear customs, and find their proper, or improper, resting places on American turntables.

Nevertheless, so many recordings do originate in Europe that it is fascinating to pass time away by collecting odd scraps and nubbins of information about repertoires, schedules and performances, arranging them speculatively in what seem to be at least possibly meaningful patterns, and trying, like a tea-shoppe gypsy reading the leaves in a cup, to divine from them the prospects for the coming year. It doesn't do at all to take this game very seriously or play it with more than a modest degree of conviction that it means anything at all. The appetite whetted too keen on what-ifs and maybe-they-wills is so frequently left digesting nothing but its own juices.

But played calmly and judiciously, without too intense an anticipatory involvement in the outcome, it can be fun — even more fun than the opposite game of trying to figure out why anybody in his right mind ever thought to record some of the items in the catalog, and far less likely to produce ulcers than the secretive game of guess-who- (or what-) *this-is* so dear to the hearts of parlor audio sadists.

The only way to play the advance-information guessing game and remain passably sane is to confine your attention to works that require the assembling of major forces. Tape-recording equipment is so easily portable nowadays, recording artists so ambient, and the gods of artists-and-repertoire so capricious in bestowing their favors, that it is less than useless to attempt systematic prediction of solo recordings. Who, in the industry or of it, can say for sure

just what solo piano recordings, for example, will be released in the next twelvemonth?

A piano recording can be made just about anywhere. All that is required is space enough for a piano, a pianist, a tape recorder, and — this above all — an engineer. It may, in fact, soon become fashionable to dispense with the pianist. Any recording engineer worth his salt should be able to take a piano, a microphone, and some tape, a razor blade and an accomplice to tell him which keys to hit, and produce a pretty fair *Waldstein* untouched by pianist's hand. And the piano repertoire, less restricted in the view of record company officials than in that of Community Concert chairmen, is broad and deep enough to provide surprises incalculable.

It is a pretty safe bet that the coming year will bring a whole spate of Mozart sonatas, *hi-fier* than any, played by a young Viennese pianist whose name is totally unknown in this country — or anywhere else, for that matter. And Walter Gieseking will record again all of the Mozart he has recorded in the past and go on to other works. So will the pet house-pianists of all the major companies. So will those of the minor companies that survive the vicissitudes of price wars among the majors.

Why? Well, 1956 is just around the next corner but one. And you know what happened in 1756? Right. Mozart.

But beyond that, what? You couldn't possibly go very far wrong by predicting new complete sets of *all* the Beethoven sonatas, *all* of Chopin's solo keyboard works, at least three new versions of Schumann's *Carnaval*, at least two of Brahms' *Variations on a Theme by Handel*. Those are practically automatic. There is no way of knowing what byways of the repertoire are likely to be explored next. The Couperin and Rameau keyboard music on records no more than scratches the surface of that literature, and Dandrieu, Dagincourt, Daquin, Chambonnières, and all the Couperins who were not Francois le Grande (three of them, weren't there?) aren't represented at all.

You would think that the people who listen to Scarlatti would listen willingly to Paradies and Kuhnau — if any

were recorded. Maybe this is the year when these composers will be recorded and promoted by some enterprising member of the industry. Then, too, C. P. E. Bach was responsible for some hundred and a half keyboard sonatas. Where are they? Check your Schwann catalog and see. Haydn's sonatas aren't exactly neglected, but where are those of Clementi, who wrote sixty-odd; where are those of Cramer, who wrote more than a hundred? Of Dussek, of Hummel? Not to mention Nils Gade, who came before Grieg, nor any of the whole long list of Slavic composers except the one with the nicest name — Nicolai de Stcherbatchew.

PERHAPS this will be the year of the great revival of interest in the lovely pre-Chopin piano music of John Field. And Czerny, who wrote other things than his volumes of teaching pieces, will have a deathday centennial in 1957. The lucky record company that hits on the idea of having his works completely grooved by then had better get on the ball and work pianists in shifts around the clock.

The list of keyboard possibilities could, to put it as un-frighteningly as possible, be extended. Take Edward MacDowell, for example. He is represented, but not very fully, on disks. Charles Wakefield Cadman is hardly represented at all, and Charles Griffes isn't represented adequately. I said not a word about Ethelbert Nevin; and I have no intention of doing so.

All *ca* may very well *ira*. But when? You just can't tell. Just think. You can hide a pianist in a closet, feed him through the keyhole while he studies up on his Dandrieu, bring him out, sit him down at a piano, record his performance, and pop him back in the closet to study up on his next project.

As a matter of fact, it is by no means certain that some recordings aren't made in just this way — maybe even inside the closet, to judge by their sound. And what is one (or even two) to think of a recording credited to a pianist whose name is completely unfamiliar, who never plays in public, anywhere, and whose photographs show a face gaunt and pale as Dantes in the bowels of Monte Christo? Some don't even have photographs. Perhaps they don't even exist. My own (extremely private) theory is that all such phantom pianists are really Percy Grainger, kept captive and immobile in just such a closet by a sinister cartel of unscrupulous record makers bent on subverting Petrillo.

But you can't keep a full orchestra in a closet, much less a full orchestra with chorus and soloists. To make a recording of a large-scale work like an opera, oratorio, or even a major orchestral composition you need to engage in some logistical shuffling that can be spied on. Even if they don't rehearse for a minute, orchestra, soloists, chorus and conductor have to be brought together at least once within range of a microphone. Or do they? Maybe the assumption is naïve. Still, it is nice to think of them all standing around together, and most recordings of large-scale works can be related to actual, real-life performances, especially if the work in question is one not frequently (I at first wrote "commonly" but

decided that it was susceptible to misinterpretation) performed. That is why you win more often at the guessing game if you keep your ears open for rumors and your eyes on European schedules.

The reason is simple: Not many companies — only the most prosperous — can afford to assemble, rehearse and record a performance of major dimensions simply to get records that may or may not sell. This is especially true in America, where union pay scales for musicians and singers (they are not, as you may have noticed, always the same animals) are distinctly unfavorable to such enterprises — if not, as has been charged in ill humor, designed to prevent performance of any music at all.

As a result, the diligent guesser can stay only a little behind the game by keeping comprehensive tabulations of comings and goings of conductors, instrumentalists and singers of all stripes, providing himself with repertoires and schedules of only several hundred orchestras, choral groups, opera houses and festivals, and making suitably clairvoyant deductions.

The problem of prediction, like the problem of making recordings, is one of applied logistics. When and where will the forces necessary for recording a certain work come together within microphone range and be available for recording sessions — note that "available" here means "under contract," or, at least, "not under contract to an uncoöperative rival company?" And, assuming that a recording *can* be made, will it sell enough copies to make the effort worthwhile?

THE conception and birth of most recordings will be found, if you think about it, to be intimately bound up with tales of propinquity between a microphone and an already existent performance. Even such recordings as the RCA Victor *Rigoletto* and the Columbia *Pagliacci*, made in studio sessions with no direct relationship to any particular public performance, were determined by the availability of Metropolitan Opera artists.

Such conductor-centered recordings as RCA Victor releases of Toscanini broadcasts and London recordings of performances conducted by Ernest Ansermet occupy a special place, since these men exercise full control over casting (very finicky, whether or not universally admired after the fact), rehearsals (a great many, at great expense), final approval of the recording made (also very exacting) — subject of course to such *forze maggiore* as previous contractual involvements on the part of artists wanted.

The Toscanini broadcast performance of Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* should by now be in process of being processed for ultimate release. Originally, Jussi Bjoerling was to have sung Riccardo, and the combination broadcast-recording was very nearly cancelled when Mr. Bjoerling became ill and it seemed that Jan Peerce could not juggle his plans and make himself available as a replacement. What if Mr. Peerce had not become available? Richard Tucker? Perish the thought! He is a Columbia recording artist. And *you* find another Riccardo acceptable to the maestro.

Thus it takes only one virus to upset *Continued on page 91*



front row center and THIRTY FEET UP



The author of this article loves music and sells audio equipment. Sometimes he has to listen to records all day long. So he's a little bit critical . . .

by WILLIAM C. BOHN

IN THE continuing efforts of recording companies to achieve what has been misnamed "concert-hall realism," it seems to me that the importance of this basic, obvious fact has been generally ignored: most music sounds best when heard at a reasonable distance from the musicians.

Fritz Kreisler played on occasion to audiences in Carnegie Hall that overflowed onto the platform around him. But — the dignitaries were seated on the stage more to honor the celebrity than to give them better vantage points for listening. If this were not so, seats would have been raised above the stage and the Mayor might have been suspended fifteen feet above the violinist in a seat of honor. Nonsense, you say? True. But is it any more ridiculous than a recording microphone swinging above a conductor's head?

One of the frequent complaints in high-fidelity sound reproduction is that it is virtually impossible to imagine squeezing a full-sized symphony into the living room of a city apartment. Many are, in effect, trying to do just that with their home music systems because the program material demands it. The real goal in home music reproduction should be the duplication, as closely as possible, of the sound heard in a good not-too-close seat in a concert hall.

This does *not* mean putting the symphony orchestra in the living room by means of a loudspeaker system turned up to full volume, and depending on the overloaded acoustics of the listening room for a natural effect. The better answer is to obtain recordings in which the acoustics of the original performance hall have been faithfully impressed, so that in transcribing top quality acoustics in the recording process those of the home are not needed. In fact, living-room acoustics should be as inconspicuous as possible.

Everyone has noticed that some recordings sound realistic only at high volume levels, while others sound better when played more softly. There is a very good reason for this phenomenon. A microphone placed quite near an orchestra receives, during loud music passages, a high-intensity direct sound but little reverberant sound. This intensity must be diminished by faders in the audio control room of the concert hall before the resultant vol-

tages can be sent through the recording amplifiers. However, a microphone at a considerable distance from an orchestra picks up fairly low-intensity sound made up of both direct and reflected waves. The first recording has a very close-up effect which requires a high playback volume level to sound authentic. But the second one should have distant-sounding acoustics because of the reflections received by the microphone from the walls and ceiling of the hall, in addition to the direct radiation of sound from the orchestra. This recording can be played at lower volume levels than the first, because the original sound was lower in level.

Both hall acoustics and microphone distance affect the final character of the recorded music. It is my firm belief that in order for reproduced sound to approach a duplicate of the original, the volume output of the speaker system must approximate the actual volume level of the sound which originally reached the microphone. Few recordings available on regular labels today give details of microphone placement, and this information is virtually never given on live radio broadcasts. Not many have had the freedom to move about in a concert hall while a symphony orchestra was playing, nor to sit 15 or 30 feet above the conductor's head as some microphones do. Therefore, the sound of a recording made under close-up conditions can hardly be "concert-hall realism" to the great majority. The better the sound reproducing system the more critical the listener can be, and the higher his standard of reproduced sound. The original sound of the performance is the ultimate and unattainable goal. As perfection is approached, the listener becomes more critical of imperfection; specifically, the nearer one approaches a re-creation of the original sound, the more dissatisfied one may be when it isn't exactly the original sound.

Unfortunately, most recordings have been made with close-microphone technique. A half dozen mikes may be scattered throughout an orchestra; their outputs are mixed to suit the recording director's taste, and the requirements of the conductor who later auditions the recordings. Such mixing in the audio control room may defeat the efforts of the conductor to accent individual sections of the orchestra in particular *Continued on page 92*



The Grooves Are Full of GREMLINS

by EMORY COOK

Breakfast foods may snap, crackle and pop. Records shouldn't, but a few do. Here a well-known expert explains why — and pats his industry on the back.

THIS is the discophile's nightmare, which — unhappily — sometimes come true at high noon. You pay out the five or six-dollar price of a long-playing record. You take it gleefully home — only to discover on first playing that the cherished and anticipated music is regularly punctuated with a recurrent swish; that the needle in the groove sounds like a hoe in a gravel pit. It is not surprising that your ire should rise as high as your fidelity when a pressing of your favorite concerto, touted as sonically "perfect," spews more grit than Grieg. Strawberry shortcake and sand make about as pleasant a combination.

Technology can snuggle a wire recorder into a man's pocket, or bounce a broadcast off the moon, but we can't get quiet, realistic phonograph records. Why?

If you're the type of reader who turns to the last page of a detective story once the crime has been committed, you'll find a list of the culprits in a box on the next page. Those of you who prefer to sleuth things out for yourself can follow me on sort of (if you will pardon the expression) "Cook's Tour" of phonograph record pressing.

Making records is a chain of complex technical processes with the end product no better than its weakest link. The steps include electro-plating, strict thermal controls, microscopic mixing, molding to a hair's breadth, and human judgment. Flossed limestone, soap, silver, crocus, copper, plastic, nickel, steam and sapphire all play their parts.

Between the moment a sound occurs in a room with a live microphone and the moment the same sound is recreated in your living room, there lies a tortuous maze of obstacles. To begin with, let's assume a gorgeous sound, a premium microphone, an intelligent engineer, a cooperative artist, and a clear conscience. Since we're assuming, let wonders not cease until we have, a little later, taped representation of an artist's finest three hours. Now we have won 75% of the battle, and wasn't it easy? (it never is). What happens from here and how do we keep the concrete-mixer transients out of the groove?

From the tape is cut the Master. These days, most commercial master-disks are made on a Scully lathe. A precision-built piece of machinery, the Scully is so versatile that in its spare time it could probably turn out hair-springs for miniature Swiss watches. The Scully gives into the hands of the operator a high degree of control over what happens to that *sine non quod plus ultra*, the master record.

An invaluable but temperamental tool, and among the first hazards encountered in the making of a master record is the sapphire* recording stylus. If you think your round-tipped playback diamond is critical in shape, polish and other characteristics, consider for a moment the awful problem of forming a wedge-shaped knife with dimensions and angles which must be held to within one ten-thousandth of an inch. For making LPs this recording stylus must be heated. This means the winding of several turns of resistance wire around the tiny sapphire further to complicate an already microscopic subject. The heated knife is necessary for two reasons: first, to cut the "butter" more easily, more quietly; second, to afford the greatest possible freedom of motion to the stylus laterally as it inscribes the music modulation of the groove. The widest frequency range and lowest distortion are made possible through the use of heat.

The blank record which is to be cut by the recording stylus is made of a plasticized cellulose nitrate lacquer, flowed onto a soft aluminum disk as a base. To make a good master, not only must the disk be extremely flat, but the lacquer must be uniform in thickness so that the surface does not become bumpy. A good blank record also makes a very good mirror. The nitrate lacquer has a certain degree of softness and allows its grooves to be burnished or polished by the tiny facets or edges of the recording stylus into quiet surfaces. All the grooves, including the eccentric lead-in and lead-off grooves found in the finished record must be inscribed in the lacquer exactly as desired. Everything is precisely as it will appear on the finished pressing — except the clicks, the pops, the hiss, the distortion, the restricted frequency range, bad transient response, and of course, the fingerprints.

Processing is the term applied to the conversion of this lacquer master record into the metal master. It starts with the precipitation of tiny silver particles on the surface of the lacquer master, by means of a sort of chemical snow storm. This provides an electrically conduc-

*As a matter of interest, recording styli are made of sapphire because the sharp edges of diamond are more brittle and fragile, and because when something happens to a diamond stylus (perish the thought!) which may have taken hundreds of hours to make — it is really something to cry over. Sapphire is just as effective, costs a lot less and is easier by far to make. They just don't last very long.

tive surface, for it will be necessary now to electroplate nickel and then copper on top of it to form a sturdy crust which, when removed, forms a "negative" master record. In this metal master, grooves will become ridges, just as photographic negatives are reversed in shading. We proceed with extreme care and with frequent recourse to approved magical supplications, hoping to heaven that the surface of the lacquer is dust-free when silver deposition takes place. A preparation of the lacquer surface in a liquid bath of detergent has been used to remove bits of dust and foreign particles. But there is also a plasticizing oil in the lacquer, and silver does not deposit well on oil.

After the metal master is plated to a thickness of perhaps thirty thousandths (.030 inches) it is split off from the original lacquer, and for the first time we are looking at a record, made of metal, with ridges instead of grooves, and with a silver-coated surface. The one or two millionths of an inch of silver must now be dissolved away to expose the durable, well-formed nickel surface of the metal master.

In a sense, we now have a device from which pressings could be molded directly, but in making records we cannot stop here. If we did, when this first metal part met with some accident in the press, we would have to go all the way back to the original tape and start over again.

Relying on the photographic parallel, we proceed to make a "print" from the negative; we plate again on the "ridged" metal master, to make a new "positive" print, the metal "mother." It is a perfect record, complete with grooves, but made of metal. She is made in exactly the same way as was the original part, except that no silver snow storm is necessary; we plate directly on the desensitized surface of the metal master. At least eight or ten mothers may be made from the metal master, for remember the master is metal and it is durable. From each mother we may hope to produce offsprings to the extent of eight or ten "stampers," the metal parts which are finally used to shape and mold the vinyl pressing. From each stamper we may expect to get about a thousand pressings before the stamper suffers perceptibly. Since from the original

lacquer master we may evidently make at least 70 or 80 stampers (nine mothers each bearing nine stampers) we can reasonably expect the production of at least 100,000 high quality long playing records from one lacquer master.

Your complaining needle may owe its woe to thermochemical troubles as easily as to a blunted sapphire. The main hazard in processing is the presence of chemical impurities in the electrolytic baths. Contaminated nickel produces noisy surfaces; nickel baths operating at the wrong temperature produce noise and wear poorly in service as well. Plating too quickly produces a hard, brittle metal, easily fractured in service and sometimes noisy. Plating too slowly may produce a soft "elastic" metal which stretches, warps, and "mottles" in the press. Sometimes the nickel surfaces of stampers are "flushed" or coated with a very thin deposit of chromium to improve wear. This chromium bath is a real problem in itself.

Preparation of metal surfaces prior to plating a new part requires imagination, delicacy and the hand of a craftsman. Not many years ago, the preparation for plating consisted of rotating the metal record about its center on a wheel and polishing with a scrubbing brush and a lot of kitchen abrasive. The procedure was very effective in producing surfaces which would separate successfully after plating mother from stamper, but it also removed all of the interesting modulation from the grooves. The transients were gone, and so were the overtones, and abominable distortion was thrown in. Even today there are many plants that do a questionably large amount of polishing, although there are probably no plants which polish not at all. Today's enlightened polishing is done judiciously, by hand, with jeweler's crocus, the finest abrasive known, and does not effect the performance of the record in the slightest. The experienced eye can detect over-polishing even in the appearance of the final pressing. The symptoms are a tattle-tale dullness instead of the shiny, even, iridescent surface that bespeaks care and competence in polishing technics.

Most of us evaluate the quality of a pressing solely by its "surface," its noise. This is an obvious and easily

NOISY LP: CAUSE AND EFFECT

Clicks and Pops:

- tried to mold too pure vinyl
- molding pressure too low
- stampers unpolished
- used too high-quality cutting stylus
- steam pressure down
- vacation season on in plant

Off Center, Warped:

- punched stamper 1/50 inch off true
- mounted stamper in press in wrong rotation
- stretched stamper
- pin off-center in user's turntable (this happens, too!)
- carton stood near steam pipes in express car during shipment

Surface Hiss:

- processing
- dirty nickel
- highly filled compound
- economizing on quality of fill
- tried to make a rigid groove wall for low distortion (caught in the act)

AXIOM: The criterion of a record is —

"Can you hear the hiss at all with the volume turned way up after the music has stopped. The hiss is what counts."

observed criterion but unfortunately, like the gleam on the hood of an automobile, it is not the whole story. Plastic records are not unyielding to the diamond playback needle. (If they were unyielding, they would not bend, they would not be flexible; instead they would be brittle.) In a manner of speaking, record grooves are rubbery; and if they give way to the impact of the playback needle at the clash of cymbals or the bowing of a violin, then by definition, the needle did not describe the motion originally intended and the original sound was not reproduced. Instead it was distorted, changed from its original complexion. If grooves are too rubbery, the cartridge needle will not play the music faithfully; if they are too hard, the surface noise will be objectionable.

Quiet records are easy enough to make with highly plasticized vinyl; but they are not high fidelity records, because nobody can play them without deforming the grooves, though normally, if the playback cartridge is not too bad in design, they spring back to their original shape after the needle has passed. With some cartridges, the grooves are so badly buffeted that the bruises acquire the permanence of a cauliflower ear.

It follows, therefore, that some step must be taken to increase the rigidity of the record either by reduction of the amount of plasticizer (oils, waxes, soaps, etc.) mixed in with the pure vinyl, or by the addition of moderate amounts of "fill." Fill is the term applied to microscopically pulverized limestone or carbon which may be mixed into the vinyl resin. The presence of even small amounts of fill greatly improves the rigidity of the groove surfaces, enabling them to withstand the impact of the playback stylus. But here we come into more difficulties, more pitfalls. Use of fills can only go so far without rousing a double chorus of customers' complaints and surface-hiss.

Unplasticized, unfilled vinyl is the best, but it is extremely hard to mold. Plasticizers or fills make practical the production of long-playing records in existing plants. The molding of unplasticized vinyl presents fearful and costly molding problems which, although they may some day be solved, at present would cause the rejection of perhaps half the production because of incomplete molding.

When molding fails in a press, it produces what is called "unfills" or "rivering" — a peculiar, silvery, river-like glint, caused by a multitude of tiny spots where the vinyl did not "fill" into the stamper. Each of these glints is caused by a slight depression in the record, occupied during the pressing or molding process by occluded air, air that never got a chance to escape and be replaced by vinyl. Occasionally, when a bubble of air is enclosed within the record in the process of molding, it will subsequently — perhaps weeks later — blow its top, creating a little balloon on the surface of the record the shape and size of a pimple or welt. "Post-blistering" may also be caused by the use of vinyl resin which is too "raw." Like lumber and liquor, the resin must be aged before it is suitable for use.

Pressings containing unfills will display an annoying series of clicks when played. There is only one meager consolation here — incomplete molding does not occur

with low-grade, highly-filled plastic compound; instead, it indicates that an attempt has been made to mold a high quality vinyl.

The human element enters the picture when we stop to examine why pressings are off-center, warped and dished (like a Chinese hat). In the process of making the metal parts, the original center of the lacquer — the true center — is lost. It has to be redetermined; the stampers have to be centered again and mounted squarely on center in the press. This may seem a simple obstacle to overcome, but nothing is really easy in the production of records. Faultless centering is quite an achievement.

In the light of informed evaluation, the standard maintained in the manufacturing of today's quality records is indeed more than a modest achievement. True, perhaps the next record you acquire (in exchange for the sand-pit concerto) *may* contain two pops half way through the second side. In a 12-in. record with $3\frac{1}{2}$ radial inches of grooves there are approximately 2,250 grooves or revolutions. Pops in two of these grooves would represent a flaw of $1/10$ th of 1% — in other words, a record which was 99.9% perfect. No other publisher is confronted with such a criterion of perfection as exists in records today.

Many manufacturers resort to the easy way out. Yes, there are glib technical solutions to most of the problems listed above; safe, sure, — and productive of mediocre records. A soft vinyl highly plasticized compound, with or without fill, will mold conveniently in the most obsolete equipment. A good vigorous polishing job promotes molding. A kind of "snow-plow" stylus is frequently used in making the original master. It plows its way along, carving a broad, uncomplicated groove which facilitates easy plating, processing and pressing. Unfortunately, it also carves away all subtleties and musical character as well. It is a butcher-knife technique in every sense of the word. It is often found even among accepted labels. But this type of record will never be satisfying to the increasing numbers of careful listeners with discriminating ears and precise equipment.

There is a human hazard in listening, too. One isolated tribe in Decibel Depot reports persistent trouble with tracking, pointing with pride to their exclusive use of Autogram cartridges, well-known for their amazing characteristics. Another occluded group settled near Feedback Junction is addicted to amplifiers with particular types of interesting curves. The records they receive are notable for their distortion. The community snuggled at the foot of Hilo Pass Peak has for years been assiduously rooting for the pear-shaped speaker cone construction. Their suggestion to record manufacturers is to remove the screaming highs, the boomy bass, and give us something comfortable to listen to.

It takes a truly Spartan courage to consider the possibility of trouble in a \$400 or \$600 record player. The human thing to do is to view with alarm the \$4.00 or \$6.00 record. But behind that record may be a master recording channel of frightening cost, as well as an easy million dollars worth of processing facilities, pressing equipment and patience.

The prosecution may now take the floor.

Records in Review



Reviewed by PAUL AFFELDER • C. G. BURKE • JOHN M. CONLY
 RAY ERICSON • ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN • JAMES HINTON, JR.
 ROY H. HOOPES, JR. • J. F. INDCOX • ROBERT KOTLOWITZ
 DAVID RANDOLPH • JOHN S. WILSON

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CLASSICAL

ALBINONI

Concerto for Oboe, No. 2, in D Minor, Op. 9, No. 2 — See Monteverdi

BACH

Great Arias from the Cantatas

Side 1 — *Aria, Easter Oratorio; Recitative, Cantata No. 63; Aria, Cantata No. 133; Recitative and Aria, Cantata No. 161*

Hildegard Rössl-Majdan, contralto.
 Vienna State Opera Orchestra and Vienna Chamber Orch.; Felix Prohaska and Michael Gielen, cond.

Side 2 — *Recitative and two arias, Cantata No. 21; Recitative, Cantata No. 46*

Hugues Cuenod, tenor
 Vienna Symphony Orchestra; Jonathan Sternberg, cond.
 BACH GUILD BG 526. 12-in. \$5.95.

What a pity that one's enthusiasm for this disk has to be tempered — exactly 50 percent. On one side, the tenor, Hugues Cuenod, who has done so much distinguished singing on records in recent years, simply finds himself out of his depth. His approach always has the musicianship that one has come to expect from him, but his voice is just not large enough to encompass the music he has undertaken. (This is all the more surprising, in view of the ability he demonstrated in handling the role of the Evangelist, in his recent recording of the St. Matthew Passion). As a result, his singing is marred by too much roughness and strain.

But the other side! Hildegard Rössl-Majdan gives a demonstration of vocal art that many more famous singers could well envy. Her voice is full and rich, without ever being too opulent. But above all, her sense of line, and her quiet poise, make her side of the record a constant joy to hear. The recording allows her artistry to come through completely. Certainly the record is worth having for her singing alone. D. R.

BACH

Cantata No. 170 ("Vergnügte Ruh', Belibete Seelenlust")

Elisabeth Höngen, contralto. The Bavarian State Orchestra, Fritz Lehmann, cond.

Cantata No. 105 ("Herr, Gebe Nicht Ins Gericht")

Gunthild Weber (s); Lore Fischer (a); Helmut Krebs (t); Hermann Schey (bs); The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; The Berlin Motet Choir. Fritz Lehmann, cond.
 DECCA DL 9682. 12-in. \$5.85.

These are both fine cantatas, and the No. 105 is represented for the first time on LP with the appearance of this record. Miss Höngen gives an excellent account of herself in the taxing solo cantata. She uses a rather full, opulent type of vocalism, interpreting the music in today's terms, and with little attempt to achieve an archaic "restoration." One of the recitatives, in fact, becomes almost frightening as she seeks to bring out its dramatic import. Yet, although she uses her voice in the modern manner, Miss Höngen manages to avoid crossing the line that would take her beyond the stylistic demands of the music.

The other side of the disk contains a truly exciting opening chorus, which begins the Cantata No. 105. Another high-point is the soprano aria "Wie zittern und wan-

ken," in which Bach depicts the "quivering and quaking" of the sinner in most affecting music. It is touchingly sung by Gunthild Weber, and the alto recitative preceding it is equally well handled by Miss Fischer. If the bass and tenor solos that follow do not reach the same heights of vocalism, they at least convey Bach's intentions adequately. The orchestral playing is fine throughout both cantatas, as is the direction. Recording good. D. R.

BACH

Mass in B Minor

Gunthild Weber, Margherita de Landi, Helmut Krebs, Karl Wolfram; Chorus and Orchestra of Radio Berlin, Fritz Lehmann, cond.

URANIA UR-RS 2-1. Two 12-in.

This reviewer must confess that he approached this recording with more than a little misgiving on the theory that a version of the Mass in B Minor costing only \$7.50 must be regarded with suspicion. He must also confess that as a result of having heard the recording he was completely won over, and can now unhesitatingly recommend it as an excellent value. It is a fine, sober performance of the work, well recorded, and with excellent surfaces to boot.

The above paragraph will probably have more weight if the reviewer points out a few of the faults of the disks, to show that he was not simply carried away by surprise. Herewith, therefore, some shortcomings: First, the tendency to attack the final chords of the more energetic choruses with a vigor all out of proportion to the general level at which the body of the chorus had been sung; Second, the habit (which seems to be shared by most German soloists) of singing "kvee" for the Latin word "qui" and "zancustus" for

"sanctus." There also might be mentioned the occasional "whiteness" of tone on the part of the contralto soloist in the "Agnus Dei," and a *single* untrue note in the first group of running sixteenths sung by the bass soloist in his aria "Et in Spiritum Sanctum." (Am I being picayune enough?)

But now, with these shortcomings out of the way, let us proceed to the more positive aspects of the performance. While it is true that the bass soloist fares no better than most singers with the "Quoniam" aria, (which, to me, has always been a rather ungrateful piece of writing on Bach's part) he brings to the "Et in Spiritum Sanctum" a beautiful sense of urgency, that I have seldom found in other performances. Moreover, his voice is able to produce the high notes without strain.

The conception of the work as a whole is a very poised one. There are no extremes in matters of tempo at any place, and one gets the feeling that the sole purpose was to let Bach himself speak, without any attempt to "streamline" or "modernize" him. The forces used give the impression of being rather large.

In order to make the set available at such a low price, apparently some economies were necessary. These take the form of the employment of one soloist fewer than the five usually needed for this work. It would appear that the contralto also sings the second soprano parts in the duets — and most adequately, too.

The most obvious economy, though, takes the form of the complete absence of any printed material. There are no historical notes about the work, no text, and no translation. As one opens the hinged double jacket containing the disks, one's eyes meet nothing but two large areas of white space. Aside from the identification of each of the sections of the mass, which appears on the respective labels, the only printed information is that which appears at the head of this review.

Yet, aside from this, it must be stated that the records themselves add up to a very satisfying version of the *B Minor Mass*. D. R.

BACH

Six English Suites

No. 1 in A major; No. 2 in A minor; No. 3 in G minor; No. 4 in F major; No. 5 in E minor; No. 6 in D minor

Reine Gianoli, piano.

WESTMINSTER WAL 306. Three 12-in. \$17.85

It was George Bernard Shaw, I believe, who once said that a woman pianist is to be regarded in the same manner as one looks upon a dog walking on its hind legs. One doesn't criticise it; one merely marvels at the fact it can be done at all! I report this statement with great reluctance, since it comes from a man who, otherwise, has my admiration.

If one wanted to refute Shaw's argument, one could do no better than to confront him with this recording.

Let it be said that these are completely authoritative performances. Miss Gianoli plays with taste and understanding, and has a fine command of her instrument. The six suites are recorded complete, with all re-

peats, and Westminster — to its everlasting glory — includes with the set the complete miniature score in an 84-page booklet. The recording itself is excellent. The piano has "presence," without crowding the microphone, and there is enough "air" around it so that the disks give neither the "dead," "closed-in" feeling of a studio nor the cavernous echo of an empty concert hall. If any slight fault might be found with the set, it lies in the occasional harshness of tone in some of the higher notes. Whether this is the fault of the recording technique, or the result of the artist's attempt to compensate for her properly sparing use of the pedal, it is difficult to determine. In any case, it is a very minor criticism.

There remains the matter of the comparison between this set and the Vox recording of the same works, also played on the piano, by Alexander Borovsky. The Vox set, being on only two disks, has the advantage of economy, although at the expense of having the various suites broken, whereas the Westminster set places each suite complete on one side. Neither does Vox supply the score.

Musically, Borovsky, in spite of generally faster tempi, tends towards a slightly more "romantic" interpretation, with a somewhat greater use of the rubato. The recording also has his piano somewhat further from the microphone. This makes for a very round over-all sound. However, a direct comparison shows that the Westminster version brings out the individual lines of the music much more clearly; this, of course, is an extremely important consideration in music of this style. An even clearer exposition is to be found in Westminster's alternate version of the Suites — on the harpsichord, played by Fernando Valenti. D. R.

BEETHOVEN

Bagatelles, Opp. 33, 119 and 126

Grant Johannesen, piano.

CONCERT HALL CHS 1199. 12-in. 17, 12, 13 min. \$5.95.

For good measure two unnumbered early ones are included in the first complete edition of the *Bagatelles*, hitherto miraculously overlooked in the competition to get as much of Beethoven as possible on records as soon as possible. The title may have deluded entrepreneurs; but in title and length only are these shining pieces trifles. Hardy musical thoughts abound in each of the opus-numbers, undeveloped material for sonatas, or ideas so abrupt, epigrammatic or complete that their expansion would be a labor of cynicism.

Mr. Johannesen's playing is a little difficult to assess. Above all well ordered and controlled, it describes the outlines with estimable clarity and seems nowhere to have been perplexed by the purport of the sudden variegations. But there is a reluctance to display muscle, to expand the lungs; and the pleasure in the nice intendment is countered by disappointment with the uncertain viscera. Distinct and precise reproduction of the piano, which needs a supplement of bass and has a light occasional percussiveness in the treble which could not be removed by the apparatus here. C. G. B.

BEETHOVEN

Concerto for Violin, in D, Op. 61

David Oistrakh; National Orchestra of the Soviet Union, Alexander Gauk, cond.

COLLOSSEUM 155. 12-in. 43 min. \$5.95.

The rondo and the *largetto* especially have from this epic violinist a realization of consummate taste, tone and intonation. There is more variety of sensibility in this tone than we can hear, perhaps, from any other violinist living. The first movement, with a slow pace that may have been the conductor's, is less living in tone and soberer in phrasing. Mr. Gauk is fairly tame, and the orchestra is not placed to advantage, although there are moments when the solo violin and the winds blend exquisitely. The sound, generally of fair quality, is good for the soloist and not keenly articulated for the orchestra. — A movement from Mozart's Fourth Serenade, elsewhere recorded in its entirety by Colosseum, is appended as good measure or as bait. C. G. B.

BEETHOVEN

Duos (3) for Clarinet and Bassoon, G 147

Aldo Simonelli, Tina di Dario.

CLASSIC EDITIONS 1013. 12-in. 10, 10, 12 min. \$5.95.

Hardly indispensable to an understanding of Beethoven, but not so dull as the despondent playing on this record makes them. An oddly cavernous circulation of the sound of the reeds adds to the gloom. C. G. B.

BEETHOVEN

Rondos for Piano, Op. 51: No. 1, in C; No. 2, in G

Wilhelm Kempff.

DECCA DL 4086. 10-in. 7 8, min. \$2.50.

A Kempff may not be needed for these sturdily confectioned sweets, but the striking symmetry and poise of the pianist proffer a distinction of flavor and design which few confectioner's aides will have the temerity to try to imitate. Stronger sound than in Prof. Kempff's edition of the Sonatas, and satisfactory if not evocative of enthusiasm. C. G. B.

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 5, in C Minor, Op. 67

Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Erich Kleiber, cond.

LONDON LL 912. 12-in. 31 min. \$5.95.

Five of 15 recorded editions of the Fifth Symphony occupy the obverse only of a disk; and the arrival of a newcomer at this late date, sprawling over both surfaces and thus in effect doubling the user's price, proclaims either the sponsor's bold confidence or his lunacy. A minute's hearing of this expels the idea of lunacy. In orchestral sonance it is the best Fifth, without a major defect and with a remarkable concentration of virtues. The descriptive words are a little tired, but seldom have they been more applicable: resonant, clear, sturdy, balanced, defined and timbre-true. A judicious short echo improves resonance and unity, and there are no difficulties of equalization. There are latent social difficulties: full revelation comes only with stentorian volume.

The interpretation is not qualified to arouse a comparable enthusiasm, except for its beautifully proportioned and extensive dynamics and the discipline of an orchestra who must have chafed at the brake put to their urgency. For Dr. Kleiber reads with a calculated sobriety culminating in a very massive and deliberate finale. Accent is tolerant, and phrase, though slow, not expansive. The conductor's concept forbids an oversaying, and we are accustomed to a Fifth of less restrained temper. C. G. B.

BEETHOVEN

Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli, Op. 120

Julius Katchen, piano.

LONDON L 745. 12-in. 47 min. \$5.95.

Played with dash and imagination, with a sure-handed brilliance that has more to communicate than the two other versions, this would be the best record of the Diabelli Variations without much dispute if the top of the piano were less percussive. Perhaps it is best, withal, for the Horszowski record for Vox, although effective, is hard, and the Arrau for Decca is not effective. C. G. B.

BERLIOZ

Suite from "Les Troyens à Carthage"

†Glinka: *Suite from "Russlan and Ludmilla"*

Lamoureux Orchestra; Jean Martinon, cond., in *Les Troyens*; London Symphony Orchestra; Anatole Fistoulari, cond., in *Russlan*.
MGM E 3053. 12-in. \$4.85.

There is a current vogue for recordings of opera without singing, and MGM has been satisfying it with suites of orchestral excerpts. For many who may not be interested in the complete *Trojans at Carthage* or *Russlan and Ludmilla*, this adequately played and recorded disk will undoubtedly fill the bill. Interpretively, the Glinka score comes off in more striking fashion than does the Berlioz, which sounds a trifle pale in Martinon's hands. P. A.

BOHM, Georg

Chorale Variations: ("Ach wie nichtig, ach wie fluchtig;" "Auf meinen lieben Gott;" "Herr Jesus Christ, dich zu uns wend") — See Walther.

BORODIN

Polovtsian Dances from "Prince Igor."

In the Steppes of Central Asia.

†Ippolitoff-Ivanoff: *Caucasian Sketches, Op. 10*

The Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York, Dimitri Mitropoulos, cond.
COLUMBIA ML 4815. 12-in. 45 min. \$5.95.

We have had reasonably good performances of all three works previously, though none that equal in abandon and impetuosity these mettlesome performances by Mitropoulos and his men. The barbaric splendor of the *Polovtsian Dances* is splendidly realized, though it seems a pity that the work was recorded without the vocal chorus for which it was originally scored. The quieter, more reflective atmosphere of the first three movements of the *Caucasian Sketches* is followed by a stunning orgy of sound in the "March of the Sirdar," a quasi-oriental outburst of brass, cymbals, tambourines et al.

Though the Dances were recorded in

December 1952, while the others date from April 1953, there is no appreciable difference in the qualities of the recorded sound, which is both capacious and immediate.

J. F. I.

BRAHMS

Hungarian Dances

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Paul van Kempen, cond.

DECCA DL 4078. 10-in. \$2.50.

Nine of Brahms' most popular *Hungarian Dances* — Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 — are included on this low-priced, but well-recorded disk. The only drawback is that van Kempen fails to interpret them with any spark or real Hungarian Gypsy rubato. It's all very straightforward and rather dull. P. A.

BRAHMS

Sonata in D Minor, Op. 108 — See Tartini.

BRAHMS

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77

David Oistrakh, violin; State Orchestra of the USSR, Kiril Kondrashin, cond.

VANGUARD VRS 6018. 12-in. \$5.95.

†Ysaye: *Sonata-Ballad for Unaccompanied Violin, No. 3, Op. 27*

David Oistrakh, violin. National Philharmonic Orchestra; Kiril Kondrashin, cond., in the *Concerto*.

COLOSSEUM CRLP 150. 12-in. \$5.45.

This appears to be another one of those duplications of the same performance on two different labels. Once again, Vanguard's reproduction is far superior to Colosseum's, the former maintaining a more equitable balance between soloist and orchestra and lacking the excessive hall resonance and distortion of highs in the Colosseum effort. As for the interpretation, Oistrakh is marvelous, as always, and has a fine affinity for this broad, lyrical work. His playing is live, expressive and rich in tone. Kondrashin's accompaniment is soundly conceived, though the orchestra lacks the polish and subtlety



Erich Kleiber: sonic splendor justifies two disk-sides for the sixteenth Fifth.

of most American and European organizations. Still, this is one of the best Brahms Violin Concerto disks available. The Vanguard is definitely worth the extra cost, and the rather intricate Ysaye piece will never be missed. P. A.

BRUCH

Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 26

†Mendelssohn: *Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64*

Nathan Milstein, violin. Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra; William Steinberg, cond.
CAPITOL P 8243. 12-in. \$5.70.

Nathan Milstein's debut on Capitol Records is an auspicious one. He has not always been treated too kindly by the recording engineers, but here his glowing tone is allowed to emerge in all its beauty. There is also just the right degree of balance and perspective. Neither of these beautiful concerti is exactly new to disks. This makes the ninth version of the Bruch and the thirteenth of the Mendelssohn, and causes Milstein to go into competition with himself in both works. Nevertheless, the present record offers what must be ranked among the finest, most romantically expressive interpretations of these two favorites to be heard anywhere. Milstein has long been an acknowledged specialist at performing them, and he is sympathetically abetted by Steinberg and his excellent orchestra. P. A.

BRUCKNER

Symphony No. 3 in D Minor

Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra; Walter Goehr, cond.

CONCERT HALL CHS 1195. 12-in. \$5.95.

Bruckner's Third Symphony is somewhat more compact than his other works in this form. His statements are more direct, and he wanders less far afield. The melodic interest may not be quite as great as in the *Romantic* Symphony, but the themes seem to be better organized. Dedicated to the composer's idol, Wagner, it contains numerous passages, especially in the finale, that are definitely Wagnerian in character. Its end movements are quite dramatic; it boasts a beautifully elegiac slow movement, and includes a delightful scherzo.

Walter Goehr conducts a compact, intense performance that is played in fine fashion by the Netherlands Philharmonic. Neither conductor nor orchestra has ever fared better on disks. The only drawback — and here it is really unavoidable — is the splitting of the second movement between the two record sides. Reproduction is first-rate, equitably balanced, with the microphones fairly distant from the orchestra, but with just the proper amount of room resonance. P. A.

CABALLERO, Fernandez

Gigantes y Cabezudos

Lily Berchman, Luisa Espinosa, Tina Montes, Sanchez Cano, E. Barta, Santiago Ramalle, Ignacio Leon. Orquesta de Camara de Madrid; Daniel Montorio and Enrique Navarro, conds.

MONTILLA FM-LD 19. 12-in. \$5.95.

Some general comments on the Spanish zarzuela, before proceeding with the review,

may avoid misunderstandings. To my mind, the best definition of the genre was given by Moreno de Torroba, perhaps the most successful of contemporary *zarzuela* composers. He stated, after a recent visit to New York, that Broadway musicals were nothing but American *zarzuelas*. Indeed, *zarzuelas* and musicals are structurally indistinguishable and have exactly the same aim — to entertain. As a rule, both music and libretto are definitely light, although, probably because of differences in national temperaments, *zarzuelas* often try to express a wider range of emotion than musicals. However, most of us Americans are not too familiar with the Spanish musical idiom and hence may miss many details that are obvious to a Spaniard. Incidentally, the musical idiom of the *zarzuela* is not, as a rule, that of the folk-song at all, but, rather, that of what may be termed "popular music." From all this discussion it follows that adjectives like "moving," "exciting," "exquisite," etc., are not to be taken in the sense they would be when applied to a Verdi opera or a Mozart concerto — and I fervently hope this will be kept clearly in mind while reading *zarzuela* reviews. —

And now to get to the business at hand — *Gigantes y Cabezudos* was composed in 1898, when its composer was already 65 years old and blind. It met with immediate success and achieved a popularity that the years have not diminished. The plot is a simple one now venerable with age: the girl and her boy friend are separated. The villain

tells both that the other one has married someone else. The deception is eventually discovered and the loving pair is finally reunited. Although there is nothing particularly Spanish in this, every bit of characterization, almost every line even, is intensely Spanish. However, it is only fair to point out that this will only be obvious to one thoroughly steeped in Spanish traditions. Furthermore, the handsome album, though carrying the Spanish text of the vocal parts, includes only brief résumés of each scene in English instead of complete translations.

The music itself is a delight, full of wonderful *jotas* along with more than one truly moving passage. The performance is quite good, particularly since Lily Berchman, the featured artist, has a beautiful voice, even if it is not under full control at all times. The rest of the cast cannot be placed in the same category, but they do sing with spirit and seem to enjoy their parts. The recording as such is perhaps a trifle hard, but adequate. GONZALO SEGURA, Jr.

CAGE

Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano.
Vol. II.

Maro Ajemian, piano.

DIAL 20. 12-in. 40 min. \$5.95.

John Cage "prepares" his piano with nuts, bolts, screws, and pieces of rubber, soft and hard, to produce all manner of plunks, clinks, tinkles, choked sounds, and bell-like sounds. Unfortunately for my ear, the

works he writes for the instrument so conditioned sound all alike. Their color is fascinating the first time, but their continuous scurrying quickly grows wearisome. A. F.

CARPENTER

Skyscrapers

American Recording Society Orchestra;
Meinhard von Zallinger, cond.

†Elwell: *The Happy Hypocrite*

American Recording Society Orchestra;
Walter Hendl, cond.

ARS 37. 12-in. 23, 24 min. \$5.35.

Skyscrapers was for many years the only sizable piece of American music one could get on records. It is a machine-age ballet produced at the Metropolitan in the 1920's. It's a coarse and careless affair, but there is still some vitality and amusement in it, and it is of considerable interest as an historic landmark. Herbert Elwell's *Happy Hypocrite*, on the other hand, retains all its original impact because it is a work of genuine subtlety, refinement and clarity; Elwell possesses a technical command which John Alden Carpenter never mastered. *The Happy Hypocrite* was a ballet by Charles Weidman based on Max Beerbohm's like-named story. The outlines of the plot are given on the record sleeve and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that this score is one of the most distinguished American contributions to the literature of the dance, and both it and other works by its composer

Columbia's Contemporaries --- 1954

FOURTEEN pieces of chamber music by twelve composers are included in the 1954 instalment of Columbia's Modern American Music series. This series, begun in 1953, is scheduled to run for five years. Columbia will bring out an annual set of at least six LP disks containing works by modern Americans selected by a committee consisting of the four composers, Virgil Thomson, Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell and William Schuman, and Goddard Lieberson, executive vice-president of the issuing company. Each of the works selected is "recorded by artists of the composer's choice working under his immediate direction or supervision," so that "the performances will be authentic as well as first-class." In the judgment of the committee, the series as a whole will "represent American music at its most distinguished and beautiful."

The 1954 series consists of the following. We list first the record numbers, then the names of the composers and their works, and in parentheses, the names of the performers.

ML 4841: Henry Cowell, *Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano*. (Joseph Szigeti and Carlo Bussatti.) Harold Shapero, *Sonata for Piano, Four Hands*. (Harold Shapero and Leo Smit.)

ML 4842: Roy Harris, *Sonata for Violin and Piano*. (Josef Gingold and Johana Harris.) Robert Palmer, *Quartet for Piano and Strings*. (John Kirkpatrick and members of the Walden Quartet.)

ML 4843: Leon Kirchner, *String Quartet No. 1*. (American Art Quartet.) Irving Fine, *String Quartet*. (Juilliard String Quartet.)

ML 4844: Peter Mennin, *Quartet No. 2*. (Juilliard String Quartet.) Andrew Imbrie, *Quartet in B Flat*. (Juilliard String Quartet.)

ML 4845: Paul Bowles, *Music for a Farce*. (David Glazer, clarinet; Herbert C. Mueller, trumpet; Elden C. Bailey, percussion; William Masselos, piano.) Paul Bowles, *Scènes d'Anabase*. (William Hess, tenor; Josef Marx, oboe; William Masselos, piano.) Norman Dello Joio, *Variations and Capriccio*. (Patricia Travers, violin; Norman Dello Joio, piano.)

ML 4846: Arthur Berger, *Quartet in C Major for Woodwinds*. (Fairfield Wind Ensemble.) Arthur Berger, *Duo for Violoncello and Piano*. (Bernard Greenhouse and Anthony Makas.) Edward Burlingame Hill, *Sextet for Woodwinds and Piano*. (Lilian Kalir and New York Woodwind Quintet.)

It is obvious that one of the principles which governed the committee in its selection, this year as well as last, was that of variety. These 14 pieces cover a tremendous range of ideas, intentions, and points of view; consequently many of them cannot be compared, and an overall evaluation on a comparative basis would be both foolish and misleading. Nevertheless, there is one work here which seems to me particularly remarkable and important. It is the string quartet by Leon Kirchner, who herewith makes his debut on records.

Kirchner's quartet has the accent of urgency, power and over-riding imaginativeness one associates with Béla Bartók's compositions for the same medium. Not that Kirchner reflects Bartók, as do some of the others here; the prime influence behind his score seems to be that of Schönberg, but Kirchner, for all his atonality, his wide leaps and jumps, his pizzicati and other Schönbergian devices, is no pious follower of the master. The work has its own immensely individual profile. One feels it is music that *had* to be written, and one feels behind it the mind of a great composer.

Three works in this series hang together, at least vaguely, through the fact that they employ American folk motifs or original material of a folk-like character. They are the violin sonatas by Cowell and Harris and the woodwind quartet by Berger. The Cowell is all folk lore. It goes back to hymns, fuguing tunes, ballads and country fiddling, but its material is handled most creatively. Cowell does not fall into the trap of literalism; his piece is actually a sonata and not a suite of transcriptions. The Harris is beholden to folk lore only in its lyrical slow movement. The rest is typical Harris in its long lines, its breadth and its spaciousness, but this big idiom is quite wonderfully transferred to the relatively light textures of violin and piano, and in the finale the virtuoso element is remarkably well exploited. This, in short, is one of Harris' richest and most important works.

Berger's woodwind quartet really belongs in another category, that of fun-pieces, to which one may also add Bowles' *Music for a Farce* and the Shapero sonata. Berger explores the possibilities of the woodwind medium in immense high spirits and with a great deal of subtlety, too. Subtlety may not be quite the word for the

should be better known than they are. Technically the recording is adequate. A. F.

COPLAND

Music for the Theater

†Weill: *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*

MGM Orchestra; Izler Solomon, cond.
M-G-M E3095. 12-in. 23, 22 min. \$4.85.

What is especially remarkable about this recording is the high relief given to each instrument of the small orchestra in the bitter, corny, 1920 jazz of the *Dreigroschenmusik*. This work is something of a masterpiece in the domain of the sardonic and satiric. It derives from a post-war (I) German reworking of *The Beggar's Opera*, and embodies the special cynicism of that era in that country. *Music for the Theater* has always seemed to me one of Copland's weakest scores, and Solomon does nothing to alter that view. The sound is clear but without special distinction. A. F.

CORNELIUS

Weihnachtslieder, Op. 8 (with songs by Schubert, Wolf and Reger)

Irmgard Seefried, soprano; Erik Werba, piano.

DECCA DL 7545. 10-in. 13 min. (Cornelius), 17 min. (rest). \$3.85.

Nearly ultimate in the natural projection of a beautiful voice in songs of simple appeal and subtle detail. The cycle by Cornelius, a first recording of a talent stimulated and

thwarted by R. Wagner, is the feature of the disk — six songs of artfully naïve tenderness designed for use on Jesus's putative birthday before His supersession by Santy. — There are a few hoots in the recording and they belong to the engineers. The other songs, much more familiar, are not vocally inferior. The printed text is confined to English. C. G. B.

DEBUSSY

Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra

†Poulenc: *Aubade for Piano and 18 Solo Instruments*

Fabienne Jacquinot, piano. Westminster Symphony Orchestra; Anatole Fistoulari, cond.

M-G-M E 3069. 12-in. \$4.85.

Without being told the identity of the composer, a casual listener to the early Debussy *Fantasia* would be likely to attribute the music to Vincent d'Indy or some other member of the Franckian school. As a matter of fact, it bears a certain resemblance to d'Indy's *Symphony on a French Mountain Air*. Choice between this well-played, spaciouly recorded disk and an earlier one of equal quality by Helmut Schultes (Lyri-chord) will depend on the individual's preference for the moderately attractive, neo-classic Poulenc *Aubade*, originally written as music for a ballet, or the Debussy *Rhapsody* for Saxophone and Orchestra on the reverse side of the Lyri-chord disk. P. A.

D'INDY

Symphony for Piano and Orchestra on a French Mountain Air

†Saint-Saëns: *Piano Concerto No. 5 in F Major, Op. 103* ("Egyptian")

Fabienne Jacquinot, piano. Westminster Symphony Orchestra; Anatole Fistoulari, cond.

M-G-M E 3068. 12-in. \$4.85.

Of the two extant LP versions of the glowing, Franck-like *Symphony on a French Mountain Air*, the older one by Robert Casadesus (Columbia) has a little more warmth and flexibility, but the present one, excellently played, benefits from somewhat more live reproduction. The second-rate Saint-Saëns *Concerto*, however, with its pseudo-oriental overtones, does not make nearly as good listening as the Franck *Variations Symphoniques*, the companion work on the Casadesus disk. Better hear both before making a choice. P. A.

ELWELL

The Happy Hypocrite — See Carpenter.

GIORDANO

Andrea Chenier

Renata Tebaldi (s), Madeleine; Ines Marietti (s), Bersi; Irma Colsanti (s), Contessa de Coigny and Madelon; José Soler (t), Andrea Chenier; Armando Benzi (t), Un Incredibile; Tommaso Soley (t), L'Abate; Ugo

Bowles piece. It is a quartet for clarinet, trumpet, piano and percussion in eight short movements. It was originally written for movie sequences in Orson Welles' projected production of William Gillette's old comedy, *Too Much Johnson*, and it is shrewdly colored to suggest old-time movie music. It is in the Satie-Poulenc tradition, and it would make a hilarious hit at any chamber music festival. Hilarity of a less obvious kind is the keynote of Shapero's four-hand sonata, at least to my ear. It makes highly stimulating play with percussive rhythms and is of equal interest for its broad palette of tingling and clangorous color. This is a good record to play for pianists without telling them the music is for four hands.

As is pointed out above, the committee in charge of the Columbia series believes these records will represent American music "at its most distinguished and beautiful." The noteworthy thing here is the last word. "Beautiful" is a term which has been almost completely banished from the modern critical vocabulary. One may say that modern music is strong, that it is finely or solidly made, that it is significant, or, perhaps, expressive, but "beautiful" somehow suggests the 19th century, which must be avoided at all costs. Nevertheless this series does contain one work which is clearly beautiful, and that in no mawkish, back-lying sense. It is the gracious, tuneful *Variations and Capriccio* for violin and piano by Dello Joio. The composer describes this work as "earfully charming and intellectually unproblematical." So be it.

The piano quartet by Palmer and the string quartet by Fine are both works of considerable size, thrust and energy. The Palmer employs an idiom I find difficult to describe in any more specific terms, but it is the work of a fine musician with a vigorous mind. The Fine stands out for its fantasticality, its highly dissonant texture, and its individual formal devices; it employs the 12-tone system within a freely tonal framework.

The sextet for winds and piano by Edward Burlingame Hill is in an entirely different class from everything else in the series. Cowell and Harris are among the pioneers of modern music in this country, and everybody else except Hill belongs to the younger generation. Hill belongs to an older school, the school of those who taught the pioneers and some of the younger men in American universities during the earlier decades of this century. This school is almost completely neglected so far as performance and recording is concerned. Its members are the forgotten men of 20th century American music, and it is good to see at least one of them included

here. If the series contemplates recording works by modern composers no longer alive, I herewith vote for a long look at some of the compositions of David Stanley Smith.

Last of all, there are four pieces in the series which, in my judgment, do not measure up. They are the song cycle, *Scènes d'Anabase*, by Bowles, the quartets by Mennin and Imbrie, and the duo for 'cello and piano by Berger. *Scènes d'Anabase* is probably better than it sounds. Columbia, as usual, has failed to provide the texts of these French songs, and as a result of this blundering stupidity the whole cycle has been ruined. The three other pieces seem to me on the academic side. The Mennin and Imbrie quartets, despite fine slow movements, indulge in furious fiddling to a tiresome degree, and both lie back in certain spots on the scherzo of Bartok's second quartet. Both composers have written better things, and since the Imbrie was an undergraduate exercise written twelve years ago, one wonders why it was recorded at all. ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN



The Juilliard Quartet plays three works in the new MAMS issue.

Savarese (b), Gérard; Pier Luigi Latinucci (b), Mathieu; Alberto Albertini (b), Fléville; Giuliano Ferrein (bs), Roucher and Fouquier-Tinville; Ernesto Panizza (bs), Schmidt, Major-domo, and Dumas. Orchestra of Radio Italiana (Turin) and chorus of Cetra; Arturo Basile, cond.
CETRA C-1244. Three 12-in. \$17.85.

Lina Bruna Rasa (s), Madeleine; Anna Masetti Bassi (s), Bersi; Ida Conti (s), Connessa de Coigny; Luigi Marini (t), Andrea Chenier; Giuseppe Nessi (t), Un Incredibile; Carlo Galeffi (b), Gérard; Aristide Baracchi (b), Mathieu; Salvatore Baccaloni (bs), Roucher; Natale Villa (bs), Fléville. Orchestra and Chorus of La Scala, Milan; Cav. Lorenzo Molajoli, cond.
COLUMBIA ENTRE EL-10. Two 12-in. \$5.96.

Umberto Giordano was born in 1867 and did not die until 1948, thus outlasting the stage careers of all of his operas save *Andrea Chenier* and (less frequently performed) *Fedora* — and, incidentally, outliving all but one of the Italian composers of his generation.

For its part, *Andrea Chenier* has lasted better in the general repertoire than almost any operas of its period and general type save those of Mascagni, Leoncavallo, and, of course, Puccini. In this case, the judgement of half a century seems just. Giordano at his best was an extremely competent composer with a strong theatrical sense and good, solid tunes. And *Andrea Chenier*, at its best, is an opera that, if not great, can seem almost so in a performance by a conductor who knows how to realize its particular kind of effectiveness and singers who can take full advantage of its opportunities. Unfortunately, neither of the available recordings quite achieves this, although both come reasonably close.

In 1890, Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* won a publisher's contest and had its premiere. One of the scores it vanquished was an opera called *Marina*, by Giordano; he took the lesson to heart. His next effort was *Mala Vita*, produced in 1892 as a hopeful sequel to Mascagni's success. Then, in 1896, *Andrea Chenier* had its premiere at La Scala, Milan.

Not naturalistic in the peasant-blood-and-guts tradition of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, it is musically in the same line of descent from Verdi and Ponchielli. The text is treated in broad, declamatory fashion, with arias not constructed as formal unities but arising directly out of the verbal and emotional context. Fortunately, the libretto — by Luigi Illica, co-librettist of *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *La Bohème* — is a good one.

Although the characters are identifiable historically, the story is fiction except in its broadest outline. The time is immediately before and during the French Revolution. The Countess de Coigny is giving a party. Among the guests is Andrea Chenier, a young poet with revolutionary sympathies. Madeleine, the Countess' lovely daughter, teases him to improvise a poem on love. He begins conventionally enough, but ends by bursting into a passionate denunciation of the aristocracy for their treatment of the poor. Madeleine looks at him with awakening interest, and Gerard, a servant already involved in revolutionary plans despite his secret love for Madeleine, listens with mounting excitement. Several years

later, with the Revolution a *fait accompli*, Chenier and Gerard have both risen to positions of influence. Madeleine comes to seek Chenier, and Gerard, his old passion revived, makes violent advances to her. He and Chenier fight. Gerard, informed by spies, denounces Chenier for being anti-Robespierre, then, touched by Madeleine's self-sacrificing love, repents and attempts to save him. But the mob, thirsty for blood, will not hear him, and Chenier and Madeleine — he by decree, she by her own ruse, go to the guillotine together.

The theatrical situations are strong and the characters rather less stereotyped than in most operas, and although Giordano's attempts at evoking local color are not invariably fascinating, his music has plenty of vitamins for such important crises as Chenier's improvised poem in the first act, Gerard's soliloquy as he signs Chenier's warrant, and Madeleine's scene in which she offers herself to Gerard in exchange for the life of her lover. But they are vitamins that need to be catalyzed by powerful performance. As a vehicle, *Andrea Chenier* is first-class, but it is far from being fool-proof. It needs really fine singing actors in the three main roles and benefits proportionally from having good people in the numerous secondary roles, which are not so difficult to sing as they are to characterize adequately.

Both recorded performances are reputable; neither is tremendously impressive. The new Cetra issue has the advantages of contemporary engineering and of Renata Tebaldi as Madeleine. This may not be the ideal role for Miss Tebaldi. She seems most impressive, to me, when operating in terms of delicacy and pathetic nuance, while Madeleine's music pays its biggest dividends in terms of sustained, full-throated melodrama. Nevertheless, she is, as always, a fine singer and a knowing actress, and her total achievement is greater than that of Lina Bruna Rasa, whose singing sometimes has more sheer impact but also has some very ragged edges. The Cetra Chenier, José Soler, has not, I think, been heard here on records before, although he achieved prominence some five years ago by singing Manrico in performances of *Il Trovatore* all over Italy. Whether because of too many *Di quella piras* or not, his voice as recorded here sounds abused. The middle is healthy



Umberto Giordano: *Andrea Chenier's vitamins remain uncatalyzed in two recordings.*

enough, if unremarkable in texture, but the top sounds strained and scrappy. His Entré alter ego, Luigi Marini, while a long way from being a Martinelli or Pertile, is better than this. Of the Gerards, Ugo Savarese uses his big, rugged voice freely but without exceptional imagination in the Cetra set; Carlo Galeffi uses his — basically a rather better voice, but recorded when further advanced along the road to eventual retirement — with a good deal more positive artistry and dramatic sense.

In the secondary roles, and in the sense of theatrical ensemble, the advantage is all with the older set. Pier Luigi Latinucci, although not gifted with a voice that sounds either very big or very beautiful, is quite impressive as the *sansculotte* Mathieu, but even he comes off second best to Aristide Baracchi, one the preëminent secondary singers of modern times.

Similarly, Arturo Basile's conducting is straightforward and well considered, but not quite in the same class as that of Cav. Lorenzo Molajoli, whose performance has real breadth and distinction (although I always have wondered why he was singled out for knighthood over other Italian conductors who come to mind.)

In sum, the *Andrea Chenier* situation adds up to this: Unless you simply cannot live another day without buying a recording, wait. There is an HMV set, with Beniamino Gigli, Maria Caniglia, and Gino Bechi, about to be released by RCA Victor in this country, and at least one other major company is planning to record the work this summer for fall release. Of those who can't wait the admirers of Miss Tebaldi will want the Cetra set; so will those listeners whose defining criterion is modernity of engineering. On virtually all other grounds, I prefer the Entré set. It is a better over-all presentation of the opera; the engineering (just pre-war) is quite a lot better than that of most such 78-to-LP transfer jobs; and it costs only a third as much.
J. H., Jr.

GLINKA

Suite from "Russlan and Ludmilla" —
See Berlioz.

GOULD

Interplay; Spirituals

Hague Philharmonic Orchestra; Willem van Otterloo, cond. Cor de Groot, piano, in *Interplay*.

EPIC LC 3021. 12-in. 17, 18 min. \$5.95.

Records of American music coming from abroad provide a clear diagnosis of European mental stereotypes regarding the work being produced on this side of the Atlantic, for they are almost exclusively concerned with compositions on American folk themes. Gould is primarily a master of light music, and the crisp, insouciant *Interplay*, which he describes, quite horribly, as "an American concertette," may be the better of these two pieces. *Spirituals*, however, comes off quite well in its symphonic handling of Negro themes for string choir and orchestra. Recording and performance are quite good.
A. F.

GRIEG

Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16

†Mendelssohn: *Piano Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 25*

Ania Dorfmann, piano. Robin Hood Dell Orchestra of Philadelphia; Erich Leinsdorf, cond.
RCA VICTOR BLUEBIRD LBC 1043. 12-in. \$2.98.

For those seeking good recorded versions of two standard piano concerti for their libraries, this disk is a real bargain. Both works receive interpretations that balance virtuosity with warm romanticism. Besides, this is no reissue, but a brand-new, nicely proportioned recording, with the microphones placed at a moderate distance from the performers. P. A.

GRIEG

Suite from "Sigurd Jorsalfar," Op. 56
Two Elegiac Melodies, Op. 34

†Humperdinck: *Suite from "Hansel und Gretel"*

Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden; John Hollingsworth, cond.
M-G-M E 3072. 12-in. \$4.85.

Good routine performances of familiar fare. The reproduction is adequate; but the *Hansel and Gretel* music, at least, must have been dubbed from 78 rpm disks which overlapped musically, for this same overlapping is present here, the result of inexorably bad splicing. P. A.

HALFFTER

Sinfonietta in D

†Napoli: *Symphony in D Minor* (2 Movements only)

Scarlatti Orchestra of Naples, Franco Caracciolo, cond.
COLOSSEUM 1041. 12-in. 28, 12 min. \$5.95.

Strauss, Stravinsky and Respighi have shown that a sharp mixture of incongruous periods can confect a tickling gratification for hearers. Admitting that there is some vaudeville in our century's Suites after Lully, Pergolesi and Pasquini, we can accept the vaudeville as a refreshing condiment in these cases, after we have heard the results, as we might accept boiled New England dinner *provencale*, or cheeseburger *sauce béarnaise* or catfish *bonne femme*, if the right chefs prepared them. Mr. Halffter is no mean chef. The blend of himself with Stravinsky and Domenico Scarlatti makes a crackling diversionary dish not to be despised, and Mr. Caracciolo has made it all very playful and the engineers pretty vivid — despite tape-flutter — although we must help them with the bass (rich in *meunière*).

The Wagner-Bruckner flavor of the adagio and scherzo of the late Gennaro Napoli's Symphony is convincing enough to cause regret that the rest was not recorded, particularly since the playing is sympathetic and the reproduction first-class (after we have stimulated bass) in a modest and natural way. C. G. B.

HANDEL

Concerto Grosso No. 5 in D Major; Concerto Grosso No. 6 in G Minor (Opus 6)

London Philharmonic Orchestra, Felix Weingartner, cond.
COLUMBIA ML 4676. 12-in. \$5.45.

In the case of a recording of this kind, "criticism" is almost unnecessary. One can only report the facts, and leave all further decisions up to the individual record buyer.



Felix Weingartner: the stamp of authority marks two Handel concerti grossi reprints.

The main "fact" to be reported here concerns the nature of the reproduction. Since this is, frankly, a re-issue of two earlier 78 rpm sets, it is not to be expected that the recording will come up to present day standards. There are also occasional differences in the quality of various movements. However, it is unnecessary to cavil about such matters. One might just as easily take the opposite viewpoint, and express wonderment at the degree to which Columbia's engineers have been able to approach the modern level of recording.

Both works make very fine listening, and the performances have Weingartner's stamp of authority. They are done with a large orchestra, with no attempt at the smaller-scaled "authentic" style so common nowadays. D. R.

HAYDN

Scherzando in F

Three Divertimentos: Sextet in E Flat; Octets in A Minor and G, Op. 31, Nos. 2 & 3

London Baroque Ensemble, Karl Haas, cond.
WESTMINSTER WL 5227. 12-in. 8, 13, 15, 10 min. \$5.95.

Oboe, flute, horns and strings weave this light but never negligible material into the gay and thoughtful, not profound, patterns ordained by a composer who more than any other measured out the moods of his music. A grave pleasure responds to a gay, neither serious; and time is decorated in slipping by. The London Baroque demonstrates an increasing gusto for this kind of jewelry with their successive records; and since their musicianship is sure and the registration clean and plump in an assertive certainty, this disk is guaranteed against obsolescence until disks become obsolete. C. G. B.

HONEGGER

Symphonie Liturgique

Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra; Walter Stoschek, cond.
URANIA UURLP 7090. 12-in. 35 mins. \$5.95.

Picturesque, complex and masterly in harmonic and orchestra texture; very rich, exciting, and obviously destined for success. The symphony derives its title from the associations in its composer's mind between its three movements and various sections of the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead. The first movement Honegger likens to the *Dies Irae*, the broad and noble second

movement to the *De Profundis*, and the finale to the *Dona Nobis Pacem*. This is an interesting commentary on the ease with which music can attach itself to "programs," for the wrathful thunders of Honegger's avenging judge are strikingly like the sounds made many years ago by a certain symphonic locomotive. The finale reveals that Honegger has written a good deal of music for the movies. It develops, in an eminently cinematographic style, an idea suggested by Beethoven in the *Dona Nobis Pacem* of his *Missa Solemnis*. It is an ominous, heavy-booted march which rises to a climax and is followed by consolations out of Cesar Franck. The sound, in keeping with the music, is rather sumptuous. A. F.

HUMPERDINCK

Suite from "Hansel und Gretel" — See Grieg.

IPPOLITOFF-IVANOFF

Caucasian Sketches, Op. 10 — See Borodin.

JANACEK

On an Overgrown Path; Sonata, October 1, 1905; In the Threshing House

Rudolf Firkusny, piano.

COLUMBIA ML 4740. 12-in. 25, 10, 8 min. \$5.95.

These three works represent the major compositions for piano of Leos Janacek, the Moravian composer who is best known here for his choral and orchestral works and abroad for his operas. *On an Overgrown Path* (1902-08) is a suite of 10 pieces (there are five more unnamed and not included in this performance), which bear such characteristic Slavic titles as "My words stop," "So unutterably anxious," and "The little owl continues screeching." The music sounds very Schumannesque, leavened with the melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic color of Moravian folk music. The phrases tend to be fragmentary and repetitious, the music slow and completely devoid of virtuosic touches. Yet it has a good deal of lyricism and freshness of idiom, and in its introspective way it casts a considerable spell on the listener. The pieces also have the virtue of becoming more attractive with each re-hearing.

The sonata, composed in memory of a workman killed in demonstrations for a Czech university at Brno, has only two surviving movements: *The Presentiment* and *The Death*. Gloomy and occasionally strident, they have no organic development to give their length coherence. Perhaps that is why they sound so much like the piano scores for early German silent films.

In the Threshing House (1912) shows no ponderable change in style, and like the previous works its four sections suffer slightly from repetitiousness and monotony.

Although the works will probably never be popular in recital it is good to have them on records, and Mr. Firkusny's performances must be as nearly authentic as possible. In sound, the record is one of the best Columbia has made. R. E.

JOLIVET

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra

Concerto for Piano, Trumpet and String Orchestra

Andante for String Orchestra

building your record library

number seven



HAROLD C. SCHONBERG SUGGESTS TEN BASIC WORKS IN THE MODERN IDIOM

THOUSANDS of serious composers are active today. All of them are contemporary. Very few of them are modern. Most composers take things for granted, writing in a style that has been handed down to them, adding little or nothing of their own. But in every generation there are a dozen or so geniuses who are modern instead of contemporary. They are innovators; they look to the future and the public be damned; they compromise not, nor are they concerned with what is fashionable. In the 1830s the contemporary composers were men like Cherubini, Spohr, Hummel. You know where *they* stand today. And in the 1830s the modernists were Berlioz, Chopin, Schumann. How they irritated the academicians and conservatives!

What makes a "modernist" as opposed to a "contemporary?" The modernist is always more daring. He will distort, if he feels it necessary, to achieve a certain emotional result. His is not a calculated, superimposed, à la mode estheticism, but a belief and an automatic response that is rooted in the mood and spirit of the age itself. In our century the musical modernist is one with Picasso, Kandinsky, Epstein, Joyce, Eliot and Cummings, with the wars and the depressions, with the atom bomb and the dacron suit. His work may be as abstract as the forms on a cubist canvas (Schönberg) or as realistically bitter as an early drawing by Grosz (Berg). But in whatever field he specializes he is the apotheosis of a certain segment of belief implicit in his period and nowhere else.

The great twentieth-century modernists are well represented on records. Let's take some representative examples in rough chronological order, starting with Debussy and Ravel. A good disk that contains both composers is devoted to Debussy's *La Mer* (1905) and Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite* (1912), conducted by Ansermet with the Suisse Romande group (London LL-388). No great musical problems are here. But don't underestimate the delicate wit and irony of the Ravel; and the evocative tapestry of *La Mer* remains unique.

Arnold Schönberg's *Five Pieces for Orchestra* (1912), as presented by Kubelik and the Chicago Symphony (Mercury MG-50024), are a different world — the world of German expressionism. One of the score's movements, "The Changing Chord," can best be described in terms of the stream-of-consciousness of a Kandinsky color composition (and, indeed, Schönberg was greatly influenced by the theories of Kandinsky). This work is not twelve-tone, but in it the orthodox concept of tonality is close to the vanishing point.

In 1915 came Manuel de Falla's *El Amor Brujo*. The best recording of this colorful example of modern Spanish nationalism is conducted by Halffter (Westminster 5238) on a disk that also contains de Falla's brilliant *El Retablo de Maese Pedro* (1922). Also in 1915 Ernest Bloch finished his *Schelomo*, a growling, almost barbaric, evocation of the Hebraic Old Testament spirit. Try the Rose-Mitropoulos collaboration (Columbia ML-4425).

In addition to the Spanish nationalism of de Falla and the Hebraicism of Bloch, one must cite the British nationalism of Vaughan Williams as illustrated in the *Pastoral Symphony* (1922), conducted by Boult and the London Philharmonic (London LL-721). Like his two great colleagues, de Falla and Bloch, Vaughan Williams does not merely quote folk material. Any hack can do that. Vaughan Williams is a great nationalist in that he transcends the purely national elements, and the *Pastoral Symphony* is a personal document that only incidentally happens to be saturated in the heritage of England.

Similarly, Prokofieff is a composer who had the strength, personality and resource to take Russian elements and transmit them into something uniquely his own, which is more than can be said of a second-rater like Khatchaturian. As an introduction to Prokofieff, the D Major Violin Concerto (1923) immediately comes to mind, played by the artist who did more than any other to establish the work in the international repertoire — Joseph Szigeti (Columbia ML-4533). Stravinsky is another nationalist who, in early scores like *Firebird* and *Petrouchka*, gave something new and vital to the tired blatherings of Rimsky-Korsakoff. But Stravinsky has developed into a neo-classic cosmopolitan. Characteristic of his later style is the *Symphony of Psalms* (1930), a stark liturgical work with medieval influences expressed in twentieth-century terms (Ansermet, on London LS-331).

Bela Bartok's *String Quartets* are among the most amazing in the repertoire. The Juilliard Quartet has recorded all six. At first they may sound shockingly discordant, capricious and even perverse. With constant hearings they come to reflect the indomitable spirit of the quiet little man who died in 1945. The Fourth Quartet (1928), on Columbia ML-4297, may seem wild and undisciplined. In reality it is based on the most stringent of musical logic. It is not easy music to understand, and the chances are that it never will be popular, but intelligent listeners are urged to give it a chance.

Equally advanced is Alban Berg's extraordinary *Lulu* (1934), an unfinished opera with as decadent a libretto as ever delighted the heart of a Teutonic expressionist. Not pretty; highly neurotic; savagely discordant; but each discord has an emotional meaning that has its basis in character and situation. The score lays every nerve bare — but that's exactly what some critics were saying about Beethoven's *Second Symphony*, back in the early 1800s. Columbia has a complete *Lulu* set (SL-121).

And, finally, a living French composer. Some eyebrows may be lifted to see the name of Francis Poulenc in this august company. But Poulenc has composed urbane, sophisticated, extremely lovely Songs (sung by Bernac, with the composer at the piano, on Columbia ML-4333) that seem to be assured of immortality. Of how much other contemporary music can this be said?

Orchestre du Theatre des Champs-Elysées, Ernest Bour, cond. Lucette Descaves, piano, in *Piano Concerto*; Roger Del Motte, trumpet; Serge Baudo, piano, in *Concerto for Piano, Trumpet and String Orchestra*. WESTMINSTER WL 5239. 12-in. 22, 15, 6 min. \$5.95.

André Jolivet was one of the *Jeune France* group of the 1930s. In that period he wrote the *Andante for String Orchestra*, and it is an exquisitely moving and beautiful thing. The two concertos date from recent years. The one for piano, trumpet and strings is nervous, brilliant and wildly excited, with a feverish virtuoso part for the wind instrument. The piano concerto is a travelog piece. Its three movements evoke atmospheres of Africa, the Far East and Polynesia, with shockingly commonplace exoticisms and with a tremendous slam-bang of piano and percussion calculated to sell in the most cynical Hollywood manner. Wonderful recording. A. F.

KHATCHATURIAN *Gayne Ballet Music* *Masquerade Suite*

Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Fabien Sevitzy, cond.
CAPITOL P 8223. 12-in. 52 min. \$5.72.

Time has not dealt very kindly with the Khatchaturian ballet score, which already sounds rather faded, and would, in all probability, have expired long ago were it not for its *Sabre Dance*. As rearranged by Sevitzy, this frantic excerpt winds up Side 1, and if you can sit through the dreary preceding sections, you'll be rewarded by as energetic a performance of it as you could hope for. A lesser known, but far more felicitous work, the *Masquerade Suite*, with a particularly charming waltz, makes an appropriate coupling. Capitol's sound, though brilliant, is inclined to coarseness. J. F. I.

LISZT

Piano Concerto No. 1, in E Flat; Piano Concerto No. 2, in A.

Orazio Frugoni, piano. Pro Musica Symphony of Vienna. Hans Swarowsky, cond. VOX PL 8390. 12-in. 16, 20 min. \$5.95.

Piano Concerto No. 1, in E Flat.
†Saint-Saëns: *Piano Concerto No. 2, in G Minor.*

Emil Gilels, piano. State Orchestra of the USSR. Kiril Kondrashin, cond. VANGUARD VRS 6015. 12-in. 18, 18 min. \$5.95.

Emil Gilels seems to be regarded by the Soviet Union as its leading pianist, since he has been exhibited this side of the Iron Curtain in the company of such a notable, mature artist as David Oistrakh. His recording of the Liszt and Saint-Saëns concertos marks his disk debut, and we can be grateful for the mechanical devices that make it possible to hear him on this side of the Atlantic.

Assessment of young Mr. Gilel's gifts is restricted on two counts: The concertos involved do not make great musical demands on the performer, and the reproductive quality of the record is only fair, although

it is superior to many other tapes of Soviet performances. Paradoxically the performances suggest a highly musical personality. Of temperament or an individual approach there are only subtle signs, but the playing is spacious, poised, and natural in its contours. Phrase flows into phrase, section into section; the attention is held by purity of style rather than by the customary rubatos and similar devices. Except towards the end of the Liszt, the tempos never sound whipped up or strained, although the pianist plays fast enough, because the rhythmic accents are always in place. This kind of non-feverish playing engenders little emotional excitement, nor is it really ideal for concertos of the romantic school such as these, but how refreshing it is! It remains to be said that Mr. Gilels' technique achieves



Orazio Frugoni: a bold sweep and plenty of hi-fi in Liszt's two famous concertos.

an unobtrusive perfection, and the recorded piano tone implies a solid, ringing one on his part. The sound of the orchestra is quite poor, and Mr. Kondrashin conducts prosaically.

Mr. Frugoni handles the Liszt concertos in traditional fashion, underlining accents, sweeping boldly through the bravura passages, and toying with the sentimental melodies. Excellent in every way, the performances are splendidly recorded, with all the resonance and none of the excess echo that are characteristic of some other concertos issued by Vox. Mr. Swarowsky conducts forceful, somewhat broad performances, expertly played by the orchestra. R. E.

LISZT

A Faust Symphony
Mazeppa — Symphonic Poem No. 6

Orchestre de l'Association des Concerts Colonne; George Sebastian, cond., in the *Faust Symphony*; Bavarian Symphony Orchestra; Kurt Graunke, cond., in *Mazeppa*. URANIA URLP 606. Two 12-in. \$11.90.

LISZT

A Symphony to Dante's "Divine Comedy"

Orchestre de l'Association des Concerts Colonne; George Sebastian, cond. URANIA URLP 7103. 12-in. \$5.95.

When Liszt wanted to be noisy and long-winded, he had no peers. He did manage to find some interesting and worthwhile things to say in his *Faust Symphony*, however,

though all three works listed here are strictly for Lisztians. Fortunately, all are given highly dramatic readings, which suits them perfectly; unfortunately, however, the concluding vocal passages are omitted from the *Faust* music, thereby negating the value of this first up-to-date recording of the work. As to the *Dante Symphony*, it never rains but it pours. In the last issue, I reviewed two recordings of the work, and here's a third. It is, however, a good one, and should be compared with Alfred Wallenstein's on Decca. Both Sebastian and Wallenstein put as much drama as possible into this bombastic score. Reproduction is very fine, indeed, giving a feeling of presence and perspective. P. A.

MASSENET

Les Erinnyes

†Saint-Saëns: *Suite Algerienne, Op. 60*

Orchestra of the Paris Opera; André Cluytens, cond., in *Les Erinnyes*. Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française; Louis Fourestier, cond., in the *Suite*.

VOX PL 8100. 12-in. 30:12 min.; 17:30 min. \$5.95.

Two pieces of third-rate nineteenth century French music by composers who, fortunately for their fame, have given us much better fare. The only items of any particular interest are the thrice-popular *Elegie* in the Massenet incidental music and the spirited *Marche Militaire Française* in the Saint-Saëns travelog suite. Of the two performances, Fourestier's is the more exciting. Reproduction, while fairly wide-range, tends to some distortion and tinniness in the highs. P. A.

MEHUL

Symphony No. 1, in G Minor — See Mozart.

MENDELSSOHN

Piano Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 25
— See Grieg.

MENDELSSOHN

Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64 — See Bruch.

MESSAGER

Veronique. Comic Opera in 3 Acts
(Abridged)

Soloists, Raymond St. Paul Chorus. Lamoureux Orchestra, Jules Gressier, cond. VOX PL 21,100. 12-in. 46 min. \$5.95.

A particularly attractive example of French Opera Comique of the late '90's, this tuneful score will have an irresistible appeal to lovers of Herbert, Friml or Romberg. Forget all about the improbabilities of the plot or the language problem and listen to the wealth of completely captivating, elegant and sophisticated melodies Messager has provided for the cast. His duos, trios and concerted numbers are models of their kind, and, despite their fifty five years, sound as fresh and piquant as if written yesterday. Incidentally, the score was considered too "highbrow" for the taste of London's theatre goers, when the work was first produced there in 1904 and critics warned its producer, George Edwardes, it would fail. It didn't, furthermore, it has continued to be one of the two really popular scores by this composer.

With Marthe Angelici as Veronique, and

an excellent supporting cast, the performance is vivacious and typically French. Jules Gressier's adroit handling of the orchestra keeps the work moving briskly and Vox has provided fine sound. A French libretto would be welcomed with these issues. J. F. I.

MONTEVERDI

Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda
(The Duel between Tancred and Clorinda)

†Albinoni: *Concerto for Oboe No. 2 in D Minor, Op. 9, No. 2*

Grete Rapisardi-Savio (s); Luisa Ribacchi (ms); Orchestra from la Scala; Nino Sanzogno, cond. (Monteverdi). Francesco Ranzani; String Orchestra from la Scala; Tomaso Valdinoci, cond. (Albinoni).
COLOSSEUM 1014. 12-in. 23, 13 min. \$5.95.

The Monteverdi is unusual and stunning in a restrained grandeur of heroic sentiment. It is called on the envelope a one-act opera and the composer called it a "dramatic interlude"; we can be comfortable in thinking of it as a dramatic cantata. It is pungent in the unsettled orchestration of 1624, and the record is dominated by the compelling declamatory intensity of Miss Ribacchi, a mezzo of reasonable voice and great style, who is on the stage nearly continuously from beginning to end. Suggested as a corrective for those who find music this early numbing; but the edition cries for a printed libretto.

The Albinoni is a fluent and refreshing concerto grosso with a delicate pastoral as center, played with less decision than we would do it here and perhaps more amiability: very attractive although slight, and like the cantata recorded without excitation, airy and penetrating rather than suffusive.
C. G. B.

MOSKOWSKI

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in E Major

Hannes Kann, piano; Philharmonia Orchestra, Walter Goehr, cond.
CONCERT HALL CHS 1197. 12-in. 32 min. \$5.95.

Maybe the recording companies really are scraping the bottom of the barrel. A. F.

MOZART

Two Concert Rondos, in D, KV 382; in A, KV 386

Carl Seemann; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Lehmann, cond.
DECCA DL 4079. 10-in. 10, 9 min. \$2.50.

Another resonant demonstration of the usefulness of Decca's "4000" series, this intelligent coupling of kindred pieces composed to replace other rondos in concertos. There are other versions of the mocking *maestoso* of KV 382, but less satisfactory than the union of cheerful playing and fleshy sound here; while the more subdued and reflective KV 386 has its first LP, in the same forthright style and plump sound.
C. G. B.

MOZART

Divertimentos for 2 Clarinets and Bassoon, KA 229, Nos. 1, 4 and 5

Leopold Wlach, Franz Bartosek, Karl Oehlberger.

WESTMINSTER WL 5213. 12-in. 15, 14, 12 min. \$5.95.

These complete the five contrapuntal bonbons started on Westminster WL 5020 and 5022. The marriage of ideational nonchalance to technical erudition begets a number of tidy movements for idle listening. Playing of calculated and expository refinement, in a remarkably analytic reproduction of a complex and difficult blend of vibrations, at low volume seemingly faultless.
C. G. B.



Isaac Stern: Prokofieff wrote with a flute in mind, but the violin makes the grade.

MOZART

A Musical Joke, KV 522

†Méhul: *Symphony No. 1, in G Minor*

Berlin Radio Orchestra, Matthieu Lange (*Mozart*) and Rolf Kleinert, cond.
URANIA 7109. 12-in. 21, 23 min. \$5.95.

Mozart's gentle lampoon of bucolic musicians is still mildly amusing although the victims of the satire are no longer familiar, and the derision is palliated by appealing tunes and easy rhythms. The band (strings and two horns) play their false notes and countless repetitions in amiable spirit, and the recording is strong and vivid, although hardly seductive in string tone.

Méhul, influenced by Gluck and Beethoven, and a patently strong influence on Rossini, has been ignored too long by LP, and although this symphony is not one of his best works, it is vital, assertive, well scored and interesting, particularly in the approving energy of Mr. Kleinert's direction and Urania's uninhibited sound, broad and detailed, a little strident in the violins but not beyond compensation.
C. G. B.

MOZART

Serenade No. 10, for 13 Wind Instruments, in B Flat, KV 361

Vienna Philharmonic Wind Group.
WESTMINSTER WL 5229. 12-in. 48 min. \$5.95.

With the knowledge that Capitol has this in a version of high eminence (P 8181), Messrs. Westminster, on their mettle, have essayed to soar higher. They have produced a record of unblemished sensuousness, in a mellow albeit exact registration of a performance grave and intent beyond expecta-

tion in this kind of symposiac music. The unbroken texture is like dark velvet scintillating highlights, especially in the slow movements to which the players give a rare symmetry of organization. The brisker playing of the Capitol players in the more animated sections is probably preferable to the comparative restraint of the Viennese except in the plain allure of tone, which the latter exercise throughout.
C. G. B.

MOZART

Symphonies No. 29, in A, KV 201; No. 34, in C, KV 338

London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham, cond.

COLUMBIA ML 4781. 12-in. 23, 21 min. \$5.95.

Celebrated 78's in their day, this pair re-entact Sir Thomas at a day when his concepts were less disturbed by flirtation with the novel effect and the punch-line. Admittedly the deliberation of three movements of No. 29 here is coquettish, but to that concept of coquetry the conductor stays resolutely true. However, this version of the Symphony is not the one people will wish, in its hard and mean translation from SP's, sonically cramped, distorted and ugly. We are lucky that No. 34 is clothed in sound of decent texture, for the unsurpassed performance of self-assured and fastidious high-style deserves long preservation. Even the nipping animal spirits of the finale are urbanely fashioned. A disk half peach, half lemon.
C. G. B.

NAPOLI

Symphony in D Minor (2 Movements only) — See Halffter.

POULENC

Aubade for Piano and 18 Solo Instruments
— See Debussy.

PROKOFIEFF

Piano Sonata No. 8.

Anthony di Bonaventura, piano.
CLASSIC EDITIONS CE 1032. 12-in. 38 min. \$5.95.

This is one of Prokofieff's last works, and it is much like the well known symphonies he produced at the same period. In other words, it is extremely large, not to say epic in form, and makes all the gestures of a major master in its formal organization, yet comes out an essentially timid and academic creation. Fine performance, fair recording.
A. F.

PROKOFIEFF

Sonata for Violin and Piano in F Minor, Op. 80

Sonata for Violin and Piano in D Major, Op. 94

Isaac Stern, violin; Alexander Zakin, piano.
COLUMBIA ML 4734. 12-in. 20, 16 min. \$5.95.

These are among the finest works of Prokofieff's final years. Opus 80 is work of big, symphonic character, straining the possibilities of the combination to the limit, but not beyond the limit. Opus 94 is rather more condensed, pointed, and pungent, with a little more of the characteristic Prokofieff

grotesquerie and virtuoso emphasis. It was originally a flute sonata, and I have always thought it sounded cramped on the violin, but Stern's magnificent performance does not bear this out. Splendid recording. A. F.

PUCCHINI
Tosca (excerpts)

Adriana Guerrini (s) *Tosca*; Gianni Poggi (t) Cavaradossi; Paolo Silveri (b) Scarpia. Orchestra and chorus of Radio Italiana (Turin); Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, cond.

Act I: *Recondita armonia*; *Mario, Mario* to end of duet; *Tre sbirri, una carrozza* to end. Act II: *La povera mia cena fu interrotta* through *Vissi d'arte*. Act III: *E lucevan le stelle*; *O dolci mani* through *Amaro sol per te* to end of duet.

CETRA A-50152. 12-in. \$5.95.

Although some listeners might prefer more of Act II and less of Act III, this is a basically sensible assortment of chunks from a respectable but not terribly exciting performance, similarly recorded. Some people don't care for the way Adriana Guerrini sounds; without having any illusions, I do, rather, and she is certainly a thoroughgoing professional opera singer. Gianni Poggi sounds nice when he doesn't scoop up to notes; Paolo Silveri is invariably clear voice and sounds as if he had not sung very many performances as Scarpia when the recording was made. As is customary on these Cetra highlights, secondary singers are not listed. Conducting: routine. Recording: quite close on voices, not much space; review copy had a very odd spot just at the organ entrance near the end of Act I. Those who want just two sides of *Tosca* and no more would be better off with the older sounding Victor disk that has Caniglia, Gigli, and Borgioli. J. H., Jr.

RAMEAU, Jean Philippe
Secular Cantatas: Diane et Acteon; L'Impatience

Hugues Cuenod, tenor; Robert Brink, violin; Alfred Zighera, viola da gamba; Daniel Pinkham, harpsichord and dir.

LYRICHORD LL44. 12-in. \$5.95.

It strikes this reviewer that once again, an artist has been perfectly chosen to match the music being performed. Everything about Hugues Cuenod's voice seems perfectly mated to music of this style and era. As a result, we have a fine recording of two beautiful early French works. Cuenod's sense of style enables him to do complete justice to the music, and he has been ably seconded by the three instrumentalists, who play with fine taste.

The recording preserves a fine balance, acoustically speaking. The players and singer are *with* you, and yet there is "air" around them, so that one has no sense of a dead studio sound. D. R.

RESPIGHI
Concerto Gregoriano for Violin and Orchestra

Kurt Stiehler, violin. Symphony Orchestra of Radio Berlin; Ernest Borsamsky, cond.

URANIA URLP 7100. 12-in. \$5.95.

The late Ottorino Respighi, always interested

in the music of the past, tried to incorporate into a violin concerto the freedom of line and modal texture of Gregorian Chant. If he was successful in this attempt it would be difficult to judge from this rather uninspired performance by Kurt Stiehler, whose intonation is particularly shaky. The fairly close-to reproduction is satisfactory. P. A.

RESPIGHI
Old Dances and Airs for the Lute — See Stravinsky.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF

Sadko

Elizaveta Shumskaya (s), Volkhova; Vera Davidova (ms), Liubava; Elizaveta Antonova (c), Niejata; Georgi Nelepp (t), Sadko; Ivan Kozlovsky (t), Hindu Guest; Alexander Peregodov (t), Sopieli; Tikhon Tchereniakov (t), First Elder; Pavel Lizeetzian (b), Venetian Guest; Ilya Bogdanov (b), Ghost; Sergei Krasovsky (bs), King of the Sea; Mark Reizen (bs), Viking Guest; Sergei Koltipin (bs), Douda. Orchestra and Chorus of Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow; Nicolai Golovanov, cond.

Dialing Your Disks

Long-play records are made with the treble range boosted to mask surface noise, and the bass range attenuated to conserve groove-space and reduce distortion. When records are played back, therefore, the treble must be reduced and the bass increased to restore the original balance. Unfortunately, until recently, the amount of treble emphasis and bass deemphasis employed varied widely on records of different manufacture; hence the need for individual and variable bass (turnover) and treble (rolloff) compensation controls.

During the past year there has been a gradual acceptance of the RIAA (Record Industry Association of America) standard characteristic, which is virtually identical to the RCA Orthophonic curve. New recordings from all companies, with the exception of Mercury, Columbia, and the smaller companies Columbia presses for, now follow this curve, for which the turnover frequency is 500 cycles and the preemphasis is 13.5 db at 10,000 cycles. Columbia is changing gradually to the RIAA curve. (See page 50, March 1954 issue, for more detailed information.) It should be remembered that old releases will follow the old curves, no matter when the records are or were bought.

Some old records followed the NAB curve, for which bass turnover is 500 cycles and treble compensation is 16 db at 10,000 cycles. Others followed the old AES curve, with turnover at 400 cycles and only 12 db treble compensation. Some were almost combinations of the two, like RCA Victor, which was matched fairly well by NAB turnover and AES rolloff. Another important group was (and is yet) that following the LP (also called ORIG. LP or COL) curve, for which equalization is identical to NAB except in the extreme bass range.

One-knob equalizers should be set for AES, RCA, or ORTHO on new releases except those pressed by Columbia; they should be set for correct bass equalization according to the table below on other records. Then if the treble is not correct for the record, the treble tone control should be used to adjust further. Either boost or cut may be required, according to the equalizer curve available and the rolloff needed for the record; remember that COL, LP, ORIG. LP and NAB rolloff was 16 db, and LON, ORTHO (RCA), and AES rolloff about 12 or 13 db. Remember also that the proper setting is that which sounds best

to the ear, regardless of what it is supposed to be. It's perfectly legitimate to use bass and treble tone controls to make the music sound right—that's what they are intended for!

LABEL	TURN-OVER	ROLLOFF
Angel	NAB	AES
Atlantic ¹	NAB	NAB
American Recording Soc.	NAB	Ortho ⁴
Bartok	629 ²	16 db ³
Blue Note Jazz	AES	AES
Boston	COL	NAB
Caedmon	629 ²	11 db ⁷
Canyon	AES	AES
Capitol	AES	AES
Capitol-Cetra	AES	AES
Cetra-Soria	COL	NAB
Colosseum	AES	AES
Columbia	COL	NAB
Concert Hall	AES	AES
Contemporary	AES	AES
Cook Laboratories ¹	NAB	AES
Decca	COL	NAB
EMS	AES	AES
Elektra	629 ²	16 db ³
Epic	COL	NAB
Esoteric	NAB	AES
Folkways (most)	629 ²	16 db ³
Good-Time Jazz	AES	AES
Haydn Society	COL	NAB
London	COL	LON ⁴
Lyrichord, new ⁵	629 ²	16 db ³
Mercury	AES	AES
M-G-M	NAB	AES
Oceanic	COL	NAB
Philharmonia	AES	AES
Polymusic ¹	NAB	NAB
RCA Victor	Ortho ⁶	Ortho ⁴
Remington	NAB	NAB
Tempo	NAB	Ortho ⁴
Urania, most	COL	NAB
Urania, some	AES	AES
Vanguard — Bach Guild	COL	NAB
Vox	COL	NAB
Westminster, old	NAB ⁸	NAB ⁸
Westminster, new	COL	AES

¹Binaural records produced by this label are recorded to NAB standards, on the outside band. On the inside band, NAB is used for low frequencies, but the treble is recorded flat, without preemphasis.

²NAB position on equalizer is close match.

³NAB position on equalizer is close match.

⁴Use LON position on equalizer, or AES with slight treble cut.

⁵Some older records of this label were recorded to COL curve, others to AES.

⁶Very close to NAB on lows.

⁷Very close to AES on highs; boost treble slightly.

⁸Unless jacket indicates AES.



Rene Leibowitz conducts the *Gurrelieder*—
“... stupendous . . . brilliantly achieved.”

CONCERT HALL CHS 1307. Three 12-in.
\$17.85.

Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Sadko*—called “a lyric legend in seven scenes”—is a fairy-tale opera. Not a homey witch-in-the-woods affair, though; it is a full-blown fantasy with palaces instead of woodcutter's cots, water princesses instead of sandmen, soothsayers instead of angels, and a handsome hero whose dulcimer has magical powers. And the music lives up to the material. Altogether it is a very wonderfully wide-eyed opera, suitable for all children who deserve the name and all adults who deserve to be parents.

The youngest member of the Russian Five—the little group of composers who in the 1860s joined forces to stimulate creative nationalism in Russian music—was Nicholas Rimsky-Korsakoff. He also was—or developed into—the most facile orchestral writer of them all. To the casual student, it seems almost that Rimsky-Korsakoff was the official arranger of the Five, revising, touching up, and completing the work of all the others to an extent that makes it a specialized musicological problem to determine just what features of *Boris Godunoff* are by Mussorgsky and which by Rimsky-K., which portions of *Prince Igor* are Borodin's and which his, and so on.

As a result, there is far more of Rimsky-Korsakoff's operatic writing on records than shows in the catalogs, although his own operas are not well represented at all. As an additional result, there is a tendency to denigrate him as being a master orchestral colorist and little more. Faced with the necessity for saying something about a composition by him that you have listened to with only half an ear, or not at all, the safe—and common—ploy is to say, first smiling condescendingly, then wrinkling your brows: “The Rimsky? Well, it certainly is well orchestrated . . .” This indicates both familiarity and technical acumen; no one is likely to press you further.

As if the instrumental fabric could be removed like so much drapery and leave a discussable composition! Whether you like Rimsky-Korsakoff's music or not, he was a complete composer, an exceptionally fine craftsman. As a matter of fact, the sophisticated thing is *not* to like his music—or not to admit liking it if you do—to say that it is a kind of lush, hyper-romantic composition that may have been all very well when . . . bur . . .

Yet how else would a man go about composing an opera like *Sadko*? Without its

broad-contoured melodies, its Russian-Easter-egg coloration, it would be nothing at all.

Coming roughly in the middle of Rimsky-Korsakoff's operatic production, *Sadko* had its premiere in 1897, almost 20 years after *May Night*, the only other opera by him (except the little one-act monstrosity called *Mozart and Salieri*) available on records. The two are somewhat different in style. *Sadko* is characterized by a less declamatory treatment of the text, a less elementary use of folkloristic materials, and a surer command of the effects obtainable from big choral-orchestral forces. It has much more in common with the composer's other late operas—Eastern fairy-legend scores like *Tsar Saltan*, *Le Coq d'Or*, and *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitej*, which also have a way of turning up in splashy revivals even though they are so expensive to produce that they never seem to stabilize themselves in repertoires outside of Russia.

The story of *Sadko*—it could hardly be called a “plot”—has its roots in the still-pagan legends of medieval Russia. *Sadko*, a young minstrel of Novgorod, failing to obtain gold for a commercial venture from the wealthy merchants of his city, meets on the shores of Lake Ilmen the Princess of the Sea, Volkhava. Charmed by his singing and playing, she invites him home; fish of gold will make him wealthy. Leaving his wife Liubava, *Sadko* wins over the merchant princess and sets out to seek his fortune. After many adventures he wins great wealth, but the King of the Sea will not allow him to return home. *Sadko* descends into the depths, charms the king, and takes Volkhava as his bride. His dulcimer sets the court dancing, causing a storm that threatens to engulf the land. But the ghost of an old hero reminds *Sadko* of his duty to Novgorod, and he returns with his new wife. Upon arrival, Volkhava solves the marital tangle by turning into a river that gives the city direct access to the sea, and *Sadko* and Liubava are reunited in earthly splendor.

Aside from the fact that *Sadko* is the only hero readily in mind who tangles with the *on-dine-russalka* genus and emerges the better for it, the story has a good deal of enchantment, not to mention numerous opportunities for the kind of music in which Rimsky-Korsakoff is at his very best. The entire score is one huge pageant, with vigorous, colorful choruses interspersing examples of *Sadko*'s minstrel talent and such lagniappe as the Song of the Viking Guest, the Song of the Hindu Guest (known familiarly as the Song of India), the Song of the Venetian Guest, and so on.

This kind of thing the Bolshoi Theatre company, with its apparently endless supply of personnel (come to think of it, the supply probably *is* endless) does with a sweep and vitality that are most impressive. Although Georgi Nelepp is a winning *Sadko*, the final impression is one of dimension rather than detail, and even so fine a bit as Mark Reizen's singing as the Viking Guest is, as it should be, just another element in an ensemble that if not by any means above criticism brings the music strikingly alive.

The test pressings, processed here from officially approved Russian tapes, have the advantages of spaciousness and theatrical sense, and the usual disadvantages that arise

from the fact that Soviet recording engineers can still learn a great deal from their opposite numbers in Europe and this country.

J. H., Jr.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF *Scheherezade, Op. 35.*

Vienna State Opera Orchestra; Argeo Quadri, cond.
WESTMINSTER WL 5234. 12-in. 44 min.
\$5.95.

With 15 versions of the Rimsky-Korsakoff work already gracing the catalog, the reviewer can say little that is new about a 16th—even though it be on Westminster.

Quadri has no new or startling ideas about the score, which is given a straightforward performance, lying somewhere between the lush Stokowski version on Victor LM 1732 and the dry, old recording by Ormandy on Columbia ML 4089.

Superb Westminster sound . . . that still does not quite equal the very fine Mercury job by Dorati, which remains the preferred version.

J. F. I.

SAINT-SAENS

Piano Concerto No. 2, in G Minor—See Liszt.

SAINT-SAENS

Piano Concerto No. 5 in F Major, Op. 103 (“Egyptian”)—See D'Indy.

SAINT-SAENS

Suite Algerienne, Op. 60—See Massenet.

SCHONBERG

Gurrelieder

Richard Lewis (t); Ethel Semser, (s); Nell Tangeman (c); John Riley (bs); Ferry Gruber (t); Morris Gesell, speaker; Chorus and Orchestra of the New Symphony Society of Paris, Rene Leibowitz, cond.

HAYDN SOCIETY HSL 100. Three 12-in.
1:20 min. \$17.85.

The *Gurrelieder* was Schönberg's first major work, and it is also the longest and biggest work he ever created. It was begun and largely completed in 1900, but the finishing touches were not given the score until 11 years later. It is almost without precedent so far as its form is concerned; perhaps its closest parallels can be found in the dramatic symphonies of Berlioz, especially *Romeo and Juliet*, although Berlioz is scarcely recalled in its idiom. The music is particularly beholden to Wagner, with side glances at Mahler and Bruckner, but this observation merely places it historically. It stands completely on its own feet as a major masterpiece in Schönberg's tonal, lyric-dramatic style, with many extraordinary hints of the iconoclastic Schönberg to come. Ever since Stokowski's famous 78-rpm set of this work appeared, many years ago, it has taken an honored place in the recorded repertoire. I personally think of it as the next thing after Beethoven's Ninth Symphony among the gigantic, heroic creations of the romantic movement.

The text, by Franz Arnold after the Danish poet, Jens Peter Jacobsen, recalls motifs of epic literature which Wagner himself employed in *Tristan* and *The Flying*

Dutchman. It tells of the love of King Waldemar of Denmark for Tove, for whom he built the castle of Gurre; of Tove's death at the hands of Waldemar's Queen; of Waldemar's cursing God and being condemned to ride the storm with his ghostly retainers; and of the solace and healing that come at last in a mystical identification with nature.

To record the *Gurrelieder*, with its enormous orchestra, its huge chorus, and its taxing solos, was a stupendous undertaking, and it has been brilliantly achieved, except for blurring in the choral parts. The interpretation is superior to Stokowski's, partly because Leibowitz is a stricter Schönbergian, and partly because he was able to secure the services of an unbelievably magnificent tenor for the major role of Waldemar. Richard Lewis has sung much in England, and he would be the answer to many an American opera manager's prayer. Nell Tangeman, who has the part of the Wood Dove which announces and describes the death of Tove in a gorgeous, famous passage, is also superb; the singers of the two lesser parts are excellent, and so is the speaker whose monodrama with orchestra is the most "advanced" portion of the entire score. Miss Semser, the Tove, could be improved upon. A. F.

SCHMITT

Psalm 47

Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, Georges Tzipine, cond. Denis Duval, soprano; Maurice Duruflé, organ; Georges Tessier, violin; Chorale Elisabeth Brousseau.

ANGEL 35020. 12-in. 32 min. \$4.95 or \$5.95.

Florent Schmitt's *Psalm 47* (46 in the Vulgate version and originally so labeled by the composer) is a work of considerable historical importance. Written in 1904 when the composer was 34, it stems in its combination of religious, sensual, and exotic elements from Massenet and Saint-Saëns. But its advances in harmony, orchestral color, and barbaric strength of utterance were so great in its day that it in turn founded a tradition for the later oratorios of Honegger, Szymanowski, and Walton. It reflects some of Debussy's *La Mer* style, but also anticipates some of the oriental coloration of Strauss's *Salome*, first staged the following year. (Schmitt later wrote a "wordless drama" called *The Tragedy of Salome*.) Still an eloquent, vivid work, in which the choral and orchestral masses are majestically combined, the *Psalm* makes its welcome debut on records in a surging performance sumptuously recorded by Angel. Miss Duval uses her slightly acidulous voice in stylistic understanding in the seductive soprano solo. R. E.

SCHUBERT

Rondo for Violin and String Quartet *String Trio in B Flat* *String Trio Movement in B Flat*

Anton Kamper, Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet; Trio from that Quartet.

WESTMINSTER WL 5223. 12-in. 15, 26, 12 min. \$5.95.

All were composed when Schubert was 19 or 20, and all are felicitous in their different ways. Westminster, and the Vienna Kon-

zerthaus Quartet, augmented or diminished, have had notable success with Schubert's chamber music, but this record holds a shock for their admirers. The *Rondo* is complacently played in perverse indifference to its dictated high-spirits, and the treble has been stimulated beyond reach of correction. The other two works have the same exaggeration but fortunately no solo violin to make it unendurable, and they are played in obedience to the temper of their scores. The *Rondo* will not do: the others may be satisfactory on poor equipment.

C. G. B.

SCHUBERT

Sonatas for Piano, No. 14, in A Minor, Op. 143 *No. 21, in B Flat, Op. Posth.*

Friedrich Wührer.

VOX PL 8210. 12-in. 21, 32 min. \$5.95.

While the most rational couplings are those of consecutive works by the same composer, the combination here, lacking the convenience of consecution, offers a rare ease in observing Schubert in development. For the two sonatas are five years apart, and the earlier appears very clearly, in a fumbling and unstable way, to attempt what the later, the last, of Schubert's sonatas, the B Flat here recorded, did accomplish in the way of expressing the terror of living. Not that there is any terror, or any strong feeling of any kind, in the A Minor Sonata, but in the discursive entertainment of that music we cannot but interpret certain odd furies and a restless instability of line as a fretful anticipatory discontent. That impression is very strong in Mr. Wührer's forceful statement, an able demonstration of getting more out of a score than we knew was there. The great B Flat Sonata seems altogether admirable in this display of poetic sensibility, poised manipulation and great power. Since the playing is supported by a piano sound of the very first class, notable particularly in the vibratory retention of bass, the record may be called a fulfillment.

C. G. B.

SCHUBERT

Sonata for Piano No. 16, in A Minor, Op. 42

Wilhelm Kempff.

LONDON LL 792. 12-in. 34 min. \$5.95.

The late Artur Schnabel and the quick Wilhelm Kempff made careers out of specializing in their musical preferences, and the preferences of both are the same: Beethoven, Bach, Mozart and Schubert. Their methods of play have not much in common, Schnabel having excelled in a poetic personal mobility and Prof. Kempff still working within contours which impress one first as of architectural exactitude. But these too are mobile although they never lose their proportions; and in the hardy Sixteenth Sonata of Schubert, restless and inquiring within its formal structure, Prof. Kempff makes an interpretation of classic-tempered romanticism, alert and unstriving and with a definition of phrase and color, to excite inquiries on the nature of romanticism itself, that this classicism is so moving; and on the power of classicism, that it can make this romanticism so rational. — Excellent piano-sound: would belong with the best had some cushioning been provided for its concussion. C. G. B.

SCHUMANN

Symphony No. 2 in C Major, Op. 61

The Cleveland Orchestra; George Szell, cond.

COLUMBIA ML 4817. 12-in. \$5.95.

This is possibly the hardest of the four Schumann symphonies to set forth in a completely convincing manner. Szell's treatment is rather too brusque, too hard-driven for my taste, though he does allow the *Adagio* to sing in properly romantic fashion. This movement is further distinguished by some exquisite woodwind solos. But the moderately close-to-reproduction, as a whole, is rather hard-sounding, with the highs overpowering the lows. My favorite recording of this symphony is the more relaxed one by Carl Schuricht and the Paris Conservatory Orchestra (LONDON), even if the strings sound a little thin in certain of its passages. P. A.

SERRANO

La Cancion del Olvido

Lily Berchman, Luis Sagi Vela, E. Barta. Orquesta de Camara de Madrid; Montorio, Estevarena, Navarro, conds.

MONTILLA FM-LD 20. 12-in. \$5.95.

La Cancion del Olvido, like Caballero's *Gigantes y Cabezudos*, was a smash hit from the moment of its première in 1916. Its plot is rather complicated, but boils down to girl chases and catches boy. The lines, however, are much superior to the plot itself, and often possess real poetic merit. Unfortunately, this can be determined only by those sufficiently fluent in Spanish, for the program notes include only brief English résumés of each scene. However, what really makes the work live is its delightful music — things like the opening baritone number, the exquisite soprano aria that follows, the charming serenade, etc.

The singing of the principals is of a very high order indeed. Miss Berchman sings with much greater ease in this work than in *Gigantes y Cabezudos*, and Mr. Sagi Vela's brilliant baritone is her equal in every respect.

In order to determine the impression that a zarzuela would make on Americans unfamiliar with this type of music, *La Cancion del Olvido* was played first at an SME meeting and then for a group of professional musicians. The individual reactions varied all the way from frank dislike to mild en-



George Szell: brusque accents and lovely woodwind playing in the Schumann Second.

thusiasm. As a whole, the response was exactly what I expected: the singing was praised and the music was thought pleasant but not extraordinary. A listener who has produced dozens of successful shows thought it excellent material for this purpose. The reaction of a single subject to repeated listenings I determined several years ago when I subjected a roommate to recordings of the first two arias. Although not particularly impressed at first, after half a dozen hearings he became extremely fond of them.

To summarize: those who know and like the *zarzuela* style will be tremendously pleased with this recording. Those unfamiliar with the genre will still find it pleasant and after a few hearings may grow to enjoy it greatly. GONZALO SEGURA, Jr.

SHOSTAKOVITCH

The 24 Preludes

Menahem Pressler, piano.

M-G-M E 3070. 12-in. 35 min. \$4.85.

In his amusing notes on the sleeve of this recording, Edward Cole points out that this music contains echoes of Prokofieff, Tchaikovsky, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Borodin, Chopin and Richard Strauss, and in later comments he mentions Clementi and Mahler. That is not all. I find Mozart and Rachmaninoff here and there, and no doubt Shostakovitch has planted other reminiscences among these pieces. For this "round trip ticket through the styles," to quote a phrase of Schönberg's, seems quite deliberately planned as such, and in the hands of a virtuoso who has the colossal technique and the perceptive musicianship of Pressler, it all comes off. Others had better leave it alone, but unfortunately they don't. One of the best piano recordings I have ever heard. A. F.

STRAVINSKY

Pulcinella Suite

†Respighi: *Old Dances and Airs for the Lute*

Chamber Orchestra of Radio Berlin, Matthieu Lange, cond.

URANIA URLP 7093. 12-in. 18, 18 min. \$5.95.

Pulcinella Suite; Apollon Musagète

Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Hans Hollreiser, cond.

VOX PL 8270. 12-in. 18, 20 min. \$5.95.

Pulcinella and *Apollon Musagète* are Stravinsky's tributes to Italian music. The first is a chamber ballet composed in 1920 on delightful themes by Pergolesi; these are magnificently orchestrated but not extravagantly changed, yet they are somehow rendered completely Stravinskian in harmony and rhythm. *Pulcinella* is one of Stravinsky's deftest comedies and most endearing scores. *Apollon Musagète* is a classic "white" ballet which dates from 1928. Its score, for strings alone, recalls Bellini in his more somber and monumental moods; the whole thing is grand and big, but with wonderfully telling lyric moments. The Urania recording of *Pulcinella* is better than the Vox, but the Vox provides both works of Stravinsky. The Urania couples *Pulcinella* and its Pergolesian substance with Respighi's colorful, much played transcriptions of Italian instrumental music of the Renaissance. A. F.

TARTINI

Devil's Trill Sonata in G Minor

†Brahms: *Sonata in D Minor, Op. 108*

David Oistrakh, violin; Vladimir Yampolsky, piano.

COLOSSEUM CRLP 148. 12-in. 15, 21 min. \$5.45.

This recording presents two contrasting examples of the violin art of David Oistrakh. He is heard as the extremely polished virtuoso in the *Devil's Trill Sonata*, and as the mature, sensitive artist in the adagio of the Brahms Sonata.

The Sonata in G minor with the famous "Devil's Trill" is widely regarded as one of Tartini's best compositions, a feeling which the composer himself shared. This is violin playing in the grand manner; the beautiful allegro energico, broad and sure, is a striking example of this.

The *Sonata in D minor, opus 108* — the last of Brahms' three violin sonatas is given a polished impeccable reading. The above mentioned adagio is done with sensitive inner warmth. Vladimir Yampolsky's piano is good in tone and balance. R. L.



Stokowski: the latest Tchaikovsky Fifth has more sonic than musical fascination.

TCHAIKOVSKY

Pique Dame

E. Smolenskaya (s), Lisa; N. Kositzina (s), Mary; V. Firsova (s), Chloë; E. Verbitzkaya (ms), Countess; E. Korneyeva (ms), Governess; V. Borisenko (c), Pauline and Daphnis; Georgi Nelepp (t), Hermann; Alexander Peregudov (t), Tchekalinsky; V. Shevtzov (t), Master of Ceremonies; F. Godovkin (t), Tchaplitsky; Alexei Ivanov (b), Tomsky and Plutus; Pavel Liseetzian (b), Prince Yeletsky; Vsevolod Tyutyunik (bs), Sourin; Ivan Skobtzov (bs), Naroumov. Orchestra and Chorus of Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow; A. Melik-Pasheyev, cond.

CONCERT HALL CHS 1305. Three 12-in. \$17.85.

The Tchaikovsky most people know is the soul-baring neurotic of the *Pathétique*, and his modern reputation stands or falls on the public's evaluation of what in the ultimate balance may turn out to be his least important artistic achievements. Compared to his work in formal symphonic molds, his theater music is little played or, like the ballet scores, is played mainly in heavily edited fragments. Certainly it is undervalued. Most people go through a stage of firm belief that his symphonic emotional outpourings are great music — the

greatest ever written. Few stop there. They pass on to other enthusiasms, and, regarding their Tchaikovsky phase as an adolescent embarrassment like acne or a crush on the ninth-grade algebra teacher, relegate him to secondary status.

Relatively few seem to consider the possibility that they are passing judgement on extra-musical grounds, that they are placing the blame for their own emotional immaturity on Tchaikovsky. He, poor man, had enough trouble without that. Over the long haul, the percentage-content of tormented soul in a composition does not determine its worth. Anguish is not music, and Tchaikovsky's tremendous gifts — and technique — as a composer were most effectively employed when a theatrical context required him to objectify to emotions of other people instead of wallowing about in the stream-bath of his own guilt and loneliness.

The complete list of Tchaikovsky's compositions shows more operas — 10 in all — than it does symphonies. Those who know all of them, at least in score, seem to regard *Eugen Onegin* and *Pique Dame* as the finest, and they are the only two that have achieved any sort of continuing existence in the repertoires of opera houses outside of Russia. They are hardly great works in the sense that *Don Giovanni* and *Otello* and *Tristan und Isolde* are great works, but both are immensely competent constructs, and it is no exaggeration at all to say that they contain some of Tchaikovsky's very finest music. Of the two, *Pique Dame*, which has the tauter dramatic structure, may well be the better.

The libretto of *Pique Dame* (often called in English *The Queen of Spades*) was adapted by the composer's brother Modeste from a short story by Pushkin. The setting is eighteenth-century St. Petersburg. Herman, a hussar lieutenant and a habitually unsuccessful gambler at cards, falls in love with Lisa, a young noblewoman, who is engaged to the wealthy Prince Yeletsky. Herman's problem: he needs money — lots, and immediately. The solution: Lisa's grandmother, the Countess, now a wrinkled old crone but once a famous beauty known at the French court as "The Moscow Venus," in her youth gave herself for a secret — three cards that win without fail. With Lisa's aid, Herman hides in the Countess' bedroom, hoping to extort the magic secret. Upon seeing him, the old woman dies of fright. But her ghost whispers the names of the cards. Failing to dissuade Herman from using the information, Lisa drowns herself. Herman puts the three cards to the test. Twice he wins. Staking all on the third card, he turns up not the expected ace but the Queen of Spades. Before him he sees the old Countess' ghost. He stabs himself. Three cards, three deaths.

As a lyric melodist, Tchaikovsky was at least as much Italian as Russian; his ideal as an opera composer was Mozart. In the eighteenth century aristocratic milieu of *Pique Dame* he found himself quite at home, and his musical setting of the stage has about it an easy grace far more convincing than most nineteenth century attempts to recapture the classic spirit. The score is full of exquisitely long-lined melodies.

The Concert Hall version, issued with the blessing of the official Soviet agency for musical materials in this country, Leeds Music Corporation, is not the first to be-

come available. There is a Colosseum issue on four twelve-inch disks, also originating in the Bolshoi Theatre but presumably not authorized. There is also a cut version, in German, issued on two disks by Urania, that has real merit.

Without a Colosseum copy available for controlled comparison, it is only possible to say that memory bears the distinct impression that it was less carefully engineered than the Concert Hall test pressing, which although not of a technical quality to enchant those whose interest is mainly audiophilic promises a quite serviceable representation of the music. The singers, more notable for alertness, idiomatic musicality, and intelligent characterization than for uniformly high vocal quality, are all at least adequate. Although I am no special admirer of the peculiarly sweetish tone that Russian tenors strive for, Georgi Nelepp is a very good Herman, taken on his own terms, and Alexei Ivanov is above average in the primary low-voiced role of Tomsy. E. Verbitzkaya and E. Smolenskaya sing the main female roles effectively, and orchestra, chorus and soloists all show admirable unity of purpose under the baton of A. Melik-Pashyev. Soviet standards of opera performance — and tape recording, if you want to go into that — may not be the highest in the world, but performances such as this have about them sense of rapport and familiarity that make up for a good many shortcomings. J. H., Jr.

TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 36

RIAS Symphony Orchestra; Ferenc Fricsay, cond.
DECCA DL 9680. 12-in. \$5.55.

Sometimes excess duplication of the standard repertoire gets to be annoying and confusing, not only to the record collector but also to the dealer and reviewer. This newest version of the Tchaikovsky Fourth marks the symphony's twelfth appearance on the LP lists! With the exception of an excessively slow tempo for the second theme in the first movement, however, Fricsay merits a high rating for the precision, clarity and overall dynamism of his well-played and well-recorded interpretation. P. A.

TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64.

Symphony Orchestra. Leopold Stokowski, cond.
VICTOR LM 1780. 12-in. 49 min. \$5.72.

Stokowski's first recording of a Tchaikovsky symphony for LP, is a driving, genuinely exciting and highly personalized reading of the Fifth, that will, however, appeal less to music lovers than to sound fans. As always, with this conductor, there are musical vagaries in meters of tempos and dynamics that are difficult to accept, and though they are less apparent than in some previous recordings, they do detract from complete enjoyment of the symphony.

What is really impressive about the record is the exceptional brilliance of the over-all orchestral sound, one of the finest expositions of Victor's "New Orthophonic" process. The strings in particular, have been recorded with a silken sheen, taut and dazzling, never edgy. J. F. I.

WALTHER, Johann Gottfried

Chorale Variations: "Meinem Jesum lass' ich nicht;" "Jesu meine Freude")

†Böhm, Georg:

Chorale Variations: ("Ach wie nichtig, ach wie flüchtig;" "Auf meinen lieben Gott;" "Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend")

Finn Viderö, on the organ at Jaegersborg, Denmark.

HAYDN SOCIETY HSL-3066. 12-in. \$5.95.

From the standpoint of the student of organ music, or the student of music history, or both, this is a thoroughly admirable record. Walther was born just one year before Johann Sebastian Bach, and was, incidentally, his second cousin. To judge by the quality of the music presented here, he was certainly a composer to be reckoned with. One portion of his chorale variations on "Jesu meine Freude" bears a startling similarity to a section of Bach's famous *Pasacaglia* in C. This may have been an incidental by-product of the long friendship between the two men.

The other side of the disk contains works by another little-known figure of the period, Georg Böhm, who was born 24 years before Bach, in 1661. His work is characterized by the frequent use of ornaments, which may be traced to French influence.

The performances are first rate, and have the qualities that have come to be expected from this artist, namely; clarity of line and great imagination in matters of registration. In fact, it is a constant source of surprise to note the varieties of tone color drawn from the instrument. The recording is excellent, and a special word should be said for the outstandingly clean surfaces. D. R.

WEILL

Kleine Dreigroschenmusik — See Copland.

YSAYE

Sonata-Ballad for Unaccompanied Violin, No. 3, Op. 27 — See Brahms.

COLLECTIONS AND MISCELLANY

PROKOFIEFF

Symphony No. 1 in D Major ("Classical"), Op. 25

GLINKA

Ruslan and Ludmilla Overture

BORODIN

On the Steppes of Central Asia

MUSSORGSKY-RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF

Night on the Bare Mountain

L'Orchestre de la Societe des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris; Ernest Ansermet, cond.

LONDON LL 864. 12-in. 38 min. \$5.95.

Distinctly an off day for Ansermet, in a group of unimaginative readings of some more or less standard repertoire pieces. The Prokofieff symphony, in particular, seems unnecessarily fussy and distorted, with a second movement that is oddly lethargic. The Glinka is forceful enough, but lacks sonic dynamics, and the remaining two

works are available in far more attractive versions.

I was struck by the arid sound of the strings, and only after I had finished listening to the recording did I notice that the orchestra was not that of the Suisse Romande with which the conductor is more usually associated. Perhaps this may account, in part, for these unenthusiastic performances. J. F. I.

MUSSORGSKY-RAVEL

Pictures at an Exhibition

SMETANA

The Moldau

DVORAK

Rhapsody No. 3 in A Flat Major

Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam (first two works); Hague Philharmonic Orchestra; Antal Dorati, cond.

EPIC LC 3015. 12-in. 55 min. \$5.95.

With two superb versions of *Pictures* already in the catalog, Kubelik's on Mercury 50000 and Ormandy on Columbia ML 4700, Dorati faces extremely tough competition, and doesn't quite match it. His is a bold, glowing and aerial reading, about the best thing he has committed to records, but it fails to generate the extraordinary excitement of the Kubelik, and cannot match the superb orchestral playing, or the sound on the Philadelphia disk. His *Moldau* is a rather placid, turgid stream, but it would be impossible to fault his jaunty reading of the Dvorak Rhapsody, a rollicking rhythmic romp in the composer's best Bohemian manner, recorded here for the first time on LP.

Reasonably good, but not superlative sound, calling for some de-emphasis of the bass. Close-to and rather confined sound in the Mussorgsky and Smetana, but quite spacious, if occasionally hollow, in the Dvorak. Surfaces on my copy were not above reproach, being gritty and infested with clicks. For the record, this disk was the winner of the "Grand Prix du Disque 1953," whatever that may mean. J. F. I.

MUSIC OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Erika Metzger-Ulrich, soprano; Otto Pingel, tenor; Collegium Musicum, Krefeld; Robert Haass, cond.

VOX PL 8110. 12-in. \$5.95.

This is a thoroughly admirable disk, of music pleasantly off the beaten path. Among the names represented are Neidhart von Reuenthal, Walther von der Vogelweide and Adam de la Halle — composers who are met with in so many books on the history of music, and whose music is so infrequently heard.

There is a nice balance between instrumental and vocal works, the greater share of the latter category being given to the tenor, Otto Pingel. Mr. Pingel's voice seems admirably suited to music of this period, which is to say, he makes it attractive.

The acoustics, particularly in the works involving the voice, have something of a "studio" sound, otherwise the recording itself is of very high quality.

The jacket notes contain some valuable information about the period in which the music was written, and some details of the lives of the individual composers, although neither the texts nor the translations of the vocal works are supplied. D. R.



Regina Music Box, circa 1900. The tinkle and the clank arouse nostalgia, too . . .

MUSICAL GADGETRY

Carousel Band Organ; Monkey Grinder Hurdy Gurdy; Street Piano; Regina Music Box (15-inch); Regina Music Box (27-inch); Swiss Orchestral Music Box; Orchestrope; Bell Xylophone Piano; Mandolin Piano. SPECTRUTONE AH 1002. 12-in. \$5.95.

Sonically, this is certainly one of the most startling disks I have ever heard. Engaging in its blatant disregard of things musical (incidentals such as pitch, tempo, etc.) yet as attention-demanding as a 45 inch television screen in a dark room, these sounds are breathtakingly reproduced. In many cases plain nostalgia will take a hand—how long since you have heard the brash woofing and clatter of a Carousel Band Organ? It took me back to many a mid-summer night carnival. Of quite unbelievable frequency range is the sound of the 27-inch Regina Music Box (or changer). Its booming bass tones which would do fair justice to a modern pipe organ! Recommended for audio extroverts and nostalgia specialists. W. B. S.

LISTEN TO THE BAND

The Gladiators March; Sefira, Intermezzo; Malaga; Marriage of the Winds; Gypsy Baron March; Deutschmeister March; Kaiser-Friedrich March; Hoch Heidecksburg March; Radetzky March.

Vox Concert Band.

Vox vx 590. 10-in. 27 min. \$3.15.

A certain old-fashioned charm pervades this listenable concert of Continental band favorites, a charm that evokes summer evening band concerts in the park, and the grand parade, the acrobats and sawdust of the circus rather than any martial spirit. Perhaps its most novel aspect is the exclusion of any music by the March King, John Philip Sousa.

The recording is bold, brassy and bright, yet has a feeling of spaciousness. The overall band sound is extremely faithful, the clarity of the triangle in *The Gladiators*, and the drum section in the *Kaiser Friedrich* being outstanding. J. F. I.

O LOVELY APPEARANCE OF DEATH American folk songs of sadness and melancholy

Hally Wood, soprano.

ELEKTRA EKL 10. 10-in. 25 min. \$4.45.

Provided the listener is not repelled by the title of the record, he will be rewarded by

some of the most vibrant, exciting and lovely folk-singing to come along in many a day. Hally Wood's version of *King's Highway* is alone well worth the price of the whole record, even though it lasts but two minutes. This is a truly extraordinarily deep-felt, passionate statement of a spiritual, sung with verve and understanding, in a medium ordinarily most difficult for "white" singers. In fact, the entire record is remarkable for her complete mastery of various styles of singing, each one stated with rare taste and imagination. Humor is here, as well as pathos and sadness, each illuminated by Miss Wood's exquisite performances.

The recording is close-to and quite intimate in feeling. The balance is excellent. J. F. I.

SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE KEYBOARD MUSIC

Felicja Blumental, piano.

LONDON LL 769. 12-in. 39 min. \$5.95.

Includes Fr. Antonio Solder's *Sonatas in C Sharp Minor and D*; Fr. Rafael Angles' *Aria in D Minor*; Mateo Albéniz's *Sonata in D*; Cantallos' *Sonata in C Minor*; Seixas' *Sonatas in A Minor and B Flat*; and *Toccatina in E Minor*; Jacinto's *Toccatina in D*; Joao de Sousa Carvalho's *Toccatina in G Minor*.

Not all the keyboard music of the Iberian peninsula during the eighteenth century was composed by Scarlatti or Soler, and this recording proves how able and gifted were many of these composers' contemporaries. The influence of Scarlatti directly or through Soler is most apparent in the Cantallos Sonata and the B Flat Sonata of Seixas, the major composer of the Portuguese group represented here. Albéniz' dance-like Sonata is very Spanish, Seixas' A Minor Sonata almost exotic in its interesting harmonic shifts, and Angles' aria quite poignant. The figurations in the Carvalho Toccata suggest knowledge of the new instrument called the pianoforte. Miss Blumental's nimble fingers, deft touch, and discreet dynamic scale put the music in the most favorable light, and the recording is one of London's best balanced and cleanest. It provides a refreshing experience. R. E.

SOUNDS OF OUR TIMES — The Drums of Willie Rodriguez.

Progressive jazz by Willie Rodriguez and his orchestra.

COOK 1086. 10-in. \$4.00.

Also available on binaural records.

Jazz with latin overtones has become one of the characteristic sounds of our times, and staple fare for the tireless attenders of jazz concerts. However, any resemblance between genuine jazz and the eight numbers on this record is purely semantic. Willie Rodriguez, who has played for such latin bands as Jose Curbelo's, Noro Morales', and Muguelito Valdes', gives a lively performance on a variety of drums, but his sidemen sound more like Latins from Manhattan than jazz progressives, despite the contrary impression given on the record jacket. If this disk is a disappointment to jazz-fanciers, though, it won't be for Emory Cook's most loyal following—the collectors of pure sound effects. As such, it's a gem. R. H. H., Jr.

THE MUSIC BETWEEN

ECHOES OF ITALY

George Feyer, piano, with rhythm accompaniment.

Vox vx 620. 10-in. \$3.15.

Mattinata; Anema e Core; Ciribiribin; Tic-ta, Tic-ta; O Sole Mio; Luna Rossa; Per Un Bacio d'Amore; Oh, Marie; Funiculi-Funicula, Torna a Surriento; Scalinatella; Santa Lucia; Violetta; Ti Voglio Bene; Papaveri; Parla Mi d'Amore; Violino Tzigano; Operatic Fantasy.

ECHOES OF VIENNA

George Feyer, piano, with rhythm accompaniment.

Vox vx 550. 10-in. \$3.15.

Vienna, City of My Dreams; When The Lilac Blooms Again; Emperor Waltz; Springtime in Vienna; Schönbrunner Waltz; Deutschmeister March; Im Prater Blüch'n Wieder die Bäume, Wiener Madl'n; Einmal Möcht Ich Wieder Mit Dir Hutschen Gebn; Rosenkavalier Waltz; Ich Möcht Wieder Einmal in Grinzing Sein; Gypsy Baron Waltz; Fiakerlied; Das Muss Ein Stück vom Himmel Sein; Radetzky March; Voices of Spring Waltz; Schubert Melody; Das Gibi's Nur Einmal; Fledermaus Fantasie.

Following his success with Parisian tunes, George Feyer, backed by guitar and, I think, bass fiddle, now turns to Italy and Vienna and comes up with a pair of light, expressive recordings. Both show Mr. Feyer to be absolutely sure of his material. His touch is always delicate and his playing, in general, offers a graceful pleasure hard to come by these days. *Echoes of Vienna* is filled with waltzes and polkas, as it should be, and its main quality is a kind of bubbling lightheadedness. *Echoes of Italy* is more romantic; its melodies are sometimes impassioned and always deeply-colored as befits the music of a sun-drenched land. I particularly liked Mr. Feyer's fresh, energetic approach to *Ciribiribin*. The sound is beautifully-balanced and, like the playing, is sane all the way through.



Hally Wood. For death: humor, pathos and sadness—and a lovely appearance.



George Feyer: *Viennese waltzes and sunny Italian tunes in two gay "Echo" medleys.*

GYPSY SONGS AND CSARDAS

Antal Kocze and his band.

WESTMINSTER WL 3015. Vol. I. \$4.00.

Green Portal; Lover's Promise; On Lake Balaton; Rakosi Berczenyi; My House Afire; The Great Bear; Shepherd's Song; Happy Tunes; Dream Love; The Happy Hobo.

GYPSY MUSIC

Antal Kocze and his band.

WESTMINSTER WL 3010. Vol. V. \$4.00.

Transylvanian Dance; Sad Hungarian Song; Servian Dance; Hora Staccato; Czardas; Hungarian Song and Dance; Magyar Dance.

Listening to these latest Kocze recordings of gypsy music, I was struck with the idea that they are, perhaps, so authentic that they are now beginning to turn back on themselves and sound dangerously like parodies. All the gypsy tricks are here: the string tremolos, quavering pitch, the slowly increasing tempos but somehow, after a hearing or two, these tricks take on an exaggerated air. The tremolos begin to tremble a little too much, the pitch varies at peculiar moments, the tempos pick up too much or too little speed. However, this might be merely a peculiarity on the listener's part; in short, I am probably as responsible for the feeling of parody as Mr. Kocze. Mr. Kocze's selections on both records, I should add, are all lugubrious; even on a band named *Happy Tunes*, he and the orchestra manage only a half-smile. My feeling, then, is that we might be reaching a point of diminishing returns for gypsy records and I would recommend these two only for enthusiasts. The sound is close and, I thought, rather harsh.

SONGS FOR STRINGS

Pittsburgh Symphony Strings conducted by Richard Jones.

CAPITOL L419. 10-in. \$3.98.

Yesterdays; Orchids in the Moonlight; Bambalina; Long Ago (And Far Away); Summertime; Love Walked In; Little Girl Blue; Dancing On The Ceiling.

The sound of the Pittsburgh strings on these eight popular songs is as gorgeous as

anything we have on records today. Very little, however, can be said for what they've been given to do. The arrangements they play are, without exception, sluggish and humorless; *Love Walked In* takes on, here, the monotonous, dull tread of a walk to the gallows and the enchanting Rodgers and Hart tune *Dancing On The Ceiling* becomes an upside-down funeral march. On the other hand, you might like the bitter-sweet Tchaikovsky flavor with which the strings play *Yesterdays*. All in all, though, what we're given here is splendid sound and little musical interest.

BUILDERS OF AMERICA

Cantata for mixed voices; composed by Harl McDonald; text by Edward Shenton; Claude Rains, narrator; composer conducting the Columbia Chamber Orchestra and Chorus.

CHILDREN'S SYMPHONY

Composed by Harl McDonald; composer conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra.

COLUMBIA ML 2220. 10-in. \$4.00.

There is no doubting Harl McDonald and Edward Shenton's sincerity. They have collaborated here — Mr. McDonald producing the music, Mr. Shenton the text — on a cantata meant, I presume, to renew the listener's faith in our traditions, and they mean what they say. Unfortunately, the pious overtones with which the score is copiously loaded give the subject a pomposity it doesn't deserve. America, it should be clear to us now, was built by men, not angels. In any case, the team has chosen a difficult, if not impossible task; better composers and librettists than they have produced hollow, pretentious works when fired by the sparks of patriotism. Claude Rains speaks the narration with taste and affection and the chorus does its job with fervor and generally unintelligible diction.

Mr. McDonald's *Children's Symphony* is on the other side. A work in the usual four movements, it takes simple children's tunes and embellishes them with grandiose orchestration, etc. If you like this kind of fooling around, the work is probably for you. The kids, I feel sure, will like it. The sound on both sides is often shrill.

THE PASSIONS

Lex Baxter and his orchestra, featuring Bas Sheva.

CAPITOL LAL 486. 10-in. \$4.00.

Despair; Ecstasy; Hate; Lust; Terror; Jealousy; Joy.

Apparently, this is a big one for Capitol Records. They have packaged it in a special album, complete with a rainproof, dust-proof cover for the record itself, two booklets, one on high fidelity, the other, quite lengthy and elegantly printed, telling you exactly what to listen for in every groove of the record. Well, after reading the booklet and listening to the record thoroughly, the only conclusion I can reach is that the thing to listen for is sound, sound and more sound. If you want music you'd better seek elsewhere.

The Passions include despair, ecstasy, hate, lust, terror, jealousy, and joy. A throaty-

voiced vocalist called Bas Sheva moans, groans, whines, keens, screams, bawls, and calls her way through every one of them sounding most of the time like Yma Sumac having a nightmare. Miss Sheva, in fact, does everything but sing. On some bands she is helped by a chorus. I feel sure that she does everything she has been told to do and one can hardly blame her for giving her all. But the total result — including Mr. Baxter's score — offers a monumental piece of foolishness, and that goes for the booklet, too. The sound, as Capitol claims, is outstanding.

ROBERT KOTLOWITZ

THE BEST OF JAZZ

DIXIE BY THE FABULOUS SIDNEY BECHET

BLUE NOTE LP 7026. 10-in. 25 min. \$3.92.

Sidney Bechet, soprano saxophone; Jonah Jones, trumpet; Jimmy Archey, trombone; Buddy Weed, piano; Walter Page, bass; Johnny Blowers, drums.

Rose of the Rio Grande; All of Me; Sweet Georgia Brown; Ding Dong Daddy; Shine; Black and Blue.

Those who remember Jonah Jones as a member of Stuff Smith's rather frantically comic group who produced some provocative muted trumpet work when the occasion permitted, may be amazed to hear the horn that this same Jonah Jones is blowing on this disk. Gone is the mute and gone is the diffidence. He plays a crisp and forceful open horn that swings, punches and rocks with amazing vigor. When the circumstances call for it — as on *Shine* and *All of Me* — he produces a wonderfully rough jazz tone that is much in the Armstrong tradition, or — as on *Black and Blue* — a powerfully evocative blues feeling. Bechet is robust and relaxed, always his best state; Walter Page provides his sturdy beat; and Jimmy Archey fills in around the edges with his dark-toned trombone. Although, at first glance, this might appear to be a disparate group, they work together splendidly and, urged on primarily by Jones and Page, produce a succession of unusually engaging numbers. They are helped by an excellently balanced recording job.



Jonah and his horn: *Without the mute, a crisp and forceful session for Sidney.*

DJANGO REINHARDT

Three Fingered Lightning.

VOX VX 610. 10-in. 23 min. \$3.15.

Dark Eyes; Place de Broukere; Mabel; Sweet Sue; Limehouse Blues; Swing 41; Swing 42; Djangology.

In the hierarchy of jazz guitarists, Django Reinhardt and Charlie Christian are joint occupants of the very highest position. The work of both men is characterized by a constant creative flow of well developed ideas, seemingly evolved with casual ease, and an intensely swinging beat. While Christian, an American Negro, developed in a background common to many jazz greats, Reinhardt would seem to have made his mark despite both origin and circumstances. He was a gypsy, born in Belgium, who lost the use of two fingers when he was 18. Yet even with only three-fifths of the usual fingering potential, he managed to become the only non-American who has achieved what passes for jazz immortality.

The present disk is not a completely happy presentation of Reinhardt's art. Left alone with a good rhythm section and possibly the muted tones of a clarinet or violin, Reinhardt is the embodiment of swinging grace — as is the case in several of these numbers, notably *Swing 42*, a particularly melodic piece of chamber swing, and *Mabel*. But a large band intrudes on some numbers in an empty and inappropriate fashion and, while Reinhardt's brief contributions to these selections have their usual charm, they are largely a waste of space which might easily have been used to better advantage.

BENNY CARTER: Cosmopolite

CLEF MG C-141. 10-in. 25 min. \$3.85.

I Get a Kick Out of You; Street Scene; Pick Yourself Up; Imagination; I've Got the World on a String; Gone with the Wind; Long Ago and Far Away; I've Got It Bad and That Ain't Good.

Twenty years ago, Benny Carter was recognized in music circles as a great but unappreciated jazz talent. In the years since, he has neither broken through the barrier of limited appreciation nor has he abandoned, in disgust, his standards or the music business. He is still a great but scarcely appreciated jazz talent, the more so now because he has grown with the years, adapting the newer developments in jazz to his own purposes without being hoodwinked by their more manic manifestations. This collection of alto saxophone solos gives excellent display to the strong and clean lyric line with which he invests a ballad and the jaunty assurance in his attack on an uptempo number. The warmth and virility in his playing are a welcome relief on a jazz scene that is overloaded with maundering saxophonists.

THE COUNT BASIE SEXTET

CLEF MG C-146. 10-in. 26 min. \$3.85.

Count Basie, piano and organ; Joe Newman, trumpet; Paul Quinichette, tenor saxophone; Freddie Greene, guitar; Gene Ramey, bass; Buddy Rich, drums.

Basie Beat; K. C. Organ Blues; She's Funny That Way; Royal Garden Blues; Stan Short-

hair; Blue and Sentimental; Count's Organ Blues; As Long As I Live.

Credit Fats Waller with proving that a swinging beat could be coaxed from an organ, but not even Waller removed the ponderousness from that instrument as successfully as has Count Basie. Basie does most of his feather-fingering from the organ on these numbers and is thoroughly the old charmer. These are small group sides in the finest Basie tradition — light, airy, with an unquenchable built-in beat. Buddy Rich's prodding drumming and Joe Newman's muted trumpet, much in the manner of Buck Clayton, are of enormous help. The recording is close but well rounded, giving a sense of compactness, except when Paul Quinichette tries to surround the microphone completely to emphasize the soulfulness of his mood.



Howard Rumsey: From his All-Stars, a guide to recent West Coast jazz.

HOWARD RUMSEY'S LIGHTHOUSE ALL-STARS

CONTEMPORARY C 2506. 10-in. 25 min. \$3.00.

Shorty Rogers, trumpet; Milt Bernhart, trombone; Jimmy Giuffre, Bob Cooper, tenor saxophone; Frank Patchen, piano; Shelly Manne, drums; Howard Rumsey, bass; Carlos Vidal, conga drums. *Swing Shift; Out of Somewhere; Big Girl; Viva Zapata! No. 1.*

Rolf Ericson, trumpet; Herb Geller, alto saxophone; Bob Cooper, tenor saxophone; Bud Shank, alto and baritone saxophone; Claude Williamson, piano; Max Roach, drums; Howard Rumsey, bass; Jack Costanzo, bongos. *Mambo Los Feliz; Jazz Invention; Love Letters; Witch Doctor.*

Rumsey's All-Stars managed to change personnel completely during the year-plus which intervened between the two sessions caught on this disk (the Shorty Rogers group recorded in July, 1952; the Rolf Ericson group in October, 1953), but the approach has remained, in general, consistent with possibly a tendency toward more introspection in the later numbers. The earlier group is characterized by an insistent, pulsing beat, ensemble riffing and appealing solo work by trombonist Milt Bernhart and pianist Frank Patchen. The more recent group of numbers includes the

most interesting efforts — *Jazz Invention*, a well-worked out and charmingly played fuguing piece for Ericson and Cooper, and *Love Letters* for which arranger Jimmy Giuffre has created beautifully interwoven passages for reeds and trumpet. Both numbers are excellent samples of recent directions in West Coast jazz.

DIZZY GILLESPIE WITH STRINGS

CLEF MG C-136. 10-in. 19 min. \$3.85.

Sweet and Lovely; My Old Flame; I Waited for You; Ghost of a Chance; The Man I Love; Night and Day.

A fascinating and irritating disk. Gillespie's accompaniment is no mere string section but the Paris Opera-Comique Orchestra which brings woodwinds, brass and rhythm into play as well as strings. Consequently, Dizzy gets more virile background than can be had from the usual studio string group. With these men behind him, Gillespie plays a bigger, freer and more sweeping horn than we are accustomed to hearing from him. He seems thoroughly relaxed and unharried and brings off some of the most stirring creative playing that he has recorded (his coda to *The Man I Love* is a fantastic bit of virtuosity). Unfortunately, the engineers on this job appear to have been baffled by the combination that faced them — or possibly they were unprepared for what Gillespie can do. They manage to achieve a good balance on the orchestra most of the time but Gillespie is constantly falling out of perspective. When, occasionally, Gillespie is brought into focus, the orchestra disappears into a slough of shattered sounds. Enough of the good points of this session come through the inept engineering to make this disk intriguingly worthwhile but it is frustrating to consider how much more might have been caught.

DIXIELAND vs. BIRDLAND

MGM E 231. 10-in. 26 min. \$3.00.

Bobby Byrne, trombone; Yank Lawson, trumpet; Artie Baker, clarinet; Nicky Tagg, piano; Jack Lesberg, bass; Bobby Rosen-garden, drums; vs. Kai Winding, trombone; Howard McGhee, trumpet; Eddie Shu, tenor saxophone and clarinet; John Lewis, piano; Percy Heath, bass; Kenny Clarke, drums. *Perdido; That's a Plenty; Get Happy; Hot and Cool Blues.*

Leonard Feather's second attempt to pit a group of traditional jazzmen against some modernists on the same numbers (the first: *Hot vs. Cool*, MGM E 194) is essentially no contest. Bobby Byrne's group plays with the rather weary assurance that was once associated with that style known as Nicksieland music, but Winding's ensemble has polish, drive, imagination and — unkindest cut of all — it really swings. In McGhee, Shu and Lewis, the Birdland entrants have a monopoly of the best soloists on the disk and Winding's work on *That's a Plenty* is, in fact, an excellent argument for getting musicians of one school to try their hands at out-of-school material. However, as this disk shows, it takes willing, thoughtful and capable musicians to turn the trick.

JOHN S. WILSON

RICHARD STRAUSS ON MICROGROOVE

by C. G. BURKE



THE LIGHT of history glows more invitingly as the events it illumines recede further into time, and the examining glow is kindest to recent events when they happened thousands of miles from the examiner. Exotic color is brighter because it is less familiar. The Viennese café of Schubert's days has a romantic allure that today's has not, and the mercenary peregrinations of the Mozart children over Europe nearly two centuries ago present now a genial picture in full conflict with that of the egregious little monsters who from time to time are produced to flourish a calculated precocity in our tired auditoriums.

Vivaldi, two and a half centuries ago, and Handel in his youth, are seen through the curtain of time in an engaging guise of gallantry. Mussorgsky, blearing himself into a sodden grave, appears romantic to us because he retched away his life in Muscovy instead of Delaware. Lully, a court composer, is infinitely more glamorous than Sir Edward Elgar, a court composer. We are still too near the dreary age of the greater Richard Wagner to contemplate it without a shudder, but another hundred years will put the icing on it, and dictate attractive euphemisms for the sordid adulteries, speculations and treasons of this repugnant genius.

Fortunately, every age is despised by its own children who dare to use their eyes. This is the beginning of criticism, which is the source of all improvement. The latter part of the long age wherein flourished Richard Strauss is our own, and the wiser among us are not enthusiastic about it. We prefer a time whose horrors have not touched us, and we admire the men of our time whose character seems to come from another: Sir Winston Churchill, whose dogmatic chauvinism and complacency in the minor vices recalls the younger Pitt.

But Richard Strauss does not recall another period, and looking at a picture of the composer in a sack suit we find it oppressive to admit that he was a great one. A smooth, untroubled-looking man most of his life, a courteous, cynical, *maitre-d'hotel* type in looks, handsome but not attractive, Strauss did not have a physical envelope to evoke our compassion or hostility, or our love. Nor did he have a history to enlist the tears we grant to Mozart betrayed, Schubert abandoned, and Beethoven arrogant.

This was a comfort-loving burgher who became a man of the world. Like Gluck he is not to be blamed for his success. Like Gluck he earned it. Unlike most of the greater men in music, he found the ways greased for him.

He was born in Munich in 1864, a beer-soaked, royal provincial capital that forces us to think of substantial

creature-comfort as the heavy light of life. He was born to music in that his father, Franz Strauss, was first horn in the royal orchestra; but this is not really explanatory of anything, since most sons of most horns are no better than the rest of us. But the boy liked music and worked at it, in spite of a parental opposition never serious; and was composing well before the age of 10, a form of voluntary preparation for the formal studies undertaken while he was at the *gymnasium*. He was a professional composer and conductor at 20. For the next 65 years he created, and re-created, music. The story of his life is the story of his work.

He was that most fortunate and rarest of men, the artist successful from his beginnings. That is, creative artist: we have never had a dearth of interpreters too successful too early. And his success was as decided in acquisition as in creation.

He had the kind of career that is called colorless because all the colors were bright. There were no contrasts to make their brilliance apparent. His victories were musical and so were his conflicts. He was not involved in scandal and never suffered disgrace.

But he had the good chance to inflame people against his work, and there can be no doubt that his enemies enlarged and strengthened his repute by subjecting his product to 25 years of noisy controversy, remnants of which still are heard. He was accused of fostering such disputation, which brought his name into negotiable prominence, and in truth only the very naïve could think that the bombardments of disapproval — answered by salvos of defence from his admirers — were unwelcome to a composer who knew the advantages brought by money and knew how easily money comes to a man who is talked about. He was accused of proliferating musical extravagances for their own sake, and of choosing subjects for musical exploitation solely because they were lurid. *Aus Italien*, his first tone-poem, was denounced on musical grounds, *Don Juan* and *Eulenspiegel* as improper subjects indecently treated, *Heldenleben* as coarse self-glorification (which in a measure it is). Reformers never tired of enriching him by assaults on *Salomé*, with its biblical story, on *Rosenkavalier*, a very worldly narrative, and on the *Domestic Symphony*, whose problems are those which absorb readers of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. An American critic, not the least esteemed, wrote that *Elektra* was a subject that could appeal only to a Hun. Perhaps the critic had forgotten Sophocles, or perhaps he had not heard of him, and admittedly he was heated by our effective propaganda dur-

ing the first German War; but the essential is that as late as that, pontifical respectability still considered Strauss as a flamboyant cad first and as a musician secondly.

The composer's young manhood was passed amidst the rising *fin-de-siècle* irritation at the repressions of the Victorian mythology, which dropped a curtain of pious fatuity alike over the pretty leg, the hideous slum and the piratical war. It will be remembered that England then was everywhere imitated, and that her Queen's descendants were in many courts establishing euphemism as the state religion. (The culmination of this devout denial of fact was the selection by Victoria's most pious grandchild of Rasputin as councillor, to herself and to her collapsing Empire.) The irritations found expression in an art of new if still somewhat gingery freedom. The younger cultivated men greeted the appearance of this art with the enthusiastic relief that people feel when a thunderstorm frees them from the suffocation of a dead sultriness. Strauss's acceptance of the new freedom was as wholehearted and sincere as that of intellectuals over most of western Europe. It vastly enlarged his scope of musical subject-matter and correspondingly decreased the load of absurd conventions under which the musical theatre had had to plod.

His tonal radicalism — which of course we do not find now so radical — may have been influenced by the same *fin-de-siècle* movement. His early works were classic in form and romantic in content, the formula of the period; and they were good enough to win the admiration of such men as Hermann Levi and Hans von Bülow. Alexander Ritter, trained to an aesthetic of more pungent expression, was the intellectual force which induced the young composer to change direction. Strauss dropped a promising career as a capable symphonist for a perilous pilgrimage into a music all-expressive, of which Berlioz was the progenitor and Liszt (who could not write such music well) the great propagandist. He overcame the perils, which were verbal, and became the great man of music after the death of Brahms in 1897, and remained the great man until his own death in 1949.

Strauss said that the only limitations of music in expressiveness were the limitations of the composer to express. He said that he could paint a stein of beer in music, and in his tone-poems, the music by which he is best known, he has occasionally tried to illustrate concrete things and places, although the indefinable and the abstract predominate. There is nothing in *Death and Transfiguration* and *Don Juan* foreign to Liszt's concept of the symphonic poem, but the later composer had far more invention and daring, and found greater orchestral resources for their execution, than were available to Liszt.

For with Berlioz and Rimsky-Korsakoff the Bavarian occupies the first rank of virtuosos of the orchestra. For them orchestration was a separate and most important element in music. They made the orchestra spectacular; and if they had essentially no more elevated genius in scoring than Weber, Wagner and the Tchaikovsky of the ballets, they labored their genius harder. No one ever divided his strings so elaborately as Strauss, or used so many imitative instruments or so many kinds of instruments. He insisted on brutality in the orchestra, and ugliness, when there

were brutal or ugly episodes to describe, and he laminated his natural and very sweet lyricism with an orchestral coating sensationally expressive of the dozen facets of a simple emotion. He was the culmination and the end of the great Germanic romanticism of the last century, and like all culminations this one has exudations of oppressive ripeness; and as in all romanticism — so much riskier than classicism — the values are extremely uneven. The heart is on the sleeve and the brag is ready in the mouth, and despite the saving injection of cynicism, much in Strauss still repels many listeners, while to the same listeners much is irresistible.

He was a fashionable conductor, and more important, a conductor of the first class. After he had reached the zenith of his celebrity as a composer, music-lovers who professed to dislike his music thronged the houses wherein he conducted Mozart.

He acquired additional fame from the very substantial fees demanded for license to perform his works. Because he did not suffer monetary distress he was the object of a more general admiration than that commonly granted to composers and usually reserved for rogues, oil-barons and radio comedians. Few biographical notices have paid as much attention to what he did as to how much he made.

But with the kind of respectability that only comes from fortune, he changed the image of the living Creator of Music. Gone are the stigmata of earlier years — Wagner's tam and velvet jacket, Schubert's inky fingers and Beethoven's shock of unkempt hair. This composer is a dignitary, in starched front and tails, who travels in a Mercedes with his business manager and amanuensis, major-domo, valet and filing-clerk following in the Fiat loaded with the typewriters, calculating machines, files and personal luggage. It is a picture still unfamiliar enough to disturb a little, the paraphernalia conducive to propriety. We cannot in justice begrudge it to a grand musician of our times when we did not to Samuel Insull or Charly Schwab; but everyone must fear the donation of respectability to artists although so many so desperately need it personally, lest the newly respectable artist taint his art with a hostile commodity.

Most of the principal works of Strauss, and all those in frequent performance, are to be found on LPs. When work was begun on this discography 160 sides were located, the majority cataloged under the composer's name in Schwann. Some small items, concealed under disagreeable collective LP titles like "Blutfuss Sings," or "Great Nonets" or "Gay Graz," may have escaped notice, but some at least were found and are included. The present discography suffers from fewer omissions than any other yet published in this magazine.

Criticism in Strauss cannot proceed as it has in the preceding discographies. *Effectiveness* is not a vice in a Strauss performance, although it generally is in Mozart and often is in Beethoven. The vast orchestral palette of the modern composer requires a more telling reproduction than does the Haydn orchestra, and hence the sonic behavior of the records here is accorded more than the usual weight in assessing the value of the records as a whole.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

(Titles in the discography are offered in the language by which they are most easily identified. No one seems to say "So Spake Zoroaster," no one has ever said "Sir Quixote," and neither "Der Bürger als Edelmann" nor "The Burgher Ennobled" sounds right when the reference is to Molière's "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.")

(An) ALPINE SYMPHONY, OP. 64 (1 Edition)
The last of the 10 tone-poems is a lushly blooming bore of considerable and obvious beauty contrived by a great craftsman who tired of it before its completion. Its vertical construction is richly tropical, its edelweiss a sunflower: it carries no conviction and the moment we realize that it could be entitled not inappropriately "Excitation and Repose in Yucatan" it is no longer boring but instead a pleasingly sensuous study of the potentialities of a huge orchestra.

The trouble with the present recording, a good one, is that it is not good enough for the demands of the *Alpine Symphony*. The huge orchestra does not sound huge; the grandeur of the Alps (or of Yucatan) is slighted in a placement that makes the instruments distant; and the dynamic range simply does not begin to express the equation of Calm to Thunderstorm. Paltry Alps, on this record, but appealing Strauss, if one will not demur at the mountains of Florida.

—Orchestra of the Munich Opera, Franz Konwitschny, cond. URANIA 7064. 12-in. 49 min. \$5.95.

ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA, OP. 30
(2 Editions)

That Strauss has translated comprehensibly into music Nietzsche's aspiring, dogmatic, savage, lofty and poetic musing has never been claimed and certainly was never attempted. That he has indited in tones a feeling of the spirit of the Nietzschean philosophy in its rocky arrogant loneliness, joy in battle and despondency at the human spectacle, seems equally sure. Of the tone-poems it may be the best, although it is not one of the most favored. It mingles a penetrating and dulcet lyricism with the harshest exhortations, and is stunning in its orchestral imagination.

The performance by Dr. Krauss, who is the most assured interpreter of his homonym, has an impetuous enthusiasm and relentless compulsion more vital than the considered philosophy of Dr. Rodzinski in a softer delineation by a beautifully organized orchestra. Tonally the Chicago orchestra is in superb flesh here, and more gracious than the Vienna; but the question is not of grace, and the warmth of the Rodzinski utterance does not prevail against the heated Krauss delivery. Sound favors London in the sense of effectiveness: her presentation is crisper and nearer, albeit coarse and by no means free of distortion. Both disks are oldish, and with due acknowledgment to Victor for the velvet she has contrived, she has slighted detail and discophiles will not have bass without rumble.

—Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Clemens Krauss, cond. LONDON LL 232. 12-in. 32 min. \$5.95.



Clemens Krauss: primacy among Straussians.

—Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Artur Rodzinski, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 1060. 12-in. (with Wagner: *Prelude and Finale from "Tristan"*). 30 min. \$5.72.

AUS ITALIEN, OP. 16 (2 Editions)

The first of the tone-poems was written by a Strauss of 22, warmed by a trip to Italy. Thus the first and the last (*Alpine Symphony*) are sight-seeing tours and not too successful although both are orchestrally expert and the earlier, *From Italy*, had the good fortune to excite controversy. It produced also some earned derision for the composer's use of Denza's recent swinging popular song, *Funiculi, funiculà*, in the finale, under the delusion that it was folk. (It can be heard five times a week as the signature of a soap-opera.) The slow movements are truly pictorial and appealing and the whole is clever. The Urania disk contains the more confident and fluid performance and benefits from a later and clearer recording although the Westminster is still good and has the most brilliant passages.

—Berlin Radio Orchestra, Arthur Rother, cond. URANIA 7087. 12-in. 40 min. \$5.95.

—Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Henry Swoboda, cond. WESTMINSTER WL 5032. 12-in. 42 min. \$5.95.

(Le) BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME (4 Editions)

The incidental music which Strauss composed for Molière's comedy included originally the opera *Ariadne auf Naxos*, later enlarged and revised for separate presentation. The orchestral Suite of nine numbers, found on these records, was arranged by the com-



Rodzinski: a philosophical Zarathustra.

poser six years after the first performance of the whole. The use of a small but brightly jeweled orchestra in reincarnations of careful archaicism establishes an atmosphere of scented and beguiling artifice.

Two of the records hold performances in the composer's conducting. When a composer is important so are his interpretations, even when they may seem inferior to others. The only inferiority here is of sound, both the Strauss disks revealing blemishes of antiquity. The Urania fault is a vast improbable reverberation, less injurious than the emaciation of the Decca; but unless music-lovers insist upon the veritable Strauss handwork, the record to have is Dr. Krauss's, almost identical in interpretation with the composer's but with a finer attention to detail, its small dimensions accorded a sparkling, trouble-free sound by the London engineers. More nervous, and the most lucid pictorially, is the admirable Reiner production for Columbia, one of those Pittsburgh LPs which seemed remarkably good at their early issuance and still do.

—Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Clemens Krauss, cond. LONDON LL 684. 12-in. 36 min. \$5.95.

—Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond. COLUMBIA ML 2062. 10-in. 34 min. \$4.00.

—Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Strauss, cond. URANIA RS 7-8. 12-in. 36 min. \$3.50.

—Berlin National Opera Orchestra, Richard Strauss, cond. DECCA DL 9576. 12-in. 34 min. \$5.85.

BURLESQUE FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA
(2 Editions)

A good-humored parade of the valiant devices of Johannes Brahms, cheerful in its pomposity and with a wink at its own storms, the *Burlesque* needs only strength and gusto to keep it properly superficial and perhaps supercilious too. Here one foaming performance is worth the other, but sonic values are not easy to disentangle. Both pianos are inclined to hardness, with Urania's less with more realism. But the strings in this version are placed to disadvantage and the orchestral sound is moderately shrill, while the Philharmonia, for MGM, not notable in this reproduction, is nevertheless more substantial, present and pleasing. The grounds are dubious for preference either way.

—Elly Ney; Berlin Radio Orchestra, Arthur Rother, cond. URANIA 7101. 12-in. (with Britten: *Diversions*, Op. 21). 21 min. \$5.95.

—Fabienne Jacquinot; Philharmonia Orchestra, Anatole Fistoulari, cond. MGM E3004. 12-in. (with Dohnanyi: *Variations on a Nursery Theme*). 21 min. \$4.85.

CONCERTO FOR HORN, NO. 1, IN E FLAT,
OP. 11 (2 Editions)

Writing to appease the demands of his father's skill, Strauss at 18 produced a Horn Concerto near the front of its small field, easy on the ears, hard on the horn, gay and loose-jointed. Perhaps it takes Brains to play the horn: at any rate Dennis inheriting from his father Aubrey a prodigious affinity for the magic instrument, cajoles it here into an animated suavity of voice not

achieved by his talented competitor. The Leipzig orchestra has more snap than the Philharmonia, but more echo than is needed; and if the Urania sound is brighter than the Columbia, it is harder to adjust than the benign older version.

—Dennis Brain; Philharmonia Orchestra, Alceo Galliera, cond. COLUMBIA ML 4775. 12-in. (with *Oboe Concerto*, the pair titled "Distinguished Concerti for Wind Instruments, Vol. 3"). 16 min. \$5.95.

—Heinz Lohan; Leipzig Radio Orchestra, Gerhard Wiesenhütter, cond. URANIA 7108. 12-in. (with *Mozart: Clarinet Concerto*). 18 min. \$5.95.

CONCERTO FOR OBOE (2 Editions)

Although written by a composer 60 years older than he who wrote the Horn Concerto above, the Oboe Concerto of 1945 resembles more the era and milieu of Spohr than of Berg or Richard Strauss. It is tenuous and carefully delicate, not unattractive but not very interesting. In the Columbia version all is subordinate to the chaste integrity of the Goosens delivery, with Mr. Galliera, rapt like us in his admiration, apologetic in his interference. In contrast to this filigreed silver, the hearty design and texture of the Germans suggest an unstinted beerstein, and the mechanics of registration have made the stein more realistic than the silver. A taste for the one is no more reprehensible than a taste for the other. Columbia has more art, Urania more life.

—Erich Ertel; Berlin Radio Orchestra, Arthur Rother, cond. URANIA 7032. 12-in. (with *Violin Concerto*). 24 min. \$5.95.

—Leon Goosens; Philharmonia Orchestra, Alceo Galliera, cond. COLUMBIA ML 4775. 12-in. (with *Horn Concerto No. 1*). 22 min. \$5.95.

CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN, IN D MINOR, Op. 8 (1 Edition)

One would say of the first movement: Brahms' Concerto No. 2; and of the third movement: What has happened? — for the interest of this well-built tracing leaks away with its minutes. Still there is a historical interest to jibe with the first movement, and the excellent recording is a valuable accessory to history in a breezy but robust performance by the orchestra and a sure-fingered but thin manifestation of the soloist.

—Siegfried Borries; Berlin Radio Orchestra, Arthur Rother, cond. URANIA 7032. 12-in. (with *Oboe Concerto*). 30 min. \$5.95.

DEATH AND TRANSFIGURATION, Op. 24 (5 Editions)

This music has withstood the abrasion of 64 years without disfigurement. Its struggle, between death and the will to live, or between life and the will to die, can be more readily encompassed in a composition, and more pointedly communicated, than the narrative or pictorial substance of the other tone-poems. — Five eminent conductors protect their reputations on the records without incurring damage, a rare event in the experience of these discographies. It is unfair to be brief where merits are so large, but space is restricted in this magazine: briefly then, the Fürtwängler and Mengelberg performances compete for first honors in round phrasing and a conveyance of poignancy and dread; Dr. Walter imparts most fire and Dr. Reiner a nearly continu-

ous intensity of drama. That Mr. Ormandy's performance has no salient characteristics except the mellow unity of the Philadelphia Orchestra is not a fault.

In sonic registration the Walter and Reiner are the best, the old Mengelberg poor and the others satisfactory. The glossy brilliance of Victor's recording of the Reiner cannot be discerned unless the volume is high and accompanied by a generous push of the bass. Under these conditions it has a decided superiority in the



Walter: flames in *Tod und Verklärung*.

differentiation of timbre: the Walter version, which has not such a timbre, will sound richer at normal levels of volume.

—RCA Victor Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 1180. 12-in. (with *Till Eulenspiegel*). 23 min. \$5.72.

—New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond. COLUMBIA ML 4650. 12-in. (with *Don Juan*). 22 min. \$5.95.

—Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Fürtwängler, cond. RCA VICTOR LHMV 1023. 12-in. (with *Schumann: Manfred; Smetana: Moldau*). 24 min. \$5.95.

—Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. COLUMBIA ML 4044. 12-in. (with *Rosenkavalier Suite*). 22 min. \$5.95.

—Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Willem Mengelberg, cond. CAPITOL P-8100. 12-in. (with *Till Eulenspiegel*). 23 min. \$5.70.

DIVERTIMENTO AFTER COUPERIN, Op. 86 (1 Edition)

Surely one of the most brilliantly tender transcriptions ever made, this delightful procession of poetic vignettes ought to be heard more often, and here is the chance to hear it. The miniature orchestration, profound and sparkling both, is delicately exposed by Mr. Rother, and the sound is limpid, easy and natural. A recondite item that can be enjoyed without reliance on snobbery.

—Berlin Radio Orchestra, Arthur Rother, cond. URANIA 7042. 12-in. (with *Tailliefer*). 27 min. \$5.95.

DON JUAN, Op. 20 (8 Editions)

Musically matching the immortal routine of bait, chase, capture and disillusionment,

and matching it to the inescapable, rueful recognition of everyone, *Don Juan* is one of the most satisfying pieces of program music ever composed, and with *Till Eulenspiegel* the Strauss most esteemed by the symphonic public. It is a bad performance indeed that is not effective. None of the eight records is to be condemned, and three are worth high praise. Here they are in tabulation:

Walter — formidable, domineering, big in all its aspects, harmonically fat and energetically phrased. The fullest sound of all, and as clear as any, except the Wöss in the bass; but reproduction must be decidedly loud to expose all that the disk contains.

Krauss — lyrical and refined without sacrifice of strength, an even and worldly performance in notably suave orchestral playing and luminous reproduction.

Koussevitzky — tempos a little overworked for the sake of contrast, but absolutely preëminent in the display of pure orchestral beauty, a rich and irresistible glow. Technically the recording, with some obscuration of detail, does not match the supremacy of the orchestra; but perhaps a more brilliant later registration would have spoiled the texture of the bloom. — One of these first three is the best of recorded *Don Juans*. The writer is impelled to each in turn. Fourth and fifth place belong to the next two:

Reiner — The most lucid portrayal of the oldest problem: the bluntest contrasts among impetuosity, languishment and satiety, lively and alive, equipped with a commendable sound which is however much less vital than the first two above.

Mengelberg — Romantic, lush and heroic, slow *slow*, and fast *fast*; surprisingly crisp in sound for its date, and detectable divisions between its original 78 rpm sides are not obvious enough to be offensive.

The last three are less valuable:

Wöss — Steady, unassuming performance carried in clear and honest sound very clear in the bass. The string forces seem to have been reduced from the complement used for the other disks.

Karajan — Voluptuous and thoughtful, exquisitely organized woodwinds, but rather passive sound.

Toscanini — Grave, philosophical and slow, with the wonderful precision of the Toscanini chords seeming irrelevant. Insufficient body and bass in the reproduction.

—New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond. COLUMBIA ML 4650. 12-in. (with *Death and Transfiguration*). 16 min. \$5.95.

—Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Clemens Krauss, cond. LONDON LL 233. 12-in. (with *Till Eulenspiegel*). 16 min. \$5.95.

—Boston Symphony Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 1177. 12-in. (with *Wagner: A Siegfried Idyll*). 16 min. \$5.72.

—Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond. COLUMBIA ML 2079. 10-in. (with *Till Eulenspiegel*). 16 min. \$4.00.

—Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Willem Mengelberg, cond. MERCURY 15000. 10-in. (with *Tchaikovsky: 1812 Overture*). 16 min. \$3.85.

—"Austrian" Symphony Orchestra, Kurt Wöss, cond. REMINGTON 199-18. 12-in. (with *Tchaikovsky: 1812 Overture*). 16 min. \$2.99.

—Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam,

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Herbert von Karajan, cond. DECCA DL 9529. 12-in. (with *Till Eulenspiegel*). 17 min. \$5.85.

—NBC Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 1157. 12-in. (with *Wagner: Götterdämmerung, Rhine Journey*). 17 min. \$5.72.

DON QUIXOTE, OP. 35 (4 Editions)

Some of the more spectacular noises of this tone-poem — which is at the same time a theme and variations — such as the anguished bleating of a thousand maddened sheep, have obscured the underlying human sympathy of this music and corrupted its repute to that of a merely brilliant show. It is in the ever-faithful expression of this humanity that the recorded version of Dr. Clemens Krauss surpasses its rivals, and in the deep, crisp and intimate realism of the orchestral reproduction. Sensationalism is softened in this playing, as it is in the performance by the composer, upon which Dr. Krauss's has been modeled. The composer's version deserves high consideration, but the expansive warmth of the Krauss recording was not possible when the older registration was made.

If the portrayal of the deluded knight and his sad adventures is felt to be beyond the capacity of music — and many people feel that music is too specific to be at the same time something else otherwise specific — the new edition from Boston commands primary attention. This is a sparkling orchestral spectacle, complicated by the poignant commentary of Mr. Piatigorsky's cello, far more communicative and singing than Mr. Fournier's in the Vienna version. Judged as a double concerto without pictorial significance, the Boston edition, vehement and scintillating in hard, indelible colors, must be awarded some special distinction. —The Krauss and the Munch constitute a revelation of opposites in sound: both must be called first-class, but they sound little alike, as a diary and a newspaper both are concerned with letters.

Entré's version by Fritz Reiner, imaginative and painstakingly wrought, as always with this conductor, and employing the Piatigorsky of an earlier era, has a brilliance of sound that seems artificial, and a wiry sheen from time to time that does not sound good. —Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, with Pierre Fournier (solo cello) and Moraweg Ernst (solo viola), Clemens Krauss, cond. LONDON LL 855. 12-in. 42 min. \$5.95.

—Boston Symphony Orchestra, with Gregor Piatigorsky and Joseph de Pasquale, Charles Munch, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 1781. 12-in. 41 min. \$5.72.

—Bavarian National Orchestra, with Otto Uhl and Philipp Haass, Richard Strauss, cond. DECCA DL 9539. 12-in. 39 min. \$5.85.

—Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, with Gregor Piatigorsky and Vladimir Bakaleinikoff, Fritz Reiner, cond. COLUMBIA-ENTRE RL 3027. 12-in. 39 min. \$2.98.

(Ein) HELDENLEBEN, OP. 40 (6 Editions)

A work crammed with beautiful and imposing and ingenious things, which has suffered (justly) from the fatuous program inseparable from it in spite of the composer's hurt denials that it was intended. The subtitles of *A Hero's Life* and the musical quotations are senseless without an auto-



Fritz Reiner: unflagging taste and drama.

biographical interpretation on this order: (1) I have great talent and great bravery; (2) Vile people oppose great t. and great b.; (3) An understanding little woman helped me; (4) In pitched battle the forces of evil cannot withstand us; (5) Just look what I done; (6) Lemme sleep wid Beethoven.

Strauss's right to feel self-pity and self-satisfaction is not fairly to be contested, but his taste in publishing such a crudely patterned eulogy of himself has made his more fastidious admirers gag. Without the synopsis, *Ein Heldenleben*, in its dramatic excitement and spontaneous lyricism, would be one of the tastiest of the tone-poems instead of the most distasteful. Even when one stirs in discomfort at the braggadocio, one is stirred by the valorous and noble theme that he has given to the multitudinous orchestra as his own portrait.

The work was dedicated to Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra, in 1898. In gratitude, the Dutch conductor made himself the master of this score as few godfathers have ever been able to do, no matter what the godchild. All performances must be measured against the expertise obtained by the gifted traitor in a thousand trials. Although he made several 78 rpm versions, we have only one LP, a transfer managed with considerable skill but naturally far less effective than the best sonic realizations of modern disks. And of course the sonics achieved in recording the huge orchestra of *Ein Heldenleben* ought to be of commanding quality. Unfortunately, the best sound has been granted to Mr. Dorati's routine and comparatively glum performance.



Piatigorsky: a double score in Don Juan.

The version under the composer's direction is vivid and incisive and yet curiously benign, but the registration of the first side is far below modern standards. Dr. Reiner's aspiring and poetic performance fades in a rather distant sound without enough resonance. A Beecham version of greater all-around distinction has been withdrawn by Victor.

The savage energy of Dr. Rodzinski's old recording is not duplicated elsewhere, and surpasses all the others in transmitting vindictiveness, battle and triumph. When this appeared on 78s in the late 1930s its sound failed to arouse admiration, but the Columbia doctors have multiplied its vitality in the transfer to LP, making a record of robust effectiveness in spite of restrained climaxes and a pervasive dryness and an expanded solo violin.

Finally we arrive at Dr. Krauss, never at fault in this composer. His judicious interpretation is not so rewarding as several of the others, and the warm London sound has neither the bite nor the surge of the Mercury, although it has some great moments. In recapitulation, honors of performance are first to Capitol, second to Columbia-Entré; the recording laurels are easily Mercury's, and the average of pleasure seems highest from London.

—Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Clemens Krauss, cond. LONDON LL 659. 12-in. 42 min. \$5.95.

—Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Willem Mengelberg, cond. CAPITOL P8013. 12-in. 42 min. \$5.70.

—Cleveland Orchestra, Artur Rodzinski, cond. COLUMBIA-ENTRE RL 3048. 12-in. 40 min. \$2.98.

—Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. MERCURY 50012. 12-in. 42 min. \$5.95.

—Bavarian National Orchestra, Richard Strauss, cond. DECCA DL 9602. 12-in. 39 min. \$5.85.

—Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond. COLUMBIA ML 4138. 41 min. \$5.95.

JOSEPHSLEGENDE, OP. 63 (1 Edition)

Public dispassion for the *Legend of Joseph* in the Kessler-Hofmannsthal-Strauss revelation has been evident since its first performance in 1914. This is perhaps testimony to the culture of those who go to ballets, who prefer the salacity of such a carnal text undiluted by a precious "symbolism." In a less artful art, Mr. C. B. de Mille, that God-fearing seminarist, would have had more success in gilding the Old Testament into gold. But perhaps cultured people disdain the Ballet because it is unconvincing Strauss.

That it is; but it has as distinguished an orchestral coloration as the master ever devised. A huge palette has been used to compound nuances of the utmost delicacy and mutability, mingled with the massive splashes, here sparingly distributed, that we expect from this colorist and from such a palette. There are not many works to which one listens because the orchestra gilds impoverished material, but this is one. For discerning it, Messrs. Urania win the bows of discophiles, and the company's engineers a deeper obeisance for the refined and subtle glitter that they have etched into the vinyl. Pellucid and superbly balanced orchestral

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Schumann: Symphony No. 2 in C Major, Op. 61. The Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, Conductor. ML 4817

Modern American Music Series II: Music of Henry Cowell, Harold Shapero, Roy Harris, Robert Palmer, Leon Kirchner, Irving Fine, Peter Mennin, Andrew Imbrie, Paul Bowles, Norman Dello Joio, Arthur Berger, Edward B. Hill. ML 4841-6

Brahms: Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 73. The Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, Conductor. ML 4827

Brahms: Concerto No. 1 in D Minor for Piano and Orchestra. Rudolf Serkin, Piano, The Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, Conductor. ML 4829

Hindemith: Das Marienleben. Jennie Tourel, Mezzo-Soprano, with Erich Hor Kahn, Piano. SL-196 (2-12")

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e-creation except in the loudest *tutti*s; and one is tempted to say irreproachable below *mf*.

—National Opera Orchestra, Munich, Kurt Eichhorn, cond. URANIA 602. Two 12-in. (with 2 *Rosenkavalier* Preludes and March, Op. 1). 1 hr. 1 min. \$11.90.

MACBETH, OP. 23 (1 Edition)

Psychic portraits in music, however expertly painted, have too general a fit to be recognized infallibly, and the dark turbulence of this second tone-poem is recognized primarily as turbulence, not inappropriate for any reasonably agitated disaster. The instrumentation, already distinguished and characteristic, saves the work from dullness. The only recording is an early Westminster of remarkable reach and definition, excellent for the period and still good. One is reluctant to estimate the expressiveness of the interpretation, since the music has never been able to make its point, but this one has an orderly forcefulness seemingly apt.

—Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Henry Swoboda, cond. WESTMINSTER WL 5004. 12-in. (with *Martini: Concerto Grosso*). 19 min. \$5.95.

MARCH IN E FLAT, OP. 1 (1 Edition)

The interest in the mechanical repetitiousness of the well-worn devices heard here is all in the fact that the composer was 12 years old. Men four times his age were writing no better and with much poorer excuse. Performance spirited, recording excellent.

—Bavarian Symphony Orchestra, Kurt Graunke, cond. URANIA 602. Two 12-in. (appended to *Josephslegende* with 2 *Rosenkavalier* Preludes). 5 min. \$11.90.

ROSENKAVALIER (Orchestral excerpts from *Rosenkavalier* and *Salomé* are described with those operas under the rubric OPERAS, below.)

SINFONIA DOMESTICA, OP. 53 (1 Edition)

The stuffy self-esteem of *Ein Heldenleben* having revolted the better class of Strauss's admirers as well as all classes of his detractors, and worse, having excited derision, the composer five years later applied a counter-irritant designed to show that he was a whimsical and very human fellow. The derision invited by the *Domestic Symphony* would be of the homely kind meet for the village barber and his consort, sister-under-the-skin to the Heldenweib. The music admits us to the conjugal chamber and the nursery: the parents dispute and make love; the infant bawls and plays; he is bathed and caressed and he bawls again.

Low comedy can be high art. Strauss used 110 musicians to elevate his. His music is daring, learned and resourceful: it has a contrapuntal assurance and orchestral mastery which compel complete admiration. It has not been successful and is rarely performed.

The recorded performance by Dr. Clemens Krauss and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra satisfies the exactions of the score with a loving knowledge and professional skill that will make the work sympathetic to music-lovers if any knowledge and any skill ever can. Every infantile yelp and each wifely admonition, and all the forbearance of the paterfamilias are illumined with serious affection.

Since reproduction is full and deep, and brilliant in the brass, and since the excesses of the violins can be curbed by patience and good equipment and will not be heard through bad equipment, discophiles may accept this edition of a brilliant squabble without much fear that another will eclipse it tomorrow.

—Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Clemens Krauss, cond. LONDON LL 483. 12-in. 42 min. \$5.95.

SYMPHONY IN F MINOR, OP. 12 (1 Edition)

The second of two symphonies composed by Strauss, of which the first was not published, this in F Minor is a foursquare work in orthodox construction, confident and nowise introspective. The scherzo and



Ferenc Fricsay: tops in Till Eulenspiegel.

finale are lively and inventive, and the instrumentation of the 20-year-old composer is already boldly deft. The recorded performance is not one to regale us with finesse or tonal munificence, but it stipulates aggressively the youthful health and energy of music in which finesse perhaps has no good place. The impression of sinewy toughness is emphasized by the extraordinarily raw quality of the recording, vivid and startling in what seems like an unpremeditated way. The strings are less prominent than usual and the winds more forward, giving at *fortes* a grand shatter of bright timbres without contamination from violins too close. This may not have been planned, but the exhibition of brass reality imparts a ringing exhilaration and makes the record notable. —"Vienna Philharmonia Orchestra," Herbert Haefner, cond. SPA 17. 12-in. 45 min. \$5.95.

TAILLEFER, OP. 52 (1 Edition)

Strauss set Uhland's ballad on the battle of Senlac (Hastings) in 1903, scoring for chorus, three soloists and a huge orchestra. To account for the great size of the phalanx, Urania was able to commandeer as annotator the only man in the English-speaking world who does not know that Hastings was fought in 1066. The grand orchestra, the Urania scholar confides, was required to express the "roar of cannons, rifle fire and other noises of battle," these others presumably the clatter of tanks, the thud of mortar shells and the snarling hum of the bombers. Of such inventions still are too many of our jacket notes composed.

Albeit hampered by the quieter armaments of the XI Century, Strauss was able to make a good declamatory show of his ballad, striding, naive, excited and vainglorious, and this is the way it is delivered in the only recording. The spilled gore froths with a happy enthusiasm proper to this kind of literature: like the blood shed in the novels of Scott, it just serves as color and hurts no one. Mr. Rother, in having produced this effect of breathless inconsequential pageantry, may be admired as a very innocent or a very subtle man. — The sound for the orchestra imposes by its depth and clarity, but there is some bleating in the chorus and the soloists are too loud. Still, the whole is a happy fiction handsomely presented.

—Berlin Radio Orchestra and Rudolf Lamy Choir, with Maria Cebotari (s), Walter Ludwig (t) and Hans Hotter (bne), Arthur Rother, cond. URANIA 7042. 12-in. (with *Divertimento after Couperin*). 18 min. \$5.95.

TILL EULENSPIEGEL, OP. 28 (7 Editions)

The picture of a human oddity and the narrative of his disreputable adventures are more pliant to tonal treatment than portraits of the law-abiding at home with the wife and Doberman. The free logic of *Eulenspiegel* may not be Strauss's greatest achievement although it probably is, but it cannot be forgotten and inevitably entertains. The full title — *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks, in the Old-Fashioned, Roguish Manner, in Rondo Form, for Full Orchestra* — pleasantly suggests the jocularity of the history without hinting its sadness; but the husky tramp of the music and its aromatic airiness do not require for enjoyment a knowledge of the gross feats of the north-German rapscallion known to the Flemings as a national hero.

Conductors nowadays are not capable of a bad interpretation of a work so familiarly vivid. Orchestras may fail, but do not on the records; and no formula of performance applies to let it be said that one of the excellent recorded projections has a preponderance of insight, or of skill or integrity. There are some differences of tempo and various determinations of stress. The recording directors have not had equal success in capturing the hundred voices of the orchestra. It is here that one can judge with confidence.

Success in this case is proportionate to youth. The three most recent versions — Decca-Fricsay, Victor-Reiner and London-Krauss — display an orchestra most truly. Columbia-Szell is not far behind, but Columbia-Rodzinski is old and shrill, and Capitol-Krauss old and muffled. Tempo-Gui was not heard. The Decca, an unsensational record, has the nicest discrimination among instruments, remarkably true timbre and reassuring string tone. The Victor, after a rather elaborate correction of its bass and treble, has a warm carnal glow, not so natural as the Decca brightness, but comforting. London has a steadily accurate sound cushioned by hall acoustics. The Fricsay performance is tauter and less sensuous than the others.

—Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, cond. DECCA DL 9529. 12-in. (with *Don Juan*). 14 min. \$5.85.

—RCA Victor Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 1180. 12-in. (with *Death and Transfiguration*). 14 min. \$5.72.

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—Cleveland Orchestra, Artur Rodzinski, cond. COLUMBIA ML 4045. 12-in. (with *Rosenkavalier Waltzes, Salomé's Dance*). 13 min. \$5.95.

—(Orchestra of the May Festival, Florence, Vittorio Gui, cond. TEMPO 2032. 12-in. (with *Franck: Prelude, Aria and Finale*). \$5.07).

(Der) WANDERERS STURMLIED, OP. 14 (1 Edition)

It is obligatory for every German composer to supply music to a Goethe text; and Strauss, undertaking the task early, when he was 40-percent Brahms, and choosing the mystical and rhapsodic *Wanderers Sturmlied*, insured his work against popularity. Ably written for six-part chorus and full orchestra, it is dull in an able way. The disk accords it fair treatment in an earnest performance and careful registration, the latter clearly re-establishing the orchestra but rolerant of a punctuation of hoots from the women's voices.

—Vienna Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Chorus, Henry Swoboda, cond. WESTMINSTER WL 5081. 12-in. (with *Brahms: Gesang der Parzen; Nanie*). 17 min. \$5.95.

OPERAS

ARABELLA (2 Excerpts)

No use dwelling on a work of which only 15 minutes are to be found on LP. (This is one of the few things more generously treated on 78s.) But the tender and fragrant moods of the excerpts are beautifully sung, especially by Miss della Casa, richly played by the orchestra, and very well recorded — although as always when the voice is particularly lovely, the stresses attending soprano registration are evident.

—(*Aber der Richtige, Act I; and Das war sehr gut, Act III*). Lisa della Casa (s), Hilde Gueden (s), Alfred Poell (bne); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Rudolf Moralt, cond. LONDON LD 9027. 10-in. 7, 8 min. \$2.95.

ELEKTRA, OP. 58 (1 Edition)

The red meat of Strauss's supreme creation for the stage is too rare for genteel tastes, and indeed its hour and a half of unrelenting intransigence of passion is shredding to stour nerves, strong stomachs and cultivated ears. This is a tale of royal vengeance on lust, betrayal, murder and fear, in which the hero, the dead Agamemnon, does not appear, and the restoration of his grandeur is left to his children and the law of the talion. His frail daughter Elektra gives two murders for her father's, and dies in exultation at having cleansed his repute.

Hofmannsthal wrote his play naked of moral commentary, believing that the Mycenae just after the Trojan war would differ in its ethical reflections from the Vienna of the 60th year of Franz Josef's reign. The quick deft stokes of his characterizations

deserve high respect. The procedure by which Elektra achieves the slaughter of her soiled mother and apprehensive stepfather has the inevitability of a grim but unimpeachable syllogism.

Strauss compromised in his music no more than the librettist in his history. When a heroine needs two murders to abate the dishonor of her house — when the sympathetic characters are matricides — the defining music cannot be comforting. The dear wish of Elektra is double murder and she must appear daft: so must the tonal illustration. The only sweet moment in this opera occurs when Elektra recognizes her disguised brother Orestes, returned to be the instrument of their revenge. Likened to a wildcat, Elektra must howl; and the orchestra, required to impose a domain of terrible portent and increasing frenzy, has recourse to devices, innovations and audacities hostile to any concept of musical decorum. It is hard for the heterogeneous audience at a theatre to yield to this without em-



Lotte Lehmann: unforgettable Marschallin.

barrassment, and *Elektra* demands surrender in order to be apprehended.

It is a lucky thing, then, that it has been recorded, and a surprising thing, since *Das Rheingold*, for example, has not. The recording is of a public performance in 1950, and shows little of the confusion we might expect of the type, and a much greater incisiveness of sound than we would expect from the date. The focus is on the orchestra, which is excellent throughout, and there is less vocal evanescence than we might anticipate from singers moving about the stage.

A good *Elektra* must have an intense and durable soprano in the title part and a masterful hand leading the orchestra in the pit. The others have lesser consequence, and cannot make or break a performance. Mr. Mitropoulos, a modern Hellene if not an ancient Lacedaemonian, is vested with the spirit of Agamemnon for these records which are a personal triumph for the conductor. He has been at the level of the score with a savage vindictiveness without disturbing organization or introducing excesses. His diagram of fury is sharp and peremptory, cohesive and undeviating, concerned with the primary drama, the corollaries subdued. *Elektra* may well be the best of Mr. Mitropoulos's work on records.

As the heroine, Miss Konezni is admirable

in intelligence and conviction, and satisfactory if sorely beset by the purely vocal ordeal. Some of the unevenness of line and projection may be the fault of her mobility on the stage, which could have placed her at a disadvantage before the microphones. But the dramatic effectiveness of her Elektra is not weakened by illicit declamation. In subordination to the empire of the central creature, the others are capable and in character, particularly the men in their brief bloody participation. But the hero is Dimitri Mitropoulos.

—Chorus and Orchestra of the May Musical Festival, Florence, 1950; with Anny Konezni (s), Daniza Ilitsch (s), Martha Mödl (a), Franz Klarwein (t), Hans Braun (bne), and others; Dimitri Mitropoulos, cond. CETRA 1209. Two 12-in. 1 hr. 32 min. \$11.90.

(Der) ROSENKAVALIER (2½ Editions)

The most successful opera of this century in its dual receipt of tribute from the public and admiration from musicians, *Rosenkavalier* is a glittering marriage of light, witty music, marvelously orchestrated, to as shrewdly devised a libretto as the lyric theatre ever has had. Opera is essentially the most popular of arts — not effectively because enormously the most expensive — and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, a clever and analytic writer, provided in his libretto elements which would make of an entertaining and ephemeral play an opera-book of lasting and subtle significance. Not that this mixture of high and low comedy, of vulgar aspiration and aristocratic condescension, is truly subtle; but after the conventional inanities of the operatic stage the characters of the Marschallin (a *grande dame* gracefully accepting the eclipse of her amorous dominion), and of Baron Ochs, a boor of old lineage, and of everyone else, to whom a sharp and unmistakable social condition has been deftly ascribed, appear with a vividness not known since the simpler characters of Bouilly's *Amour Conjugal*, for which Beethoven provided the music. If Octavian and Sophie are no more than stage properties, they are prepossessing and realistic, while the Baron and the Princess are inventions quite out of the routine of operatic comedy. Hofmannsthal provided a mellowly romantic situation, entertaining horseplay, some worldly light philosophy, and a very funny farce in the third act. For a composer like Strauss the rest was easy.

Reference is made here to three recordings of *Rosenkavalier*, but this is an inaccuracy adopted for convenience. All are cut; and although the excisions from the Urania and Vox versions are more or less traditional and not harmful, the historic Victor resuscitation represents less than half the score, and Victor makes it clear that that is the case. Ordinarily in these discographies severely abridged recordings are simply ignored, but the battered old Victor version, made originally 20 years ago, includes singing characterizations that no one has a right to ignore. The four principals — Lotte Lehmann, Elisabeth Schumann, Maria Olszewska and Richard Mayr — are separately and especially collectively, so completely at the top of their rôles, that their presence together in such condition violates the law of probabilities. Furthermore, the Robert Heger of the early 1930s

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had a soft caress, in pressing out the romantic juices of *Rosenkavalier*, that few conductors try to equal. On the Victor records we have a stunning conformity of high talents to a serene concept, in an accomplishment of personal and yet objective devotion. As a guide to singing, a touchstone for style, characterization and refinement, this edition is *hors concours*: as a statement of *Der Rosenkavalier* the hiccupping sequence of the scenes unaxed brings frustration and will not do; and the recording equipment of the day was sadly incapable of fixing the lively glitter of the Straussian prisms.

To have a more acceptable *Rosenkavalier* we must turn to less magisterial singing. Both Urania and Vox are badly handicapped by the ladies who sing the Marschallin, and in Urania's case the handicap may be too severe to be overcome. The Marschallin is so dominant a figure that her presence changes farce to high comedy, a thwarted metamorphosis in Urania's assignment of the part to a big, achromatic voice reluctant to move. Vox has used Vioreca Ursuleac (Mme. Clemens Krauss), an erstwhile esteemed practitioner of the part, whose well-worn voice still has its moments. In fact Vox has appropriately a vocal superiority in general; for if Mesdames Lemnitz and von Milinkovic are more or less equally good Octavians, Adele Kern is the better Sophie, and the comparatively subdued Ochs of Ludwig Weber has a more durable appeal than the skillful but eventually obtrusive buffoonery of Kurt Böhme.

The orchestras are proficient in equivalent measure and the direction in both cases is knowing and alert. The Vox version, a

transfer of a recording originally done in 1944, is astonishingly successful for this kind of resurrection, crisp and brilliant and sharp in detail. (Side 8 suffers from collisions of the women's voices.) The Urania version, much later in origin, is decidedly superior, particularly in the matter of orchestral body and instrumental appeal. It is not good for its period: it is good without excuses.

Selection is left to the biases of music-lovers.

—Orchestra and Chorus of the National Opera, Munich; with Viorica Ursuleac (s), Adele Kern (s), Georgine von Milinkovic (s), Ludwig Weber (bs) and others; Clemens Krauss, cond. VOX PL 7774. Four 12-in. 3 hr. 20 min. \$23.80.

—National Opera Chorus and National Saxon Orchestra, Dresden; with Margarete Bäumer (s), Ursula Richter (s), Tiana Lemnitz (s), Kurt Böhme (bs) and others; Rudolf Kempe, cond. URANIA 201. Four 12-in. 3 hr. 9 min. \$23.90.

—(About ½) National Opera Chorus, Vienna, and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, with Lotte Lehmann (s), Elisabeth Schumann (s), Maria Olszewska (ms), Richard Mayr (bs) and others, Robert Heger, cond. RCA VICTOR LCT 6005. Two 12-in. 1 hr. 38 min. \$11.44.

ROSENKAVALIER Excerpts

There are so many of these that it has been necessary to be summary with most. The Vox disk of "Highlights" is drawn from the nearly complete edition and has the same qualities; Urania's "Highlights" contains almost identical excerpts from the full-length Urania version, but the sound has

deteriorated considerably in the transfer to the single disk. Victor's "Scenes" displays highly professional singing by Etna Berger and Risé Stevens, with a jeweled accompaniment directed by Friz Reiner, the whole in a cleanly precise engraving and emotionally rather aloof. Decca's disk of the finales to the first and third acts has Miss Lemnitz again, this time poised and moving as the Marschallin, the best on present records after Lehmann, but the orchestra sounds shallow.

The Schwarzkopf-Seefried "Presentation of the Rose" is beautifully sung but has a sound not indulgent to the voices. Oversight, Ludwig Weber is lively and sonorous in the last scene of Act II, the recording overburdened at the bass end. Emanuel List's version of the same music for Remington is less adroit, but the sound is startlingly clear and real.

The three orchestral suites recorded all resemble the one made by Strauss himself for a movie version of the opera, restating the most popular sections with instruments substituted for the voices. Mr. Ormandy's version, although a little blowzy, is so much the best in its expert playing and enthusiastic sound that the others hardly need be considered, Mr. Dorati's being noisy and angular although sonically fat, and Sir John Barbiroli's determinedly listless. These Suites contain the Introduction to Act I, which can be had also (with that to Act III) in Urania's album of the *Josephslegende*, well played and effectively recorded. These do not seem right, out of context; but perhaps the first Introduction, so gloriously explicit on an occurrence which in print requires a never-sleeping ingenuity of

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And then there is the Waltz, or the Waltzes or the Waltz-Themes, which decorate or decorate the background in every act: there are six recorded concert versions of this music, and those who esteem *Rosenkavalier* most find it denatured when removed from the theatre. As a concert-piece it may last as long as a conductor sees fit, and for some of these records that is too long. Dr. Rodzinski conceives this Vienna as the saw-toothed tiger, an image made real by the sharp fangs of the obsolete recording. Mr. Brown permits himself a rather endearing fatuity of interference: had he not been there, the Austrian concert-master could have given a sensible and acceptable beat. Mr. Collins uses an unfamiliar arrangement and his orchestra plays with obvious skill; but although fussy the per-

formance is not graceful. Mr. André's impulses are sound but he is not free of that cursed fret of the *chef d'orchestre* to demonstrate that he matters; and so we have some muddled tempos, not many: the performance is not bad. Mr. Smallens gives a pleasant, unpretentious performance. Mr. Votto waltzes, with an arrangement largely fantasia but filled with the vulgar gusto of Ochs himself: this in a coarse way is what we have been waiting for.

—Sonic laurels are easily Decca's and Mr. Smallens's, with second place to London and Mr. Collins and third to Tempo and Mr. Votto.

—"Highlights." The same participants as in Vox PL 7774, above. VOX PL 8200. 12-in. 52 min. \$5.95.

—"Highlights." Participants as in Urania 201, above. URANIA 7062. 12-in. 53 min. \$5.95.

—"Scenes." Erna Berger (s), Risé Stevens (ms); RCA Victor Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 9010. 12-in. (part of an operatic miscellany). 18 min. \$5.72.

—*Finales, Act I and Act III.* Tiana Lemnitz (s), Elfride Trötschel (s), Georgine von Milinkovic (ms); Württemberg National Orchestra, Ferdinand Leitner, cond. DECCA DL 9606. 12-in. 22, 20 min. \$5.85.

—*Presentation of the Rose.* Irmgard Seefried, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, (ss); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Anon. cond. COLUMBIA ML 2126. 10-in. (with *Finale, Act II*). 11 min. \$4.00.

—*Finale, Act II.* Ludwig Weber (bs), Dagmar Hermann (a); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Otto Ackermann, cond. COLUMBIA ML 2126. 10-in. (with *Presentation*). 12 min. \$4.00.

—*Finale, Act II.* Emanuel List (bs), Elsa Schurhoff (a); Austrian Symphony Orchestra, Wilhelm Loibner, cond. REMINGTON 199-123. 12-in. (with 5 works by 5 composers). 9 min. \$2.99.

—*Orchestral Suite.* Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. COLUMBIA ML 4044. 12-in. (with *Death and Transfiguration*) 21 min. \$5.95.

—*Orchestral Suite.* Robin Hood Dell Orchestra, Philadelphia, Antal Dorati, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 48. 10-in. 25 min. \$4.67.

—*Orchestral Suite.* Hallé Orchestra, Manchester, Sir John Barbirolli, cond. RCA VICTOR LBC 1017. 12-in. (with *Grieg: Peer Gynt Suites*). 21 min. \$2.98.

—*Preludes, Act I and Act III.* National Saxon Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe, cond. URANIA 602. Two 12-in. (appended with *March, Op. 1, to Josephslegende*). 3, 6 min. \$11.90.

—*Waltzes.* Italian Radio Orchestra, Antonino Votto, cond. TEMPO 2036. 12-in. (with *Haydn: Sym. 88 & Mozart: Serenade 6*). 8 min. \$5.07.

—*Waltzes.* Stadium Concerts Orchestra, New York, Alexander Smallens, cond. DECCA DL 4032. 10-in. (with *Salomé's Dance*). 9 min. \$2.50.

—*Waltzes.* INR Orchestra, Brussels, Franz André, cond. CAPITOL L8173. 10-in. (with *Liszt: Les Préludes*). 10-min. \$3.98.

—*Waltzes.* London Philharmonic Orchestra, Anthony Collins, cond. LONDON LD 9025. 10-in. (with *Humperdinck: Hansel and Gretel, Pantomime*). 10 min. \$2.95.

—*Waltzes.* Austrian Symphony Orchestra, H. Arthur Brown, cond. REMINGTON 199-67. 12-in. (with *Mendelssohn: Midsummernight's Dream excerpts*). 9 min. \$2.99. (The 10-inch version of the same performance is much poorer in sound.)

—*Waltzes.* Cleveland Orchestra, Artur Rodzinski, cond. COLUMBIA ML 4045. 12-in. (with *Till Eulenspiegel & Salomé's Dance*). 7 min. \$5.95.

SALOME, OP. 54 (2 Editions)

The spelling used here, *Salomé*, is not an affectation of snobbery. It refers specifically to Wilde's play, which he and Pierre Louys wrote originally in French, and it indicates pretty accurately the pronunciation of the German text of the opera. Besides, *Slomy* will always — or for a year or two — be associated with the biblical research of Miss Rita Hayworth, who appeared in the animated comic strip of that name.

It has always been hazardous to bring Holy Writ to life, except for commercial exploitation at Christmas and Easter, and Strauss's grand one-act shocker fouled with

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the censors everywhere, who made its fortune in the lubricity they advertised. The ugly repute of Wilde's name associated with a Dance of Seven Veils itself associated with countless clandestine *boites de nuit*, and later by extension, with the *frères* Minsky sucked the vulgar in myriads to those theatres aided by the censors' initial generous puff.

The opera has no libretto. Strauss set Wilde's play without change save in the elimination of enough lines to fit it within the limitations of one act of breathlessly barbarous music. There is no such thing as "authenticity" in a musical description of the horrible Near East at the beginning of the Christian period, but the aesthetic apprehensions of Strauss's turbulent sensuality of insight have not been denied temperamental verisimilitude. *Salomé* is a drama of strong appetites, and a certain strength of digestion is necessary to absorb it.

As in *Elektra*, there are two formidable prerequisites for a satisfactory presentation of *Salomé*: a healthy, tireless soprano, and a skillful orchestra under intelligent control. Both requirements are satisfied in the recorded editions, in which the parts of Herod, Herodias, John and Narraboth are sung adequately or better. Since in both cases the sound is meritorious, neither version may be slighted in consideration.

Not that there can be any doubt which is the more commendable. The evidence of our ears favors Columbia decisively in all the leading parts and in the savage clamor of the orchestra. This evidence is not fair to the Dresden performance, for much of it is induced by the modern superiority of the Columbia recording to the older Oceanic sound. There is a deep substance to the Vienna production which is precisely what the Dresden sound, bright and ringing, lacks; and this has warmed the Vienna voices to their great advantage. Particularly is this true of Miss Wegner as Salomé, Mr. Metternich as John and Mr. Szemere as Herod. Miss Wegner has a continuous dark sensuousness of controlled tone, which in view of the lung-bursting exigencies of the part must be considered a great accomplishment. Mr. Metternich (what a name to associate with the princely *canaille* of this opera!) imbues his forlorn and terrible rôle with the fervor expected, and also with a mellow lyricism not customary.

Miss Goltz expresses a greater intensity of devious eroticism with a voice less hotly endowed for this kind of expression; but whereas Miss Wegner luxuriates in disks of balanced frequencies, the slighting of the lower reaches in the recording attenuates a little the quality of every Dresden voice, and if one attempts to supply more bass through controls, one will oppress the voices with a reinforcement of rumble.

The comparison affords a valuable illumination of the persuasiveness of sonic values considered in their subtler aspects. The difference here is not between degrees of effectiveness, for the brilliance of the Oceanic recording is not ineffective. What we contemplate is the closer resemblance of a later recording forcing recognition of a falsity in an earlier recording, not evident before the comparison. The Dresden singers are better than they sound, although that could not be determined until the Vienna version arrived to serve as touchstone. (It is frightening to think that the

process may continue forever.) Miss Goltz may be more seductive really than Miss Wegner, and some of the other Dresden singers too, than their Vienna opposites, but the records cannot show it. Lineally there is no falsification, and the conduct of the Saxon orchestra under Prof. Keilberth is revealed as more responsive—tatter and more parabolic both—than the rather more comfortable Viennese equivalent.

—Vienna Symphony Orchestra with Walburga Wegner (s), Georgine von Milinkovic (ms), Laszlo Szemere (t), Waldemar Kmentt (t), Josef Metternich (bne) and others; Rudolf Moralt, cond. COLUMBIA SL 126. Two 12-in. 1 hr. 33 min. \$12.50.

—National Saxon Orchestra with Christel Goltz (s), Inger Karen (ms), Bernd Aldenhoff (t), Rudolf Dietrich (t), Josef Herrmann (bne) and others; Josef Keilberth, cond.

OCEANIC 302. Two 12-in. 1 hr. 39 min. \$12.50.

SALOME Excerpts

Salomé's Dance does not undulate the same way to all conductors. To Dr. Rodzinski it is a fiery neurosis of provocation, unluckily in shallow sound; to Dr. Krauss it coils languorously serpentine, hot and dangerous. These are the most convincing performances, the least imposing recordings. There is a surfeit of good manners in the well-played and well-recorded version of Alexander Smallens, which shares sonic honors with the Ormandy disk containing a more heated allure. (The preference is for the Keilberth Oceanic album of the complete opera.)

Both records of Salomé's peroration omit the interpolations of Herod and Herodias. Miss Welitch is splendid in dramatic vigor and vocal steadiness, and holds head against



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the sturdy wall of sound with which Dr. Reiner surrounds her. Miss Enck has been put in front of her lesser wall, which gives her force, and some hoots.

—*Salomé's Dance*. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. COLUMBIA AL 12. 10-in. (with *Weinberger: Polka from Schwanda*). 8 min. \$2.85.

—*Salomé's Dance*. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Clemens Krauss, cond. CAPITOL L 8036. 10-in. (with *Final Scene*). 9 min. \$3.98.

—*Salomé's Dance*. Stadium Concerts Orchestra, New York, Alexander Smallens, cond. DECCA DL 4032. 10-in. (with *Rosenkavalier Waltzes*). 9 min. \$2.50.

—*Salomé's Dance*. Cleveland Orchestra, Artur Rodzinski, cond. COLUMBIA ML 4045. 12-in. (with *Till Eulenspiegel & Rosenkavalier Waltzes*). 8 min. \$5.95.

—(*Salomé's Dance*). Italian Radio Orchestra, Sergio Failoni, cond. TEMPO 2034. 12-in. (with *Ravel: Mother Goose; Sibelius: Finlandia*). \$5.07.)

—*Final Scene*. Ljuba Welitch (s); Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond. COLUMBIA ML 2048. 10-in. (with *Tchaikovsky: Eugene Onegin: Letter Scene*). 16 min. \$4.00.

—*Final Scene*. Liselotte Enck (s); Berlin National Opera Orchestra, Robert Heger, cond. CAPITOL L 8036. 10-in. (with *Salomé's Dance*). 14 min. \$3.98.

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—Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, with Gerald Caylor (cl) and Don Christlieb (bn); Harold Byrns, cond. CAPITOL P 8115. 12-in. (with *Honegger: Concerto da Camera*). 17 min. \$5.70.

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when the little andante appeared in 1881. It prepared an audience for the young composer, and is still worth an annual hearing. The only disk combines pleasantly the antitheses of relaxed playing and crisp recording. —Vienna Philharmonic Wind Group. WESTMINSTER WL 5185. 12-in. (with *Suite for Winds*). 9 min. \$5.95.

SONATA FOR PIANO, IN B MINOR, OP. 5
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A garrulous, accurate mimicry of Brahms save in the second movement, distinguished by simple sentiment and a long Straussian line. In Brahms, Brahms is better.

It is no inconsiderable testimony to Ruggiero Ricci's conscience as a musician that he has devoted as much care and apparent affection on the tracing as we could have expected in the original. His distinction of tone, phrasing and intonation would have served one of the Brahms sonatas admirably. London has permitted good reproduction for his violin, but has tolerated harshness in the piano when loud. —The Tryon-LaMontaine version is unassuming and smaller-scaled, one cannot say inappropriately. But the Ricci tone is not there, and some difficulty will be encountered in reproducing the violin without an alien shimmer. The piano, rolling out satisfactorily, seems to come from a greater distance. (The music is not much, and no one should think for a moment that the London version does not contain the more expert playing; but there is an indefinable emanation of wistful appeal from the Classic record which could cause many to prefer it.) —Ruggiero Ricci, Carlo Bussotti. LONDON LL770. 12-in. (with *Prokofieff: Violin Sonata 2*). 27 min. \$5.95.

—Jesse Tryon, John LaMontaine. CLASSIC EDITIONS 1019. 12-in. (with *Elgar: Violin Sonata, Op. 82*). 27 min. \$5.95.

SONATA FOR VIOLONCELLO AND PIANO, OP. 6 (1 Edition)

Of all the works written by the young Strauss in the mould called neo-classical, this one has the most charm and the least identifiable derivation. The charm is varied in mood as classicism must be, but suggestive and personal to show that romanticism has been there too. The record displays an informed and capable cellist and a pianist more tentative, diffident in assertion. —The sound impresses by its entire naturalness: there are a few records from this small company which seem not to have been contrived but to have happened; and in the casual realism of this reproduction we have one of their best happenings.

—Carl Stern, Perry O'Neil. SPA 8. 12-in. (with *Hindemith: Cello Sonata*). 26 min. \$5.95.

SONATINA FOR WINDS, NO. 2, IN E FLAT (1 Edition)

This is Strauss's rite, a weak one for a 40-minute work. The publishers prefer the designation "Symphony," less accurate still, and M-G-M has printed the latter on her record of the music. Musical nomenclature, always confused, has had no clarification from modern composers and editors who

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love to use an old word to describe a new thing. Far better to baptize the undefined as Thing, which may not satisfy but will not give offense.

Here we are considering a Thing in E Flat (*Ding, es-dur; Machin en mi bémol majeur*) written by a composer aged 80 for 16 wind instruments. It is not inventive and not interesting, but may be more stimulating than it sounds in an obviously perplexed performance. There is no order in these fairly rich sounds which convey so little: that is perhaps their permanent destiny. — Horns weak, registration otherwise satisfactory.

—M-G-M Wind Band, Izler Solomon, cond.
M-G-M 3097. 12-in. 40 min. \$4.85.

SUITE FOR WINDS, IN B FLAT, Op. 4
(1 Edition)

This was composed 60 years before the

Sonatina noted immediately above, and it is melancholy to realize how much better it is. The old man could not return to the natural classicism of his youth over the intervening barrier of his greatness. Not that it is wise to exaggerate the merits of the *Suite*, a spry, colorful and occasionally thoughtful diversion not unworthy of Max Reger. It is agreeable music resourcefully scored; and the record, in a performance of unusual polish for such a combination — nine woods and four horns — and with a vivid, nicely adjusted sound, will not contaminate a good collection.

—Vienna Philharmonic Wind Group. WESTMINSTER WL 5185. 12-in. (with *Serenade, Op. 7*). 24 min. \$5.95.

SONGS

Despite the popularity of some, the great repute of many and the craftsmanship of all, Strauss's songs have had paltry representation on LP. Only four disks have as much as a side devoted to them, and only two are systemized. Of the four, the Felbermayer-Poell record unaccountably was overlooked: if the singers are equal to their standard this may be presumed a good record. Of the rest, Miss Danco is in excellent form with five of the most popular, competently recorded on a disk worth having: the others are more *recherché*. Miss Berger's purity of delivery in the difficult Brentano songs is a personal triumph not to be contested as a feat of fine singing; and whether the contrast of her childlike voice with the sullen sexuality of the sentiments it expresses be an absurdity or an incitement must be left to the psyche and physiology of hearers.

The collaboration between Miss della Casa and the Vienna Philharmonic in the *Last Four Songs* makes a little masterpiece of soft feeling beautifully conveyed. *September*, of these, was the last music from Richard Strauss, composed in September, 1948, the composer's December. In the *Last Four Songs* the old composer who had tried to recapture the classicism of his youth with sad things like the *Sonatinas for Winds* had no chasm to span, for song-writing had been a continuous love and a continuous instinct with him. The delicate, touching and subtle intertwinings of the beautiful voice and the dedicated orchestra in these songs beckoning to death are in consummate accomplishment on this little record appropriately labeled in black.

— These three good editions would have been more illuminating had they been supplied with printed texts. A text is worth a hundred commentaries.

— Songs by Strauss have been recorded on LP miscellanies by Schlusnus, Janssen, Schoeffler, Cebotari and others.

—6 *Brentano Songs*. Erna Berger (s), Michael Raucheisen (pf). DECCA DL 9666. 12-in. (with *Brahms: 8 Songs*). 26 min. \$5.85.

—*Morgen, Ständchen, Traum durch die Dämmerung, Zueignung, Freundliche Vision*. Suzanne Danco (s), Guido Agosti (pf). LONDON S 699. 10-in. (with *Mozart: 4 Songs*). 13 min. \$4.95.

—*Vier Letzte Lieder*. Lisa della Casa (s); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm, cond. LONDON LD 9072. 10-in. 18 min. \$2.95.

—("Song Recital." Anny Felbermayer (s), Alfred Poell (bne), Viktor Graef (pf). VANGUARD 431. 12-in. \$5.95.)

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the Housing Problem... one way to solve it

The nationwide housing situation, for hi-fi equipment as well as for families, is improving rapidly. We plucked these neat construction ideas from a folder of pictures sent us by Angle-Genesee of Rochester, N. Y., cabinetmakers deluxe who have cleverly adapted a few basic cabinet designs to house many different combinations of equipment. With apologies to A-G, we might mention that the home constructor who changes equipment frequently can borrow some of these ideas to advantage.

In the two pictures immediately below, note how the amplifier chassis is bolted to two runners which slide in grooved supports; to switch amplifiers of different chassis-depth becomes simple.



Note that front panels slip into place; height of panel depends on whether or not a separate front end is used.



Speakers are usually housed separately to minimize acoustic feedback, as shown in this three-unit assembly.

Angle-Genesee supplies pre-cut panels, by the way. The one above is for a single-chassis amplifier and control.

Stereophony FROM THE OUTSIDE IN

If you want to know why you have two ears rather than one, and how a binaural sound system works — here are answers that are authoritative, yet comprehensible.

by GILBERT PLASS

IT IS A common experience to be startled by a loud noise while reading. Usually, the affected person turns his head immediately and accurately toward the sound source; he has located it by ear alone.

You can demonstrate for yourself an even more striking example of the ear's direction-finding ability the next time you are in a crowded, noisy restaurant. Without moving your head it is possible to listen first to the conversation from the table on your right, then to the one on your left, and finally to the one in front of you, simply by concentrating on the direction of the conversation you wish to hear. The three conversations may all be equally loud, but you can understand what is being said in any particular one. You can also ascertain easily that this ability depends on hearing with both ears. By stopping up one ear with a finger you bring the background noise in the restaurant to bothersome prominence. Not only can you no longer listen to any one of the three different conversations at the neighboring tables, but you may even have difficulty hearing the conversation at your own table. What is the reason for these curious phenomena?

Physical differences in the sound patterns that reach the two ears are the only possible sources of information that can be used to locate sounds. It is evident that if there were no physical differences in the sounds at the two ears, there would be no possibility of localizing sound and no binaural effects. The main differences are those of loudness, phase and time; they will be discussed in order.

Perhaps the most obvious possible difference in sounds reaching the two ears is loudness. If the source of sound is on your right, the sound in the right ear is louder than that in the left. This is true first, of course, because the right ear is nearer to the sound. However, if the sound source is farther away (as it usually is) than a distance equal to a few times the diameter of the head, then the relative distance of the two ears from the source is quite unimportant in determining the loudness difference, compared to the interference of the head itself.

This can best be explained by analogy to ocean surface waves. In order to prevent high waves from reaching a certain point, you must erect a breakwater. As actually built they may extend to enormous lengths. No one would propose putting up a breakwater one foot in length and expect it to stop ocean waves; they would lap around the

tiny breakwater just as if it were not there. The smallest length for a breakwater that will diminish appreciably the force of the waves over at least a small region behind it can be calculated easily; the critical size is approximately equal to the wavelength (distance from the top of one wave to the top of the next) divided by the factor 6.28. Build the breakwater smaller than this critical length and it will have virtually no effect; built it larger and it will start protecting the space behind the middle of the breakwater.

In exactly the same manner the head acts as a breakwater, interfering with the passage of sound waves from one side to the other, and the critical wavelength that corresponds with the size of the head can be found according to the same formula. The average distance between the ears is about 17.5 centimeters, or 7 inches. Multiplication by 6.28 gives the critical wavelength, 110 centimeters or 43 in. This corresponds to a frequency of 310 cycles (about D sharp above middle C). If the frequency is much less than 310 cycles the sound waves bend around the head almost as if it were not present. For low-pitched tones, then, the *intensity* of sounds at the two ears is virtually the same; there is no information in this characteristic that can be used by the ears to locate the sound. However, for high-pitched sounds with frequencies much greater than 310 cycles, the wavelength is short compared with the size of the head; therefore, the head is a very effective breakwater.

Measurements have been made of this intensity difference on a dummy head with microphones at the positions of the two ears. It was found that if the sound is coming from the right it is 12 db louder at the right ear than at the left, at 1,000 cycles; 20 db louder at 7,500 cycles; 30 db louder at 10,000 cycles. If the sound is coming directly from the front, on the other hand, there is no loudness difference. Here, then, is a physical difference between the sound of high-pitched notes reaching the two ears that depends on the location of the sound source. That this loudness difference can actually be used to locate sounds is easily shown by means of earphones; the individual phones are supplied with tones of the same frequency but different intensities. If the intensity difference is large, the subject locates the sound as coming from the side on which the ear is receiving the louder tone. It must be mentioned that the ability to locate tones by

loudness differences alone varies enormously among individuals.

For very high-pitched sounds, over 5,000 cycles, there is still another factor that causes a loudness difference. This is a monaural effect and must be quite effective, since persons completely deaf in one ear can locate sounds in this manner. It is known as the funnel effect. As every audio enthusiast knows, when high-pitched sounds issue from a simple horn, they are loudest along the axis of the horn and have lesser intensity as the listener departs from the axis. The ear drum is at the end of a funnel or horn which has similar directional properties. Low-pitched sounds are heard by a single ear with virtually the same intensity from every direction, but for frequencies above 5,000 cycles the ear picks up sounds very much more strongly in the direction toward which the funnel is pointing. This can be easily demonstrated by putting a test tone above 5,000 cycles through the loudspeaker, stopping one ear, and turning the head back and forth. The sound has a pronounced maximum with the open ear pointing at the loudspeaker. Measurements show that sounds can be located within 30° by the funnel effect for frequencies above 5,000 cycles, but that accuracy becomes rapidly worse as the frequency is lowered.

IF LOUDNESS were the only physical difference possible in the sounds reaching our two ears, we could locate only sounds that have high-frequency components. However, the phase effect is very conveniently useful in the low-frequency region, for which loudness differences are too small to be noticed.

Sound waves are traveling variations in air pressure. At any point in the path of a sound wave, the instantaneous air pressure is alternately higher than, equal to, lower than, and again equal to the normal air pressure.

If you face directly a source of sound your two ears are equally distant from that source, and the pressure maxima and minima appear at each ear at the same instant, no matter what the frequency of the sound wave. This is known as the in-phase condition; the phase relationship of the sounds appearing at the two ears is zero degrees.

Now, suppose you turn your head to the left, and the frequency of the sound is adjusted so that when the left ear is subjected to a pressure-maximum the right ear is in the following normal-pressure zone. (A very short time later, of course, the normal-pressure zone will have moved onward to the left ear and a pressure minimum will be invading the right ear). This is a condition of 90° phase relationship between the sounds at the two ears; let us call this frequency A . If the frequency is doubled to $2A$, the pressure variations are half the former distance apart; now, when a pressure maximum appears at the left ear, the following normal-pressure zone is in the vicinity of the nose, and the following pressure minimum is at the right ear! The phase relationship for this condition is 180° . If the original frequency is trebled to $3A$, then at a time when the pressure is maximum at the left ear it is normal at the left eye, minimum at the right eye, and normal at the right ear, and a 270° phase relationship

exists between the sounds sensed at the right and left ears. A further increase in frequency, to $4A$, results in a pressure maximum at the right ear while the preceding pressure maximum is at the left ear; this is a 360° phase difference, identical in phase (so far as the ears are concerned) to the zero-degrees condition. Note that phase differences depend on the position of the listener's head, the distance between his ears, and the frequency.

When the phase difference is greater than 180° , a difficulty of interpretation arises. Consider, for example, the phase difference 270° . The brain cannot tell whether the sound at the right ear is ahead of that at the left ear by 270° or the sound at the left ear is ahead of that at the right by 90° . Experiment shows that the brain always interprets the information as though the phase were less than 180° .

As an actual pure-tone sound source is moved from directly in front of the observer to the right side, the phase difference increases from 0° to a maximum value when the source has moved through a right angle. Experiments have been performed on subjects wearing earphones, with pure tones fed at the same intensity into the two earphones, and varying the phase between the two sounds. When the phase of the tones in the two earphones is 0° the sound is imagined to be coming from directly in front of the observer. If the phase of the tone to the right ear is advanced slowly ahead of the phase in the left ear, the sound appears to move slowly to the right. As the phase difference approaches 180° the sound (according to most observers) appears to move in along a straight line, passes through the inside of the head, and reappears on the other side at the same angle. It is a remarkable sensation to experience. At 500 cycles, when the phase difference is a little less than 180° , the sound source is imagined to be at 70° from the front on the right side. When the phase is a little more than 180° , the source seems to be at 70° from the front on the left side.

For frequencies less than 300 cps it is quite easy to locate sounds accurately by phase differences. For higher frequencies, as in the previous example, the apparent displacement of the source is always less than the phase difference. Most people lose the ability to detect direction by phase at around 1,200 cycles, although some retain it for an octave above that. The reason is that the phase can easily become greater than 180° as the sound source is moved around the head, and the brain then receives confusing information. The theoretical wavelength at which this happens can be shown to be about twice the distance between the ears; thus, for frequencies above about 1,000 cycles, approximately two octaves above middle C, phase cannot dependably be used to locate sounds. (Especially for people who are, literally, thick-headed!)

THERE has been considerable discussion among scientists as to whether the information used by the brain is the phase difference itself or only the time interval between the maximum amplitude of the sound wave as heard in each ear. Some recent experiments have been made which suggest that the time difference is most important. If you listen

with earphones to tones of a particular frequency with a certain phase difference, the sound appears to come from a definite direction. If the frequency is changed but the phase difference kept constant, the direction of the sound appears to change with the frequency. But if both frequency and phase are changed together, so that the time interval between the maximum amplitudes at the two ears remains constant, the sound appears to remain in the same direction (provided the frequency does not go above 1,000 cycles). Other experiments have shown that most people can begin to hear a change in direction of a sound when the time interval between the maximum amplitudes at the two ears is greater than 0.0002 second. This time interval is a constant, independent of frequency below 1,000 cycles.

Another experiment performed with clicks rather than tones also tends to support this view. When clicks are heard in the two earphones, you locate the source of sound directly ahead of you if the two clicks are simultaneous. However, when the time interval between the clicks is made greater than 0.0003 second, you notice an apparent lateral displacement of the sound source. It appears to move toward the side that receives the earliest click. As the time interval between the clicks increases, the source appears to move farther to the side. When the interval is greater than 0.0006 second, you hear two separate clicks.

The results of these experiments can be explained simply if it is assumed that the brain is capable of inserting a time delay into the electrical output of one ear. By varying this time delay, it would obtain the maximum signal when the phase difference of the waves from the two ears had been reduced to zero. This would explain how we can hear in a particular direction at will in a noisy restaurant. Also, knowing how much time delay had to be inserted, the brain would be able to compute the apparent direction of the sound source. This is probably much too simple to represent the situation accurately, but it does suggest in a basic way how the brain can sort out such information.

The experiments with pure tones and clicks demonstrate that the direction of a sound source can be determined by intensity differences for high-frequency tones and by phase or time differences for low-pitched tones. Since any complex sound can be analyzed in terms of a certain number of pure tones, it follows that these same factors must operate when the complex sounds of speech and music are heard. For actual sounds the intensity and phase vary at the same time, not separately as in the experiments. For this and other reasons it is very difficult to determine which is the most important single factor (if, indeed, there is one) when listening to speech or music. Sound engineers have all possible opinions on this matter, including the extreme views that the only factor of any importance is one or another. Most, however, believe that both intensity and phase factors must be important.

In binaural reproduction, the aim is to bring you the same intensity and phase differences as you would have heard at the actual recording session. Two spaced micro-

phones pick up the sound, and the microphone signals are recorded simultaneously but individually. These two sound channels are then played back either through two earphones or two loudspeakers. Each method has certain advantages.

For earphone playback the sound is originally picked up by two microphones spaced by the normal distance between the ears. The sound recorded by the right microphone can be fed into the right earphone so that virtually none of this sound track is heard by the left ear. This preserves the intensity and phase differences originally heard by the two microphones, if the rest of the system is working properly. However, in order to achieve the complete illusion of listening to the original sound, experiments have shown that you must be able to notice changes in the sound coming to your ears as you turn your head slightly. With earphones on, you can turn your head, but the sound you hear is exactly the same. In an experimental setup where the earphones are directly connected electrically to the two microphones, an additional mechanical connection may be made between the head and the microphones so that, when the head is turned, the microphones turn a corresponding amount. The ability to locate the direction of sounds improves tremendously when this is done; you are able to listen to sounds coming from any specified direction as in real life. The ideal binaural system, then, would incorporate a device to rotate the microphones slightly as the recording is being made and then provide a mechanical system to rotate the head of the listener in exactly the same manner as he listens! It is unfortunate that this is as impractical as most ideal sound systems.

Because of the inconvenience of earphones, most binaural reproduction of music has been done with two loudspeakers. A disadvantage of this system is that you cannot prevent the left ear from hearing some of the sound from the right loudspeakers that should be heard only by the right ear. The intensity and phase differences that reach the two ears are, accordingly, not the same as they were at the recording studio. However, there appears to be a considerable improvement in the sound when there are any such differences present from a double source, even if they are not identical with those in the original source. As you turn your head the intensity and phase differences actually do change, although again these changes are not exactly the same as you would have heard at the recording studio; still, it seems to add a feeling of presence to the music.

When binaural recordings are made for loudspeaker reproduction the microphones are now spaced as far or farther apart than the recommended loudspeaker spacing; this is usually 6 to 12 feet. An attempt is made in this way to reproduce the sound field as it existed in the recording studio at a given distance from the listener. To accomplish this perfectly an infinite number of microphones and loudspeakers would be required. Practically, however, very good results can be obtained with three channels, and surprisingly realistic sound can often be achieved with only two channels.

TESTED IN THE HOME



These reports may not be quoted or reproduced, in part or in whole, in any form whatsoever, without written permission from the publisher.

With this issue, we initiate a new feature in "Tested in the Home": We are providing the manufacturers of equipment reported on an opportunity to comment on the report itself. The specific procedure is this: When we get the equipment a member of the HIGH FIDELITY staff (as indicated by the initials at the end of each item) writes the report. A copy of this report is then sent to the equipment manufacturer who may comment if he so desires. There is no obligation to do so.

A good example of why we have added this service to readers is given in the report (below) on two speaker enclosures. After testing them, we found several points of dissatisfaction; the manufacturer, in his comment, points out that changes have been made in design and construction to overcome the criticisms voiced in the "Tested in the Home" write-up.

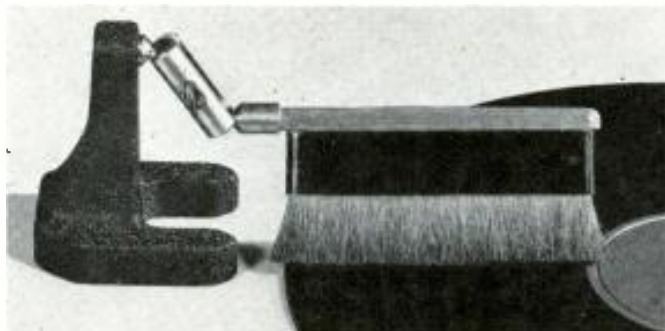
As was the case with the speaker enclosures, our report will *always* stand exactly as first written. With this new procedure we hope to give you, the reader, more complete information about equipment reviewed in "Tested in the Home."

R & L Record Brush

SPECIFICATIONS (furnished by manufacturer): Flat camel-hair brush with double ball-joint mount, attached to cast-iron base (see illustration). Brush is adjustable in height above record; angle of contact with record is also adjustable. **Price:** \$7.95. **Manufacturer:** R & L Products, 7533 Malvern Avenue, Philadelphia 31, Pa.

This is such a simple, uncomplicated device that there isn't much to say about it — but what there is to say is important: it works! It works very well indeed, keeping records virtually spotless and dust-free without any apparent ill effects.

The manufacturer recommends that the brush be ad-



An exceptionally clean sweep with camel-hair brush from R & L.

justed so that its back is about one inch above the record in playing position, with the bristles slanted against the direction of turntable rotation. The bristles should make contact with the record only lightly. Once set in this way for any particular turntable, the wing nut can be tightened forcibly; if the unit is handled thereafter by its base the adjustment will be maintained. Long enough to cover the grooves on a 12-inch LP, the brush accumulates enough dust and lint during the playing of a single record to be visible. This accumulation should be flicked off after every record. Surprisingly, the brush seems to add no static charge.

Even though the device must be moved twice for each record played, and cannot be used on a record changer unless it is operated manually, its slight inconveniences are, in our opinion, far outweighed by the satisfaction of having permanently quiet record surfaces. — R. A.

Scott 99-A Amplifier

SPECIFICATIONS (furnished by manufacturer): Combination amplifier-preamp-control unit in single small case, 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ wide by 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ high by 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. deep. **Amplifier:** Rated 10 watts, 13 watts maximum. Flat from 20 to 30,000 cycles. Output impedance 4, 8, 16, 500 ohms. Hum 80 db below full output; harmonic distortion .8%, difference-tone intermodulation .3%, both at full output. Output tubes balanced automatically. Rumble filter gives sharp cutoff below 20 cycles. **Inputs:** One low-level (for magnetic pickup) and one high-level (for crystal or constant-amplitude pickup) phono inputs, both affected by level and equalization controls; high-level inputs for tape, tuner, and TV. Also output to and input from "Dynaaural" noise-suppressor (not supplied). **Controls:** Input selector switch (phono, tuner, tape, TV); level control for phono input; separate 3-position turnover and rolloff equalization controls; continuously adjustable bass and treble tone controls, each providing boost or droop; power on-off switch; compensated loudness control. **Tubes:** 2-12AX7, 12AU7, 2-6V6, 5Y3. **Price:** \$99.95; on West Coast, \$104.95. **Manufacturer:** H. H. Scott, Inc., 385 Putnam Avenue, Cambridge 39, Mass.

The first reaction to the Scott 99 is likely to be one of wonder — how was the manufacturer able to pack so many features in such a small and convenient case? This complete little gadget, in a space not much larger than some preamp-control units, provides these functions and has a 10-watt amplifier thrown in! Second reaction, after using it for a few minutes: A mild surprise that the 99 is not such a toy as it looks, but a smooth performer that does the sort of job it is supposed to do.

One of the most important features of the 99 is, of course, the two-knob equalization with which a total of

nine record-compensation curves can be obtained. It represents considerably greater flexibility in this respect than amplifier-control unit combinations selling in the lower price ranges; on the other hand, flexibility could not be expected to be so great, nor the amplifier section so refined, at the 99's price as in combinations selling for many times that price. Scott has aimed for the substantial market that exists for equipment which combines compactness with flexibility of application yet gives good performance — all at a relatively moderate cost — and the 99 hits that market dead center.

A feature of the 99 well worth special mention is that of variable equalization that works on a crystal or constant-amplitude (such as the Weathers) pickup input also. Usually, these are allocated a standard high-level input the same as tuner and tape inputs, on which volume and tone controls are effective but not record equalization.

We can't approve entirely of the loudness control setup, although we can appreciate the cost problems involved. The front-panel level control is effective only on the phono input, and there are no level-set controls provided on the back of the chassis for the other inputs. This being so, it seems to us that the loudness compensation circuits on the main volume control should be susceptible to nullification, but they are not. It's a loudness control to the end. But this may be only an academic objection to the great majority of users, who can adjust the levels of the other inputs at their respective sources for proper operation of the loudness control.

Range and effectiveness of the tone controls is adequate. With our set-up, we felt best listening could be achieved with both bass and treble tone controls turned down slightly from their "flat" positions. Record compensation controls seemed accurate. One note of caution — on the treble rolloff control, the position marked NARTB is for the *new* NARTB standards. For older records, cut according to the old NAB standards, more accurate compensation will be obtained if the rolloff control is put in the LP position.



Believe it or not, this Scott unit includes a power amplifier.

Underneath the chassis cover are a pair of pin jacks marked N.S. IN and N.S. OUT. These are for connection of a Scott 111-B noise suppressor, optional at extra cost. It should be pointed out that these connections are, of course, in the phono circuit only.

A tape recorder input can be connected to the N.S. IN jack if the noise suppressor is not to be used, or in parallel with the output of the noise suppressor if one is used; but then you can record only from disk records. The tape recorder can be bridged across the amplifier output, of course, but the output to the recorder is then affected by the amplifier loudness and tone controls.

We found the amplifier quality to be good, about right for the price range. In short — a very good buy for the money. If you want greater flexibility than you can get in minimum-priced equipment, but can't afford to pay considerably more than \$100, you can't go wrong on the 99. — R. A.

MANUFACTURER'S COMMENT. HIGH FIDELITY'S comments and questions are so typical that we are glad of the opportunity to answer several questions we have been asked hundreds of times. First, how do we do it? The answer is reduced margin aiming for volume distribution, new capital investments for semi-automatic production machinery, and a great deal of expert engineering.

We have been asked about size so often and is 10 watts enough that we can only suggest to readers that they listen to the little "toy". A precision watch is smaller than an alarm clock. Actually most listening levels average under 1 watt. Extra power is in reserve for musical peaks. The actual instantaneous peak output of the 99 is nearly 25 watts, but the level at which such peaks are clipped is less important than how they are clipped. Even when the 99 does clip, the clipping is clean and symmetrical, and therefore relatively unnoticeable to the ear, thereby providing actual performance audibly equal or superior to units with higher formal ratings but less favorable clipping characteristics.

On our loudness control the compensation contours were determined by extended listening tests. At all listening levels juries of listeners adjusted calibrated equalizers for best audible balance. The statistically analyzed results gave our contours, which have somewhat less compensation than the usual loudness control.

Scherr Stylus-Pressure Gauge

SPECIFICATIONS (furnished by manufacturer): Precision dynamometers, useful as stylus pressure gauges, in two models calibrated from 2 to 15 grams or 3 to 30 grams each way from center position. Models with range extended to 50, 100 and 150 grams are available also. Price: \$9.85. Manufacturer: George Scherr Company, Inc., 200 Lafayette Street, New York 12, N. Y.



You can set stylus pressure accurately with this Scherr gauge.

Some time ago we received a news release from the Scherr Company describing their "NEW Precision Dynamometer for measuring spring tension, starting torque and the force required to actuate delicate mechanisms." Well, we mused, there aren't many mechanisms more delicate than a record playing arm, and there are few devices more sensitive to improper force adjustment than a pickup stylus. Noting that the few stylus pressure gauges (proper term is *force*, but *pressure* seems to be adopted in this usage) that are available now are often lacking in accuracy and durability, we asked to be sent one of these devices in order to determine its suitability for measuring stylus pressure (*sic*). We were sent the two models described in the specifications above; one is pictured in the accompanying illustration.

One of the more satisfying features of the gauge is the repeatability of its indications; in other words, if the little knob at the end of the indicator arm is placed under

the cartridge at any point reasonably close to the stylus tip and at the same distance from the arm pivot as the stylus tip, and then the indicator is raised to support the weight of the arm, approximately the same reading will be obtained each time. This is more than can be said for some stylus pressure gauges! While such performance is not a guarantee of accuracy, it certainly inspires more confidence.

The gauge is fairly easy to use, as described above. An improvement in convenience for this application could be made by adding a small platform at the end of the lever arm, marked at the center, on which the stylus could be rested. It is likely that the manufacturer would make this modification if the response from the hi-fi market were sufficient to warrant it. He has stated that newer models will have an extra indicator "hand" that will remain at the maximum reading of the device until reset by a knob on the dial face.

A price tag of \$9.85 may seem to be high for such a device, but it is probably not when the accuracy — and the *need* for such accuracy — are considered. This is less than the price of one diamond stylus or of two LPs. Correct stylus pressure not only guarantees minimum stylus and record wear, but assures sound pickup at minimum distortion. (Stylus pressure can be too low as well as too high — better check on manufacturer's recommendation.) One way to reduce your investment in a good gauge would be to talk your friends into a mutual-ownership pact.—R.A.

Mercury Disc-Charger

It would be quite a mouthful, but this tiny doo-dad would be more explicitly described if it were called the "Mercury Disc Dis-charger." That, in essence, is what it does: it discharges or negates the charge of static electricity which builds up on most phonograph records. Its action is not at all apparent nor particularly easy to observe.

The Disc-Charger is not photogenic, which explains why there is no picture hereabout. It is a very small cylindrical capsule of red plastic approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch long and $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in diameter. It clips to the end of a cartridge with a small bent wire. At the end nearest the record, a tiny square (about $\frac{1}{16}$ th of an inch) of radium-base material is imbedded. As the record revolves, the radioactive square "scans" the surface of the disk and discharges static electricity. The process is slow. Dust will be picked up by the stylus on the first playing and to a lesser extent on the second . . . and then gradually less and less dust will be picked up because a record which is free of static electricity does not *attract* dust . . . dust will settle, normally, but it will not be held to the record by electricity. (It may be held to the disk by catching, so to speak, on the groove modulations.)

The most dramatic illustration of what the Mercury Disc-Charger does is to try the old "comb test." Frisk a pocket comb on your sleeve, then pass the comb over some cigarette ashes. The ashes will leap to the comb. Now blow the ashes off the comb, frisk it on your sleeve again, and then hold the Disc-Charger about $\frac{1}{8}$ in. from

the comb, passing it slowly (without touching the comb) over a small area — say, $\frac{3}{8}$ in. on a side. If you now pass the comb over the cigarette ashes, the ashes will leap to those parts of the comb which have not been "scanned" by the Disc-Charger.

The Disc-Charger is not the complete answer to the dust problem, since it does not do anything to remove the dust, but it does help with an important part of the problem. Add a brush and the dust menace should cease.

The radioactive content of the Disc-Charger is so miniscule as to be, reportedly, harmless; it should also be stated that the strength of the radioactive material will drop to one half in approximately 1,600 years. We have not yet completed our life-test of the Disc-Charger! — C. F.

Cabinart Rebel Enclosure

SPECIFICATIONS (furnished by manufacturer): Klipsch-licensed corner enclosures for 12 and 15-in. loudspeakers following "Rebel" design, providing rear loading of cone. **Sizes**, for 15-in. speaker: 32 high by 24 wide by $16\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep; for 12-in. speaker: 32 high by 21 wide by $14\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep. **Material of construction**: 5/8-in. plywood. **Finishes**: limed oak, honey walnut, french mahogany or black lacquer. **Prices**: 15-in. model, \$87.00, 12-in. model, \$69.00. Also available as kits for \$42.00 and \$36.00 respectively. **Address**: G. & H. Wood Products Co., 75 North 11th Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.



G & H Wood Product's Rebel IV enclosure, cornered.

After developing the Klipschorn to a high state of perfection, Paul Klipsch turned his attention to smaller sizes and smaller pocketbooks. The result was the enclosure known as the Rebel. These two Cabinart enclosures follow the design principles established for the Klipsch Rebel, and are known as the Klipsch Rebel IV. Both sizes are identical in design and height, the differences being in width and in depth.

Both improve low-frequency reproduction by rear loading of the speaker and by using the walls of the room as an extension of this horn. In placing enclosures of this type in a room, optimum results will be secured if the walls along each side of the cabinet are left open so that the horn effect is not lost.

The KR-4-12 has two 12-in. cutouts, and the KR-4-15 one 15-in. and one 12-in. cutout, in the front panel. One cutout is covered by a factory-installed plate. Thus the speaker can be installed in either an upper or a lower position, or two speakers of similar sizes can be used, or the "plate" cut to take a smaller speaker or tweeter. Around the perimeter of the cutouts are four pre-installed bolts. That's a nice idea; with any standard speaker, you simply drop the speaker in place over the bolts, screw down the nuts, and you have a firm, correct type of installation. (Wood screws are generally considered "incorrect," since they're almost sure to loosen up after a while.)

Note, however, that we said "with any *standard* speaker." If you have a non-standard type — such as the English ones, most of which use mounting hole radii different from the U. S. standard — you'll have to get the bolts out of the way. We wound up hack-sawing, in order to mount a 12-in. Wharfedale. With the new Tannoy, built to American mounting standards, the bolts were not long enough to come through the extra-heavy frame used for this speaker. A University 6201, of course, dropped into place like a charm.

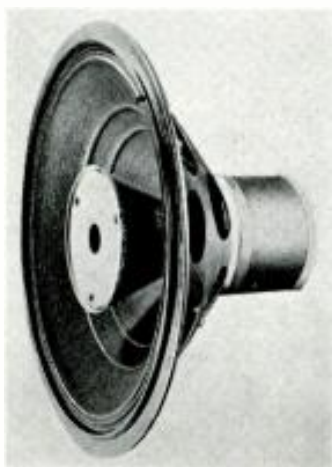
These cabinets do not add anything to the basic tonality of the speaker. Low frequency response is picked up a bit, and that's all. There's a possibility that the lows may be too heavy; try moving the cabinet out a little from the corner. The Tannoy (a 15-in. one) needed this treatment.

Duotone-Philips Speakers

SPECIFICATIONS (furnished by manufacturer): Master line of loudspeakers manufactured by Philips Laboratories, Holland, and distributed in this country by Duotone. Line includes two 12-in., one 10-in., and one 8½-in. model, all employing magnets of Ticonal steel. **Model 9762** — 12-in. diameter; 20-watt capacity at 8 ohms; flux density 11,000 gauss, total flux 140,000 Maxwells; efficiency 14% at 400 cycles; resonant frequency 45 cycles; fitted with wafer-type sound diffuser and dust cover; price \$59.95. **Model 9760** — 12-in. diameter; same specifications as model 9762 except for lighter magnet, efficiency 7%; price \$39.00. **Model 9758** — 10-in. diameter; 10-watt capacity at 8 ohms; efficiency 6% at 400 cycles; copper ring installed in air gap to maintain uniform impedance; fitted with wafer-type sound diffuser and dust cover; price \$33.00. **Model 9750** — 8½-in. diameter; 6-watt capacity at 4 ohms; efficiency 10% at 400 cycles; resonant frequency 60 cycles; fitted with sound diffuser and dust cover; price \$29.95. Also model **EL7010**, priced between Master line and low-priced Variant line: 8½-in. diameter; 5-watt capacity at 4 ohms; resonant frequency 70 cycles; no diffuser or dust cover; price \$14.10. **Distributor:** Duotone Company, Inc., Locust Street, Keyport, N. J.

We received for testing models 9762, 9750 and EL7010; accordingly, all comments made in this report will be based on those speakers, which Stephen Nestor of Duotone assures us are representative of the complete line. The illustration shows model 9762, the most expensive and certainly the best.

However, the photo is one of the speaker with the dust cover removed. We think that dust covers are well worth bothering with, because they minimize the danger of damage to the delicate speaker parts and — more important — prevent bits of sound-absorbing material, metal scraps and wood chips from lodging in around moving parts of the speaker. Usually, dust covers create mounting problems because the mounting bolts or screws must be forced through the cloth. It is difficult to do this neatly; the cloth often gets twisted



It also necessitated the addition of a couple of pieces of 1 by 4 wood strips screwed to the back panels to break up panel resonances.

Both these cabinets are compact, good sound-reproducers. They'll help most any speaker, and may help some a little too much. — C. F.

MANUFACTURER'S COMMENT: I have read your copy carefully and have noticed just a few minor errors which I am correcting below. I would also like to report that some of your critical findings have already been corrected in production, subsequent to our initial production. I am taking the liberty of pointing these out to you, so that your report is accurate for our present production.

We are now using ¼-in. plywood, and not the ½-in. mentioned. We have also added Korina finish to the several already mentioned.

We now use bolts long enough to fit any speaker.

Your reference to hack-sawing the bolts in order to change them left us a little mystified. To remove any bolt, just grasp it firmly and push it to the right and then to the left and then simply push it out through the board. That is all there is to it!

We have added two strips of Kimsul insulation to the back panels to kill the occasional resonances produced.

This I hope will serve to completely correct and clarify your copy in accordance with our present production.

and strained, particularly if screws are used. (Screws should not be used to mount speakers because they inevitably become loosened after a while, but let's face it — they *are* very often used anyway.) With these Master line speakers the difficulty is overcome by mounting clips that are furnished with each speaker. The EL7010, without dust cover, has standard flange holes.

The most impressive aspect of the speakers, taken as a group, is their efficiency. They make more sound than any others we remember working with. Although we think that the importance of high speaker-system efficiency has been generally overemphasized (especially for those to be used in the home), there can be no doubt that this is desirable if no other qualities are sacrificed in the process of obtaining such high efficiency.

These are not true coaxial speakers — a single voice-coil is used in each case to cover the entire range, and all the Master line speakers are furnished with high-frequency diffusers. Apparently, the diffusers work well; good distribution of highs was perceived from all but the EL7010 (which, it will be recalled, does not have a diffuser).

Evaluation of speaker performance must still be done on a subjective basis and, because of this, results are unreliable except for the evaluator himself. Nevertheless, some impressions of the writer must be offered, otherwise the report is useless. — Highs seemed to be bright and hard, but not harsh. Lows (in well-tuned bass-reflex cabinets) were average in amount, quite clean. Definition in middle and high ranges was less than desirable in the 9750, adequate in the 9762, and not good enough for true high fidelity in the EL7010. But the prices for the Master line make it definitely attractive. — R. A.

MANUFACTURER'S COMMENT: We would like to make the following comments, at which we have arrived after having a discussion with Philips Engineers.

We agree with you that this master line of speakers is not a two-way speaker system and, of course, they were not intended to be. These speakers have the advantage of giving full range reproduction with a single cone, making it unnecessary to have a crossover network, with the result that less distortion is present giving more natural reproduction.

These speakers have a brass ring, the purpose of which is to keep the impedance of the voice coil almost constant at all frequencies.

Regarding the No. 9750 speakers, we are sure that you made your test on these with improper baffle. Otherwise you would have found these speakers are very fine on the high and middle ranges.

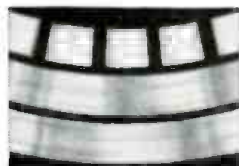
Two of these speakers are used in the famous Philips Concerto radio-phonograph, which retails for \$850 and perhaps you have had an opportunity to hear this set.

ZENITH'S PRECISION TURNTABLE SPEED TAKES THE CHANCE OUT OF HIGH FIDELITY

With the announcement of the new Super-phonics, Zenith takes one more step toward absolute perfection in high fidelity for the home. We pride ourselves that Zenith's flawless high fidelity with precision turntable speed brings a new meaning

to the word "realism" in music. Of course, the final authority is your own two good ears. Which is why we most cordially invite you to bring your favorite LP record in to your Zenith dealer's . . . and hear it come to life for the first time.

You can't have high fidelity, except by chance, on any phonograph without a turntable speedometer and fully variable speed regulator. *Only Zenith gives you both!*



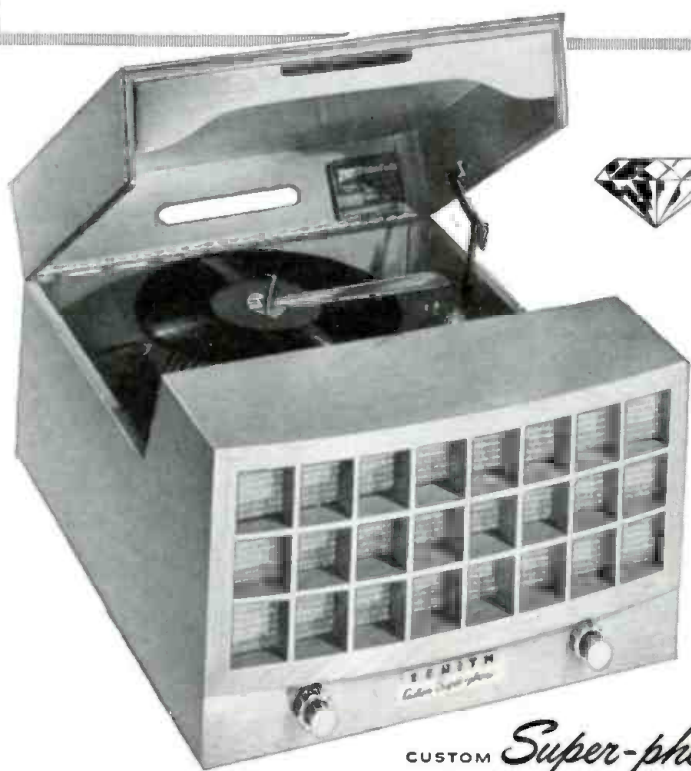
Stroboscope Speedometer—Zenith's amazing Stroboscope is your infallible turntable speedometer. When the moving light becomes a dot, the record is being played at exact recorded speed . . . necessary for perfect pitch, tempo, timbre. *No phonograph without*

such micro-metric measurement of turntable speed can give high fidelity, except by chance!



Fully Variable Speed Regulator—The fully variable Zenith speed regulator lets you make any needed adjustment in record speed. It's in Zenith's exclusive Cobra-Matic Record Player that plays any and all speeds from 10 to 85 RPM . . . including 78, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$, 45

and 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ RPM, the new "talking book" speed. It's as necessary to perfect speed as the regulator on a fine watch.



CUSTOM *Super-phonics*

Take the chance out of high fidelity with Zenith!

The model illustrated is the Custom Super-phonics in blonde, \$159.95*. In mahogany, \$149.95*. The Super-phonics is available in blue pyroxilin finish, \$129.95*, or blonde, \$139.95*.

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds

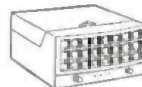
Perfect turntable speed is just the start of Zenith's flawless High Fidelity:



Dual speakers (7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " woofer for bass and separate tweeter for treble) are built by Zenith to assure accurate reproduction of all sounds within the range of the human ear, at normal listening levels.



Wide-angle dispersion through the open front of the cabinet lets you hear the actual "highs" . . . not just their reflection. Increases "presence" of sound.



Sound-sealed cabinet of heavy wood converts entire phonograph into sound chamber (necessary for true high-fidelity reproduction).



New barium titanate pickup with feather-light Cobra® Tone arm. Two changeable cartridges (1 mil and 2 mil stylus) for playing standard and LP records. Frequency range from 25 to 20,000 cycles per second.

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The NEW BROOK AMPLIFIER Model 22A

An entirely new concept in amplifier design and construction. Combines the main amplifier, the front-end control system, and record pre-amp equalizer in one functional compact unit. Nominal power is 10 watts with less than 1% harmonic, and less 2% intermodulation distortion.

Main amplifier section employs all-triode circuit. Pre-amp equalizer section has 6-position switch for matching to record characteristics. Independent controls provide extreme boost or attenuation for treble and bass.

Channel selector permits switching to FM, AM, TV, tape, magnetic or crystal pickups. Frequency response: 20 to 20,000 cps, ± 1 db. Matches speakers: 2, 4, 8, or 16 ohms.
\$129.99
Complete with tubes

REK-O-KUT 12-inch, 3-Speed TURNTABLES Model L-743



A broadcast quality turntable designed for discriminating users . . . professionals and audiophiles. Driven by 4-pole motor. Turntable itself is made of cast aluminum, and exerts no pull on magnetic cartridges. It is precision machined with a heavy rim for dynamically balanced flywheel action.

A single knob permits instantaneous selection of any record speed: 33 $\frac{1}{2}$, 45, or 78 rpm. Record slippage is eliminated through use of new mat material. There is virtually no rumble, wow or flutter. Complete with 45 rpm record adapter
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The New FISHER Model 70-RT FM-AM TUNER with Preamp-Equalizer, Tone and Loudness Controls

The Fisher Model 70-RT is a complete, self-contained high fidelity front-end system. Not only does it provide the means for the finest reception of both FM and AM radio broadcasts, but embodies the necessary pre-amplification for use with high quality magnetic phono pickups. The equalizer control with 4 compensating positions enables matching to the characteristics of all record types. Frequency response: 20 to 20,000 cycles ± 1 db. Other features include: Variable AFC Control Switch, Broad and Sharp AM, Auxiliary Input. Continuously variable Bass and Treble controls permit up to 15 db boost or attenuation at 50 and 10,000 cycles respectively.
\$184.50
Complete with tubes

WESTERN ELECTRIC 755-A SPEAKER (8" PM) Provides full frequency range coverage and wide angle high-frequency distribution. SPECIAL \$2460

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FAIRCHILD Moving Coil PICKUP CARTRIDGES



Designed to professional quality standards, these playback cartridges permit the highest quality record reproduction thus far attained. Unusually high lateral compliance has reduced tracking error distortion to an absolute minimum. Each Fairchild cartridge has a carefully selected diamond stylus. The moving coil design provides a linear, smooth, wide-range response. Dimensions are such to permit ready installation in most pickup arms and record changers. The Fairchild cartridge is used with conventional preamp-equalizers. Its impedance and output are designed to work into a high quality transformer, such as the Fairchild Models 823-A and 826-A.

The Model 823-A is a fully shielded transformer with multi-tap primary. It is intended for use with pre-amplifiers where an all-purpose input transformer is desired. The Model 826-A is a special transformer of small dimensions designed for use between Fairchild cartridges and a grid input preamp. (Illustrated)



Cartridge Model 215-A for microgroove records **\$37.50**
Cartridge Model 215-C for standard groove records **37.50**
Transformer Model 823-A **13.85**
Transformer Model 826-A **8.75**



GRAY Model 108-B

Viscous-Damped Arm

A transcription arm of radically new design. Provides perfect tracking for all records: 33 $\frac{1}{2}$, 45, and 78 rpm. Has stylus pressure adjustment from 5 grams. Mechanical resonance is virtually eliminated. Prevents damage due to dropping. Accommodates most makes of magnetic cartridges, and permits instant interchange from one type to another. Can be used for records up to 16" in diameter.

Gray 108-B Arm **\$56.00**



ALTEC DUPLEX LOUDSPEAKERS

After ten years of research, Altec has perfected three speakers to provide wider frequency range, smoother response and lower distortion than previously has been obtained. These speakers are unconditionally guaranteed by the manufacturer to reproduce all frequencies from 30 to 22,000 cycles when mounted in a suitable enclosure. Each is effectively a self-contained two-way system and is supplied with a dividing network. Model 601A and Model 602A are respectively 12 and 15 inches in diameter. Each has an impedance of 8 ohms, power rating of 20 watts with 30-watt peak, and a crossover frequency of 3000 cycles.

Model 604C (illustrated) is designed for highpower requirements with a rating of 35 watts. (50-watt peak). Diameter is 15 inches; impedance is 16 ohms; crossover frequency is 1600 cycles.

Model 601A **\$99.00**
Model 602A **114.00**
Model 604C **156.00**

RIVER EDGE MATCHED HI-FI CABINET and SPEAKER ENCLOSURE



Good taste, construction and audio design combined to give the user top appearance and performance at low cost. The cabinet is designed to accommodate record player or changer, tuner, preamplifier and amplifier. The speaker enclosure may be ordered for either a 12-inch or 15-inch speaker. Both are fine examples of beautifully finished cabinet-craft. Maple and birch construction, in your choice of finish: Riviera blond, maple, fruitwood, mahogany or walnut. The dimensions of each unit are: 24" w. x 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ " h. x 17" d.

Cabinet #F2224 **\$75.00**
Speaker Enclosure #S2224 (for 12-inch or 15-inch speaker) **\$50.00**

HARVEY RADIO COMPANY, INC.

103 W. 43rd Street, New York 36, N. Y. JUdson 2-1500

BAYREUTH

Continued from page 28

Wagner succeeded in creating a unique atmosphere in his theater. More important still are its technical excellences. The Festspielhaus was completed in 1876; the submerged orchestra was an innovation, while the curtain parted in the middle was a rare novelty in European theaters of the day. Wagner also left ample room backstage for easy manipulation of scenery, so that here is a stage manager's dream. But above all it is the acoustics of the house which justifiably cause such wonder. At the other side of Bayreuth is a rococo opera house built in 1748 for the local prince. Architecturally it is a gem that draws connoisseurs from all over the world to see such a perfect example of its kind. Acoustically it is dreadful — all sound is flattened. To hear music there underlines by contrast the glory of the Festspielhaus, where all musical sound is enriched. Flutes can never sound more mellifluous nor horns more golden than they do in the Festspielhaus; the cor anglais finds a new crispness and 'cellos a greater breadth. Such acoustics were not a happy accident, but the design of Wagner and his architects. This was proved when, in the course of reconstruction, the removal of a single brick destroyed the splendid sound, which was only restored when the brick was replaced.

The Festival last year was a feast of beauty for the ear because the orchestral playing and, generally speaking, the singing were of a high quality worthy of the acoustics. It was the result of two months' patient rehearsal and preparation, which continued during the morning, even after the Festival had started. The gathering of pilgrims before lunch, on the terrace around the theater, to discuss the events of yesterday or to meet the celebrities of today, was accompanied by music from many of the rehearsal rooms that nestle along the flanks of the Festspielhaus, as kittens do about a cat. Elsa's dream; Siegmund's love-song and Mark's address flooded from different windows in dubious harmony, backed up by the none too thorough bass of Siegfried's horn call, repeated a dozen times. These morning get-togethers were notable for the number of Americans who came; amiable Americans with time on their hands and a long European vacation ahead; busy Americans, soldiers from the base; anxious Americans, artists taking part in the Festival. It is an indication of the broader, enlightened policy of post-war Bayreuth in looking outside Europe for artists, that every one of the productions this year — *The Ring*, *Tristan, Lohengrin, Parsifal* — in some major roles and many of the smaller parts included American artists and artists from American opera houses.

The presence of Eleanor Steber at the Festival brought to mind the commotion of 1894 when no suitable Elsa could be found in Germany for the first Bayreuth production of *Lohengrin* and the authorities invited the American, Lillian Nordica, to sing the part. In many influential quarters strong objections were raised to her nationality on the grounds that the Festival could no longer be regarded as the purest manifestation of wholly German art, but Nordica, by her

Continued on page 88

European Summer Music Festivals -- 1954

A round-up by James Hinton, Jr.

Bayreuth, though it is the most photogenic and probably the most famous of Europe's summer music festivals, isn't the only one. A couple of others — Prades, Glyndebourne — are almost as illustrious, and numerous concert-series up and down the Continent and in the British Isles have special appeals of their own. Here are some of them, arranged in approximate chronological order. HIGH FIDELITY will be glad to relay queries about any of the festivals to the appropriate travel and ticket agencies.

WIESBADEN (W. Germany) May 1-26
General Content: Opera in original languages; orchestra concerts; drama; ballet.

Repertoire: Britten's *Peter Grimes*; Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Magic Flute*, and *Don Giovanni*; Handel's *Julius Caesar*; Janacek's *Aus einem Totenhaus*; Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* and *Otello*; Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*; Bellini's *Norma*.

Participants: Vienna Staatsoper; Florence Opera; Royal Opera Company, Covent Garden; Paris Opera Ballet.

FLORENCE (N. Italy) May 4-June 20

General Content: Opera; orchestra concerts; chamber music; ballet; recitals; choral music.

Repertoire: Puccini's *The Girl of the Golden West*; Spontini's *Agnes of Hohenstaufen*; Weber's *Euryanthe*; Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa*; Bucchi's *Il Contrabasso* and Lualdi's *The Devil in the Belfry*.

Participants: Orchestra and Chorus of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino. Conductors: Leopold Stokowski; Dimitri Mitropoulos (*The Girl of the Golden West*); Guido Cantelli; Wilhelm Fürtwängler.

BORDEAUX (SW France) May 18-30

General Content: Orchestra concerts; choral music; opera; ballet; chamber music.

Repertoire: Fauré's *Requiem*; Britten's *Peter Grimes*; French and Spanish baroque and pre-baroque music; standard repertoire; French Contemporary music (Repartz, Milhaud, etc.); three ballet programs.

Participants: Bordeaux City Orchestra; Orchestre de la Radiodiffusion Française; Bordeaux Opéra. Conductors: André Cluytens, Charles Munch, Charles Bruck, Pierre Capdeville. Soloists: Artur Rubinstein, André Segovia, Janine Michaux, Louis Beydts; Agrupacion Coral de Pamplune.

SCEAUX (Paris, France) May-July (exact dates not available)

General Content: French music from the seventeenth century to today.

Repertoire: Programs devoted to pre-baroque music; to violin and flute music; to Fauré, Ravel, Aubert, Enesco, and Schmitt; to D'Indy, Repartz, Roussel, Duparc, Chausson, and Délaage; to Dukas, Messiaen, and Durufle; to Satie, Poulenc, Sauguet, and Milhaud; to Mouret, Bernier, and Lully; to ancient music; to Debussy; to Honegger, etc.

Participants: Local and guest artists.

BAYREUTH (Germany) May 24-30

General Content: Baroque music.

Repertoire: (See above)

Participants: (Guest artists)

VIENNA (Austria) May 29-June 30

General Content: Opera; operetta; orchestra concerts; sacred and secular choral music; drama.

Repertoire: Vienna Staatsoper cycle "From the Baroque to the Modern" includes operas by Handel, Gluck, Mozart, Verdi, and Wagner; a new production of Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*; Strauss's *Intermezzo*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and *Capriccio*; Gottfried von Einem's *Der Prozess*; Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*; and Franz Salmhofer's *Iwan Tarasenko*. Open-air performances of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Lehar's *The Count of Luxembourg* in the gardens of the Schoenbrunn Palace.

Participants: Vienna Staatsoper and guest artists; Vienna Philharmonic; Vienna Symphony; Orchestra of La Scala in Milan. Conductors: Karl Boehm, André Cluytens, Alberto Erede, Wilhelm Fürtwängler, Paul Hindemith, Herbert von Karajan, Erich Kleiber, Mario Rossi, Victor de Sabata, Hans Swarowsky.

STOCKHOLM (Sweden) June 2-9

General Content: Orchestra concerts; opera; chamber music; drama; ballet.

Repertoire: Handel's *Orlando Furioso*; Nathaniel Berg's *Judith*; Verdi's *Otello* and *Rigoletto*; Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*; Campra's *Fêtes Galantes à la Watteau*. Music by Scandinavian composers (Rångstrom, Blum Dahl, Sibelius, Rosenber, Andersson, Bergman, Ericson). Eighteenth-century music (in theatre at Drottningholm Palace).

Participants: Stockholm Festival Orchestra (combined Philharmonic and Radio orchestras); Stockholm Choral Society; Royal Swedish Opera. Conductors: Sixten Ehrling; Ertel Bokstaedt. Swedish Royal Ballet. Amadeus Quartet. Soloists: Jussi Bjoerling, Set Svanholm (*Otello*), Elisabeth Söderström, Berté Wermline, Sven Nilsson, David Oistrakh (Sibelius' *Violin Concerto*).

PRADES (SW France) June 5-20

General Content: Beethoven chamber music; performances under supervision of Pablo Casals.

Repertoire: Trios; sonatas for violin and piano; cello and piano; *Diabelli Variations* piano sonatas.

Participants: Pablo Casals, Szymon Goldberg, Mieczyslaw Horszowski, Rudolf Serkin, and Eugene Istomin.

ROYAUMONT (S. France) June-July

General Content: Baroque and pre-baroque instrumental and vocal music.

Repertoire: (no details available yet)

Participants: (no details available yet)

Continued on page 99

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BAYREUTH

Continued from page 87

magnificent performance, convinced the critics that they were quibbling. If similar objections were leveled this year at Steber, she must have silenced them just as finally by her version of Elsa. Later Steber made more admirers with a delicious and unaccompanied version of Brahms' *Cradle Song*, one evening at the Eule, a back-street eating and meeting house and the favorite rendezvous of artists off duty in Festival time. Imagine the picture: close, smoky rooms; hot, happy diners, some a little tipsy; cut and thrust of strong, informed discussion or the relaxation of laughter. I myself was being introduced to the Li'l Abner saga by a striking blonde from Los Angeles and a law student from Pierre, S. D., a bearded man of engaging wit, with Scottish ancestors and a plaid shirt. Waitresses in black, marshals of the inn, standing hawk-eyed to spot the empty glass, for it is a custom of the house that an empty glass is immediately refilled unless the drinker lays a hand across it. An animated scene enclosed by a wall of signed photographs of the great Wagnerians who in the past found leisure at the Eule. Then, just as Moonbeam and Earthquake and Hairless Joe were achieving a clear identity in my English mind, Steber's silvery voice, started on the *Cradle Song* and slowly the hum died so that she finished in an atmosphere of rapt attention. Whether Brahms is admissible at Bayreuth is a moot point among the experts, but Steber got a big hand.

Another American to make a mark as a singer was Gene Tobin who sang quite beautifully the unaccompanied lines of the Young Seaman, which occur as soon as the curtain lifts on *Tristan* Act I. The remaining artists from the New World shone more as actors, and nowhere in the operatic world is dramatic ability more important than at Bayreuth, where emphasis is laid heavily on the conception of Wagner's works as music-drama and not as opera, which today has come to be concerned almost exclusively with voice and orchestra. At Bayreuth vocal ability can be sacrificed to some extent if good acting is assured; this was well illustrated by the first act of *Walküre*, when Regina Resnik and Ramon Vinay electrified us with the force and reality of their Sieglinde and Siegmund, respectively, albeit no one could consider them the ultimate in Wagnerian vocalism. This also applied in *Rheingold* to the Goddess of Youth, though it is many years since she has looked as young and as glamorous as Boston's Bruni Falcom made her.

It is impossible to accommodate Astrid Varnay in a single category as singer or actress. Her Isolde was a creation that we in Europe were anxious to see, and extremely compelling it was. Varnay has tamed the tremolo which for some time haunted her; now the voice is full of expression, splendid to hear. Add to the improved voice her great intellectual and dramatic gifts, her intensely mobile face and you have in Varnay a remarkable Isolde. When she planned the death potion for Tristan she looked utterly a murderess; when she extinguished the torch she was the girl en-

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BAYREUTH

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chanted with love; when she lamented over Tristan's corpse she was truly serene in resignation. She sang a restrained and moving Liebestod, and I thought that if one could be certain of such a lament by a beloved at one's own departure, the problems of life would immediately lose their sting. Varnay's Isolde was a triumph worthy to stand beside the successes of the male artists, among whom honor fell above all to Wolfgang Windgassen, resonant, youthful, fearless in voice and action as Siegfried, and to Ludwig Weber, wonderfully sensitive both as Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* and as King Mark in *Tristan*.

If the American influence is strong on the Festival hill, it is still more so at the foot of it where the colony known locally as "Kleines Amerika" exists, within sight and sound of the theater. This close-knit group of houses are the homes of married U. S. soldiers; bright, white, German houses to be sure, but the style of the boards on the gates and the shape of the neat letters spelling rank and name of the occupant is unmistakably American. In the middle of the colony, on the Nibelungen Strasse, is the school for their children and here, walking to the theater in mid-afternoon, one was sure to pass a cluster of young Americans fighting for baseball bat or for a fixed identity as a current baseball star. "I'm Mickey Mantle 'cause I'm biggest," one boy insisted; as he was also the strongest, nobody challenged his word.

At night there is a sentry to guard the school and perhaps the baseball ground. Nearby, touching on the lush grass and foliage of the Siegfried Wagner Allee, is the officers' club which provides a quicker, cheaper and tastier meal in the intervals from the theater than you can buy in any other restaurant within reach. My hours spent in this cosy, congenial club, thanks to the hospitality of the U. S. Army, were among the most pleasant I had in Bayreuth. Possibly this strengthened in my mind the connection of America and Bayreuth.

America is omnipresent. It penetrates further than the influence, well-known in Europe now, of a jukebox in an age-old inn; the New York *Herald Tribune* on the paper stalls; children's toys and gadgets created from K-ration containers; the blue-white signs above the doors of Ford agents. In Bayreuth the effect is material but also cultural and it is thus twice as powerful.

On a warm, close morning I sat on my suitcase in an over-crowded train and marked down that the last person I saw in Bayreuth was the same official of the American Express Company. The New World called in to redress the balance of the Old—I pondered the well-used phrase. Yet as we ran on through rich farming land there were, strangely it seemed by this time, no combine harvesters, and looking back at distant Bayreuth, only the Festspielhaus was in sight. Above an invisible city it stood symbolically, the magnet to attract the outside world. The first performance of the *Ring* there, in 1876, was the alpha of modern Bayreuth and, New World or no, the town preserves in 1953 the Wagner Festival as its focal-point and leitmotiv.

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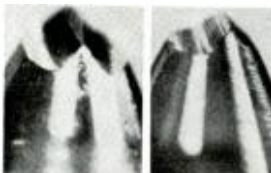
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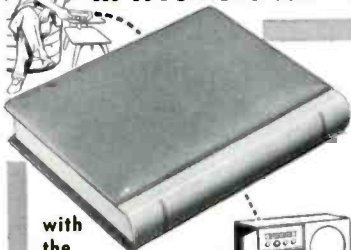
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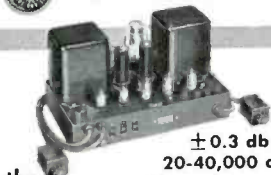
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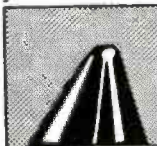
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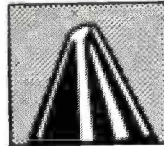
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IN ONE EAR

Continued from page 36

the best-laid plans. The season at La Scala, Milan, was to have opened in the fall with Verdi's *Otello*, conducted by Victor de Sabata with Mario del Monaco, Renata Tebaldi and Leonard Warren. Since the tenor and soprano are London artists of long standing and since Mr. De Sabata can be had (if for a very healthy price) plans were made — as everyone who reads record advertisements knows — for a Toscanini-topping *Otello* recording — Iago unspecified, for Mr. Warren belongs to RCA Victor. Then Mr. De Sabata became ill, cancelled his Milan season, the Scala opened with Catalani's *La Wally*, and all except the people at RCA were dissatisfied. Maybe by next summer Mr. De Sabata will have recovered, the stars will again come into conjunction, and the sessions will proceed. Meanwhile, who is going to try to sell a recording of *La Wally*? A damn good question.

The recording entrepreneur looking over the rest of the season for something to dish up might be tempted by Cherubini's *Medea*; it has no competitive version on disks, and there is (or was) a shiny, already rehearsed production ready for the plucking. Likewise Alfano's *Cyrano de Bergerac*. But would they sell? Maybe so; maybe no. Nobody has ever tried. But the way things are going, somebody eventually will.

Then take the summer to come. All sorts of Rossini operas are kicking around the

Italian opera circuit. Maybe the fall will bring a recording of, say, *Le Comte Ory* or *Semiramide* or *Tancredi*. They can't go on re-recording *The Barber of Seville* forever just because there is no perfectly satisfactory recording to be had.

What of the gaps in the Strauss repertoire? Take note of what is to happen in Munich this summer. Why not recordings of the later operas? Why not *Capriccio*; why not a complete *Arabella*? Why not *Die Frau ohne Schatten* instead of another *Salome* or *Elektra*? Perhaps the answer is that they are not yet royalty-free and are thought to be bad financial risks because they have not been staged here. But it seems sheer ridiculousness to offer seven versions of *Till Eulenspiegel* and nine of *Don Juan* and almost completely ignore a score as surpassingly lovely as *Ariadne auf Naxos*. The straws are in the wind; pray that a few wisps blow across the Atlantic.

There will always be more Beethoven coming up. A ninth version of the *Ninth Symphony* may well fail to arouse the same prospective-listener interest as did the first eight, but there is still room for another, and really fine, recording of *Fidelio* — and the promise of one, the rumor of another. The *Egmont* music is apparently going to be accorded further attention, too.

And who can tell where the current — and unpredicted — success of light opera on disks will end? More Strauss? Surely — even another *Fledermaus*. More Lehar? Just as surely. Perhaps the coming year will bring recordings of items like *The Red Mill*

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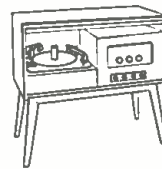


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IN ONE EAR

Continued from page 91

and *The White Horse Inn*. If they succeed, we may yet wind up with competing versions of Reginald de Koven's *Robin Hood* (I don't really think so either, but *one* wouldn't be a bad idea at all).

This kind of guessing — or hoping-cum-speculating, for that is what it really amounts to — can go on for hours at a time, to greater or less profit. One thing is certain: You stand a much better chance of guessing right if you think systematically in terms of the possible rather than the wildly improbable and if you express your wish-guess by writing either direct to the most likely-seeming record company or to a friendly intermediary between you and the people who make the decisions on what music to record, when, and with what artists. It is much like writing to Santa Claus. You probably won't get an answer, but come Christmas morning you may find the recording you hoped for under the tree — or at least on the shelves of your local shop. After all, Christmas is a business too.

THIRTY FEET UP

Continued from page 37

musical passages. Originally, this mixing was done to compress the tremendous dynamic range of a symphony orchestra in order not to overcut the record grooves and to avoid breaking down the walls between the grooves. However, with the advent of tape recording methods which provide for variable margins between grooves in anticipation of loud or soft passages, it is now possible to record with much greater dynamic range. *It is no longer necessary to compress or mix orchestral sounds before recording them on disks.* It is now possible to place the microphone farther from the orchestra — microphones today are more sensitive than they were a decade or more ago — and to expose it to sound exactly equivalent to that found where the main body of the audience would be sitting at a live performance.

As a direct result of this new method of recording, it is no longer necessary to wonder whether binaural or stereophonic sound would be worth the extra expense in a home music system. For an orchestra conductor, perhaps, stereophonic sound would be practical since he is normally in the midst of his orchestra, and is used to sound coming from several directions at once. But ordinary listeners, accustomed to sitting two-thirds of the way back in the orchestra seats at a concert, receive the main sound of the music from a not-very-wide angle directly in front. A similar situation occurs when the home listener sits in his living room across from his corner-located loudspeaker enclosure. The walls of the room tend to spread out the sound about as much as in the concert hall.

The purpose of a home music system, then, should be to transport the listener in his imagination to a good seat at a concert. The sound should convey the impression of being located at a distance well behind the

Continued on page 94

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See Page 100



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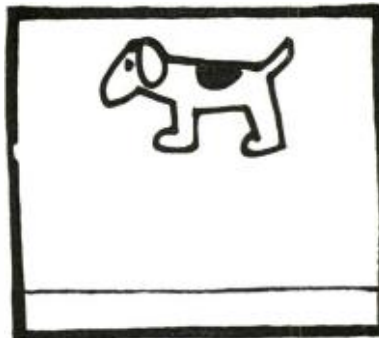
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THIRTY FEET UP

Continued from page 92

speaker cabinet, and not above or below it. True, if one sits in the first few rows of a concert hall, the orchestra on the stage may be above as well as ahead of the listener; but for most listeners a better-balanced sound is obtained farther back. Ideally, therefore, a microphone should be placed in the vicinity of that central seat instead of over the conductor's head or in the orchestra itself. Placement should be modified by the individual requirements of different halls, and determined by the acoustic design of each hall.

Recordings should be chosen with an awareness of the microphone placement used in making them. London has done some good work in this line. There are other recordings available with depth and distance of sound, but the labels do not usually report this information. The listener must listen and choose for himself. Here are some typical examples:

Manuel de Falla—*Three-Cornered Hat*, ballet.

London LL 598: Distance, especially of voices, good at moderate volume.

Urania 7034: Close-up, especially voices, must be played at high volume.

Mozart—*Flute Concerto No. 1*, K. 313

Mercury 10056: Close-up, very good at high volume level.

Vox PL 8130: More distant; can be played softly—good.

Tchaikovsky—*Swan Lake* (complete ballet)

London LL 565/6: An excellent recording with depth, which can be played at moderately low volume level for best results.

Mussorgsky-Ravel—*Pictures at an Exhibition*

Mercury 50000: Also an excellent recording, but must be played "at full room volume" for best results.

Note: Other Mercury 50000 series records are in this category. Vanguard record labels give the same instructions.

JAZZ

Continued from page 34

broadened a bit to include research into early recordings; but the atmosphere of weighty dedication which hung over this restricted district was enough to frighten anyone but the most valiant hobbyist. Obscure recordings of the early 1920s were being sought out and fought over with a passion that bordered on the pathological.

At this time, two quite serious enthusiasts carried on a running battle for two years in the little magazines devoted to jazz. It concerned the presence of either one of two clarinetists in a recording of the early 1920s. Before the discussion had come to an end, each expert had said some pretty nasty things about his brother *aficionado*. The dispute was finally arbitrated when a third expert unearthed the fact that the musician concerned was probably a third clarinetist whose name had not been brought into the debate up to that time. These sandpile tiffs naturally discouraged many

Continued on page 97

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C. G. Burke, New TRENDS IN AUDIO
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JAZZ

Continued from page 94

persons from an interest in jazz.

This, too, was the time when many "experts" took their cue from jazz musicians whom they had met, and modestly disclaimed any but the most primordial relationship to jazz. "It would be pretentious on my part to say that I discovered jazz," one of them wrote, "but I can claim to be the first to have paid serious attention to it." This is sheer ego, and if one were to total the ergs of ego applied to jazz in the 1940s, one could have moved the mountain to Mahomet.

A third manifestation of the period was a controversy that arose as to relative merits of "traditional" and "contemporary" jazz. So far as it is possible to determine at this fairly safe distance, the bitterness seemed to center more about the reputations of critics themselves than about merits of the music involved.

What had happened was that many younger New York musicians, surfeited on a critical diet of "pure New Orleans," had decided to strike out for themselves and experiment with the forms of jazz. Publicists seized on the experiment, dubbed it "bebop" (after the onomatopoeic figure sung along with the music), and used it as a tool to dislodge from Parnassus the older, more established New Orleans musicians and their coterie of press agents without portfolio. It was inevitable that this skirmish would be called the "Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns," and it was.

No great satire comparable to Swift's "Battle of the Books" emerged from it, although shafts were aimed by almost everyone at almost everyone else. It was like all of Ireland against the rest of Ireland. If there was any parallel at all to Swift's "Battle," it occurred when Louis Armstrong, like Aristotle who aimed at Bacon but hit Descartes, sent an arrow at Dizzy Gillespie but hit *Metronome* magazine. The whole mock epic came to a delicious conclusion when American name-calling (rival camps had split into groups derisively known as "Mouldy Figs" and "Sour Grapes") got translated into French as "*Figues Moistes*" and "*Raisins Aigres*," and by mere carry-over to the sound of an academic language, the embroglio was endowed with an austerity that echoed the ancient "*Guerre entre les Anciens et les Modernes*" of Paris, 1688.

The 1940s also saw the formation, along lines distinctly different from those of the battle array drawn up for the "*Guerre*," of legions of overeducated young intellectuals, who, having tired of existentialism or Kierkegaard, took up jazz. Sometimes they took it up without ever having tired of anything; they merely added it to their repertoire, and along with Kafka and Sartre, Joyce and Picasso, jazz moved into the neat little drawing rooms dotted with Eames furniture. It became something one had to know something about.

And this, too, gave rise to a minor sort of industry. To establish that one knew something about jazz, one could, on almost the shoestring of an I. Miller sandal, start a small record company. So the late 1940s

Continued on page 98



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JAZZ

Continued from page 97

saw the burgeoning of no less than 50 labels devoted to such lofty ends as "preserving the best of jazz," "re-recording the ancients," or "making better recordings of the moderns." This industry has been persistent, although it has its ups and downs, and the vari-colored labels come and go, leaving in their wake a shattered romance here ("my girl left me when I turned down Bunk Johnson and went in for Thelonious Monk on Ultra-Sound") and a dented pocketbook there ("when we got the bill for mastering, we had to hock our Toulouse-Lautrecs").

What does it all add up to? We think it means that our bewildered hypothetical, the "individual" who might have been refreshed by the vitality that is in jazz, has been shortchanged by a lot of shoddy manipulators. Admittedly, some of this has been his own fault; conditioned by conservatory attitudes toward a different music with a gaudy history, he has failed to do any exploring on his own initiative. He has been too easily discouraged, perhaps, by the experts who flip their galluses. But this is hardly a reason for giving up, if the music has anything to offer.

It is our belief that it does. The fact that cults, experts, and chi-chi have surrounded both Joyce and Picasso has not prevented any one who cared to from reading *Ulysses* or enjoying exhibits of Pablo's progress. This, I think, gets us to what we should really like to see happen: a clearing of the air, so that an interested music-lover may be able to find his way into jazz, without recourse to its mythology, expertise, or downright commercialism. None of these parasitic phenomenon derive from the nature of the music, and they certainly have tended to obscure it.

They will be divorced from the music only when it is finally understood that neither flag-waving nor snobism, panegyrics nor elegiacs, can make anyone like jazz. Then the need for a softer approach will become apparent. Could anything hasten this day? Possibly. Much of the chaos of jazz has stemmed from the lack of any secure backing of research in the field. Up till now, private persons have born most of the expense of searching into a past that has been, as we have shown, bequeathed orally. As a result, jazz scholarship is in a seedy state. Too often the research has been biased by needs for self-glorification. The need is for some unemotional research, no matter what idols it may topple as it progresses.

And out of this comes another, and final need, the need for jazz to be described objectively. This is a "critical" passage written by an apologist for jazz: "It is as if a group of travelers through our musical history had collected everything of true value from New Orleans to the present and, by an extraordinary process of selection and purification, had been able to leave behind all that was ephemeral and redundant on the way, and finally by an act of grace, had been able to bring forth, as their own innermost experience and creation, a series of new variations which gave personal depth

Continued on page 100

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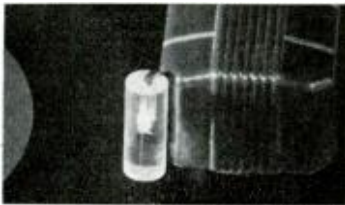
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MUSIC FESTIVALS

Continued from page 87

HELSINKI (Finland) June 10-18
General Content: Orchestra concerts.
Repertoire: Music by Sibelius and other contemporary Finnish composers.
Participants: Helsinki City Symphony; Finnish Radio Symphony. Conductors: Nils-Erik Fougstedt, Jussi Jalas, Tauno Hannikainen, and guests.

STRASBOURG (France) June 11-20
General Content: Orchestra concerts; choral concerts; chamber music; organ music; contemporary music.
Repertoire: Haydn's *The Creation*; Mozart; Debussy; Spanish pre-baroque and baroque music; Schmitt's *Psaumes*; Bach; Vivaldi; Daquin; Respighi. Contemporary music; Shostakovich's *Tenth Symphony* (premiere); Messiaen's *Le Reveille des Oiseaux* (premiere); American contemporary composers. Ravel memorial concert.
Participants: Orchestra of Radio Strasbourg; Strasbourg Municipal Orchestra; Choir of Strasbourg Cathedral; Chorus of Saint-Guillaume; Florence Chamber Orchestra; Madrid Symphony. Conductors: Fritz Münch, L'Abbé Hech, Ataulfo Argenta, Dimitri Shostakovich, Vlado Perlmutter, Loewenguth Quartet. Soloists: Maurice Duruflé, Janine Michaux, Rita Gorr, Gérard Souzay, Jean Girardeau.

Continued on page 100

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MUSIC FESTIVALS

Continued from page 99

HOLLAND June 15-July 15

General Content: Opera; orchestra concerts; choral music; chamber music; recitals; ballet drama; art exhibitions.

Repertoire: Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (La Scala production with Giulietta Simionato, Dora Gatta, Carlo Badioli, Sesto Bruscantini, and Mario Petri; Carlo Maria Giulini, conductor); Verdi's *Otello* (with Ramon Vinay, conducted by Josef Krips); Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (conducted by Mr. Krips); premiere of an opera to be named, conducted by Alexander Krannhals; Bach's *B Minor Mass*.

Participants: Hague Residentie Orchestra (conducted by Leonard Bernstein, Carlo Maria Giulini, Otto Klemperer, and Willem van Otterloo); BBC Symphony (conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent, with Clifford Curzon as piano soloist); Netherlands Radio Philharmonic (conducted by Paul van Kempen and Daniel Sternefeld, with Wilhelm Backhaus as piano soloist); Rotterdam Orchestra (conducted by Eduard Flipse); Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra (conducted by Karl Muenchinger); Netherlands Chamber Choir (conducted by Felix de Nobel); Netherlands Bach Society (conducted by Anthon van der Horst); Théâtre Nationale Populaire de Paris (in Molière's *Don Juan* and Beaumarchais' *Le Mariage de Figaro*); Nederlandse Comedie (in Sophocles' *Elektra*); Sadler's Wells Ballet; Holland

Festival Piano Quintet; I Musici; Amadeus Quartet; Orchestra of La Scala in Milan. Singers: Gré Brouwenstijn, Eleanor Steber, Greet Koeman, Scipio Colombo, Arnold van Mill, Frans Vroons.

GLYNDEBOURNE (England) June 10-July 27

General Content: Opera, instrumental music. **Repertoire:** Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*; Gluck's *Alceste*; Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Busoni's *Arlecchino*; Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

Participants: Graziella Sciutti (Rosina); James Pease (Don Giovanni); Sena Jurinac (Elvira and Ariadne); Leopold Simoneau (Ottavio); Anny Schlemm (Zerlina); Benno Kusche (Leporello). Conductors: Vittorio Gui (*Barber*); Georg Solti (*Don Giovanni*); John Pritchard. Staging: Carl Ebert; Peter Ebert (*Arlecchino*). Virtuosi di Roma (concerts on Easter weekend).

LAUSANNE (Switzerland) June 15-30

General Content: Ballet.

Repertoire: (not yet decided)

Participants: (not yet decided) Guest companies.

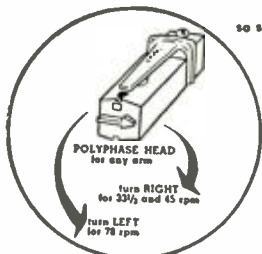
ARLES (SE France) July 1-11

General Content: Opera; ballet; drama.

Repertoire: Opera; Bizet's *Carmen*; Gounod's *Mireille*. Drama: Racine's *Andromaque*; Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*; Daudet's *L'Arlesienne* (with Bizet's music).

Participants: (no details)

Continued on page 102



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JAZZ

Continued from page 98

and shape to the whole tradition of the past."

It deserves to be placed alongside a passage by another writer, a man who has shown himself sympathetic to music, but who has never played fortissimo on his typewriter when the score called for pianissimo: "Lucia began to sing, and there was a moment's silence. She was stout and ugly; but her voice was still beautiful, and as she sang the theatre murmured like a hive of happy bees. All through the *coloratura* she was accompanied by sighs, and its top note was drowned in a shout of universal joy.

"So the opera proceeded. The singers drew inspiration from the audience, and the two great sextettes were rendered not unworthily." Thus does E. M. Forster, in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, tell us of opera in Italy.

A day may come when reports about jazz would be filed as simply. In the meantime, perhaps the very best way to know jazz would be to listen to it.

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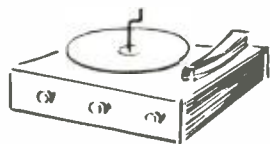
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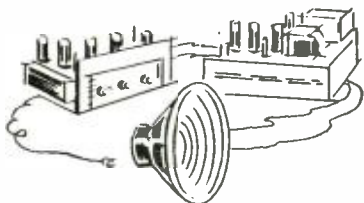
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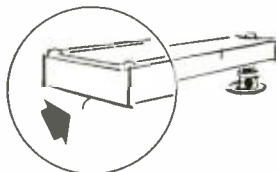
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MUSIC FESTIVALS

Continued from page 100

VERONA (N. Italy) July-August (exact dates not fixed).

General Content: Opera and drama (open-air performances).

Repertoire: (not decided)

Participants: (ditto)

AIX-EN-PROVENCE (S. France) July 10-31

General Content: Opera, instrumental music.
Repertoire: Open-air performances in the Val d'Enfer of Gounod's *Mireille*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and The *Abduction from the Seraglio*, and Henri Sauguet's *Les Caprices de Marianne* (premiere).

Participants: Conductor: André Cluytens.

BAYREUTH (Germany) July 22- August 22

General Content: Wagner operas; instrumental music.

Repertoire: *Tannhäuser* (Gré Brouwenstijn, Herta Wilfert, Ramon Vinay, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Ludwig Weber or Josef Greindl; conducted by Igor Markevitch, staged by Wieland Wagner), July 22, 31; Aug. 3, 8, 15, 19. *Lohengrin* (Birgit Nilsson, Astrid Varnay, Wolfgang Windgassen, Hermann Uhde, Josef Greindl, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau; conducted by Josef Keilberth, staged by Wolfgang Wagner), July 23; Aug. 1, 7, 16, 20, 22. *Parsifal* (Marthe Mödl, Ramon Vinay, Hans Hotter, Ludwig Weber, Gustav Neidlinger, Josef Greindl; conducted by Eugen Jochum, staged by Wieland Wagner. *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Astrid Varnay, Marthe Mödl, Herta Wilfert, Maria von Ilovsay, Georgine von Milinkovic, Rita Streich, Hans Hotter, Toni Blankenheim, Erich Witte, Gustav Neidlinger, Paul Kuen, Ludwig Weber, Josef Greindl,

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ADVERTISING INDEX

MUSIC FESTIVALS

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Ramon Vinay, Wolfgang Windgassen, Hermann Uhde; conducted by Clemens Krauss, staged by Wieland Wagner; First Cycle, July 24, 25, 26, 28; Second Cycle, August 10, 11, 12, 14. Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, conducted by Wilhelm Fürtwängler. *Participants:* Bayreuth Festival Orchestra and Chorus; conductors and singers named above.

SALZBURG (Austria) July 25-August 30
General Content: Opera; orchestra concerts; chamber music; ballet.
Repertoire: Weber's *Der Freischütz* (July 26, 30; Aug. 5, 16, 28); Mozart's *Cosi Fan Tutte* (July 29; Aug. 2, 8, 15, 22); Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Aug. 3, 6, 10, 13, 18); Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Aug. 7, 11, 14, 19, 24); Rolf Liebermann's *Penelope* (Aug. 17, 20, 23, 27). Twelve orchestra concerts, three with soloists; seven chamber concerts; four ballet evenings; five morning concerts; one performance of Mozart's *Mass in C Minor*; six secular and four sacred choral programs; six performances of Hugo von Hoffmannsthal's morality play *Jedermann*.
Participants: Conductors: Karl Boehm, Guido Cantelli, Wilhelm Fürtwängler, Hans Knappertsbusch, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Bernard Paumgartner, Edwin Fischer. Staging: Herbert Graf, Oscar Fritz Schuh, Margherita Wallmann (choreographer).

MENTON (SE France) August 3-15
General Content: Chamber-orchestra concerts; chamber music; recitals.
Repertoire: Bach, Vivaldi; contemporary composers.
Participants: Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Karl Münchinger. Soloists: Gérard Souzay, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Isaac Stern, Wilhelm Kempff and Pierre Fournier (piano and cello sonatas).

LUCERNE (Switzerland) August 7-29
General Content: Orchestra concerts; chamber music; organ music.
Repertoire: (no details)
Participants: Philharmonia Orchestra.

MUNICH (Germany) August 12-September 9
General Content: Opera; orchestra concerts.
Repertoire: Bavarian State Opera performances of Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Elektra*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and *Arabella*; Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and *Die Meistersinger*; and Hans Pfitzner's *Palestrina* (in the Prinzregenten Theater) and of Strauss's *Capriccio* and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Cosi Fan Tutte*, and *Don Giovanni* (in the Theater am Gärtnerplatz). Two festival concerts; second (on Sept. 8) a Strauss memorial program.
Participants: Bavarian State Opera. Conductors: Robert Heger, Eugen Jochum, Joseph Keilberth, Rudolf Kempe, and Hans Knappertsbusch. General director and régisseur: Rudolf Hartmann. Conductor for Strauss memorial program: Erich Kleiber.

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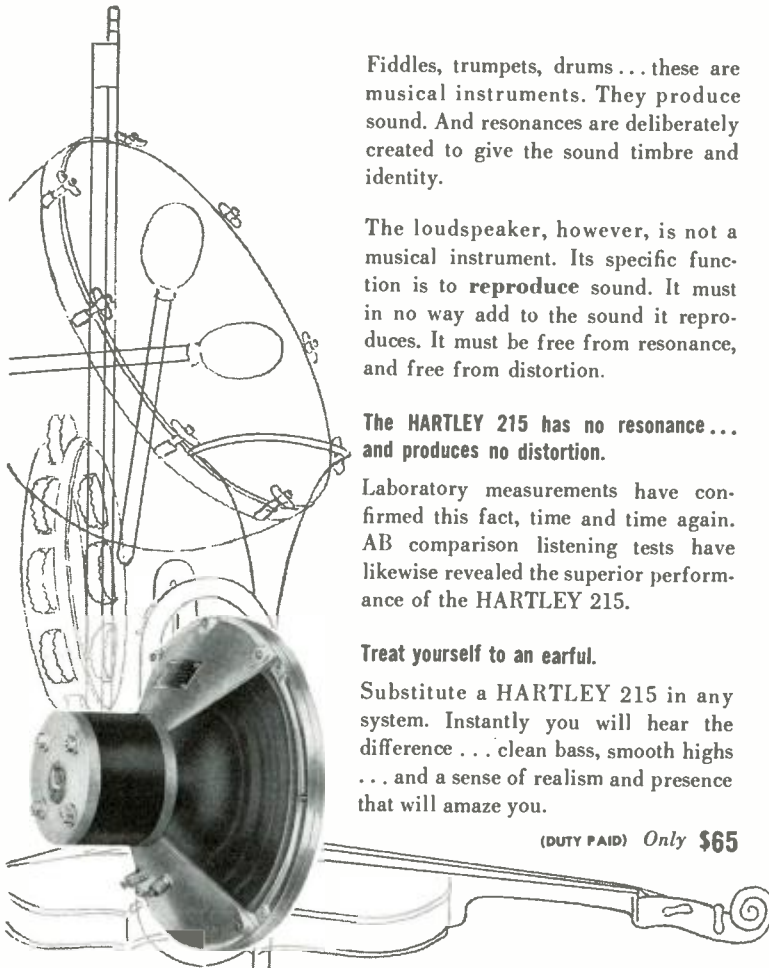
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MUSIC FESTIVALS

Continued from page 103

EDINBURGH (Scotland) August 22-September 11

General Content: Orchestra concerts; opera; ballet; recitals; drama.

Repertoire: Glyndebourne Opera productions of Rossini's *Le Comte Ory*, Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte*, and Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*. Production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (with Mendelssohn's music.)

Participants: Orchestras: Danish State Radio Orchestra (conducted by Erik Tuxen, Thomas Jensen, and Paul Kletzki); Northwest German Radio Orchestra (conducted by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt); Hallé Orchestra of Manchester (conducted by Sir John Barbirolli); Philharmonia Orchestra (conducted by Herbert von Karajan); Scottish National Orchestra (conducted by Karl Rankl); National Youth Orchestra. Soloists: Caludio Arrau, Artur Rubinstein, Andrés Segovia, Isaac Stern. Zurich Collegium Musicum (conducted by Paul Sacher). Jacques Quartet; Amadeus Quartet; Hungarian Quartet; Kehr Trio.

BESANCON (E. France) September 2-12

General Content: Orchestra concerts; chamber music; sacred choral music; ballet.

Repertoire: Pre-baroque, baroque, and romantic music; Russian and Spanish music; contemporary French composers.

Participants: Orchestre de la Radiodiffusion Française; Orchestre de la Société des Concerts de Conservatoire; Agrupación Coral de Pampelune; Jubilee Singers. Conductors: Eugene Ormandy, Ataulfo Argenta, Charles Munch, Josef Krips, Wilhelm Fürtwängler. Paris Opéra Ballet. Soloists: Artur Rubinstein, Nathan Milstein.

VENICE (N. Italy) September 10-25

General Content: Opera, contemporary and classical.

Repertoire: (no details yet)

Participants: (no details yet)

BERLIN (Germany) September 18-October 5

General Content: Orchestra concerts; opera; operetta; drama; art exhibitions; chamber music; recitals.

Repertoire: (no details yet; general and inclusive)

Participants: (no details; many, many, many, from all over international landscape)

NOTED WITH INTEREST

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haywire as I fear, upon first look at this scramble, I will be up to spread it out on your living room floor. I think I was intrigued by the idea of the two chassis (plural). That should dilute the main body of confusion. What the devil gets wrong with a guy that he wants to be constructive. This is for your information, and for the world at large. Best Wishes, Ed."

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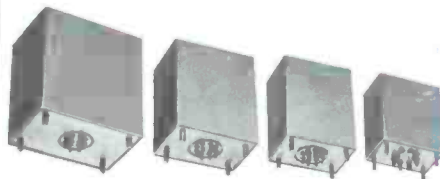
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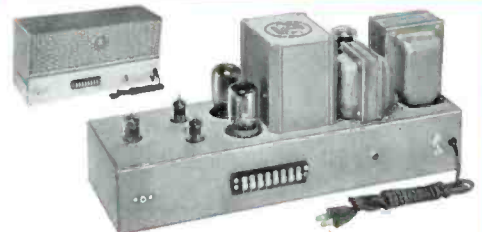
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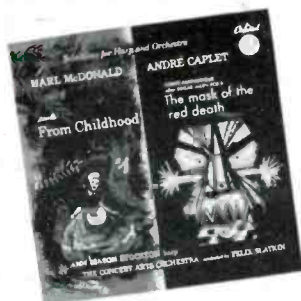
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