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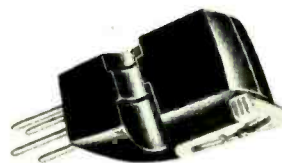


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volume 11 number 3

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Claire N. Eddings, The Publishing House
Great Barrington, Mass. Telephone 1300

New York
1564 Broadway, New York 36
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10 East Huron St., Chicago 11
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- Where Sound Sounds Best** 30 Eric Salzman
Wooden pilasters in Vienna can affect the sound you hear in your living room.
- Toscanini in Stereo** 40 Jack Arthur Somer
A report on electronically reprocessing the Maestro's discs.
- The Mixture That Is Milhaud** 42 Edward Lockspeiser
A close look at France's prolific composer.
- Sometimes Look Beyond the Stars** 44 Alan Wagner
Opera wouldn't be opera without its guards, messengers, and ladies-in-waiting.
- Do Re Mi Marks a Record Marathon** 10 Shirley Fleming
Overtime labors produced the tape of Broadway's latest success.
- Notes from Abroad** 18
Dispatches on doings in Hanover, Paris, Bucharest.
- Music Makers** 51 Roland Gelatt

EQUIPMENT

- The Hobbyhorse Still Rocks** 29
An editorial.
- Cabinets for Components** 34 Norman Eisenberg
Advice and counsel on housing the nude component.
- Low Budget Formula for Component Housing** 97
Follow Doug Climenson's example and do-it-yourself for \$126.
- Equipment Reports** 47
Eico HF-89 Dual 50-Watt Power Amplifier
Garrard Type A Automatic Turntable
Fairchild 500 Integrated Arm and Cartridge
DuKane Ionovac Speaker
- High Fidelity Newsfronts** 95 Ralph Freas

REVIEWS

- Feature Record Reviews** 53
Toscanini in "Electronically Reprocessed" Stereo.
Vivaldi: The Four Seasons (Baumgartner, et al)
- Other Classical Record Reviews** 55
- The Lighter Side** 75
- Jazz Record Reviews** 85
- The Tape Deck** 91

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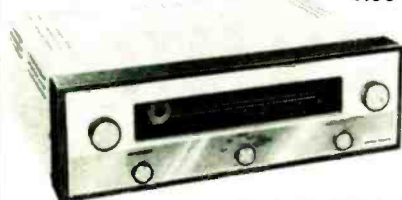
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AUTHORitatively Speaking

Regular readers of the *New York Times's* music columns are noting more and more frequently of late the by-line of Eric Salzman. They no doubt deduce that another bright young critic has entered on the musical scene. They deduce quite correctly. Mr. Salzman, still a safe distance on the near side of thirty, started training for his present career a good many years ago, beginning with violin lessons at age seven and going on to piano studies and private classes in musical theory and composition. (How he managed on the side a high school varsity letter in basketball, we don't know—but it's a fact he did.) An A.B. from Columbia, graduate work at Princeton, and a Fulbright Fellowship for study in Rome followed. Also teaching. Also conducting. Also performing. And writing about music and musicians, of course. This month Mr. Salzman gives us (p. 30) a disquisition on recording halls here and abroad.

Jack Arthur Somer, whose "Toscanini in Stereo" appears on p. 40, holds at RCA Victor the post of administrator for audio coordination. A graduate of CCNY with a degree in mechanical engineering. Mr. Somer was previously employed at RCA's Indianapolis development laboratories. When he could manage to extricate himself from the fascinating experiments going on there (and we all know scientists' devotion to duty), he acted in his spare time as assistant to Edwin Biltcliffe, director of the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir. As a matter of fact, Mr. Somers has had a more than casual interest in music ever since he started taking piano lessons as a small boy: he himself is now giving private instruction to several adult beginners and, together with a fellow Victor staff member, is engaged in composing a three-act opera.

London-born Edward Lockspeiser, author of "The Mixture That Is Milhaud" (p. 42), has made his reputation largely as an authority on French music, especially the work of Debussy. (In recognition of his services in this connection he was made in 1948 an Officer of the French Academy.) His latest book will be published in this country next year, to coincide with the Debussy centenary. Mr. Lockspeiser is also known as composer, conductor, author of *The Literary Clef*—an anthology of the writings of French composers from Berlioz to Satie, and lecturer. Recently he visited the United States to speak at a number of Eastern universities.

Our frequent contributor Alan Wagner (his current appearance in these pages is as author of "Sometimes Look Beyond the Stars," p. 44) claims that nothing new has happened to him recently. The changes in his existence, he writes, are more of degree than of kind. (Being all in favor of a quiet life, we think this is fine.) Mr. Wagner now bears a more imposing title at a New York advertising agency; he finds that these days his radio program on WNYC consumes more and more of his time; and he suddenly is being forced to recognize that a younger generation challenges his musical authority; son David, now going-on-three, listens willingly only to Bach. Mr. Wagner is an *aficionado* of the opera. Everybody has his own problems, we guess.

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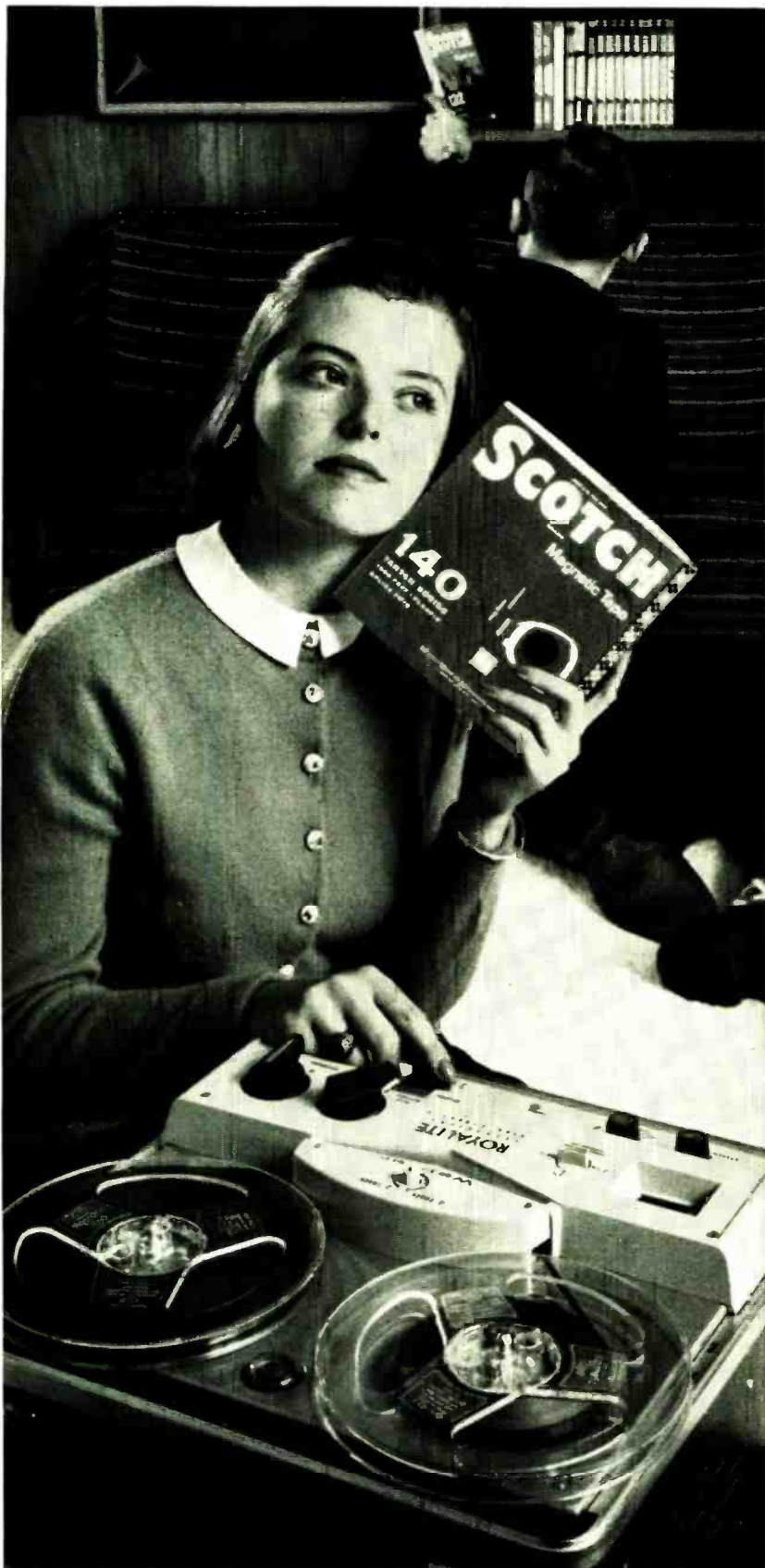
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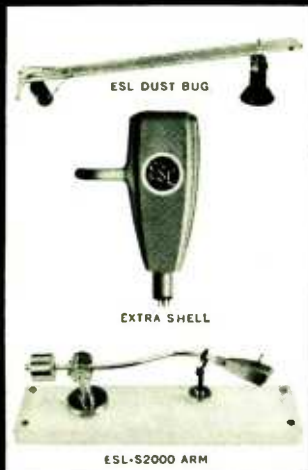
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power; balance; bass channel A; bass channel B; treble auxiliary 1, auxiliary 2); mode (mono A, stereo, mono B); equalizing speaker outputs. At full rotation will completely filter. Balance Control for cut off sound from either speaker. Circuitry, 2 germanium diodes, 3 silicon diodes. Power Requirements 105-120 volts AC, 50-60 cps; 12-28 volts DC for battery operation.

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Do Re Mi Marks a Record Marathon



Phil Silvers

An eighteen-hour work day put Broadway's hit on tape.

RECORDING a brand-new Broadway musical comedy while it is riding the crest of the raves is, I am sure, an event unlike any other on earth. The session usually takes place on Sunday, and the principals may find themselves still in the hall when the sun comes up on Monday, especially if the completed album must, by previous commitment, go on sale in the stores on Wednesday morning. Such was the timetable for RCA Victor's recent taping of *Do Re Mi*, and the eighteen hours of takes and retakes (with a meal or two interspersed) demonstrated that the show must not only go on . . . but on and on and on.

Do Re Mi is the story of an inveterate bungler named Hubert Cram (Phil Silvers) who decides that his chance to make big money lies in the jukebox racket. His wife Kay (Nancy Walker) has been through this sort of thing before, and although what she really wants to do is open a dry-cleaning establishment, she is with Hubie to the end. For the recording session, Silvers and Miss Walker were scheduled for afternoon and evening; lesser lights of the cast were on hand much earlier.

It was ten A.M. when Lehman Engel, dean of Broadway conductors, beamed joyfully at his orchestra assembled in the intensely pink ballroom of the Manhattan Center on West 34th Street, lit a six-inch cigar, and gave the downbeat of the overture in a cloud of smoke. In the adjacent room (which is, on more prosaic occasions, a bar) the engineers had set up three huge speakers and an elaborate array of tape equipment; seated near the control panels, flanked by technicians, was the show's composer, Jule Styne (*The Bells Are Ringing*, *Gypsy*), a compact, well-tailored man in his fifties who is known for driving energy and a sense of determination that brooks no contradiction. "This session is going to be the devil," an RCA man confided to me. "Styne's a real stickler." Which proved

to be no exaggeration—the overture required, in all, fourteen takes before the balance of inner voices and the behavior of the trombones were worked out to the composer's satisfaction.

Meanwhile, as the morning progressed, the control room began to fill with others responsible for Broadway's newest hit. Lyricists Betty Comden and Adolph Green appeared (*The Bells Are Ringing*, *On the Town*, *Wonderful Town*), the former cool and imperturbable, the latter looking rather like a character from *Great Expectations* (in spite of the proficiency with which he occasionally performed an absent-minded soft-shoe routine off in one corner, or sat by the speakers conducting intensively to himself, never still for a moment, eyes squinted against the trailing smoke of a perpetual cigarette). The producer, David Merrick (*A Taste of Honey*, *Becket*, *Irma La Douce*), alone and watchful, paced between the ballroom and the engineers' encampment, as much a veteran of the show as any member of the troupe by virtue of having traveled with the company during the entire six weeks of the out-of-town tryouts—a somewhat unusual procedure but one in keeping with Merrick's reputation as one of the most astute backers in the business. "Phil Silvers wanted to come back to Broadway, so we cast around for a show for him," was his explanation of how it all began.

The first of the leads scheduled to record was John Reardon, a tall, athletic baritone who has worked his way from musical comedy into opera (at New York City Center) and back again. Reardon vaulted onstage and began a love song titled *Make Someone Happy* with an ease belying the fact that he had been singing Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* only a few months before. A grueling series of retakes on his three solo numbers

Continued on page 12

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stretched well into the afternoon, after which he and Nancy Dussault did a rousing duet called *Fireworks*. Sinking onto a nearby trunk full of electric cables, Mr. Reardon was heard to moan, "This puts *Götterdämmerung* in the shade."

By midafternoon the chorus had checked in, clad in everything from toreador pants to silk sheaths, Edwardian suits to turtle-neck sweaters. Lehman Engel was still irrepressible, having changed shirts three times and cigars perhaps half a dozen; he made several vain inquiries as to "who has the adrenaline concession around here?" but his own energy was obviously far from depleted. Members of the orchestra who weren't called upon to play had several quiet, high-staked draw-poker games in progress at tables around the edge of the dance floor, and in the control room the engineers hadn't budged since lunchtime.

The chorus got to work, and later Phil Silvers of the inimitable slouch and wagging shoulders shuffled in. He was soon on stage with Nancy Dussault, rasping out a strapping number called *Ambition*, hat pushed to the back of his head, arms outstretched in a wide embrace of the empty rows of the balcony, glasses reflecting darts of light to the rear of the house. Jule Styne, at his post near the controls, was still implacable, calling for better balance with the orchestra, better diction, "more drive, more excitement." unperturbed by Silvers' protest, during a playback, that "I'm tearing my throat out for you, man."

And so it went, into the night. By the time the show's costar, Nancy Walker, came on with a menacing solo called *Waiting, Waiting*, it was nearly midnight. Most of the onlookers had gone home, and the poker games had long since given out. Lehman Engel was wearing his fourth shirt, and composer Styne looked as impeccable and unwrinkled as when he had sat down some fourteen hours earlier. By four A.M. the last song was recorded, and an RCA engineer went off to the company's Twenty-fourth Street offices to make the tape-to-disc transfer. Another musical marathon had been won.

SHIRLEY FLEMING

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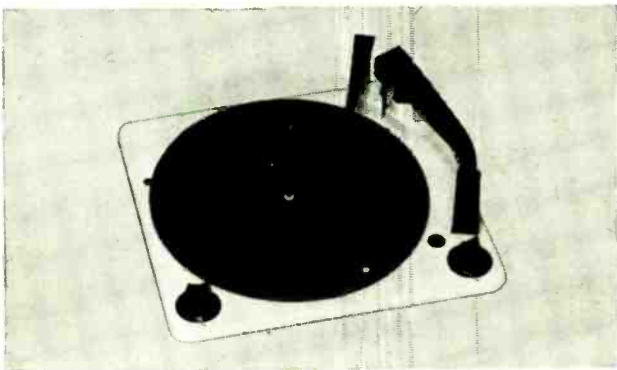
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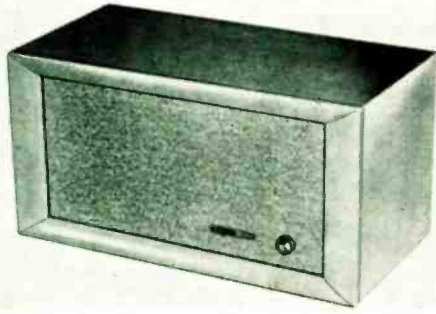


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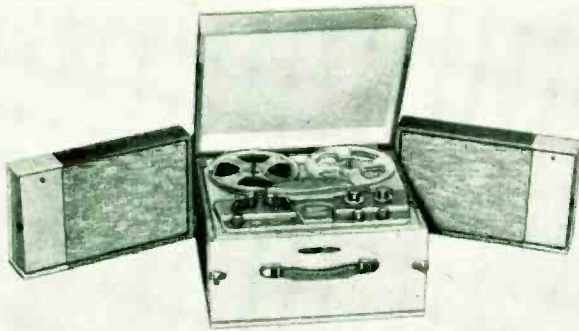
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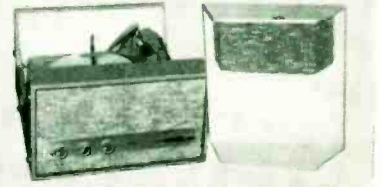
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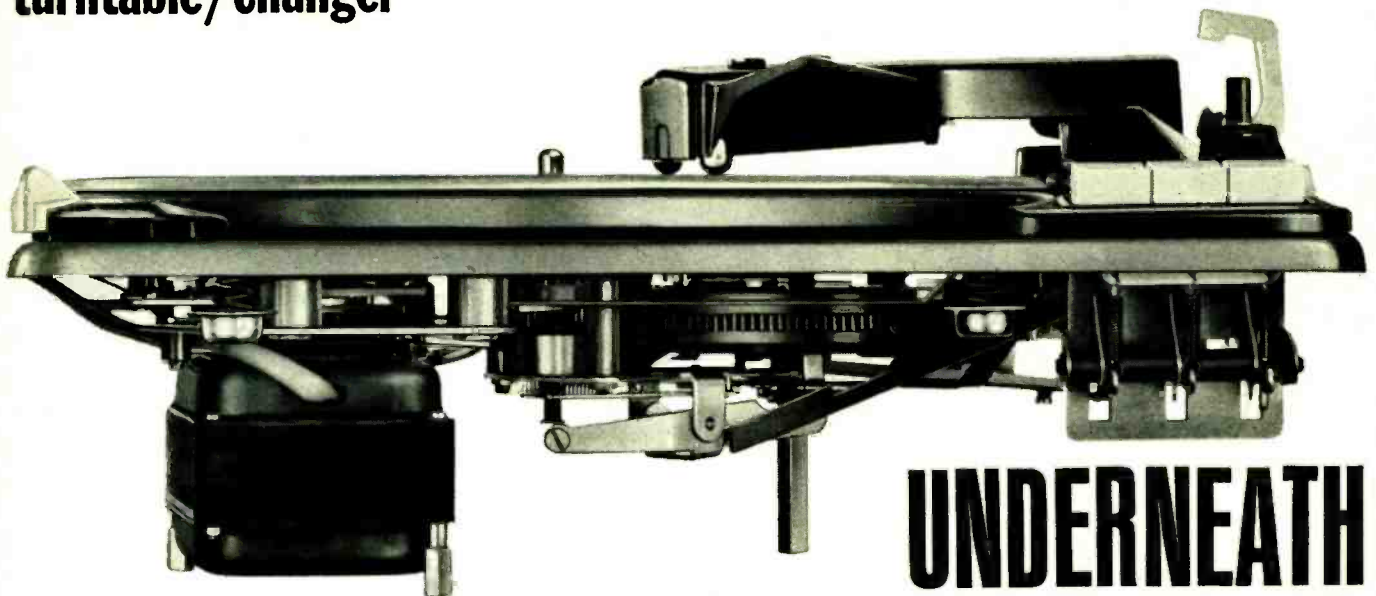
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Notes from Abroad



HANOVER—This city of more than half a million people looms large in the history of the phonograph. Emil Berliner, inventor of the disc record, was born here, 110 years ago. Today, Hanover retains its importance among the phonographic centers, thanks to the large factory of Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft.

I arrived at DGG's offices at a propitious moment. Tapes of *Elektra*—recorded in Dresden under Karl Böhm, with Jean Madeira, Marianne Schech, and Fischer-Dieskau—had just been edited and I was able to hear the complete performance. It seemed to me that both from the musical and technical point of view a far better job had been done than with the company's *Rosenkavalier* of a couple of years ago.

When Richard Strauss, many decades ago, rehearsed *Elektra* with the Dresden orchestra, he interrupted the musicians right after the very first bars to say: "Gentlemen, I should like you to play more softly in spite of what I wrote in the score. I made a number of mistakes when composing this music. My dynamic marks are far too loud." Karl Böhm enjoys telling this story, and it seems to have had a salutary effect upon the way in which this new *Elektra* has been played and recorded.

Gavazzeni Dreams. Another opera I listened to at DGG came from Milan: *Un Ballo in maschera*, recorded at La Scala under Gianandrea Gavazzeni and including in the cast Antonietta Stella, Adrianna Lazzarini, Ettore Bastianini, and Gianni Poggi. His approach seems authentic, his rendering of the score full of zest. Yet the various takes showed that even an Italian conductor with a seemingly born-in knowledge of the correct tempo for every passage in Verdi's scores occasionally revises his ideas when he listens to a playback. One morning Maestro Gavazzeni arrived late for a recording session and announced that he wanted to repeat a passage from the second act done the night before. The engineers were surprised because on that evening Gavazzeni had seemed to be perfectly satisfied with the results. "Well," he explained, "you know that in my dreams I keep discussing all my problems with Toscanini. And last night Toscanini said that I should definitely play the passage much faster. I am sure he is right."

The recording technique applied to *Un Ballo* differs very much from that chosen for *Elektra*, with the stereo sound con-



Gavazzeni

veying considerably more illusion of a stage performance.

Fricsay to the Front. I also had a chance to hear the tapes of Brahms's Second Piano Concerto played by Geza Anda and the Berlin Philharmonic under Ferenc Fricsay, which is soon due for release. It is Fricsay's association with the Berlin Philharmonic and his leading position with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra that mainly account for DGG's choice of Berlin as one of its recording centers. Recently, Fricsay recorded three Beethoven's Seventh (with the Berlin Philharmonic) and Bartók's First Piano Concerto (with Geza Anda and the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra).

Berlin has also recognized Fricsay's leading position in the operatic field by entrusting him with the conductorship of *Don Giovanni*, which will be performed at the opening of the new West Berlin Opera House in September 1961. Further recognition has come from Salzburg, which turned to Fricsay when Karajan sulkily withdrew from the Festival: next July, Fricsay will conduct the first Mozart opera in the new Festspielhaus (*Idomeneo*).

Maazel, Markevitch, et al. Of Paris-made recordings I heard Ravel's *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*, taped at the Salle de la Mutualité in November 1960. Lorin Maazel is the conductor of the Paris Radio Choir, the Orchestre National, and an all-French cast. This, as far as I know, is the first attempt to record the "*Fantaisie lyrique*" by Ravel and Colette since Ansermet conducted it for a monophonic London recording in Geneva more than five years ago. The filigree music gains much by stereo.

Maazel is now in Berlin again, where he is scheduled to record Mendelssohn's Fifth, Schubert's Fifth and Sixth (with the Berlin Philharmonic), as well as César Franck's Symphony and *Les Eolides* (with the Berlin Radio Symphony). But DGG work in Paris continues at an undiminished pace. At the time of this writing, Igor Markevitch was making the *Symphonie fantastique* and a set of French overtures in the Salle de la Mutualité, and Gerard Souzay, accompanied by Dalton Baldwin, was recordings songs by Debussy.

And a Pianist. While I was in Hanover, I also attended a DGG recording session. From the control room next to the Beethovensaal came the sound of Chopin's *Revolutionary Etude* (Op. 10, No. 12). "Herr Vásáry is just listening to the playback," somebody whispered to me. I listened, respectfully, to the vigorous rendering of Chopin's old warhorse. Rather surprisingly, the twenty-seven-year-old Hungarian pianist is a small man

Continued on page 21



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OUTPUT: 7 millivolts

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CIRCLE 12 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

NOTES FROM ABROAD

Continued from page 18

whose shyness contrasts in a very marked manner with his energetic piano playing. Vásáry was not satisfied with what had been taped. He insisted that there was some unevenness in his fingerwork (which, by the way, I was unable to detect). So it was decided to try Op. 10, No. 12 again. All the Etudes of Op. 10 and Op. 25 were eventually included in the Hanover program.

Vásáry received his music education at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, but in 1951 was deported from the Hungarian capital to a small provincial town. "A guardian angel watched over me," he says. "Zoltán Kodály, the great composer, came to my rescue. He sent me the most precious, the most useful present—a piano, which enabled me to continue practicing."

A few years later Vásáry became again "acceptable" to the authorities and was even appointed to the faculty of the Budapest Academy. ("I am sure this was due to Kodály's influence.") In 1956, however, he left Hungary and went to Switzerland in order to study under the late Clara Haskil. With his first records, issued by DGG, his name became known in Western Europe and engagements for recitals in London, Berlin, and other cities followed. The present series of Chopin recordings should do much to make Vásáry better known in the States.

KURT BLAUKOPF

PARIS—Financial people say that the depression in the French record industry is petering out. Dealers in Paris are folding less rapidly. Manufacturers are talking about stability. This is, then, perhaps a good occasion to look again at the sickness of the last two years—and to hope that French record firms will be more adventurous than they have been lately.

There may be 1,500,000 phonographs in use in France, but one industry source told me recently that there are not more than a million worth counting. Competing for this market are four major companies (Pathé-Marconi, Philips, RCA-Decca, and Vega) and a dozen smaller ones. The latest catalogue lists 101 labels as French, although some of these are naturalized foreigners. Total production is now about 3,500,000 records a month. Prices, in terms of real wages, are at least 100 per cent higher than in the United States. Stereo has created mainly confusion and hesitation: monophonic discs account for 99 per cent of sales.

These are the main elements in the crisis. Obviously, too many people are trying to sell a luxury to too few. Why? Well, largely because too few were trying ten years ago, when the LP revolution arrived. At that time French record companies had not yet recovered from the war. Dealers had inventories to establish, and collectors were eager. So a rush started. Factories were built with more enthusiasm than judgment. So, in the winter of 1958-59, the bubble burst.

Continued on page 23



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CIRCLE 81 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

It Took Eleven Years and One Night to Design The World's Best Speaker System The New CITATION X by Harman-Kardon



Stewart Hegeman, Director of Engineering, Citation Kit Division, Harman-Kardon, Inc.

STEW HEGEMAN owns a big, old Charles Adams-type wood frame house in New Jersey. It has its disadvantages—but it's a rather special kind of house. The original high-ceilinged living room has been converted into a sound laboratory replete with morris chairs, the best testing equipment and Universal Coffematic machines. According to legend, Stew has coffee now flowing through his veins instead of blood—a concomitant of spending night after night searching for perfection in audio design. It was at this house, one night last summer, that the Citation X speaker system was born.

The antecedents of this story date back to 1949 when Hegeman first heard a Lowther driver. That was it; the beginning of a remarkable collaboration between this great American audio engineer—now Director of Engineering of the Citation Kit Division of Harman-Kardon—and the highly regarded Lowther company of England. Together, they created speaker systems which became classics: the original Hegeman-Lowther horn—the great "Grey Monster" with its top section of plaster of Paris and the Brociner Model 4 Horn.

Over the years, Hegeman and Donald Chave—head of Lowther—continued to work together. Ideas were exchanged; concepts discussed and explored. Independent lines of research into the perfection of speaker design were followed by both. Then came their meeting one night last summer—and the creation of Citation X—the culmination of 11 years of joint and independent research into speaker design.

Reflected Sound

DESIGNED IN THE CITATION TRADITION—the best regardless of cost—the new speaker system places no limits upon performance. It can perfectly reproduce the whole com-

plex structure of a musical composition without adding or taking anything away from the original performance.

The Citation X diffuses sound in a hemispheric radiation pattern—by a blend of direct and reflected sound. In creating this design, the precise process of what occurs in a concert hall has now been duplicated.

Audio engineers know that approximately 80% of the sound in a good concert hall is reflected from the ceilings, walls, etc. It is this mixture of direct and reflected sound that gives music its depth and dimension, its exciting spatial quality.

The Citation X achieves precisely this effect by distributing music on vertical and horizontal planes. Conventional speakers beam the sound at you on a horizontal plane—similar to automobile headlights. In stereo, this is akin to listening to the full orchestra through two holes in the wall. Replace the conventional speakers with Citation X and the wall disappears. *You are in the same room with the music.* There is no ping-pong effect; no "hole-in-the-middle." All of the music is there in all of its depth and dimension and reality. For the first time, the word "presence" has been made meaningful.

The Lowther Driver

THE BASIC ELEMENTS of the Citation X are the Lowther driver and the Hegeman enclosure design—a split, slot-loaded conical horn, with two 7½ feet sections folded within the enclosure.

The driver is a massive Lowther unit specifically engineered for the Citation system. It consists of four working elements:

- Direct radiation from front of cone.
- Radiation from the midrange "whizzer" cone which operates between 2000 and 7000 cycles.
- A stabilizer which places a damping load on the cone and acts as a diffuser and distributor of the very highs.
- Radiation from the back of the main cone which is directly coupled to the folded horn.

Features of the specially designed driver include: magnetic structure of anisotropic magnetic alloy (Ticonal G) which is the most efficient magnet material known today; usable frequency range of 20 to 50,000 cps; gap flux—17,500 gauss; total flux 196,000 maxwells; aluminum voice coil for increased high frequency efficiency; twin cone construction with foam plastic front and rear suspension; no distortion at crossover frequencies due to elimination of distortion producing LC networks.

The Horn

CONVENTIONAL HORN DESIGNS use an acoustic chamber to couple the diaphragm to the throat of the horn. In the Citation X, the chamber is removed and the driver placed directly into the throat of the horn. This eliminates the last resonating element in the horn configuration and results in absolutely smooth transfer of radiation between horn and driver.

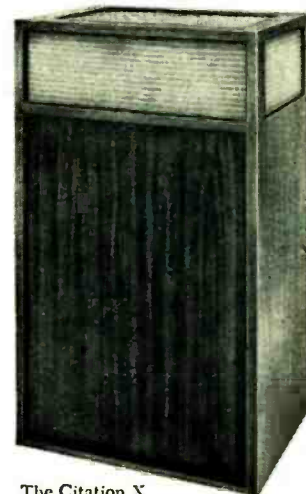
Instead of the conventional "open mouth," the Citation X horn terminates in a slot at the base of the enclosure. This presents the horn and driver with the impedance of an infinite horn. Thus, phase shift is reduced within the horn and room reflections are prevented from entering the horn's mouth and reaching the driver. Pressure loading by the horn damps completely the mechanical resonance of the cone and its suspension.

The interior of the handsome, hand-rubbed walnut enclosure is constructed of Timblend which has no directive resonance and is stronger than wood. The entire internal horn structure is honey-combed for strength and prevention of panel resonance.

For those who own Citation units—for all those who want perfection in speaker performance—we can recommend the Citation X without qualification. *The dimensions of the Citation X are 20" wide x 14½" deep x 36½" high—because that is the size necessary for the design of the world's best speaker system.*

The Citation X—\$250.00

Price slightly higher in the West. For complete Citation catalog write to: Dept. HF-3, Citation Kit Division, Harman-Kardon, Inc., Plainview, New York.



The Citation X
A Hegeman-Lowther Design

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CIRCLE 95 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

harman kardon

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

NOTES FROM ABROAD

Continued from page 21

Cuts and Clubs. Slashing prices would seem to be the indicated remedy, and it is being applied. Some of the companies, I am told, are even secretly sending new records to the second-hand stalls in the Flea Market. But there are economic limits to the cuts, and a curious psychological limit: apparently French collectors, used to thinking of records as luxuries, suspect defects when offered too good a bargain. Anyway, that is what Champs-Élysées dealers say.

Educating a larger public is perhaps a better approach, and it is now being tried with considerable success by Pathé-Marconi. Last fall the firm launched a record club, offering three discs for the price of one as a starter, bonuses to keep things rolling, and an illustrated monthly magazine. Standard classics and popular tunes are available, interpreted by Maria Callas, André Cluytens, Herbert von Karajan, Edith Piaf, Miles Davis, and other stars of the EMI empire. Retailers worried by this direct approach have been given a double reassurance: no record goes on the club list until six months after release, and none is kept on the list for more than six months.

At this writing the club has more than fifty thousand members. Most of the prospecting for subscribers has been done in the provinces, where well-stocked dealers are surprisingly rare. But this does not mean that Pathé-Marconi has romantic illusions about bringing music to art-hungry peasants. The best results have been obtained among students, shop girls, and small-town professional men.

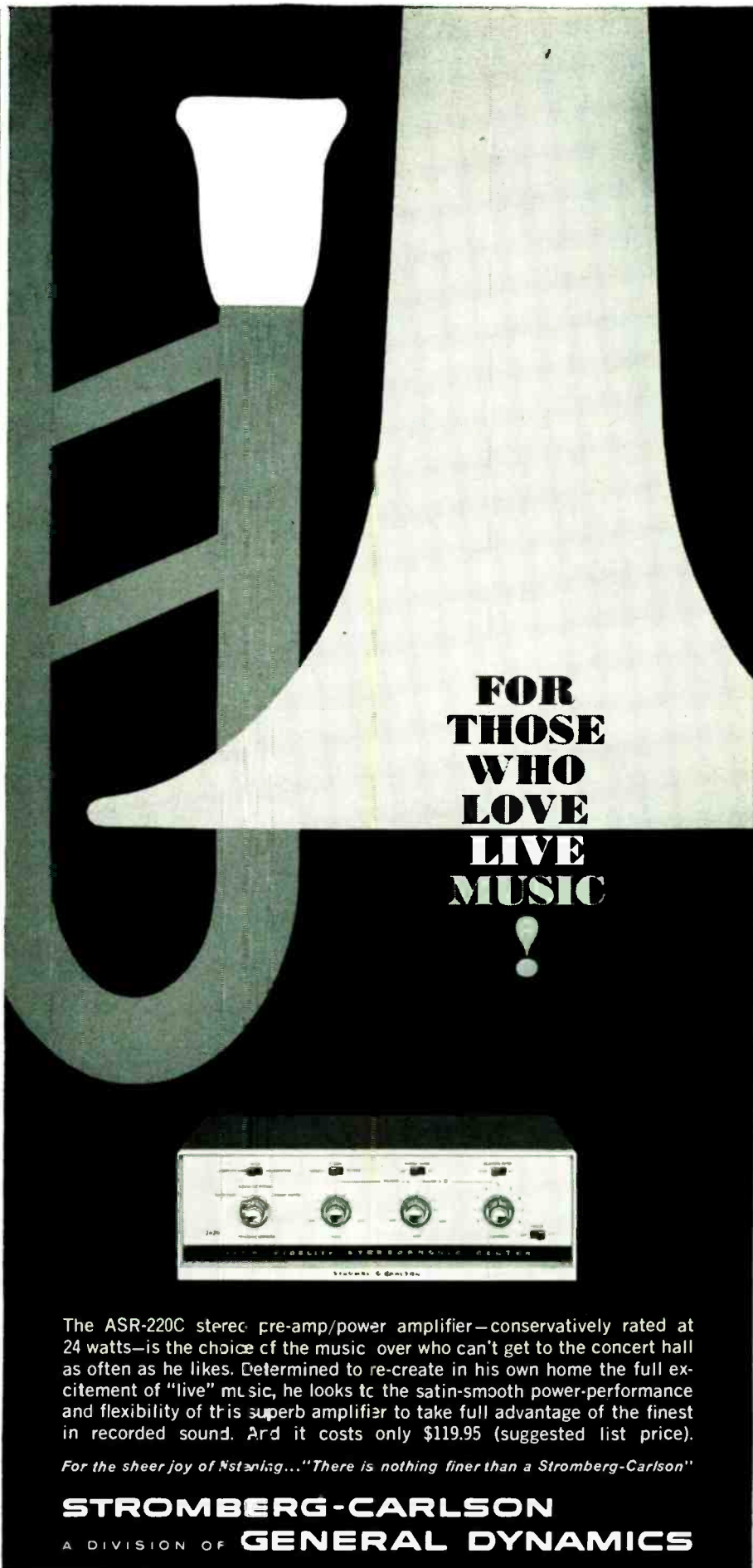
Collectors and Critics. My latest unscientific survey of French musical taste—as revealed by Paris record sales—has yielded only one surprise: Vivaldi, except for *The Seasons*, is slipping badly. Beethoven, of course, is still far ahead, followed by a slightly faltering Mozart. Bartók, Berlioz, Mahler, and Prokofiev are coming up fast. A record-lending library back of De Gaulle's palace has noticed that beginning listeners may jump from familiar Beethoven into an extraordinary enthusiasm for Bartók, with nothing in between. I don't know what this phenomenon means.

Vega, which has made a magnificent effort to record contemporary music over the past five years, thinks that new composers are part of the answer to the French crisis. The total public may not be large for new works, but it is apt to be faithful and there is little competition. The company has now passed the six thousand mark with its recording of Pierre Boulez's *Marteau sans maître*.


Do critics have any influence? Paris dealers are rather skeptical. "We sell legends," one of them told me. "People like pianists who die young, and sopranos who have love affairs." But this cynicism is not shared by everyone. Philips has found that serious reviewers who compare different recorded versions of the same work substantially affect sales.

Continued on page 25

MARCH 1961



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The ASR-220C stereo pre-amp/power amplifier—conservatively rated at 24 watts—is the choice of the music lover who can't get to the concert hall as often as he likes. Determined to re-create in his own home the full excitement of "live" music, he looks to the satin-smooth power-performance and flexibility of this superb amplifier to take full advantage of the finest in recorded sound. And it costs only \$119.95 (suggested list price).

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NOTES FROM ABROAD

Continued from page 23

Criticism that makes no comparative judgments is apt to be less influential.

ROY McMULLEN

BUCHAREST—Rumania is a fascinating dark-hued country where Europe stops and the East begins; where, except in the larger cities or the capital itself, time seems to have stood still ages ago: where huge herds of swine and buffaloes, the latter black and with quaint, curly horns, block the main highways as they are driven to their villages from the outlying fields; where, in Bucharest, a gypsy woman, nursing her child at her breast, sits at the steps of a splendid new concrete and steel housing block; where, along the sparsely traveled roads, the only signs are party slogans, encouraging the peasants and workers to more efficiency; and where the country people are of a generous warm heartedness (we occasionally asked for a mug of creamy buffalo milk, and never would a peasant accept money for it).

It may seem incongruous for Rumania even to have a record industry, but although the country is hundreds of miles deep in Eastern Europe, its cultural ties to the West—especially to Paris—remain strongly felt. Rumanian orchestras are a curious and attractive mixture of French and Central European, having a rather Austrian string tone balanced by a woodwind and brass texture distinctly Gallic in character. In Bucharest, the principal orchestra is the State Philharmonic, named after Rumania's greatest musical son, Georges Enesco; and it is a very fine orchestra indeed—not, perhaps, on the level of the Leningrad, Vienna, or Berlin Philharmonic, but only just below them. And Cluj—the second largest city, which was formerly part of Hungary and still has a large Hungarian element—boasts both a Hungarian Opera House and a Rumanian Opera House. Like those of other Eastern European countries, the peasants in Rumania are highly musical, and their unutterably sad, desolate folk tunes have left an indelible mark on all Rumanian music of today.

Rumania's Record Scene. The State Record Company, Electrecord, began to produce LPs in 1956; recordings had been made in Rumania twenty years before then, but mostly dance music and on a very limited scale. Officials of the company told me that the original LPs were technically inferior, and in the past years they have imported German, British, and Danish equipment to record, process, and press their records. This year Electrecord has begun to make stereo recordings (Beethoven's Ninth Symphony conducted by George Georgescu, works by Enesco), but since stereo playback equipment is not generally available, the stereo tapes are intended primarily for export.

Recently Electrecord has been making

Continued on next page

MARCH 1961

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The ultra-compact RS-501 two-way, high-compliance speaker system is built for music lovers who want the same tonal perfection, the same richness, clarity and realism that makes a concert-hall performance so memorable. The RS-501 features a specially designed long-excursion woofer. And this bookshelf-size speaker system measures only 13¾ x 18¾ x 13¾. \$59.95 (suggested list price). Available in beautiful decorator housings in a variety of finishes.

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CIRCLE 83 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Continued from preceding page

joint recordings with Supraphon in Prague and Erato in Paris; in Rumania, you can buy Furtwängler and Menuhin discs, the rights for which Electrecord leased from French HMV. The prices of records in Rumania are relatively cheap: for example, a 12-in. LP costs 46 Lei—a little over \$3.00. (There are half a dozen different rates of exchange in this country; I have used the one tourists get, which is considerably better than the official bank rate for businesses, and so forth.)

I was given a large number of records, and I also heard several test pressings (e.g., a magnificent performance of Enesco's Third Violin Sonata, with Enesco himself and Dinu Lipatti—an old tape which has been skillfully re-processed). On the whole, the technical quality of the records is far higher than I expected, and the performances I heard were all first-rate. There seem to be two star conductors in Bucharest, Georgescu and, of course, Contantin Silvestri, who is known to the West through his EMI recordings. All save one of the Electrecord discs of classical orchestral music I heard were conducted by Georgescu.

Beautiful and Sad. On the folk-music side, Rumania has more to offer than almost any other European country. The peasants' agelessly beautiful, deeply poignant melodies have fascinated musicians ever since Bartók began giving them more than local circulation. The Rumanian Folk-Lore Institute (in whose offices I spent an enthralling morning) has issued, via Electrecord, a series of twelve-inch LPs covering Rumanian folk music ("*Culgere de Cintece Rominești*") and to hear this music, which varies from heart-rending sadness to almost hysterical gaiety, is an experience no music lover should miss. Some of the arrangements, I felt, derived from the night club; but others are straight from remote Rumanian villages where there has never been a radio or a television set to pollute the strength and purity of these ancient tunes. It is music close to the earth: it sings of birth, and love, and death; it conjures up the rich, black earth of Transylvania, and the neat white-washed houses, and the peasants after the harvest, drinking the new wine in the shadow of the ancient church. It tells of the icy north wind, moaning across the plains to Hungary; it tells of a race sad before they were born, "Because" (says one nursery song) "it is not a thing of joy to be placed on the earth." No wonder that the sick Bartók, looking at the beautiful hills of New England the last summer before he died, longed for the Rumanian villages. Eastern Europe is a tragedy in many ways, but out of its seething history has come perhaps the greatest folk music of our civilization.

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The ultimate test of a high fidelity system, then, is a direct comparison with the sound of the original instruments.

The moment of transition from live to recorded sound: AR-3 speakers and Dynakit amplifiers take over from the Fine Arts Quartet.

Such a comparison was made during the recent hi-fi show in New York City, when AR speakers and Dynakit amplifiers vied with the Fine Arts Quartet in a "live vs. recorded" concert. At intervals the Quartet stopped playing and allowed the hi-fi system to take over, using pre-recorded sections of the music, without missing a beat.

McProul, editor of *Audio*, reported: "We must admit that we couldn't tell when it was live and when it wasn't." The *Herald Tribune* referred to "awesome fidelity". Record reviewer Canby wrote: "My eyes told me one thing, my ears another." Freas, audio editor of *High Fidelity*, wrote: "Few could separate the live from the recorded portions."

After all of the trade jargon and esoteric talk heard at hi-fi shows, this was the real thing.

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Further information on these products, including a list of high fidelity dealers in your area who carry and demonstrate them, is available for the asking.

^oA complete high fidelity record playing system using the above components would cost about \$750. You may hear AR speakers and Dynakit amplifiers together (in these and other, less expensive models) at AR Music Rooms, on the west balcony of Grand Central Terminal in New York City, and at 52 Brattle Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

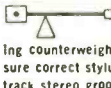











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KEY FEATURES	 <p>The only dynamically balanced tone arm on an automatic unit...with adjustable sliding counterweight, and built-in calibrated scale to set and insure correct stylus tracking force. Once balanced, this arm will track stereo grooves perfectly with precise specified pressure.</p>	 <p>Full manual position: The RC88 is a single record player as well as an automatic changer. At the touch of a switch, the tone arm is freed, and individual records (or bands) are played by hand.</p>	 <p>"Side/slide" controls—Select manual (single play) or automatic operation on separate halves of the unitized panel. Instantly the 210 is ready to play. Clearest, simplest controls on any record changer!</p>
	 <p>Full-sized, heavily weighted (6 lb.). Actually 2 turntables...a drive table inside, a non-ferrous heavy cast table outside; with a vibration-damping resilient foam barrier.</p>	 <p>The exclusive Garrard pusher platform—remains the only automatic device that insures positive, gentle handling of all records, regardless of diameter or condition of center hole, or the record surface or edges.</p>	 <p>GARRARD's 4-pole shaded "Induction Surge" motor with rotor dynamically balanced—a refinement not found in other record changers in this class. Insures constant speed with no hum or vibration.</p>
	 <p>New exclusive, completely shielded 4-pole shaded Laboratory Series Motor...developed by Garrard especially for the Type A turntable system. Insures true musical pitch, clear sustained passages without wow, flutter, or magnetic hum.</p>	 <p>Interchangeable spindles (manual and automatic). Have no moving parts to nick or enlarge record center holes. Records are lifted from turntable without interference, with spindle removed.</p>	 <p>Extra-sensitive stylus pressure control through instantly accessible knurled knob built into the cast aluminum tone arm, insures precise specified correct tracking pressure at all times.</p>
	 <p>The great plus feature of automatic play—without compromise. Garrard's exclusive pusher platform changing mechanism, makes the Type A fully automatic, at your option. Convenient, reliable, maximum protection for records.</p>	 <p>Exclusive cast-aluminum, true-tangent tone arm provides rigidly, low resonance, low mass. Light weight interchangeable plug-in heads accommodate cartridges of any make.</p>	 <p>The ideal Garrard changer to replace obsolete equipment in existing cabinets. Every part is built to Garrard's highest standards, yet it is so compact it will fit any record changer cabinet section.</p>

Write for your Garrard Comparator Guide, Dept. GC-21, Garrard Sales Corp., Port Washington, N. Y.

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The Hobbyhorse Still Rocks

REMEMBER the cartoon in which a breathless matron bursts into a room full of swizzled guests and martini-induced euphoria? "Dinner is ready," she announces, "What shall we do with it?"

Audio hobbyists are finding themselves in a similar quandary these days. "The system is installed," they are heard to complain. "Now, what do we do with it?"

Listen to music? Of course. But what about the tinkering, the loving installation of accessory refinements that kept us so busily and happily occupied a few years ago? In a sense, the manufacturers have taken that fun away from us. In the new stereo-inspired audio equipment, with its unprecedented control features and operating facilities, the need for further "nuts and bolts" activity is practically nonexistent. Another way of putting this is that the components produced today, unlike those on the market as recently as three years ago, largely anticipate the user's needs.

Such intricate operations, for example, as wiring a signal take-off to feed a tape recorder from an amplifier are no longer necessary; the connecting jack and associated circuits now come built in on most amplifiers, with simply one more switch on the control panel. Tone arms now are supplied with stylus pressure settings calibrated along the arm; in some, the pickup leads already are connected to signal cables, ready to be plugged into the amplifier. Leveling indicators, as well as the leveling adjustments, are showing up as standard equipment on more and more turntables. Built-in bias and balancing meters in amplifiers eliminate the need for connecting one's own meter to check critical circuits. In another area, the cut-and-try experimenting in fitting "naked speakers" into home-built enclosures has been obviated to a great extent by the integrated speaker system in which drivers, dividing network, enclosure, even grille cloth all are conceived and produced as an entity. Even less ambitious activities such as "making up" odd types of signal cables for special interconnection between components hardly seem worth the bother when, for a few cents, one can buy a length of cable prefitted with any combination of plugs, and stronger than any made at home.

Yet, despite the fact that many of the hobby aspects of audio have become passé, we believe that the hobbyhorse still is rocking, if in a different tempo and on a higher level. For one thing, there are any number of newcomers to the ranks. It is true that buyers today can simply put their money down and take home equipment far more sophisticated and advanced in design than was available a few years ago. Even so, how long before the new audiophiles start asking the old questions: why this? and how that? and can I get it to sound better?

Secondly, many of these questions have not been resolved—and cannot be, except in terms of the individual listener and his environment. Certain types of distortion, for example, still are not completely understood, particularly as they relate to the listening experience. One of the most challenging of these types involves the effect on sound—both in recording and playback—of the room itself, "acoustic distortion" if you will. Here indeed is virgin territory for the hobbyist to explore, from experimenting with speaker placement to experimenting with the room itself.

In another, though related, area there is a growing tendency towards integrating the high-fidelity system with room décor, by cabinets, built-ins, equipment housing, or room dividers. This suggests new discoveries and personal involvement for the hobbyist. It is a short step from kit building (and the rising interest in kits at all levels of price and performance suggests that the do-it-yourself movement is stronger than ever) to woodcrafting and allied arts. What has emerged, and undoubtedly will continue to grow, is a new understanding of how sonic beauty can be related to visual beauty.

Finally, and perhaps most important, the fidelitarian—active or passive—likely never will abdicate his "rule from the sidelines." He will maintain his prerogative of inquiry, and of criticism; and he will not stint his appreciation of new equipment and techniques.

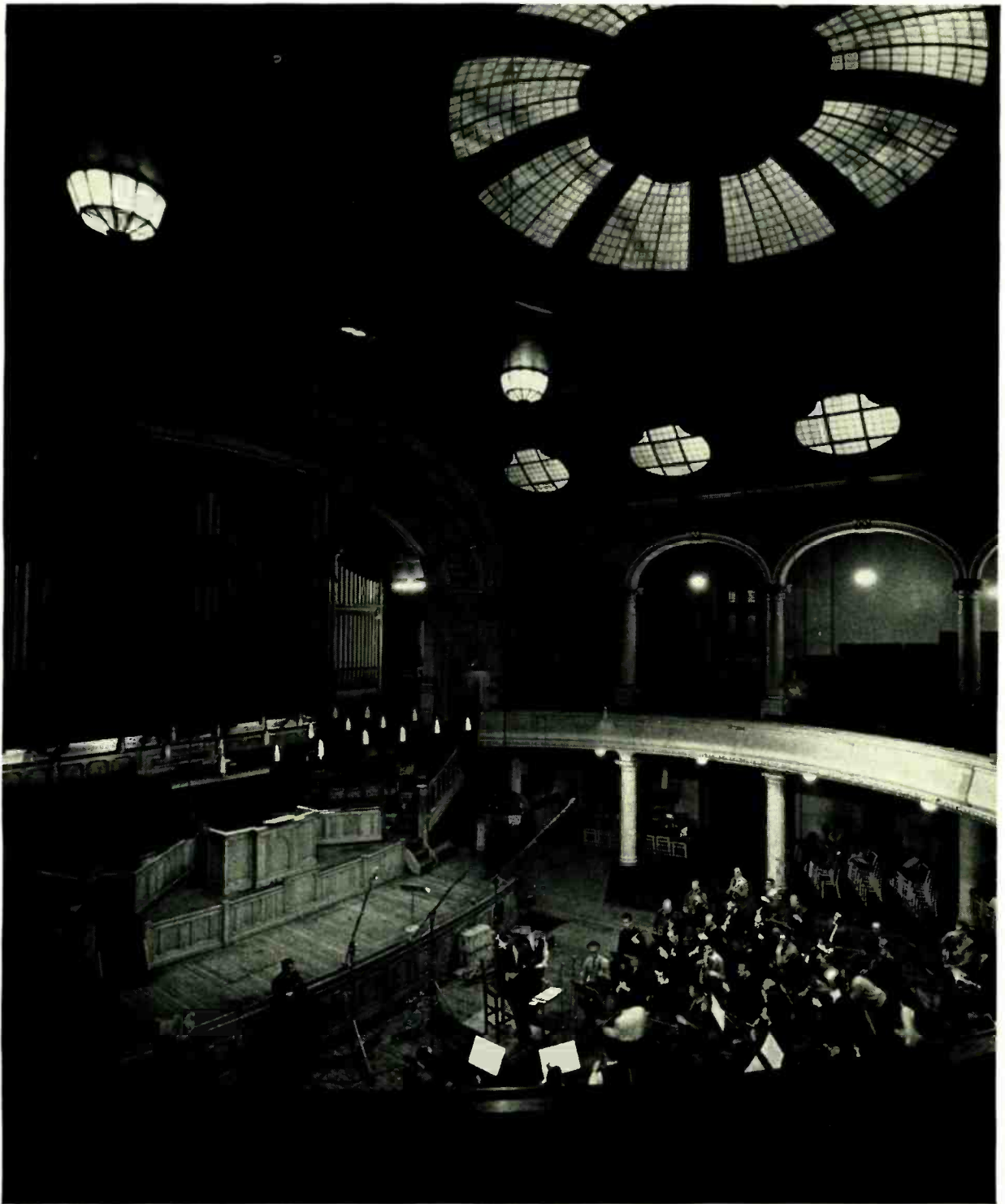
Aside from all this, what more is left for audio enthusiasts to do? Quite simply, to sit back and listen to their music. The prospect, we confess, pleases.

NORMAN EISENBERG

AS high fidelity SEES IT



WHERE SOUND



Kingsway Hall, photo by Hans Wild

SOUNDS BEST

A METHODIST MISSION HALL in London, an abandoned basilica in Milan, the lobby of the opera house in Brescia, a handful of faded ballrooms in New York and other American cities, an out-of-the-way chapel on New York's East Side, an old St. Louis beer hall—all have one thing in common: the making of records.

Good recording halls are hard to find. The industry's musical directors and sound engineers have searched everywhere from barns to ballrooms, clapping hands, firing pistol shots, and shouting across empty rooms in an effort to locate acceptable sites for their work. With every advance in sound reproduction—and stereo has compounded the problems—the choice of a recording location becomes more and more crucial. Hall acoustics can mean the difference between a genuine musical re-creation and an artificial imitation. The finest performance can be severely damaged if recorded in an acoustically inadequate auditorium.

Long ago, performers went to the studio—to the recording equipment. Engineers merely wanted musicians close enough to the horn so that something—anything—would be heard. Even after the development of better and more flexible recording equipment, the studio retained the advantages of convenience. Solo and chamber music are still often recorded in the studio, and it is the usual locale for pops recordings, where special effects may be desired and where artificial gimmicking is often introduced. But for orchestra, choral, and operatic music, the studio today plays a secondary role.

Aside from the fact that few studios have the space to accommodate large instrumental and vocal ensembles and that the older ones (and even some of the newer) are often inferior acoustically, the much-proclaimed ideal of "concert hall sound" led logically to the choice of actual concert halls for recording. Their acoustic properties are well known, and they provide comfortable, familiar surroundings for the musicians. The recordings made in Boston's Symphony Hall and in Chicago's Orchestra Hall serve as examples of the fine results that can be obtained in concert halls. Their use, however, is not without problems. Some have bad acoustics—the Royal Albert and Royal Festival Halls in London, the Salle Pleyel in Paris, and the Ford Auditorium in Detroit are notorious cases in point. Furthermore, since the microphone does not hear the same way

human ears do, a good concert hall isn't necessarily a good recording hall. The ear listens selectively; the microphone picks up everything, with brutal objectivity. Omnidirectional microphones in large halls reproduce reverberation that our ears (aimed forward as they are) and mental attitudes (trained to notice only what we consider important) note only slightly, while strongly directional mikes miss great areas of complex reverberations and make the hall sound drier than it would in concert. Conversely, a hall not accounted good for concerts may be excellent for recording. A first-rate concert hall must have even diffusion of sound through most of its area, but recording engineers need only as many choice listening spots as there are microphones.

Another significant difference between the sound of a hall for concert and for recording purposes relates to the presence or absence of an audience. Performers know of the vast difference in sound between an empty hall and a full one, and many a concert hall is not at its acoustical best unless full of people. And there are further difficulties in using established halls: they are engaged for other, conflicting functions; a rival firm may have exclusive use of the wanted hall; street and traffic noises (enormously magnified on recordings) may be audible inside—Carnegie Hall's subway rumble is a famous example.

These factors, complicated by the industry's growth (and need for quality reproduction), have triggered a search for adequate halls and forced engineers to face the very difficult, basic question—what makes a good hall good?

To understand the magnitude and complexity of the problems, consider the physical characteristics of a hall: size and shape of the stage; curve of the back wall; presence or absence of reflectors; construction of the roof above the stage; proscenium arch; size and shape of the hall itself, including the shape of the walls, roof, and floor; number and arrangement of seats, balconies, and boxes as well as the variety of materials used in each. Every surface reflects or absorbs sound; thus materials, shapes, construction, and even decoration is significant. Rococo curlicues on the boxes make a difference. Distance between surfaces means differences in reverberation and diffusion. Hall acoustics result from a fantastically complex interplay of sound waves reflected or absorbed by the myriad surfaces of the hall.

A tale of recording halls, and of why sound engineers
clap their hands—and turn gray early.



*In Vienna's Sofiensaal (above), where Johann Strauss used to conduct, Herbert von Karajan sometimes records with the Vienna Philharmonic. At left: the cast of poet Archibald MacLeish's Broadway success *J. B.* recorded under the massive chandelier of Webster Hall. Victoria Hall, Geneva (photo on the facing page) often serves as recording home for Ernest Ansermet and his Orchestre de la Suisse Romande.*

Today's taste in recorded sound—especially in stereo—calls for considerable reverberation with absorption held down. Among American firms particularly, clarity is achieved by close miking. At its best, this technique results in a lush, reverberant "aura" around a basically focused primary sound. In stereo, it tends to emphasize directionality rather than depth. European companies often place the microphones at a distance, to take more advantage of the hall's natural resonance. This procedure is coming into favor in this country, even though directionality is somewhat lessened thereby. The ideal for microphone placement has been defined as finding the point farthest away from the musicians where definition and clarity are retained. Beyond that point, sound tends to haziness and mushiness.

Add to these problems, the humidity, the temperature, and the temper of the musicians—all of which change from day to day and, with them, the resulting sound. The type of music, the style, the medium, the number and kind of performers, and even the performing style of the musicians should also be taken into account. What may work for a string

orchestra might be dreadful on a solo piano disc. What is clear and incisive for a percussion ensemble might be hideous for Italian opera. Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven might benefit from a drier, cleaner sound, while Debussy and Ravel would be better off with rich reverberance.

To top it off, the recording director's listening point makes a difference. The best location is usually considered to be the monitoring room, where the sound is supposed to be heard exactly as it will be inscribed on the record. The acoustics of the monitoring room then come into play, and they can differ greatly. They undoubtedly differ from the living rooms in which the music will be ultimately heard. The record buyer's impression of the quality of the sound will depend, of course, not only on his playing equipment, but on the acoustics of his own listening room.

Ideally, potential recording halls should be tested under actual recording conditions—with the performers in their seats playing the music at hand. But obviously, no one puts one hundred and ten musicians in a hall, only to decide—after a few

tests—that the place isn't really suitable. Even trial runs for minor adjustments are held to a minimum since a symphony orchestra's time is valuable from a number of points of view. Engineers have to rely on past experience, often gained through sad trial-and-error methods. Many a much-used hall has been sacrificed when technology and public awareness passed it by. In unfamiliar halls engineers depend on their ability to spot the likely qualities of the locale, abetted by some simple tests.

Old halls are generally more desirable than modern ones (this is true of concert halls as well). Perhaps they have mellowed with age. They often have much wood; desirable, since wood does not sop up sound or give the sharp, ugly rebound of harder materials. They have heavier, thicker walls, well settled and apparently less affected by climatic changes. More importantly, most older halls abound in columns, chandeliers, niches, friezes, and other forms of rococo ornamentation far more likely to produce even, rich sound or optimum reverberation than the starkness of a sleek modern hall composed of synthetic materials. Harold Lawrence of Mercury Records compares a hall to a speaker enclosure—both are frequency selective, and the gingerbread hall is most likely to have a smooth frequency response without peaks.

Hall-testing procedures are simple and limited. Talking and shouting at different distances gives some notion of clarity, and loud handclaps, sharp percussive noises, or even a pistol shot will reveal reverberation time as well as special disturbing echo effects—shatter echo (a kind of breaking-glass effect), ta-ta-ta-ta echo (repetitions of the sound fading away at distinct time intervals), and slap-back (a sharp split-second return of the sound). The most desirable kind of reverberation produces a very distinct kind of fade-out (technically referred to as decay), very fast at the beginning and then slow and steady.

Once the hall is chosen and musicians assembled, further tests are in order and many minor adjustments are made. Players are moved, curtains hung, and even temporary structural changes may be made. Dario Soria recalls, for instance, a fearful session at the Teatro La Scala in Milan when Victor de Sabata was recording *Tosca*. He drove everyone to tears (and close to financial ruin) by making the assembled orchestra and singers stand by while every possible modification of the hall was attempted. Seats were covered, curtains hung, boxes boarded up, and musicians shifted from one position to another for days before he was satisfied.

If the engineers are aware of the quirks of the hall, many adjustments can be made in advance. They have learned, among other things, that the best position for the musicians is often not the one normal for a concert performance. The space above the stage and the proscenium curtains seems to soak up sound aimed at the recording microphones and,

for some of the reasons outlined above, this seems more pronounced on recordings than in concert. Also, one hears on discs what is sometime described as the "room within a room" effect; the proscenium pushes the sound together and, in stereo, makes it appear to come from a single source. So out come the seats in the hall and the orchestra moves down from the stage. On the floor of the hall (either directly in the center, somewhat off-center, or directly in front of the stage—depending on the hall and the calculations of the engineers) the full reverberation of the hall comes into play, giving the much-prized richness and depth. This procedure, common nowadays, is often supplemented by completely closing the stage curtains.

There are variations. In the Munch recording of the Berlioz Requiem, chorus and soloists stood on the stage of Boston's Symphony Hall while the orchestra was down on the floor. In recordings of piano concertos, the piano has sometimes been placed on the stage in order to make it project over, yet blend with, the orchestra. In some cases, the orchestra has been divided between stage and floor—to get an antiphonal effect or to correct instrumental imbalances resulting from special acoustical problems of a hall. Orchestras have even been placed on the stage backwards, with performers facing the back wall and the conductor facing the drawn curtains of the stage. In this way, the large area above the stage can be a good resonator.

In the London recording of the final scene from Strauss's *Salome*, the orchestral sound would not blend properly with the voice of Inge Borkh. Either her soprano would soar above or be submerged by the masses of orchestral sound. Since the vocal sound should blend with the orchestral texture, someone finally hit on the idea of putting her right smack in the center of the orchestra. When, in the heat of a passionate delivery, she flailed out a bit, two music stands and a second *Continued on page 106*



C A B I N E T S



F O R C O M P O N E N T S

*A word from the wise on wrapping woodwork
around your watts and your Wagner.*

LITTLE MORE than a decade ago, the prevailing approach to housing audio equipment was decidedly that of the naked components school. Good fidelitarians frankly enjoyed living with their artifacts: an amplifier sat here, a control unit there—and wading ankle-deep in wires only heightened pride of ownership. If some disorder and early sorrow resulted, real high fidelity was worth it.

This point of view, of course, had its opponents, who believed that in the interests of domestic decorum high fidelity should be heard but not seen. With the coming of stereo—and its threat to preempt even more shelf, table, and floor space—the struggle between the let-it-all-show camp and the cover-it-all-up brigade became acute. The former naturally wished to avoid any resemblance to the consoles and package sets associated with low fidelity. More to the point, they were concerned with what

might happen to components when confined in cabinets that afforded inadequate ventilation, or whose dimensions precluded future expansion of the basic system, or whose structure made installation a chore or hampered its successful completion. Of what use is a cabinet, ran their argument, if it meant, for example, that the components would be so thoroughly “installed” that replacing a tube in the tuner could become a major problem in demolition? Yet the voice of those who held that a living room was intended for people to live in became more and more articulate.

One way out was the “built-in” or “entertainment wall,” wedging storage space and exciting design motifs into a dynamic, yet functional unity. It also inspired the subsequent variation, actually an abstraction of the wall, known as the “room divider.” A good many enthusiasts seized on this approach

to installing high-fidelity equipment, but for others the wall was simply too "way out." Aside from the fact that it jogged firmly established concepts in home décor, it also took considerable doing to be successful structurally, functionally, and aesthetically. What's more, it took considerable cash. And for people with unsympathetic landlords, the "music wall" was clearly impractical.

An alternate solution, charted when designers and craftsmen began seriously to relate timber to timbre, was a simple addition to home audio gear: the free-standing, self-contained equipment cabinet. As it has evolved recently from the casually conceived and mass-produced box to the precisely designed and hand-crafted custom job, the equipment cabinet has become something of a three-part invention.

One part is concerned with basic functions, and to the extent that any cabinet performs these functions, it may be said to qualify as a useful adjunct to a high-fidelity system. These functions, in the main, are: 1) housing and protection for equipment against harmful exposure and accidental damage; 2) assisting in the logical arrangement of components and thus facilitating their convenient use; 3) serving as an installation aid from the standpoint of proper functioning—specifically in the shock-mounting and leveling of turntables, the correct positioning of tone arms, proper orientation of components for minimum interference and spurious interaction such as hum pickup or heat transfer, and finally in providing adequate ventilation for critical units, particularly power amplifiers; 4) permitting removal of parts for servicing.

Obviously, a cabinet that fulfills these ends is not like any other piece of furniture ever devised. However attractive it may be to the eye, it must put function first. Without primary regard to its use as equipment housing, the cabinet fails or, at best, can prove very troublesome and frustrating to the unwary buyer.

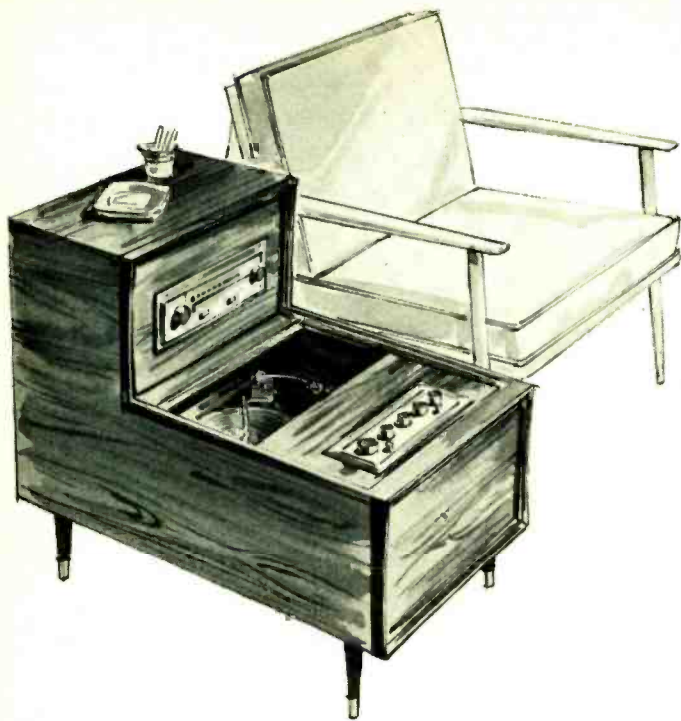
There are cabinets—and cabinets. One common type is a simple, boxlike affair with two doors, swinging or sliding, and one shelf, usually adjustable.

Actually, this is an "all purpose" cabinet of fairly uninspired design. Such a cabinet is likely to be shown in the furniture section of a large store as a "high-fidelity equipment cabinet" and in the music and record department as a "record storage cabinet." Strictly speaking, it is neither, although with some effort and additional cost it could conceivably be adapted for these functions. To use it as an equipment cabinet, the buyer has to supply and install the fitments for a record player, drill holes to ventilate the amplifier, and so on. For record storage it should be fitted with vertical partitions spaced about five or six inches apart so that the records will be held upright without undue pressure from one to another. (With this much do-it-yourself involved, one might as well design and build his own cabinet from scratch. Indeed, for an example of what one handy audiophile did with hand tools and material from the local lumberyard, see page 97 of this issue.) In any case, and leaving aside matters of appearance and possibilities for future expansion of the system—which may or may not be of importance to the individual buyer—the only appeal of the "general purpose" cabinet is relatively low cost. In fact if one is really economy-minded, something like an unpainted toy chest with a lift-up lid—and a sales tag of about \$20—can, with some effort, be made as suitable for installing equipment as the higher-priced "all purpose" cabinet. Most people will, however, feel that the housing needs of, say, a \$200 amplifier or a \$100 turntable and pickup, or a \$450 tape system are not quite the same as those of a set of building blocks, or a pile of linens, or a collection of potables.

The second part of the three-part invention to which I have referred involves a special aspect of cabinetry: the question of whether the housing is to serve as the final dress-up for the system, or, rather, as a frame into which the owner can slip different components and accessories as his taste dictates and his budget permits. Cabinet people who take their work seriously, striving for good design while meeting the requirements of good audio prac-



Wood grain and roughly woven cloth provide texture contrast for this finely proportioned custom-built cabinet. The turntable drawer lies above tape deck. (By Gray Sound Corp., New York City.)



The profile of this unique equipment cabinet reflects its "chair-side" function. Comfort is the keynote as a seated music listener selects the signal to be fed to the speakers placed on the opposite side of the room. (By British Industries Corp.)

tice, have their hands full with this problem. The engineering and aesthetics that come together to make for a successful design (in terms of structural, visual, production, and marketing factors) for one type of cabinet may not as often work for the other type. One obvious result is the availability of two distinct types of cabinets—one for a "permanent" installation, the other for the buyer who will probably change or expand his system. Another result is perennial talk of a "universal" unit, or cabinet system, that conceivably would satisfy the demands of all buyers. There are, indeed, some examples of ingenious attempts at such units. As a general rule, however, the prospective cabinet buyer would do well to formulate his own intentions before setting out on a shopping tour.

One thing to bear in mind—and which is assuming increasing importance to cabinet designers—is the changing face of audio components themselves. More and more, the operating and control panels of components are entrusted not to the engineer but

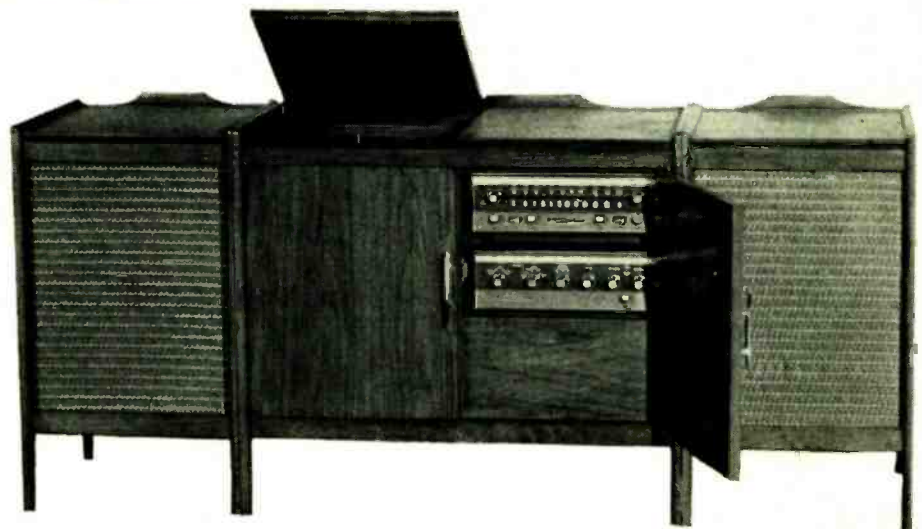
to an industrial designer. As a result, audio equipment has become visually more pleasing. This recent interest in design on the part of high-fidelity manufacturers has helped clarify the approach of furniture builders. Although some of the equipment cabinets offered ten years ago were attractive enough, they proved to be of limited use in monophonic systems and became wholly inadequate for stereo. Today, however, certain specifics are more apparent: there is, for instance, a definite trend away from the permanently fitted, cut-out front panel, thus permitting components to be changed or new ones to be added without radically altering the cabinet.

The designer who is himself an audiophile is particularly likely to keep in mind the needs of individual owners. Manuel Mundschenk, head of Artizans of New England, for example, has built a cabinet that permits the owner to install components correctly and handsomely, but with the option of changing things at will. The trick is accomplished by providing a sliding, removable mounting panel, as well as a generous amount of unmapped, but carefully contained, space. This approach does not attempt to solve the problem of what a given system ultimately will become; rather it permits the owner to solve it for himself.

The third part of the three-part invention involves the extra-audio aspects of cabinetry—style, finish, materials, structural features, price. Whatever its special functions as a new kind of cabinet intended specifically to house audio equipment, it remains also a piece of furniture and often a particularly conspicuous one.

The shop of custom designer Melvin Gray (Gray

This ensemble is available in kit form at a \$125 saving. The speaker enclosures are separate pieces intended to be relocated in the listening room for optimum stereophonic effect. (By Heath Co.)



Sound Corp., New York), for instance, resembles more than anything else the showroom of a fine cabinet maker—but of cabinets specifically tailored for audio systems. Gray, as a matter of fact, is one who holds that it is the cabinet itself which attracts many to quality sound in the first place. Often, says Gray, people now will think in terms of “furniture with music,” as the focal point of a room, rather than, as they once did, of a huge breakfront or credenza. And, he reasons, why not give them both good furniture and good sound? Of course, breakfronts or what-have-you can be fitted with components, but the piece designed especially for high fidelity is likely to be superior in every respect. One can have such refinements as removable panels for replacement or servicing of components, heavy-duty smooth-sliding tracks for tape decks or turntables, lift-up lids or doors that disappear into the sides of the cabinet, or—for those who must have the speakers in the same cabinet with the other equipment—specially treated compartments in which full-range, quality speaker systems in their own enclosures can be installed without danger of acoustic feedback.

Another, related aspect of the custom-made cabinet is that often wood may be used with other materials; tile or formica, for example, for attractive yet rugged surfaces. Or, as suggested by the well-known designer Paul McCobb, aluminum can be combined with wood for structural strength as well as a clean, uncluttered look. Again, the style may be related to certain almost metaphysical concepts. One example is the use of a glass case blended with a wooden structure (featured both at Gray and at Phillip Enfield Designs). The avowed intention here is that a “suitable setting” should be provided for quality components, which are, after all, “something of gems in their own way.” Precious as this may seem at first glance, it is a trend reflected widely in the use of clear plastic and plexiglass covers for changers and turntables.

These, of course, are only a few of the variations possible. The person whose inclination (and budget) permits a full exploration naturally turns to the custom designer, or to the producer who is both designer and manufacturer. Some cabinet builders can be approached directly by the prospective buyer. Others work through retail outlets or through interior decorators who serve as roving retailers and advisers. In a few cases, the same company's line is sold

in one city through decorators, and in other places by local furniture stores.

One of the well-known attractions of using a decorator to obtain high quality furniture is the anticipated discount, usually 40 per cent, from the manufacturer's “list price.” Of course, the decorator then adds a smaller percentage, generally 10 to 15 per cent, for the service. There is no fixed rule for the exact amount, nor for the important consideration of whether the decorator's percentage is based on the original list price or the discounted net price. Usually, this depends on the time and effort expended by the decorator, and many are unwilling to commit themselves in advance. In any case, knowing what percentages are involved, and how they are split, can make the customer a wiser shopper.

With established retail furniture dealers, where no decorator is involved, the pricing situation is even more tenuous. Some dealers will quote list price for a piece that can be obtained, elsewhere, for considerably less. Others are likely to offer some discount, perhaps 20 to 25 per cent, but rarely approaching the larger discount obtained by a decorator. They reason that they, in effect, serve the function of the decorator. With the relatively few component dealers who also can supply custom-made cabinets or the cabinets of a “prestige line” (such as Gray in New York, Kierulff in Los Angeles, etc.), there generally is less doubt, and less coyness, about selling prices. While substantially below “list,” their prices nevertheless must reflect the fact that they often serve dual roles, acting both as decorators and as audio consultants.

For the buyer willing to accept a production-line model, there are many perfectly suitable cabinets to choose from. To the extent that they fulfill the audio functions outlined above and meet the needs of the buyer's own music system and his taste in

This compact cabinet holds equipment for all program sources—tape, tuner, discs. The lift top protects the tape deck. Disc storage is behind door. (By Rockford Special Furniture Company.)



Grain and Tint, and Wax and Lac

ALL CABINETS are made of wood, but there are woods—and woods. Here, in descending order of average cost, is a rundown on widely used hardwoods, based on information supplied by trade sources.

Macassar (or Makassar) ebony, obtained from the dominion of that name in the Dutch East Indies, ranks as one of the choicest, most expensive, and most difficult-to-work woods. Next in order is rosewood. The Brazilian variety (also known as "palisander") boasts a richly figured grain and tends to run in alternating hues of deep orange-brown tones. Rosewood from the Indies tends towards more consistently darker hues as well as straighter grains.

Only slightly less expensive is teak, imported from Siam and nearby regions, and a Hawaiian wood known as koa. Both are excellent furniture woods combining strength with great beauty.

The most popular hardwoods group includes limba, walnut, and mahogany. Limba, which comes from a province in central Africa, bears the trade name "korina." Walnut, including many types that are called "imported walnut," is obtained mostly from our own forests, with a sizable bulk "imported" from the state of Indiana. A notable exception is French walnut; this genuinely imported variety is characterized by a figured grain described as "wide and wild."

"Mahogany" has become a catch-all term for woods of varying quality. African mahogany, one of the best furniture woods, is very similar to the mahogany obtained from Mexico and Honduras. On the other hand, Philippine mahogany is distinctly lower in quality; in fact, the lumber and furniture trades do not even regard it as real mahogany. An even cheaper imitation is made from Spanish cedar; this wood, familiar to many as the stuff of which cigar boxes are made, is also the stuff of which dreams are made since its grain resembles that of real mahogany. Over-all, however, the grain does not run as true, and unfortunately the wood itself is a comparatively

flimsy replica of the real thing.

Maple and birch, both native to the United States, are considered acceptable for cabinet work, though not as desirable as the stronger, more richly grained woods.

What makes one wood "better" than another? Among the factors are its resistance to moisture and warpage, its density, its imperviousness to damage, its tensile strength. These qualities are not the only hallmarks. Value in a furniture wood also is a matter of how it takes a finish, how it ages in use, and—to an extent—how scarce it happens to be or how costly it is to obtain it. Thus, teak is relatively inexpensive in Scandinavia, while it is almost a "premium wood" in this country. On the other hand, American walnut brings a fairly high price in Europe. Again, some of the new synthetic woods or pressed composition boards—actually made of scraps and waste—may boast greater strength than many natural woods, and yet cost much less simply because they have acquired no prestige value.

With few exceptions, furniture woods are not solid slabs of the basic natural types, but rather plywood sandwiches of which only the outer layer, or layers, and most always the edging, are made of the type of wood that lends its name to the entire piece. The best plywoods are the "lumber core" types which consist of lengths or "staves" of some fairly hard, white wood—usually poplar—covered with a thin layer or "veneer" of the hardwood in question. "Full-stave lumber core" describes the highest grade of plywood, in which the core is a series of two-inch staves, closely spaced, and running the full length of the panel. "Block lumber core" is composed of narrower staves, not as closely spaced, and not running the full length of the panel. Both types are highly warp-free and provide good stability, with the full-stave type generally superior.

"Veneer core" plywood does not use staves for its sandwich ma-

terial, but instead thin layers of fairly common wood, usually fir, that are bonded together and faced with a hardwood surface. The layers just under the surfaces, on both sides, are sandwiched in at right angles to the surface; this "cross-banding" lends strength to the board. This type of plywood comes in three-, five-, and seven-layer versions. The number of layers includes the cross-bands and the surfaces.

A new and relatively inexpensive kind of plywood is "flake board core," which uses as its core pressed composition board without any cross-banding. The virtues of this type stem not so much from the material used (generally scraps of fairly low-grade wood), but rather from the way in which it is put together. This plywood is usually faced on both surfaces with a hardwood veneer. Its high density, stability, and resistance to warpage recommend it for many uses, including the building of speaker enclosures. On the other hand, it is not as good for most purposes as the better grades of lumber core plywood, and is heavier and less impervious to punctures.

Finishes on wood are, of course, purely a matter of individual preference. They may have varying degrees of gloss, from the highly polished, almost reflective surface of varnish or lacquer, through the more satiny look of shellac, to the more subdued tones of wax, or the soft, natural look of oils. The last two finishes—which do little to the wood other than preserve it, darken it somewhat, and bring out its natural patina—are best used with quality hardwoods of distinctive grain, such as walnut and teak. An oil finish should be renewed periodically by rubbing in new oil (linseed or a recommended substitute). A practical advantage of an oil finish is its resistance to damage; usually a slight defect, such as a cigarette burn or a scratch, can be rubbed out with steel wool and then recoiled. Restoring a glossy finish generally requires professional services.

furniture, they too qualify as examples of the "three-part invention" that is the true equipment cabinet. A number of producers have entered this area; some (such as Furniture Craftsmen of Grand Rapids) distribute more or less regionally. Others (such as Drexel) sell more nationally. Some (such as Rockford) sell heavily in high-fidelity outlets. A list of such manufacturers is appended to this article.

Yet another aspect of the changing face of high fidelity is the entry into the furniture field by several component manufacturers, either as distributors for cabinets produced by other organizations, or with products made by their own facilities. Thus the new Audax/Omni units offered by Rek-O-Kut (which can serve as individual cabinets or as building blocks for room dividers and wall units); the River Edge line offered by British Industries (which features the handy chair-side equipment cabinet); the expanding lines recently announced by Heath; the new, striking cabinets and room divider systems sold by Allied Radio. While qualifying easily as housing for audio equipment, these units all show the influence of fine cabinet-making in styling and finishes. Similar advances are apparent in do-it-yourself furniture, from the preassembled but unfinished models (such as the new Stereocraft line) to the completely knocked-down, to-be-assembled kit available from a number of producers.

Related to the equipment cabinet is the record storage unit. With more, and bulkier, equipment being used, and more records being bought, many designers simply have given up trying to provide space for both equipment and records in the same cabinet. Conceivably, some of the space "left over" in many cabinets could be used for a limited number of records, but the collector whose library approaches the sixty to seventy mark (and no end in sight) would do well to consider some sort of record storage unit. Many types are being made, from skeletal units that display the records to furniture-

styled cabinets that file them away. One such line is offered by Kersting Manufacturing Company. A useful notion is served by the kind of record cabinet that can be expanded with a matching add-on unit. These are available in ready-made form as well as in kit form (from Lafayette and Radio Shack).

High-fidelity sound in a visually pleasing setting is now an actuality. The audiophile is finding himself as interested in details of cabinet structure, finish, joining, and so on as he has been in frequency response, distortion, and channel separation. In fact, the well-designed cabinet is itself something of a component—and certainly one that can contribute much to the pleasure of music in the home.

Descriptive List of Cabinet Manufacturers

Acousti-Craft, 14122 Aetna St., Van Nuys, Calif.—comprehensive line of equipment cabinets in various styles, sizes, and woods.

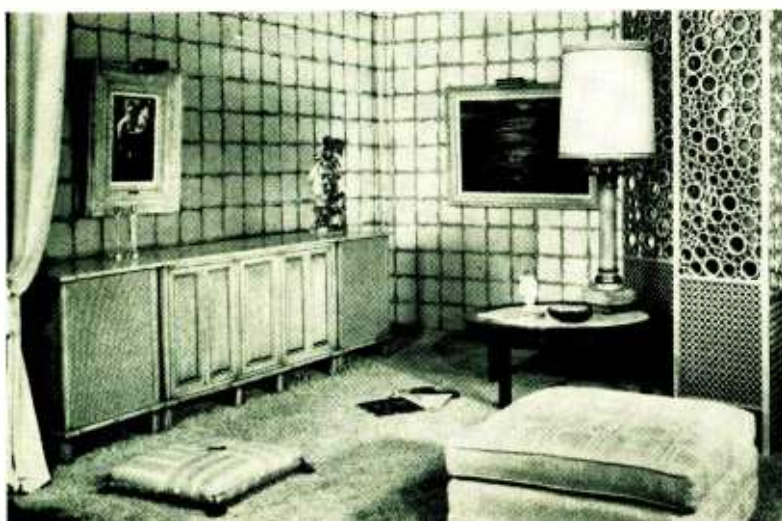
Allied Radio Corp., 100 N. Western Ave., Chicago 80, Ill.—same, including some in kit form; new shelf-cabinet line.

Aristo-Bilt Furniture Corp., 1107 Broadway, New York, N. Y.—ready-to-finish cabinets.

Artizans of New England, Box 206, Rt. 7, Brookfield, Conn.—comprehensive line, some in kit form, various styles, sizes, and woods.

British Industries Corp., 80 Shore Rd., Port Washington, N.Y.—new "chair-side" equipment cabinet; other River Edge

Continued on page 110



This Italian Provincial cabinet blends well with other decorator elements. (By Kierulff Sound, Los Angeles.)



A particularly handsome example of a kit-constructed cabinet. (By Artizans of New England.)

Toscanini in Stereo

**Through techniques of "electronic reprocessing,"
the Maestro can now be heard on two channels.**

by Jack Arthur Somer

EDITOR'S NOTE: It is no secret in the record industry that the sales of Toscanini recordings have fallen off appreciably in the past two or three years. This decreased interest in a unique musical heritage has been an unfortunate by-product of the increased interest in stereophonic reproduction. Toscanini's recordings are all pre-stereo. In 1958, however, RCA Victor embarked on a project to reprocess many of these recordings in a form having the essential characteristics of stereo. The story of the two and a half years' experimentation involved and the techniques finally achieved is told below by the engineer in charge. A critical evaluation of the three discs just issued appears on page 53.

ALTHOUGH I was born and brought up in New York City, I never saw Arturo Toscanini perform. I did, of course, hear his broadcasts with the NBC Symphony, and I think that even as a child I sensed the greatness of a man who was already a legend. It was not until a year after the Maestro's death, however, that I first came into close personal contact with his music. It was in the summer of 1958, as a development engineer in the Record Laboratory of RCA Victor Records, that I was assigned the formidable task I am about to describe.

One year after Toscanini's death, the stereophonic disc became a commercial reality. Stereo represented a significant technical advance, but it threatened to outmode a precious catalogue of recordings by great artists of the past unless means could be found to revitalize that catalogue by some kind of sonic updating process. Obviously, the recordings of Arturo Toscanini—all of them pre-stereophonic—were uppermost in our minds.

The job of converting many of Toscanini's celebrated monophonic discs to a form having stereophonic qualities fell to me—which meant producing a two-channel recording with different information in each channel, a recording possessing directional effects consistent with the music and having the spread, depth, and reverberant qualities typical of true stereo reproduction. It was of course quite clear to me and everyone else involved in the project that whatever reprocessing technique I decided upon would have to be revised for the music's sake: that is, that it would have to be a technical method flexible enough to adjust to the specific musical characteristics of any piece of music to which it was applied.

I followed the premise that the stereophonic effect is produced by two essential elements—direct and reverberant sound. In a true stereophonic (two-microphone) recording each microphone picks up some direct signal from all orchestral instruments, level and phrasing being dependent on relative distances from the instrumental source. The microphones also pick up reverberant sound, the quality of reverberation being dependent on the construction of the hall or studio, microphone placement, and other factors. Fortunately, symphonic orchestras in a concert hall are arranged according to fairly common patterns. A typical seating plan is shown in the accompanying diagram. This arrangement shows that the generally higher-pitched instruments are concentrated to the left and center and the lower-pitched instruments are concentrated to the right—a fact of considerable value to the recording engineer.

The duplication (or synthesization) of stereophonic recording from a complete single signal requires the following:

1. Means to divide the spectrum into high and low frequency bands corresponding to left and right channels respectively.

2. Means to accommodate deviations from or reversals of this division.

3. Means of dividing the spectrum without detriment to the total sound of the original.

4. Means to increase the spatial effect to resemble that of a true stereophonic recording.

5. A detailed knowledge of the musical score so that all its requirements may be anticipated.

The first experiments were pure groping on my part. A general principle of technique had to be discovered, then worked out in its practical applications. After playing with time-delay devices, echo chambers, and fixed filters, it became apparent to me that the use of variable filters had the most promising potentialities. I set up two filters in such a way that they divided the frequency spectrum of the music source at any frequency of my choice. I spent many hours "enjoying" split-frequency stereo performances and learning much about cut-off frequency and its effect on the tonal balance of sound.

By using a high-pass filter system on the left and a low-pass on the right, I could divide the original spectrum of a monophonic recording into two signals, each containing a large portion of the *fundamental* frequencies of the instruments I wished to place in these positions, according to my arbitrarily chosen orchestra seating plan. These early attempts were in general quite unsatisfactory, though some startling effects were produced when the cut-off was selected properly. I learned that simple fixed filters set at the same value resulted in very uncomfortable sonic balances. The right track became acoustically subordinate to the left because of its total lack of high frequency content. It became apparent that though the bass frequencies contribute the bulk of the energy in a wide-range signal, it is the mid and high frequency content that produces the effect of "loudness."

The next step was the addition of some "highs" to the right track, by means of a third filter. The addition of highs produced a remarkably satisfying effect. The increased "loudness" resulted with little increase in electrical energy (as viewed on a VU meter), and a large portion of the instrumental overtones were restored. Finally, the third filter made it possible for the first time to place some higher *fundamental* frequencies on the right track when such were desired.

This then became the basic working plan. With these three filter outputs splitting a full-range monophonic signal, the source could be monitored by an operator or stereo synthesist, following a score. By first establishing a positive pattern of instrument placement, the output level of each filter and its frequency of cut-off could be continuously adjusted to satisfy the requirements of the music.

To illustrate, the left track might contain all fundamental and overtones above 200 cps, the right

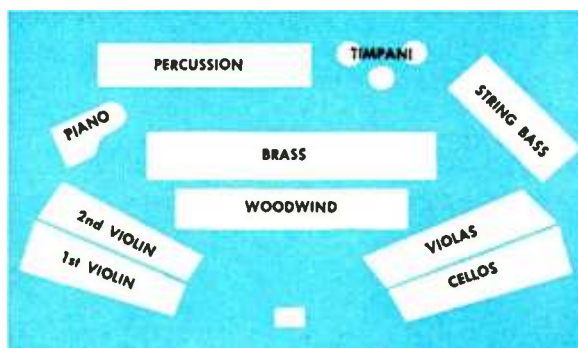
track all frequencies below 1,000 cps and above 3,000 cps. The left track, therefore, would project all instruments of the middle to upper ranges, including violins and higher winds, with all their overtones. The right track would carry the fundamentals and lower overtones of cellos and double basses, winds, brass, timpani, as well as their higher overtones. If enough overlap were maintained between the high cut-off on the left and the low cut-off on the right, a large portion of the fundamentals of the middle-range winds, strings, and brass could be balanced equally between channels, thus forming the so-called "phantom" center track.

At this point, however, there was still insufficient flexibility and too much frequency elimination. To fill in the gaps left by the filters, a full-range signal was added to each channel at a level somewhat lower than the filtered signals. In this way no frequency band was completely eliminated from either channel, but the spectrum shape of each channel could be continuously variable over an infinite range. The final step was the addition of a controlled low frequency signal on the left.

This variable frequency spectrum method enables an operator, fully acquainted with the score of the work he is converting, to manipulate these six signals to produce an effective simulation of a stereophonic recording. The essential elements of the original performance must of course be thoroughly studied, orchestral balances and dynamics respected. Obviously, the simplest passages to control are instrumental solos or light orchestrations with broad contrasts in instrumental ranges. In more complex tuttis the synthesist must seek by experimentation the ideal balance that satisfies as well as possible the psychoacoustic requirements he has set for himself.

So much for the directional effects that can be achieved. Next, spatial effects had to be produced through the addition of reverberation and delayed signals. Three reverberation chambers were employed, two adjusted for a relatively short decay of 1.5 to 3 seconds and a third set in the range of 3 to 5 seconds. The shorter decay chambers were introduced in cross-channel fashion to simulate the across-the-stage pickups of each of two theoretical microphones. The third (longer decay) chamber was fed to both channels

Continued on page 109



Seating plan for Toscanini's "Stereo Orchestra."

by Edward Lockspeiser

THE MIXTURE THAT IS MILHAUD

A Hebrew of Biblical bent, a Gaul with the acid wit of Provence, named oddly for a Persian king, Darius Milhaud never will be explained, but here a perceptive friend does his best.



FROM A DISTANCE, Darius Milhaud might almost be taken for Churchill: his great solid bulk has the amplitude of that figure—a big man, a generous-minded man; and you have the same impression as you see him more closely—there is a Churchillian determination about the curl of the lips. “We may all have ideas,” he says, “but it is the setting of them down that is the terrifying experience. For most composers this is almost a matter of life and death!”

Certainly, Milhaud’s is a mind teeming with ideas; and just as certainly, he is possessed of the moral energy to give them shape and form. I doubt if there is a composer alive today who is more prolific. Twelve years ago a catalogue of his works was brought out reaching the opus number 297. Milhaud is now in his sixty-ninth year, and the formidable list of his opus numbers has increased to well over 350. He is blessed with a gift of fertility that enables him to produce music as naturally and as lavishly as trees blossom into flower. “*Le bon*

Darius,” as he is affectionately known to his friends, has always been this figure of abundance. Aware of his facility, he declared in his youth that he would write one more string quartet than Beethoven. Ten years ago he reached this goal with the publication of his eighteenth quartet.

I knew Milhaud first when the group of Les Six, of which he was a member, was first attracting public attention. Jean Cocteau, their spokesman, had arranged for me to call on him at his apartment in Montmartre, in the Rue Gaillard. I had been greatly amused by the Cocteau-Milhaud ballet *Le Boeuf sur le toit*, which at its premiere in February 1921 was attended by the most fashionable set in Paris (among them the Shah of Persia, who paid a fabulous sum for a box from which he was in full view of the audience though he could see nothing of the stage). I knew that Milhaud, among Les Six, was the bosom friend of the eccentric Erik Satie, and I naturally expected that, like other



sophisticated Parisian composers of the time, he would turn out to be something of a wag. He struck me as nothing of the sort. A swarthy young man in his late twenties, with full sensuous features and a wonderful crop of jet black hair, he impressed me as a most serious-minded personality.

Milhaud's relationship with Satie was curious and is worth dwelling on for a moment. Satie's manifestos, posted on the walls of Paris ("There is no more art. Art is dead!"); his extravagant behavior (he once turned up at a concert in a fireman's helmet); the mystifying titles of his works—*Gymnopédies*, *Trois Morceaux en forme de poire*—all this deliberate and fantastic clowning on the older man's part Milhaud considered to be a blind behind which was hidden an innocent child of music, a soul of exquisite shyness and tenderness. Satie, it seems to me, became in fact the very caricature of himself. Milhaud, who for a time was regarded as a kind of

Continued on page 98

A SELECTIVE MILHAUD DISCOGRAPHY

by Alfred Frankenstein

Le Boeuf sur le toit. Concert Arts Orchestra, Vladimir Golschmann, cond. Capitol P 8244 (with short works of Honegger, Ravel, and Satie). A slapstick monument to a slapstick period—the era of Les Six and the aesthetic leadership of Jean Cocteau.

Le Carnaval d'Atx. Grant Johannesen, piano; Philharmonia Orchestra, Georges Tzipine, cond. Capitol G 7151 (with Saint-Saëns: Piano Concerto No. 4). Derived from a Diaghilev ballet score, this suite for piano and orchestra is a vivid pageant of *commedia dell'arte* characters and incidents.

Les Choréophores. Geneviève Moizan, soprano; Hélène Bouvier, mezzo; Heinz Rehfuß, baritone; Claude Nollier, narrator; Chorale de l'Université; Lamoureux Orchestra, Igor Markevitch, cond. Decca DL 9956 (with Honegger: Symphony No. 5). Aeschylus translated by Paul Claudel and set by Milhaud with unparalleled savagery and power. The foremost dramatic work of Milhaud now available on records.

La Création du monde. Columbia Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein, cond., Columbia CL 920 (with short works of Copland and Bernstein); also by London Symphony Orchestra Chamber Group, John Carewe, cond., Everest 6017 or 3017 (with Stravinsky: *Histoire du soldat*). This chamber orchestra score to a ballet on an African Negro creation myth is one of the earliest examples of the use of jazz idioms in the larger forms, and to this day it remains the best.

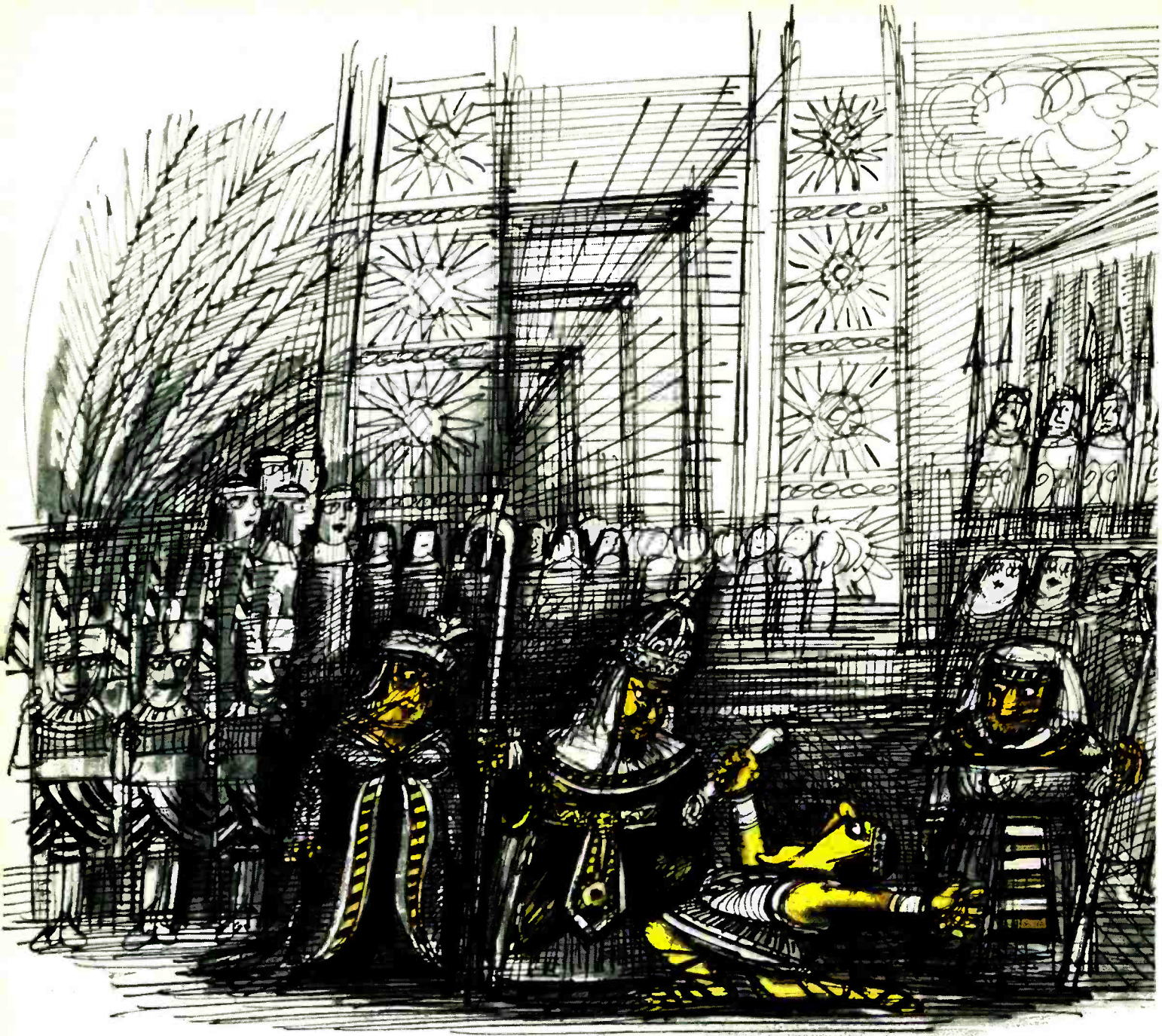
The Four Seasons. Szymon Goldberg, violin; Ernst Wallfisch, viola; Geneviève Joy and Jacqueline Bonneau, pianos; Maurice Suzan, trombone; Ensemble of the Concerts Lamoureux, Darius Milhaud, cond. Epic LC 3666 or BC 1069. A delightful cycle of four concertos, à la Vivaldi, for solo instruments and small orchestra—*Spring* for violin, *Summer* for viola, *Autumn* for two pianos, and *Winter* for trombone.

Kentuckiana. Louisville Orchestra, Robert Whitney, cond. Columbia ML 4859 (with Foss: *Parable of Death*; Martinu: *Intermezzo*). High jinks with no fewer than twenty Kentucky folk tunes in a short symphonic piece.

Suite française. Eastman Wind Ensemble, Frederick Fennell, cond. Mercury 50173 or 90173 (with short works of Grainger, Rogers, and Richard Strauss). Folk tunes of France magnificently handled.

Symphony No. 4. Vienna Orchestra, F. Charles Adler, cond. SPA 57. The big, Berliozian side of Milhaud in a symphony composed to commemorate the revolution of 1848.

Sonata for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, and Piano; Pastorale for Oboe, Clarinet, and Piano; La Cheminée du roi René. New York Woodwind Quintet, EMS 6. A rich collection of chamber pieces from various periods in Milhaud's career. The last-named derives its title from a place in Provence and evokes the days of chivalry there.



Sometimes Look Beyond the Stars

BY ALAN WAGNER

A salute to those invaluable and
uncelebrated people, the *comprimari*.



IN THE CAST of a fairly recent and quite good recording of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* were listed, as the two peasant girls, a pair of singers fetchingly named Elysia Field and Appasionata Schultz. They were, obviously, imaginary—a pair of operatic George Spelvins. The reason behind this rather fey fiction is equally obvious: some more imposing names had filled in the bit parts accredited to the Misses Field and Schultz and preferred their contributions to remain anonymous.

The whole slightly precious matter serves to focus attention on an area of operatic endeavor generally ignored. Day in and day out, in performance after performance and recording after recording, little gems of characterization are turned in by the infantry of music, the *comprimari*. Season after season, in company after company, these artists who fill the small roles provide the necessary dramatic framework in which the stars glitter. What's more,

they accomplish this with hardly any notice. You'll never see a review headlined "Alessio de Paolis Scores as Spoletta in *Tosca* at Met" or "Kate Pinkerton Sung Brilliantly at Rome Opera by Mitì Truccato Pace." Nor should you. Nevertheless, in an era when second-rate talents can be turned into super-stars by a combination of good publicity and properly utilized funds, these self-effacing artists should be given their due.

Some *comprimari* have had careers as leading artists. The aforementioned Mr. De Paolis, for example, was a star for some time: he made his debut with the Bologna Opera as the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*. That he is now far more likely to appear as Borsa in the same opera is mainly a matter of deliberate choice. As a character tenor he has remained a valued member of the Metropolitan roster for over twenty years—a considerably longer tenure than most Dukes of Mantua ever enjoy. De Paolis, as matter of fact, is that *rara avis*, a *comprimario* who *does* get reviewed beyond the usual mention, a season or two ago, for example, earning a very handsome set of notices for his hilarious portrayal of the Old Prisoner in the Met's production of Offenbach's *La Périchole*.

Although a number of *comprimari* have made the giddy descent from leads to walk-ons, if not all with the grace and consummate skill of De Paolis, far more common is the reverse situation: an aspiring youngster sings Mercedes hoping to work her way up to Carmen, or looks at Remendado as a whistle stop on the way to Don José. It sometimes happens, too. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf is a particularly luminous example; she made her debut in Berlin as a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*. On these shores the bootstrap award might go to Margaret Harshaw, who is now singing Brünnhildes and Isolde after some time on the Met's Norn-Rhinemaiden-Valkyr merry-go-round. In the process, she underwent a metamorphosis from a mezzo into a soprano, but metamorphosis or no, success stories like this are few and far between. For every Schwarzkopf or Harshaw there are dozens who *don't* wind up in the star dressing room, which is precisely why every opera company has at least some turnover each year in its *comprimario* roster. Newly eager conservatory graduates and studio fledglings rush to fill the void left by disappointed and despairing brethren.

For the record collector, a perusal of some of the casts of his older opera albums might prove the validity of this assertion. They contain dozens of obscure names, almost all of which have remained obscure and are replaced in more recent sets by a new batch no better known. To excite the discophile and encourage the young singer there are, though, a magic few of the current operatic giants lurking in infinitesimal parts on earlier recordings. For example, the old HMV *Cavalleria rusticana* that featured Mascagni in the pit and Beniamino Gigli as Turiddu also had Giulietta Simionato in the cast—as Mamma Lucia. Or how about the Columbia *Magic Flute* that squandered the talents of Sena Jurinac as

the First Lady? HMV probably established some sort of mark for prescience when it issued *Andrea Chénier* with Simionato, Giuseppe Taddei, and Italo Tajo all singing walk-ons, but there have been sufficient instances elsewhere to make the search rewarding and amusing: Teresa Stich-Randall is the Priestess in RCA Victor's Toscanini-conducted *Aida*, Nicola Monti sings Beppe for the Angel *I Pagliacci*, Kim Borg plays Rangoni to Christoff's Boris Godunov . . . the list can be extended. With the increasing number of sets being released—and re-released—in this stereophonic age, it's natural and pleasant to speculate on how many stars of tomorrow today's casts hide, and who they may be.

Certainly a number of latter-day performances are worthy of note. Some voices only recently preserved on vinyl in supporting roles are already marked for potential importance, voices like those of Eberhard Waechter and Claire Watson, the Donner and Freia of London's *Das Rheingold*, both of whom have since recorded leading roles, or Marianne Schech, the First Lady on the DGG *Magic Flute* and subsequently a sumptuous Marshallin for the same label. In other cases, established front-liners have delighted in the opportunity offered by a bit, and so we are treated to Giorgio Tozzi singing the tiny if melodious role of Jake Wallace in Puccini's *The Girl of the Golden West*. But even without the stars and the stars-to-be, the perceptive collector can relish some extraordinary opera singing as the regulars, the day-in-and-day-out *comprimari*, immortalize samples of their skill. Listen critically to one of the many fine recordings of Melchiorre Luise; he's the Sacristan on the Angel *Tosca*, for one, and Yamadori on the old London *Madama Butterfly*. De Paolis' funny work in *La Périochole* has been captured by RCA Victor, as has his distinctive Emperor in *Turandot*. This company can also boast such regular strengths as Calvin Marsh and Margaret Roggero: notice what these two do as Fiorello (and the Sergeant) and Berta in the *Barber of Seville*. The doubling Marsh does here is not an unusual *comprimario* feat. On the EMI-Capitol *Gianni Schicchi* Alfredo Mariotti sings both the Notary and Maestro Spinelloccio in a virtuoso job of dual characterization. One role or two, artists such as these, artists like Jeannine Collard and Paul Franke (witness Geneviève in Angel's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Sellem in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* on Columbia) are as worthy of recognition as the glittering headliners.

It is these out-and-out professionals who, with tremendous competence and very few illusions, form quite literally the backbone of opera. They lend stability and sheen to the companies and recordings they grace, and a depth of artistry as well. Many of them are quite capable of singing major roles should the occasion demand; the Metropolitan's George Cehanovsky, for example, has turned in excellent performances as Silvio in *I Pagliacci* and Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, and has turned down many other opportunities. Nevertheless, it is as the ubiquitous servants and messengers and courtiers that they

make their greatest contribution. *Somebody* has to do bit parts; the pros see that they are done right.

These performers who have entered their less-than-stellar careers willingly and knowingly make up an impressively large group of opera singers. During any recent season at the Metropolitan some two dozen or more artists might fairly have been labeled *comprimari*, and well over half of them have been with the company for years in just this capacity and look forward to more of the same. The total number of roles essayed by this crew is staggering. George Cehanovsky alone has sung eighty-three parts in fifty-seven different works during his quarter of a century plus on the Met roster, not to speak of roles performed with other organizations during this period. On the distaff side, Thelma Votipka ("Tippy" to her colleagues) has managed to squeeze about forty roles thus far into her career—and this too counts only duty with the home team.

Why should a singer deliberately choose such a career, with its constant demands and its shortage of glamour? There are almost as many reasons as there are *comprimari*, and they're all more or less valid. For one thing, being a perennial walk-on is a lot more secure than trying to buck fickle public favor. Singers invariably outnumber the available chances to sing, and one's chances to get work increase in inverse ratio to the size of a role to which one aspires. And permanence has blessings other than pecuniary ones. Nothing, even in the day of the LP, is deader than yesterday's hero, or as sad, but the good *comprimario* seems to go on happily forever. The fading high C is not the calamitous tragedy it might be to the star, and many a practitioner of the bit players' art has seen whole generations of big names come and go.

As a matter of fact, this close-up view of opera history from the best vantage point in the house is no small reward to some of the best-known *comprimari*. Thelma Votipka is very frank and charming: "You know, I'm really a hero worshiper at heart. I love to stand up there with a group of marvelous artists—and I'm just the worst one in the whole cast; then I'm very happy. I love good performances. They do something for my soul. It's not difficult at all, standing there with nothing to sing, looking interested. I *am* interested; in fact, that's the pleasure of the job."

Tippy, now in her twenty-sixth Metropolitan season, is a representative member of the corps of professional walk-ons. She, like her confreres, includes in her dozens of roles many in the same opera. She has performed four roles each in *Die Walküre* and *Der Rosenkavalier*, which has given her, she says, a considerable perspective. "I know a mess of things, and they've all been fun."

Fun, it might be added, and hard work. Miss Votipka's art requires the same years of training as that of a *prima donna assoluta*; and since her student days her versatility has led her into some Herculean endeavors. Before the advent of the American Guild of Musical Artists she often sang two roles a day, as many as six or *Continued on page 104*

The consumer's guide
to new and important
high-fidelity equipment

high fidelity

EQUIPMENT REPORTS

AT A GLANCE: The EICO HF-89 is a dual 50-watt power amplifier, in which the tubes and components are operated conservatively and which meets its published specifications in all important respects.

It is constructed on a large chassis, with good ventilation for tubes and other components. The HF-89, available in kit form or factory-wired, is an excellent choice for the person who wants the advantages of a high-powered, clean amplifier at a relatively modest price. As a kit, it sells for \$99.50 (factory-wired, \$139.50).

IN DETAIL: The EICO HF-89, for such a powerful amplifier, has a remarkably small tube complement. Only seven tubes are used, with a pair of EL-34s in each output stage. The output tubes are operated well within their dissipation ratings (a point on which some otherwise excellent amplifiers fall down), and the filter capacitors are also safely operated.

A silicon rectifier voltage doubler power supply is used. This results in reduced power transformer size and weight, cooler over-all operation, and better regulation. The latter point is important, especially on a high-powered amplifier where an appreciable difference between quiescent tube currents and the currents drawn at full power output may exist. In a poorly regulated power supply, a voltage drop under strong signal conditions limits the maximum power output obtainable under steady-state conditions. EICO emphasize in their instruction manual that the HF-89 delivers full rated power from both channels simultaneously, due to their good power supply regulation.

Our measurements verified EICO's claims quite closely. The power response of the HF-89 was very flat, with full 50 watts per channel available from 30 cps to 20 kc at 1% distortion. Even at 20 cps it delivered 35 watts per channel at 1% distortion. The power bandwidth, in accordance with IHFM standards on amplifier measurements, is in excess of 20 to 20,000 cps referred to 50 watts at 1% distortion. These measurements were made with both channels driven to the same output simultaneously.

The excellent low frequency performance of the HF-89 is evident in the close correspondence between the 20-cps harmonic distortion curve and the intermodulation distortion curve. In both cases, the distortion at usual listening levels under 10 watts is a small fraction of one per cent, and the IM distortion does not reach 2% until output of 70 watts per channel is reached.

There is no point in plotting frequency response, for it would be virtually a straight line. It was within 0.1 db up to 10 kc, and down 0.4 db at 20 kc. This is within the possible range of our instrument errors.

The EL-34 output tubes were operated well below their maximum dissipation ratings, and filter capacitors never were subjected to more than about 90% of rated voltage. This, combined with the large, open construction of the HF-89, suggests the likelihood of long life without component failure.

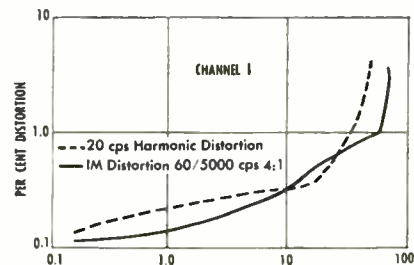
The stability of the amplifier was good under capacitive loads, and it rates above average in ability to drive large capacitive loads at high frequencies.

The hum level was very low when the input was shorted or driven from a low impedance source (such as the output of most preamplifiers). It was typically about 88 db below 10 watts output. With a higher driving impedance it was about 70 db below 10 watts. Even this is quite inaudible in practice.

The HF-89 had the effortless, solid sound typical of a good, high-powered amplifier at a relatively modest price.

H. H. LABS.

EICO HF-89 Dual 50-Watt Power Amplifier



Garrard Type A Automatic Turntable



AT A GLANCE: The Garrard Type A is called by its manufacturer an "automatic turntable," rather than a record changer. This is done with considerable justification, since the performance of the Type A is generally comparable to that of a good quality turntable and tone arm, while retaining the operating convenience of a changer. Price: \$69.50 (less base and cartridge).

IN DETAIL: The Garrard Type A is more like a good 4-speed turntable with a transcription arm than a record changer. The arm is distinctive; it is mass-balanced with tracking force supplied by a spring. The balance is good enough to play records with the unit tilted at more than 45 degrees, at a 3-gram tracking force. As with any turntable, leveling is recommended for the Type A, but it is not affected by moderate amounts of tilt, and it is insensitive to normal jarring or vibration.

With the arm balanced, the stylus force is set by sliding a pointer along a scale, calibrated from 3 to 7 grams, on the side of the arm. The cartridge mounts in a plug-in shell, which is clamped in place by a small lever. No tools are needed for these adjustments. A thumbscrew is used to lock the adjustable counterweight. The cartridge shell is wired, with clips on the leads to fit most types of cartridge terminals. Hardware is provided for installing practically any type of stereo or mono cartridge. Since the two output cables with plugs attached, the power cable, and a grounding lead are integral parts of the Type A, installation has been simplified to the utmost. As a final touch, mounting springs are also integral with the motorboard, and are equipped with knurled wheels to adjust heights individually for leveling purposes.

The unit has a clearly marked selector lever for its four speeds. The drive wheels disengage when the turntable is shut off, and a brake brings the turntable to a halt. Apparently, considerable pains have been taken to reduce rumble and other undesirable effects to levels comparable to good quality turntables. The basic turntable is actually a two-piece unit. The under-platter is covered with a light plastic foam pad. A heavy, balanced turntable is fitted over this, resting on the foam to isolate it from rumble. Finally, a ribbed rubber pad lies on the outer turntable.

Interchangeable spindles allow for automatic changer operation and manual playing. The changer mechanism is the familiar pusher platform type used by Garrard for many years. A lever moves the platform into position for 10-in. and 12-in. records, and sets the correct arm indexing. A feeler arm detects the absence of a record on the spindle and shuts off the player after the last record has played. A separate switch turns on the turntable without activating the change mechanism, for manual playing. An accessory 45-rpm spindle is available for automatic playing of 45-rpm discs.

The trip mechanism is the velocity type, and does not engage the arm except during the change cycle. A hold-down is provided for keeping the arm on its rest during shipment or when otherwise not in use.

Inspection of the Garrard Type A suggested that it indeed was of transcription player caliber, so we mounted a high compliance cartridge designed for installation in separate tone arms (the Pickering 381A) in the plug-in shell. The stylus force gauge on the arm was found to be accurate, and the force was set at 3 grams for all tests.

The wow and flutter were 0.15% and 0.1% respectively. These figures compare with most good turntables and some of the better record changers. Rumble was measured at -37.5 db relative to 7 cm/sec at 1,000 cps, in both vertical and lateral planes. The NARTB standard uses a different reference level, and when converted to that reference the rumble would be -40.5 db. The NARTB broadcast standards call for a rumble of better than -35 db, and wow and flutter not to exceed 0.2% and 0.1%. The Garrard Type A obviously exceeds NARTB specifications by a healthy margin.

The hum field surrounding the cartridge in any playing position is very low, and the unit is suitable for use with any cartridge in that respect. Mechanical noise was also very low during playing; expected clicks occurred during the change cycle.

The arm resonance was difficult to find. There was no peak at all, just a falling off of response in the extreme low frequency region. It occurs, with the cartridge we used, in the 10- to 15-cps region. Tracking error was very low with the Pickering 381A installed. It was 3 degrees at a 6-in. radius and did not exceed 1 degree from a 5-in. to a 2-in. radius. Since tracking error can produce more distortion at the inner grooves of the record, this low figure is noteworthy. It would be considered very good performance even for a good separate tone arm. The Pickering cartridge has a 3/8-in. spacing from stylus to mounting centers, while most other cartridges use a 7/16-in. spacing. When such a cartridge is used, the tracking error is slightly greater, but does not exceed 3 degrees between a 5-in. and a 2-in. radius. Arm cannot be moved manually near inner grooves without tripping the changer.

The styling of the Garrard Type A conveys an impression of precision performance and professionalism. The user will find that this impression is not disturbed by the actual performance of the unit.

H. H. LABS.

AT A GLANCE: The Fairchild 500 is an integrated arm and pickup incorporating the SM-2 moving magnet cartridge. The arm features an "anti-skating" action, intended to counteract effects of stylus friction on the record surface.

The frequency response of the Fairchild is smooth and free from resonant peaks throughout its range. The channel separation is adequate at all frequencies, and is characterized by the same freedom from sudden changes as the frequency response. Price: \$55.

IN DETAIL: The "anti-skating" feature of the Fairchild 500 attempts to compensate for the inherent frictional force of the record surface on the stylus, a force which tends to push the stylus toward the center of the record. This is an inevitable property of any arm with an offset head (a necessary feature for low tracking error). Reasoning that this factor places an additional force on the inner groove wall, with consequent reduction of tracking force on the outer wall, Fairchild engineers designed an arm in which an opposing force is applied to the stylus.

This is accomplished by a spring in the base of the arm. During installation, it is adjusted by aligning a pair of red dots on the arm and base, with the pickup stylus eleven inches from the turntable center. When so installed, the spring is supposed to exert the correct opposing force to overcome the effects of stylus friction over the entire record surface.

The idea sounds good, in principle. However, the spring force of our test sample could not be set to compensate properly over more than a small portion of the record. When set according to instructions, the force was excessive, in the opposite direction to the usual frictional force. If the pickup skipped a groove, for any reason, it tended to move outward rather than inward. We tried setting in other amounts of spring tension, and found the optimum point to be when the red dots were aligned with the pickup about eight inches from the turntable center. In this condition, the pickup tended to move inward at record radii of five to six inches, and outward at radii of two or three inches. In the middle of the record the frictional forces were reasonably well neutralized. This is not to say that the "anti-skating" feature interfered in any way with the normal performance of the arm and cartridge.

In practice, no significant difference could be found in measurements or listening tests between the various settings of the anti-skating force.

Other than the adjustment in its base, the arm uses no springs, and is factory-set for 3 grams force. The counterweight is easily adjusted. As received, our sample had a tracking force of 2.7 grams. It was reset to 3 grams for testing purposes. The vertical and horizontal pivots are offset, so the arm is well balanced laterally when set for a 3-gram vertical force. The arm tracks well at rather large degrees of off-level operation (such as 45 degrees) and is relatively immune to the effects of jarring.

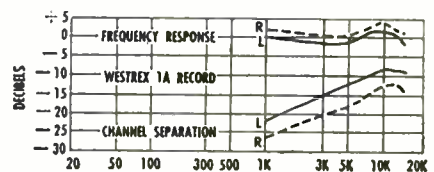
Installation has been simplified by having all internal arm wiring brought to a connector in the arm base. The output cables are prewired to a plug which fits this connector, thereby eliminating all soldering and screwdriver connections in installation. Holes punched in the cover of the box containing the pickup act as a template for its installation. A small screwdriver (for setting arm height) and a stylus pressure gauge are included. All in all, we would say that the usual pickup installation problems have been eliminated to the greatest practicable degree in the Fairchild 500.

The Fairchild 500 arm is an eminently satisfactory design. It has low bearing friction, a convenient finger lift and a good "feel," and a tracking error which remains under 2 degrees over the entire record surface (under 1 degree over most of it). The counterweight is isolated from the arm by a resilient damping material which damps the arm resonance effectively. The resonance, which occurs at 15 cps, amounts to only a 1-db rise in output.

The cartridge, designated SM-2, is supplied only in this arm, but is not an integral part of it as in some other integrated pickup designs. It appears to be of conventional proportions, so that it would fit in other arms, and other cartridges presumably could fit in this arm. Unlike the SM-1, the stylus of the SM-2 can be replaced by the user.

The frequency response of the SM-2 is smooth and within plus or minus 1.5 db all the way up to 15 kc. Both channels have identical response curves, though one has 1.6 db more output than the other in the unit tested. This easily corrects with a preamplifier balance control. Channel separation, over 20 db at lower frequencies, reduces gradually to about 10 db in the 10- to 15-kc region. Here, too, there are no sudden peaks or holes, and both curves have

Fairchild 500 Integrated Arm And Cartridge



REPORT POLICY

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identical shapes. The difference in separation between channels, seen in the curves, may be due to the slight tilt of the stylus to one side. This was a characteristic of the unit we tested, and could not be corrected by adjustment or modification of installation procedure.

The output of the SM-2 is moderately high (7.6 mv at 5 cm/sec stylus velocity). Susceptibility to induced hum is low. Needle talk is moderately low.

The listening quality of the Fairchild 500 pickup is definitely smooth. The lack of peaks results in very low surface noise, with all the brilliance and sheen of a good recording being reproduced. The stereo channel separation at high frequencies is more than adequate for its intended function. The important requirement of smoothness and close matching between channels is met, and it contributes to the excellent sound of this novel pickup system.

H. H. LABS.

DuKane Ionovac Speaker



AT A GLANCE: The DuKane Ionovac is the latest version of the revolutionary loudspeaker which has no moving parts, but which uses ionized air to generate the sound directly. It is a "super-tweeter," covering frequencies above 3,500 cps.

The Ionovac has the clarity and transparency, in its own frequency range, of a fine high frequency speaker, electrostatic or electrodynamic. Its relatively high efficiency makes it most suitable for use with horn type systems or other high efficiency speakers. The unit can interfere with nearby FM and TV receivers, a factor to be considered in its use. Price: \$79 (without enclosure).

IN DETAIL: The history and general description of the Ionovac are covered in detail in our January 1961 issue ("The Driverless Tweeter from Paris"). Briefly, this unique speaker generates sound by ionizing air in a small, fused quartz tube with a high radio frequency potential and modulating the radio frequency signal to produce acoustic output. Variation in intensity of ionization produces compressions and rarefactions of air in the tube. This minute sound is coupled to an exponential horn like those used in conventional dynamic speakers.

Although the Ionovac itself has, in principle, no frequency limitations, practical considerations of quartz cell and horn size limit its use to higher audio frequencies. The present version is most effective at frequencies above 3,500 cps.

The Ionovac derives its ionizing potential from an oscillator, in which the quartz cell and its electrodes serve as the capacitance in a series resonant tank circuit. Due to the high "Q" of the tank circuit, a very large potential develops across the cell, although the oscillator tube operates with only about 300 volts. The oscillator, a 6DQ6A, is screen-grid modulated through a transformer which matches the 8-ohm input impedance of the unit to the higher impedance required for screen modulation.

The oscillator in the Ionovac we tested operates at about 25.9 megacycles. Although precautions are taken to minimize radiation from the oscillator, our test speaker did radiate some harmonics. The third harmonic obliterated channel 5 on a nearby television set, and the fourth harmonic similarly affected 103.6 mc on an FM set.

In earlier versions of the Ionovac, the quartz cell had a short life. The cell in the unit being considered is guaranteed for 1,200 hours of use, and is replaced with no more difficulty than replacing a phono stylus, and at nominal cost (\$6.25).

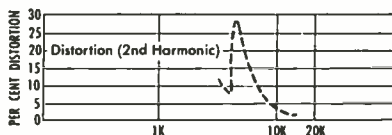
The power supply and input transformer of the Ionovac are contained in a small separate box, connected to the oscillator and radiator unit by a five-foot cable. No crossover is built in, and an external 8-ohm crossover network effective at 3,500 cps should be used. Damage to the speaker cannot result from driving it with low frequencies, but its efficiency falls off.

When the unit is first turned on, it sputters briefly. This should not concern the user. Soon it quiets down and one is aware only of its contribution to the reproduced sound.

Some 40 watts are dissipated in the oscillator unit, which heats after a period of operation. We do not recommend its operation in a confined space. In most situations it can be mounted near, but outside, accompanying speakers.

The Ionovac, fortunately, has many virtues. Its frequency response is extremely smooth. The axial pressure response rises at a 6 db/octave rate above 3,000 cps. as in high quality electrostatic

Continued on page 108



Music Makers

by ROLAND GELATT



GEORG SOLTÍ'S work on records—*Das Rheingold*, *Arabella*, some Beethoven symphonies—has long given us a great deal of pleasure, and we gladly accepted an invitation to make his acquaintance when he stopped off in New York this winter to conduct a few performances of *Tannhäuser* at the Metropolitan Opera. On the day we met, test pressings from Solti's forthcoming stereo *Tristan* had just arrived from London Records. Naturally, the conversation turned to Wagner in the recording studio versus Wagner in the opera house. Did he order things differently for the microphone than for an audience?

Mr. Solti loosened his tie and moved forward to the edge of the sofa. Yes, indeed he did. "For recordings, I take a quite different approach. The microphone requires more intensity, more nuance, more expression—everything must be heightened to make up for the loss of visual impact. But I wouldn't want to give the impression that I considered Wagner less effective on records than in the theatre. As a matter of fact, I find recording an advantage in some respects. It enables me to let out the orchestra without burying the singers. In the opera house one must often hold down the sound of the orchestra so that the singers can be heard. In the studio you don't have to worry. On records, *everything* can be heard. For Wagner, I am convinced that stereo is the ideal medium."

What, we asked, was essential to a conductor in working before the microphone? "The ability," Solti replied, "to make up your mind. A conductor in the recording studio must realize what is wrong and how to correct it, but he must also learn not to lose ex-

pression in a search for the perfection which recording seems to make possible. I am against perfectionism. In *Tristan* I always chose an expressive 'take' with a small blemish in preference to an inexpressive version that was note-perfect. Of course, ideally I should like to have perfect execution of the notes and beautiful expression, but unfortunately the two don't always go together."

Solti's recording career began not as a conductor but as a pianist, accompanying the noted German violinist Georg Kulenkampff in sonatas by Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms. These discs (made in Switzerland for English Decca) date from the immediate postwar period, when Solti was still on an involuntary leave of absence from conducting. Before the War, he had conducted opera in his native Budapest, but in 1939 anti-Semitism forced him to emigrate. The outbreak of war found him in Switzerland and jobless. Since a conducting post seemed out of the question, Solti brushed up on the piano, won first prize at the Geneva competition in 1942, and subsequently eked out a living as a recitalist and accompanist.

His return to the podium took place in 1946. The United States authorities in Germany were then finding it difficult to turn up conductors untainted by Nazism, and the pianist Eduard Kilenyi, an old Budapest acquaintance stationed in Munich as a cultural-affairs officer with the Army, offered Solti an engagement to conduct *Fidelio* at the Munich Opera. *Fidelio* was a great success, and Solti was invited to remain as a permanent conductor. "I didn't want to stay," he told us. "Munich was a shambles; everything seemed disorderly and difficult and discouraging. In fact, I wanted to go to the States, and it was my wife who persuaded me to accept the Munich offer. She was right, of course. I wasn't ready for America."

In due course Solti was appointed general music director of the State Opera in Munich. A few years later, in 1952, he moved to Frankfurt as general music director of that city's opera and conductor of the Museum Concerts. Meanwhile, Decca/London had transferred him from the keyboard to the podium, first with the

Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, then with the London Philharmonic, and subsequently with the Israel Philharmonic, Paris Conservatoire, and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras.

For many years Solti's guiding inspiration was Arturo Toscanini, with whom he had worked as an assistant conductor at Salzburg before the War. "I was in my early twenties when I came under Toscanini's influence, and of course at that age you see everything in black and white. To me, Toscanini could do no wrong. What most inspired me was his passion for detail. Incredible! I shall never forget it. Naturally, as I matured, I began to see virtues in other conductors. I learned to appreciate the greatness of Furtwängler, to understand his slow tempos and elastic phrasing. And this had an effect on my own conducting. I am getting quieter, phrasing more broadly, beating time less nervously. Perhaps you will find in my recording of the *Eroica* a mixture of both the Toscanini and Furtwängler influences."

Next season Solti will be dividing his time between Los Angeles and London. He will spend a total of thirteen weeks in California, as music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and twenty weeks in England, as music director of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. "Theoretically," he says, "I can do both. Practically? Well, we shall see." Before the Los Angeles-to-London commuting begins, Solti is scheduled to make a good many recordings, including a *Ballo in maschera* for London Records and an *Aida* for RCA Victor. And if someone would only ask him, he would be most happy to record Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*.



Solti reflective . . .



. . . and animated.

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3	JET TAKING OFF 1 00	3	DOGS BARKING 34
4	VISCOUNT LANDING 37	4	GLASS BREAKING 35
5	DC7 TAKING OFF 33	5	SHOOTING GALLERY 57
6	707 JET TAKING OFF 27	6	CAROUSEL 45
7	DC8 JET TAKING OFF 29	7	POP BOTTLE OPENING AND POURING 30
8	STEAM ENGINE (SHORT TRAIN) 34	8	TAP DANCE ROUTINE 30
9	DIESEL ENGINE (LONG TRAIN) 43	9	FIRECRACKERS 1 09
10	RACING CARS (STARTS AND RACING) 1 37	10	CHINESE GONG 28
11	PIN BALL MACHINE 56	11	GONG REPEATED CRESCENDO 32
12	BOWLING 33	12	RAILROAD TELEGRAPH 30
13	BILLIARDS (POOL TABLE) 34	13	RADIO CODE SIGNALS 1 09
14	BASEBALL GAME 31	14	PHONE-DIAL TONE, DIALING, BUSY SIGNAL 23
15	LARGE CROWD APPLAUSE 39	15	PHONE-DIAL TONE, DIALING, RINGING 41
16	LARGE CROWD LAUGHTER 30	16	PHONE RINGING 30
17	DOOR-CLOSING, OPENING, SLAMMING 11	17	AIR HAMMER AND COMPRESSOR 33
18	CREAKING DOOR 13	18	GRINDING WHEEL 31
19	PISTOL SHOTS AND RICOCHETS 30	19	GAS ENGINE STARTING 38
20	THUNDER 25	20	HAMMERING NAIL (RIGHT) ELECTRIC SAW (LEFT) 54
21	HEARTBEATS 1 03	21	IBM ELECTRIC TYPEWRITER 45
22	SURF 1 11	22	ROYAL TYPEWRITER 42
23	WATER SOUNDS (DRIP IN BUCKET) 29	23	NATIONAL CASH REGISTER ELECTRIC ADDING MACHINE 27
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 - LARGE CROWD APPLAUSE
 - LARGE CROWD LAUGHTER
 - DOOR-CLOSING, OPENING, SLAMMING
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 - THUNDER
 - HEARTBEATS
 - SURF
 - WATER SOUNDS (DRIP IN BUCKET)
 - SINK DRAINING
 - POURING WATER INTO BUCKET
- SIDE 2
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 - CAROUSEL
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 - PHONE RINGING
 - AIR HAMMER AND COMPRESSOR
 - GRINDING WHEEL
 - GAS ENGINE STARTING
 - HAMMERING NAIL (RIGHT) ELECTRIC SAW (LEFT)
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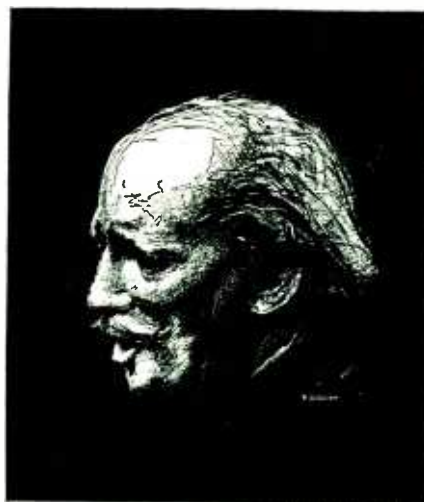
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Records in Review



by Robert C. Marsh

From the Maestro's Store— “Electronic Reprocessings”



Arturo Toscanini

IN THIS ISSUE of HIGH FIDELITY, page 40, is an account of RCA Victor's project to reprocess many of Arturo Toscanini's recordings, all pre-stereo, in two-channel form. The three albums here considered are the first results of that experiment to be released—and I am happy to say that they are well worth knowing.

The only Toscanini performances originally recorded in stereo are the tapes, never released, of the Maestro's final two public concerts, on March 21 and April 4, 1954. Recorded in stereo as part of what RCA Victor then described as a “continuing policy of development and research in recording techniques,” these tapes were made with a separate microphone set up from that used in the broadcast. (A monophonic tape, again never used for commercial releases, was also made.) The principal item of the first concert is the *Pathétique*. Had the engineers recorded it at the dress rehearsal, which I attended, they would have had a great performance, but the broadcast showed that the eighty-seven-year-old Maestro could not perform the same miracle two days running. Technically,

the tape is a good example of early stereo engineering, as is the tape of the Wagner program with which Toscanini made his last bow. This performance too is flawed, but we might in time have at least a part of it (say *Siegfried's Rhine Journey*) as evidence of the energy Toscanini brought to even his farewell appearance.

Since I wanted to try the present examples of “electronic reprocessing” on an unprejudiced pair of ears, I played them anonymously to one of the most astute and knowledgeable record collectors residing locally. He took them for genuine stereo discs of recent vintage. When you consider that *The Fountains of Rome* was recorded in 1951 and the other titles date from 1953, this is indeed a tribute to Victor's engineers.

There are critics who regard the originals of the Toscanini recordings as a sort of holy writ which cannot be altered in any way. I am sure this release will send such people into an absolute frenzy, but I urge others not to join them. Improvements given to some of the Toscanini recordings in the past have not always been worthy of the name, but anyone with one of the new reverbera-

tion devices attached to his sound system can cause far more momentous havoc with a careless flick of the wrist. It seems to me that two questions want answering in connection with the new discs. First, taken by themselves, are these stereo-reprocessed Toscaninis satisfying records? The answer to that is yes, as one would infer from my friend's reaction. For good results they will have to be played at a higher volume setting than normal, and it will be noticed, of course, that the sound is never highly directional, but neither matter is of great importance. The truth is that these synthetic stereo discs are comparable to the average of the real thing as represented in the current catalogue. (This, it must be added, is an interesting commentary on the state of the industry.)

The second—and more important—question is how well these new discs stand up when played in direct comparison with the monophonic transfers of the master tape. It is obvious that re-recording of this type is possible only when the monophonic master is a first-class job with a great deal of information crammed into its single channel. The

engineer can only divide this information into two parts, and no amount of supplemental reinforcement can help him if there just isn't enough to go around.

In the climactic pages of the Respighi scores such a shortage is felt. The mono disc seems rock-solid in registration and filled with music, but apparently it cannot take the stretching. The two-channel version spreads out beautifully in the quiet pages (and the Toscanini devotee may want it just for them), but it lacks brilliance, focus, and weight in the full orchestral passages.

The Dvořák, on the other hand, is a success. It has grown in spaciousness without any loss of definition; indeed, small instrumental details now stand out with a sonic relief they did not possess before. The dynamics are wide-range. The quality is excellent. Naturally, in going from the mono to the stereo in A-B fashion, the listener will notice differences. (The point of the business is that there *should* be differences.) For me the merits of the new version exceed those of the old.

In the Mussorgsky recording, the issue is more open. Here again one finds greater spaciousness and some sharpened contours, but there are also some changes of tonal coloring—presumably from the intermixing of filtered and full frequency signals. The trumpet in the "Promenade" is plainly better in the monophonic set, but some people may be willing to accept its altered timbre in order to have the "Great Gate at Kiev" spread the width of their listening room.

RCA is selling these reprocessed discs for the same price as the mono versions—which presumably will remain in the catalogue. The obvious intent, and a worthy one, is to give some of the finer Toscanini performances an extra lease on life by allowing them to compete with newer recordings made in stereo. It's a depressing thought that a mediocre performance with spectacular sound will take sales from a great one with less striking sonics, but that's the way the money goes these days.

None of these Toscanini performances has been surpassed, or seems likely to be for a long, long time. Whether you choose to take them in one channel or two, you will be a lot happier for knowing them.

DVORAK: *Symphony No. 5, in E minor, Op. 95* ("From the New World")

NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond.

• • RCA VICTOR LME 2408. SD. \$4.98.

MUSSORGSKY: *Pictures at an Exhibition* (orch. Ravel)

NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond.

• • RCA VICTOR LME 2410. SD. \$4.98.

RESPIGHI: *Pini di Roma; Fontane di Roma*

NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond.

• • RCA VICTOR LME 2409. SD. \$4.98.



Antonio Vivaldi

Now More Than a Score of *Seasons*

by Nathan Broder

SINCE the advent of microgroove more than twenty performances of *The Seasons* have appeared on discs in this country. This is surely a remarkable record for a composer who seems to have been forgotten in his native city as soon as, and perhaps even before, he died. When Dr. Burney visited Venice less than thirty years after Vivaldi's death, he spent time in the conservatories—especially in the Pietà, where Vivaldi had been employed for many years—and questioned their directors on the history of these institutions and the men who had conducted the music in them. In his account of this visit he mentions many names of Venetian composers connected with the conservatories, but Vivaldi's name does not appear once. This curiously sudden neglect of a composer highly regarded in his own day lasted for more than two centuries. And it was almost complete: it was only when interest in Bach was revived, after sleeping for three-quarters of a century after his death, that musicians and scholars began to wonder about a composer that Bach had thought enough of to transcribe.

The Seasons were a success immediately upon their publication about 1725 as the first four concertos in the set of twelve called *Il Cimento dell'Armonia e dell'Invenzione*, Op. 8. (For some time before that they had been favorites of Count Morzin, to whom Op. 8 was dedicated.) *Spring* was particularly popular. Pincherle tells us of various transcriptions of this concerto published in France, ranging from a large sacred choral work to an arrangement—by Jean Jacques Rousseau—for flute solo! Today this delightful set of pieces, with their naïve and graphic tone pictures woven

into the structure of the baroque violin concerto as into a set of tapestries, is again a success, as is indicated by the number of recordings it has received. A large number of those recordings are of high quality. To that number must now be added two more.

Of the three new versions of *The Seasons* one is of the large-orchestra type while the other two employ chamber orchestras. To begin with the first of these, the Ormandy reading has a big, rich sound—a bit too rich for this music, it seems to me. Despite the apparent size of the group, however, it is extremely flexible and absolutely precise. It shows signs of ponderousness only in the finale of *Summer*. Ormandy does some of the movements very nicely, for example the opening one of *Autumn* and the Largo of *Winter*, and he sometimes brings out the viola line to good effect. But in other respects he is not always convincing, and his judgment is on occasion questionable.

This conductor has, for instance, the old-fashioned habit of making a big ritard and crescendo at final cadences. The slow movements of *Spring* and *Summer* are very slow indeed, especially that for *Spring*, where the listener is induced to follow the goatherd into slumber. The opening of *Summer* seems overexpressive, and in the course of the movement Ormandy inverts the *piano-pianissimo* succession of the printed score. There are passages in this movement where he seems not to trust the harpsichord to supply harmonic filling and allots it instead to the strings. At the beginning of *Winter* he omits the trills, and thus loses the stipulated effect of shivering with cold. The whirlwind finish of this con-

certo seems to be evoked less by the program than by a desire to display the virtuosity of the Philadelphia strings. On the credit side of this performance is the work of the soloist, Anshel Brusilow, which, considered purely as violin playing, is the best to be heard on all three discs.

The Goberman recording, which like all the other Vivaldi releases in its series includes the Ricordi scores, is in some ways the most imaginative and the most thoughtfully prepared of the three. Appoggiaturas are interpreted according to eighteenth-century rules. In accord with the custom of Vivaldi's tin-soloist is permitted, as in the Ad *Summer*, to elaborate on the p violin part (the double dotting in the accompaniment in that movement is persuasive musically, though programmatically it has some excuse—it represents "furious" insects). As in the other Vivaldi performances of this group, the harpsichord realizations of the continuo (played by Eugenia Earle) are unusually lively and interesting. Only in the mysterious slow movement of *Autumn* does the continuo realization seem overdone: it is made so prominent as to achieve the status of a solo part, but the music improvised by the harpsichordist or written for her here is not substantial enough for that, and anyway everybody is supposed to be resting, sleeping off the effects of a harvest celebration.

One asset of this recording is shared by only one other stereo version of *The Seasons* that I have heard: the engineers (or Mr. Goberman) had the musical intelligence to record first and second violins on separate tracks. This makes especially effective the sound of such movements as the finales of *Summer* and *Winter*, where separation of the two sections clarifies the proceedings. There are four soloists, one for each concerto: Ariana Bronne (*Spring*), Sonya Monosoff (*Summer*), Helen Kwalwasser (*Autumn*), Nadia Koutzen (*Winter*). All four are excellent, if not quite on a par with Brusilow or with Wolfgang Schneiderhan, soloist on the Archive disc.

This third of the new versions, by Rudolph Baumgartner, is a first-class performance. The harpsichord is too faint in one or two spots, and the tempo of the first movement of *Autumn* seems a little rushed to me, but otherwise I could hear nothing objectionable. There are positive qualities, such as small touches that enhance the pictorial aspect of the music without departing from good taste—for example playing the opening figure of *Winter* with the bow near the bridge, to give it a nasty, icy feeling, or taking the Largo of the same work somewhat faster than usual so as to give the violin pizzicato the realistic plink-plonk of raindrops. Although Baumgartner is not so bold as Goberman and he and his soloist stick to the printed score, within

that frame they do as fine-sounding, nuanced, and musical a job as any group on records.

How do these compare with the other available recordings of *The Seasons*? From the standpoint of performance, I should say that the Goberman and Baumgartner discs belong with the best—those of the Virtuosi di Roma and the Musici and the large-orchestra versions conducted by Cantelli and Giulini. From the standpoint of stereo, the Goberman and Musici are the most effective. As mono recordings, the loveliest sound, to my mind, is offered by the Baumgartner, the Virtuosi, the Cantelli, and the Giulini.

VIVALDI: *Concertos for Violin and Strings, Op. 8, Nos. 1-4* ("The Four Seasons")

Anshel Brusilow, violin; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.

- COLUMBIA ML 5595. LP. \$4.98.
- COLUMBIA MS 6195. SD. \$5.98.

Soloists; New York Sinfonietta, Max Goberman, cond.

- LIBRARY OF RECORDED MASTERPIECES, Vol. 1, No. 8. SD. \$8.50 on subscription; \$10 nonsubscription.

Wolfgang Schneiderhan, violin; Festival Strings Lucerne, Rudolf Baumgartner, cond.

- ARCHIVE ARC 3141. LP. \$5.98.
- ARCHIVE ARC 73141. SD. \$6.98.

CLASSICAL

ALFVEN: *Midsommarvaka* (Swedish Rhapsody, No. 1, Op. 19)—See Sibelius: *Finlandia*, Op. 26, No. 7.

ARNOLD: *Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra*, Op. 67

†Giuliani: *Concerto for Guitar and String Orchestra*

Julian Bream, guitar; Melos Ensemble.
• RCA VICTOR LM 2487. LP. \$4.98
• RCA VICTOR LSC 2487. SD. \$5.98

Malcolm Arnold's new guitar concert is a lively, accessible work composed in a conservatively dissonant idiom. There is a lot of lively *concertante* solo work in the orchestral writing to supplement the strumming of the solo instrument and for this reason, the piece is, in effect, a concerto for orchestra. (The second subject of the first movement, incidentally, is suggestive of parts of Bernstein's *Candide*, both melodically and harmonically.) The middle, "Blues" section, written in memory of the French guitarist Django Reinhardt, is a trifle long and uneventful in relation to the concise outer movements, but the piece is eminently likable. The composer-directed performance here recorded is presumably definitive.

I like the string quartet purity of sound furnished by the Melos Ensemble in the classical Mauro Giuliani (1780-1840)

concerto. Bream's playing, too, is lovely here (as, indeed, in the Arnold composition). Aside from a tendency in the stereo version for the guitar to drift over to the right channel in the first movement of this piece, the recorded sound is of demonstration caliber. H.G.

BABBITT: *Composition for Four Instruments; Composition for Viola and Piano*

†Bavicchi: *Trio for Clarinet, Violin, and Harp, No. 4; Short Sonata for Violin and Harpsichord*

John Wummer, flute; Stanley Drucker, clarinet; Peter Marsh, violin; Donald McCall, cello (in the *Composition for Four Instruments*). Walter Trampler, viola; Alvin Bauman, piano (in the *Composition for Viola and Piano*). David Glazer, clarinet; Matthew Raimondi, violin; Assunta Dell' Aquila, harp (in the Trio). Robert Brink, violin; Daniel Pinkham, harpsichord (in the Sonata).
• COMPOSERS RECORDINGS CRI 138. LP. \$5.95.

Wilton Babbitt, professor of music at Princeton and a formidable figure among neorists of modern music, here has his first important representation on records. Both *Compositions* employ the technique of total serialism. The one for four instruments falls into fifteen short sections each characterized by its own instrumental color. The overlapping progression of these sections is fascinating to hear, and the work as a whole has great dignity, strong dramatic tension, and at the

same time a kind of lofty serenity as well. The *Composition for Viola and Piano*, however, eludes me; I find it desperately uninteresting, as I do the Trio by John Bavicchi, a young man who, one gathers, is not long out of Harvard. Bavicchi's Short Sonata for Violin and Harpsichord, on the other hand, is a rather fascinating piece, thanks in part to the curious color of the combination (or, rather, the curious things he does with it), and the energy, conciseness, and thrust of the music as a whole.

Performances throughout the album seem impeccable, and the recorded sound certainly is. A.F.

BACH: *Cantatas: No. 198, Trauer Ode; No. 131, Aus der Tiefe*

Marni Nixon, soprano; Elaine Bonazzi, contralto; Nico Castel, tenor (in No. 198); Loren Driscoll, tenor (in No. 131); Peter Binder, baritone (in No. 198); Robert Oliver, bass (in No. 131); American Concert Choir; Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Robert Craft, cond.
• COLUMBIA ML 5577. LP. \$4.98.
• COLUMBIA MS 6177. SD. \$5.98.

One welcomes the initiative shown by Mr. Craft here in taking a fresh look at Bach and reinterpreting him in the light of the knowledge of baroque performance practice gained in recent years. (Some English musicians, notably Thurston Dart, have been doing the same lately, with considerable success.) In some respects Mr. Craft is convincing: the embellishments added here by solo singers and players usually sound natural and seldom seem

superfluous. In other respects, however, it is difficult to follow Mr. Craft's reasoning. In the big opening chorus of the *Ode of Mourning*, for example, Bach (if the printed scores can be trusted) carefully distinguishes between even and dotted sixteenths in the orchestra and between a mixture of these in the orchestra against even sixteenths in the voices. Mr. Craft wipes out these distinctions and has everybody performing dotted sixteenths most of the time. That Bach did not want this in the chorus throughout is quite clear: in the few measures where he does want dotted sixteenths sung he writes them that way. The result of Mr. Craft's interpretation is that the music skips along breezily and completely negates the meaning of the text. This is not Bach's fault, as may be heard in Scherchen's grave and powerful, if not as well recorded, performance on a Westminster disc.

The soloists, especially Messrs. Driscoll and Oliver, are satisfactory and the chorus well balanced. In the alto aria of No. 198 the gambas are sometimes too loud for the voice; in the baritone arioso of the same work and in the tenor-alto duet in No. 131 the harpsichord is too faint, leaving a gap between voice and cello. Otherwise the sound in both versions is good. The works are sung in German; unfortunately, no texts are provided in the notes. N.B.

BACH: Concerto for Clavier and Orchestra, No. 1, in D minor, S. 1052—See Schumann: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 54.

BACH: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in A minor, S. 1041
 †Mozart: *Symphonie concertante for Violin, Viola, and Orchestra, in E flat, K. 364*

David Oistrakh, violin; Rudolf Barshai, viola; Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Rudolf Barshai, cond.
 • ARTIA ALP 165. LP. \$4.98.

Oistrakh's performance of the Bach is to be rated high. I think, among available recordings of that work. The tone is singing and pure, there is no sign of interpretative tricks or applied intensification, and the tempos are plausible. A harpsichord can occasionally be heard, but only out of the corner of one's ear; except for a somewhat boomy bass in the finale, the sound is satisfactory.

In the Mozart the approach is again entirely straightforward. Here, a little more imagination would have helped. Mr. Barshai's command of the viola part is not, it seems to me, as complete as Primrose's in the RCA Victor recording of this fine work, or Lillian Fuchs's in the Decca, but his playing is acceptable nevertheless, and his rapport with his partner unexceptionable. The oboes are not well defined here, but otherwise the sound is good. N.B.

BACH: Toccata and Fugue in D minor, S. 565; Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue in C, S. 564; Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, S. 582 (arr. Ormandy)

†Bach, J. C.: *Sinfonia for Double Orchestra, Op. 18, No. 1*

Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.

- COLUMBIA ML 5580. LP. \$4.98.
- • COLUMBIA MS 6180. SD. \$5.98.

I suppose there must be people who do not enjoy any music unless it is played by a large, lush symphony orchestra. *Aut Kostelanetz (or Mantovani) aut nihil.* There does not seem to be any other good reason for conductors continuing to make, and record, transcriptions like these. Even the excuse that used to be given in their defense—that otherwise some of Bach's great works would not be heard—is no longer valid: there are many good recordings of these compositions played on the organ, as Bach intended they should be.

The *Sinfonia* by Johann Christian Bach is another matter entirely. Here Ormandy follows faithfully a modern edition of the score, and the result is a delight, almost enough to make up for the rest of the disc. Although this work would seem to be made to order for stereo, it is effective in mono too because in the dialogues between the two orchestras the material given to one differs from the other's in octave register or instrumentation. N.B.

BACH, JOHANN CHRISTIAN: Sinfonia for Double Orchestra, Op. 18, No. 1—See Bach: Toccata and Fugue in D minor, S. 565 (arr. Ormandy).



BACH, JOHANN CHRISTIAN: Symphonies, Op. 18: No. 2, in B flat; No. 4, in D

†Handel: *Water Music: Suite*

Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Eduard van Beinum, cond.
 • EPIC LC 3749. LP. \$4.98.
 • • EPIC BC 1112. SD. \$5.98.

Two lively and attractive symphonies are presented here in pleasing performances by the late Eduard van Beinum. Written by the youngest son of Johann Sebastian Bach, they resemble nothing composed by the father; instead, they are fine examples of the developed Italian three-movement opera overture (No. 2 did in fact start life as the overture to Bach's opera *Lucio Silla*). They are consequently light-textured and full of singing melody. The Handel suite consists of eight movements from the complete work. The performance of the Air is lacking in grace, but in the Minuet, Van Beinum brings out the expressive secondary line in the bassoon, and in the remaining movements he does full justice to Handel's splendid music. The sound in both versions is good. N.B.

BAVICCHI: Trio for Clarinet, Violin, and Harp, No. 4; Short Sonata

for Violin and Harpsichord—See Babbitt: *Composition for Four Instruments.*

BEETHOVEN: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 3, in C minor, Op. 37

†Mozart: *Rondos: in D, K. 382; in A, K. 386*

Annie Fischer, piano; Bavarian State Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, cond.

• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON LPM 18607. LP. \$5.98.

• • DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON SLPM 138087. SD. \$6.98.

If you like the idea of Mozart and Beethoven played on a music box, this recording provides that effect. Miss Fischer strives for the even, tinkle-tinkle type of piano sound with enormous success. I do not like my Beethoven in lacy underpants, thank you, so my choice remains the Backhaus edition. Fricsay deserves a word of praise for a good accompaniment here. The engineering is no better than average. R.C.M.

BEETHOVEN: Quartets for Strings: No. 7, in F, Op. 59, No. 1; No. 8, in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2; No. 9, in C, Op. 59, No. 3; No. 10, in E flat, Op. 74 ("Harp"); No. 11, in F minor, Op. 95

Amadeus Quartet.

• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON LPM 18534/36. Three LP. \$17.94.

• • DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON SLPM 138534/36. Three SD. \$20.94.

This set is a good buy. The five works have been fitted, without any handicap to the purchaser, on three rather than four records, thereby providing a complete edition of the most popular Beethoven quartets at a \$3.00 saving over the customary price. Moreover the records are well made and silent-surfaced—which is exactly what chamber music requires.

The Amadeus is a group with a well-deserved reputation. Their performances do not have the ultra high polish and ripeness of tone one hears in the Budapest set, but they do have the firm pulse and cleanly drawn lines that project the strong musical substance of these works. In short, the quartet is self-effacing. It fixes your attention not on what it is playing but what Beethoven is saying, and that is the way it ought to be. I enjoyed their performances and look forward to returning to them. You will too. R.C.M.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 3, in E flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica")

Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond.

• LONDON CM 9249. LP. \$4.98.

• • LONDON CS 6189. SD. \$5.98.

Ansermet's edition of the Beethoven nine has been appearing gradually and now reaches its conclusion with an *Eroica* of impressive vigor and force. Indeed, if we look back through this Ansermet series, we find a number of exceptional performances and a consistently high level of interest in the conductor's points of view and their development.

The *Eroica* given us here shares with many of the other symphonies a fairly



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ANTONIO VIVALDI: GLORIA. Vienna Academy Chorus, The Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Hermann Scherchen. Mimi Coertse, Soprano; Ina Dressel, Soprano; Sonja Draxler, Contralto.
Stereo WST 14139 Monaural XWN 18958

OTTORINO RESPIGHI: FOUNTAINS OF ROME; FESTE ROMANE, Fernando Previtali conducting the Orchestra of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome.
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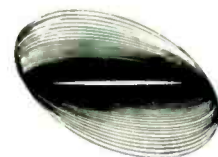
Valse-Theme Varie et Finale-Twelve Preludes.
Stereo WST 14138 Monaural XWN 18957

WELL, ALL REED: Byron Parker and His Orchestra. Liza (Gershwin), September Song (Weill), Blue Moon (Rodgers), Solitude (Ellington), With a Song in My Heart (Rodgers), Embraceable You (Gershwin), Body and Soul (Green), Tea for Two (Youmans), Maria la O (Lecuona), Dancing in the Dark (Schwartz), Who (Kern), Who Cares (Gershwin).
Stereo WST 15067 Monaural WP 6133

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Maio, Piano. April in Paris (Duke), Spring is Here (Rodgers), September Song (Weill), The Last Time I Saw Paris (Kern), Autumn in New York (Duke), September in the Rain (Warren), Autumn Leaves (Kosina), A Foggy Day (Gershwin), Under Paris Skies (Giraud), Summertime (Gershwin), I'll Remember April (Raye, de Paul and Johnson), Around the World (Young).
Stereo WST 15068 Monaural WP 6134



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quick, lightly inflected type of performance, but Ansermet does not carry this approach to the point of austerity. There is breadth to the phrase when it is needed for expressive significance. What Ansermet is seeking is a golden mean between superficiality and bombast, and I think he finds it. If, among the older *Eroicas*, your paradigm was the Toscanini, this is the stereo account of the score most in sympathy with the late Maestro's precepts. Naturally there are differences, Ansermet is not as fierce as the Maestro, but both stress the classicism in the music and, in their respective ways, make its nobility felt.

The recording is slightly heavy on the right channel (although this imbalance is easily corrected), and resonant to the point of losing some low frequency definition. The sound, however, is quite spacious and very pleasing to the ear, particularly in the full-bodied quality of the chords. R.C.M.

BEETHOVEN: Wellingtons Sieg, Op. 91 ("Battle Symphony"); Overtures: Prometheus, Op. 43; Leonore No. 3, Op. 72

London Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond.
 ● MERCURY LPS 5000. LP. \$4.98.
 ● ● MERCURY LPS 9000. SD. \$5.98.

Having turned the Russian campaign of 1812 into a sonic smasher, Mercury continues the struggle against Bonaparte with this climactic moment from the Peninsular War of 1813. That the *Battle Symphony* was ideal for stereo (and rather pointless otherwise) became clear when the Morton Gould version appeared last year. Those who know that set and haven't heard this new one may doubt my word, but the truth is that Dorati and his cohorts have succeeded in making all previous recordings sound like pretty mild stuff. *Wellingtons Sieg* is not great music—and Beethoven would be the first to say so. It can be quite entertaining, however, and it is of lasting antiquarian interest as the only really surviving example of its genre. (Battle pieces were once a major item of mass entertainment, and Mercury is obviously out to revive them.)

Before we get lost among the artillery and small arms, it ought to be said that the fundamental advantage of this set is that musically it's a stronger, better-paced, and more persuasive account of the score. Dorati plays it straight and plays it well in the same manner that he provides forthright statements of the two overtures on the other side of the record. Mercury once more went to West Point for its sound of battle, and this time three cannon and a collection of muskets provide the gunsmoke. The thing that impresses is that these additions aren't just sound effects. Beethoven wrote 188 cannon shots into his music, and they blend with the sinister rattle of the musket volleys to produce a striking intensification of the total impact. (If the wind machine and sheep in *Don Quixote* can be musical, why not patterns of firing?) In other words, Mercury has provided the better disc because it has gone to the trouble to treat the work seriously and give it the kind of performance Beethoven intended.

Along with the set come a print of the battle, which adds to the interest of the piece, and French and English flags for those who wish to convert their

speakers into opposing camps. The mono version, incidentally, is just as carefully engineered as the stereo. R.C.M.

BORODIN: Prince Igor (highlights)

Valeria Heybalova (s), Yaroslavna; Dusan Popovich (b), Igor; Zharko Tzveych (bs), Galitsky and Konchak. Chorus and Orchestra of the National Opera, Belgrade, Oscar Danon, cond.
 ● LONDON 5563. LP. \$4.98.
 ● ● LONDON OS 25202. SD. \$5.98.

A selection from London's complete version of the opera, this recording is distinguished mainly by Popovich's magnificent voicing of Igor's monologue, and by a good version of the *Polovtsi Dances*—with chorus, really the only way they should ever be performed. The chief drawback is some embarrassing bellowing by Zharko Tzveych in Galitsky's aria. It must be said, too, that some of the other selections—Konchak's aria and Yaroslavna's "I Shed Tears"—are mighty dull unless the singing is quite out of the ordinary, which is not so here. The sound is fine, except that the solo voices are recorded too close up. C.L.O.

BRAHMS: Quartets for Piano and Strings: No. 1, in G minor, Op. 25; No. 2, in A, Op. 26

Quartetto di Roma.
 ● DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON LPM 18529/28. Two LP. \$5.98 each.
 ● ● DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON SLPM 138015/14. Two SD. \$6.98 each.

Not very long ago, Deutsche Grammophon issued highly commendable recordings of the three Brahms string quartets; now this same company has come out



Quartetto di Roma

with equally fine disc interpretations of the first two of the three piano quartets. It is to be hoped that the third will follow shortly. The ensemble playing here is of a very high order, perfectly balanced at all times. The performances have a certain Italianate fluency which occasionally results in a bit too much speed, yet with this fluency also goes a tonal firmness and an understanding of the German and gypsy elements in music. Sonics are commendable in both versions of both quartets, though stereo gives a definite place to each instrument on the aural stage—violin to the left, piano in the center, and viola and cello to the right. In the two-channel edition, the piano tone seems a trifle brighter too.

A word about the Quartetto di Roma. Some years ago, there was a string quar-

ter bearing this name. The present group is made up of Ornella Puliti Santoliquido, piano; Arrigo Pelliccia, violin; Bruno Giuranna, viola, and Massimo Amfiteatrof, cello. Those familiar with the personnel, past and present, of I Virtuosi di Roma and I Musici will probably be able to recognize these players as members of those two leading Italian string ensembles. P.A.

BRAHMS: Quintet for Piano and Strings, in F minor, Op. 34

Sviatoslav Richter, piano; Borodin Quartet.
 ● MK-ARTIA 1516. LP. \$5.98.

These Soviet artists approach this impassioned Brahms score with warmth and considerable care. Their ensemble playing is very well balanced, and they even take the trouble to repeat the exposition of the first movement. Although their interpretation would have benefited from a bit more incisiveness, particularly in the finale, it is a highly acceptable reading, clothed in faithful, slightly resonant sound. P.A.

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 1, in C minor, Op. 68

London Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond.
 ● MERCURY MG 50268. LP. \$4.98.
 ● ● MERCURY SR 90268. SD. \$5.98.

There are many different ways to interpret this heroic symphony; what may be moving to one listener may fail to touch another. Dorati's approach is essentially muscular, full of rhythmic drive. Though it is eminently listenable, I myself found his conception a bit too extroverted, a brilliant surface with too little substance beneath it. It must be generally agreed, however, that the London Symphony plays here in top form, crisp and clean. Mercury has provided top-quality sound, in which even the resinous attacks of the strings may be discerned. In stereo, the orchestra is deployed naturally and evenly. P.A.

BRUCH: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1, in G minor, Op. 26

†Mozart: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 3, in G, K. 216

Jaime Laredo, violin; National Symphony Orchestra, Howard Mitchell, cond.
 ● RCA VICTOR LM 2472. LP. \$4.98.
 ● ● RCA VICTOR LSC 2472. SD. \$5.98.

According to Paul Hume's jacket notes, this disc represents a meeting of three nineteen-year-old minds. The Mozart Concerto was written and the Bruch Concerto begun when their respective composers were nineteen, and the amazing Bolivian-born violinist Jaime Laredo was just two weeks short of his nineteenth birthday when he recorded these two works.

Young Laredo has already recorded some performances that have been astounding for the technical virtuosity and—far more important—stylistic maturity they have displayed. These qualities are again to be heard in his deft, delicate, often subtle handling of the Mozart Concerto. Portions of the Bruch, however, seem unduly heavy and often are square-

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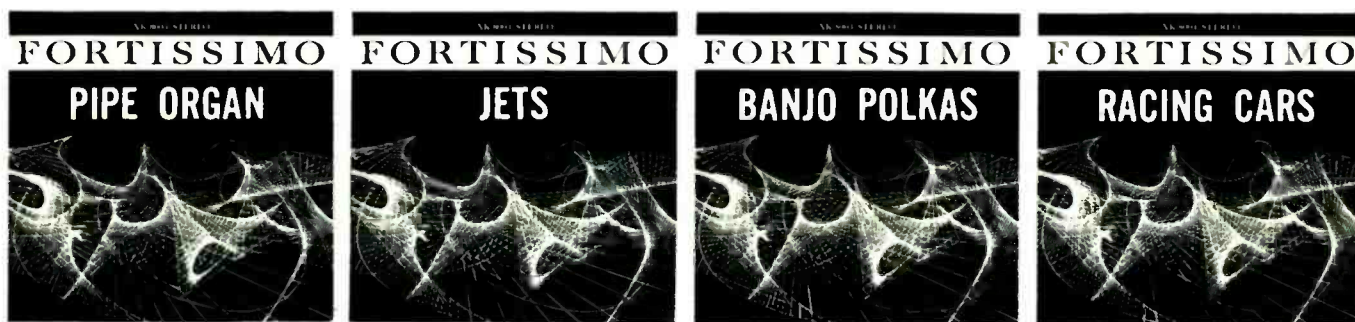
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Cutting the master disc from the inside out has long been advocated as a solution to the problem now encountered in classical recordings wherever a symphonic work closes with a loud finale at the end of a lengthy side. Unfortunately, the four initial releases in this series do not contain classical material. We won't know how the theory works until some one puts out a stereo disc with an "1812 Overture" that starts next to the label. The Fortissimo series anticipates playback equipment considerably better than what we have today. Their master tapes are recorded at 60 inches per second with the heads oriented

horizontally. Of even greater significance to the record fan are the measures that have been taken to improve the transfer from tape to disc. These include a 92,000 cps tone superimposed over the regular signal while cutting the master disc. It seems that the conventional hot stylus technique cannot do as good a job in the harder material they are using for this series. The finished pressings contain a new and harder compound called Polymax. All these steps produce a stereo disc unlike any I've heard before.

Of the four translucent discs released so far, these two records offer the most convincing evidence of the changes this series could make within the industry. Conventional surface noise is totally absent and response is phenomenal. The pipe organ played by Paul Renard is the second Wurlitzer located in the Radio City Music Hall building. This smaller version of the main theatre organ is located in a studio atop the building that was originally intended for radio broadcasts. Miked at extremely close quarters, the sound of the studio organ has a gleam impossible to capture in the vast auditorium. The music is sure-fire stuff by George M. Cohan. The 27-year old Paul Renard doesn't have the polish and poise of the veteran theatre organists but he sails into these show stoppers with a complete quota of enthusiasm. This record won't be studied for the performance of the music. The attraction is the sound just as it is in the companion release of jet planes and a helicopter recorded at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. In high and low fly-by, take-off and landing, these jets have the "live" quality formerly available only on 15 ips professional tapes. Once the word gets around, these will be the test records in the months ahead.

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FORTISSIMO

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CIRCLE 40 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

ly phrased. Either consciously or unconsciously, Mitchell and the orchestra reflect the soloist's moods. They provide a properly light accompaniment for the Mozart and a weighty one for the Bruch. The reproduction in both mono and stereo is clear and properly balanced.

A printer's error on the labels of both editions lists the Mozart Concerto with its proper key signature and Köchel catalogue number, but credits that work to Bruch. P.A.

CHANLER: *Nine Epitaphs*—See Trimble: *Four Fragments from the Canterbury Tales*.

CHOPIN: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in E minor, Op. 11*

†Mendelssohn: *Capriccio brillant, in B minor, Op. 22*

Gary Graffman, piano; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond.
• RCA VICTOR LM 2468. LP. \$4.98.
• • RCA VICTOR LSC 2468. SD. \$5.98.

The nocturne movement of the Chopin fares best in the present performance, for Graffman's tastefully reticent phraseology gives the music a fine, arching line. The first movement, however, lacks communicative appeal in this playing, and the finale too needs more spring and rhythmic vibrancy (as opposed to Graffman's intellectually precise attention to note values). While the emphasis on the composer and the music at hand is commendable, there is also a blank, rather objective plainness in evidence here. Wayward though it is, Stefan Askenase's recent DGG version of this concerto seems to me much more expressive and interesting. I also prefer the lovely and rarely played Chopin *Krakowiak* which that disc offers to the Mendelssohn here.

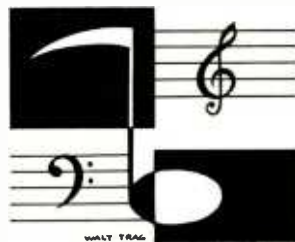
Munch makes the unfortunately familiar cut in the opening tutti of the Chopin, and adds little otherwise to the total. The sound is rather clinical in sonority, but otherwise excellent. H.G.

CHOPIN: *Etudes: Op. 10; Op. 25. Ballade, No. 2, in F, Op. 38. Nocturne, No. 3, in B, Op. 9, No. 3*

†Liszt: *Mephisto Waltz*

Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano.
• MK-ARTIA 203. Two LP. \$11.96.

Ashkenazy has little to fear from the extreme technical demands posed by these works. He can play with astonishing facility and lightness, his pianistic endurance is seemingly limitless, and he seldom produces a percussive or otherwise unattractive tone in these performances. He does, however, tend to be tonally monotonous. The pianist is apt to disremember that these pieces are as much studies in touch as they are studies in stamina, and his super-legato, while effective and beautiful in those études requiring this approach, does tend to militate against his rendition as a whole. When crisp articulation of passage work is called for, or independence of part writing at high speeds, Ashkenazy's fingers are apt to "melt" into one another, and the result is an occasional loss of clarity and blurring together of unrelated harmonies. This is most apparent in the *Black-Key Etude*, the *Revolutionary*, and Op. 10, No. 4



(both for the left hand) and the arpeggiatorun F major, Op. 10, No. 8.

In addition, there is interpretative inconsistency in the present set: some of the pieces are played with exquisite finesse, while others are treated metronomically and are quite lacking in subtlety. Moreover, there are such perversities as ending the double-sixth étude *pianissimo* and *leggiero* when Chopin plainly indicated that he wanted fortissimo there. These more than occasional touches of preciousness are recurrent throughout these renditions; they are a new feature in Ashkenazy's work, and I hope a temporary one. There are elements of greatness in these performances and one cannot do other than admire them. Nevertheless, I will continue to cherish the deleted Concert Hall edition of the Etudes by Robert Goldsand because of its greater variety and subtlety.

The Ballade and *Mephisto Waltz* both duplicate other Ashkenazy performances for other companies. This *Mephisto* is a shade faster and more driving than the one on Angel. The improved definition of the piano sound on the present disc makes the performance of the Ballade sound a good deal more assured and convincing. The fine early Nocturne, played with engaging flow, is new to the pianist's discography. Sonics are very satisfactory throughout, but the surfaces on these Russian-made discs are a bit noisy. H.G.

CHOPIN: *Fantaisie, in F minor, Op. 49. Mazurkas: No. 17, in B flat minor, Op. 24, No. 4; No. 51, in A minor, Op. posth. Scherzos: No. 1, in B minor, Op. 20; in E, Op. 54*

Adam Harasiewicz, piano.
• EPIC LC 3744. LP. \$4.98.
• • EPIC BC 1108. SD. \$5.98.

These flowing, well-paced readings are, nevertheless, just a shade on the bland side. Harasiewicz is a strong technician and he plays with an admirable balance of voice lines, lack of sentimentality, and considerable forward movement. In fact, he goes such a long way in the right direction of architectural clarification that I wish he had thrown aside all the impediments of "traditional-salon style." Very often, as in the middle section of the B minor Scherzo, or in the *alla marcia* introduction to the Fantasia, the artist will build boldly to an inevitable harmonic peak and then retreat from it, just before reaching the top. Similarly, Harasiewicz has a slight, but noticeable tendency to accelerate the tempo at climaxes, and this produces an inevitable weakening of rhetorical emphasis.

The E major Scherzo holds together better than the other three big pieces here recorded; and since the Mazurkas require grace and can better withstand the softening effects of rubato, they suit this artist's basically lyric temperament

best of all. The piano sound is not particularly colorful or sensuous, but pleasing nevertheless. H.G.

DVORAK: *Slavonic Rhapsodies, Op. 45; Scherzo capriccioso, Op. 66*

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Karel Sejna, cond.
• SUPRAPHON LPV 407. LP. \$5.98.

It has been a long time since Dvořák's three Rhapsodies have been made available on one disc. It is good to have them back together again, to listen to the composer giving free rein to his imagination within the framework of the nationalistic music of his native Bohemia. Here one encounters appealing juxtapositions of narrative musical drama and the gay abandon of country folk enjoying a holiday. The later *Scherzo capriccioso* fits nicely into this program, too, offering as it does an effective blend of the darkly dramatic and the light, carefree elements of Dvořák's work.

Sejna and the fine Czech Philharmonic have captured the spirit of all this music admirably, and give performances of the highest order. The fidelity of the recording is not quite as high; it will pass muster, though it cannot compare to the more brilliant sounds that technicians on this side of the Iron Curtain have been producing in recent years. P.A.

DVORAK: *Symphony No. 5, in E minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World")*

NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond.
• • RCA VICTOR LME 2408. SD. \$4.98.

For a feature review including this recording, see page 53.

ENESCO: *Rumanian Rhapsodies, Op. 11: No. 1, in A; No. 2, in D*

†Liszt: *Hungarian Rhapsodies: No. 5, in E minor ("Héroïde-Élégaïque"); No. 6, in D ("Carnaval de Pesth")*

Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Vladimir Golschmann (in the Enesco), Anatol Fistoulari (in the Liszt), conds.
• VANGUARD SRV 119. LP. \$1.98.
• • VANGUARD SRV 119. SD. \$2.98.

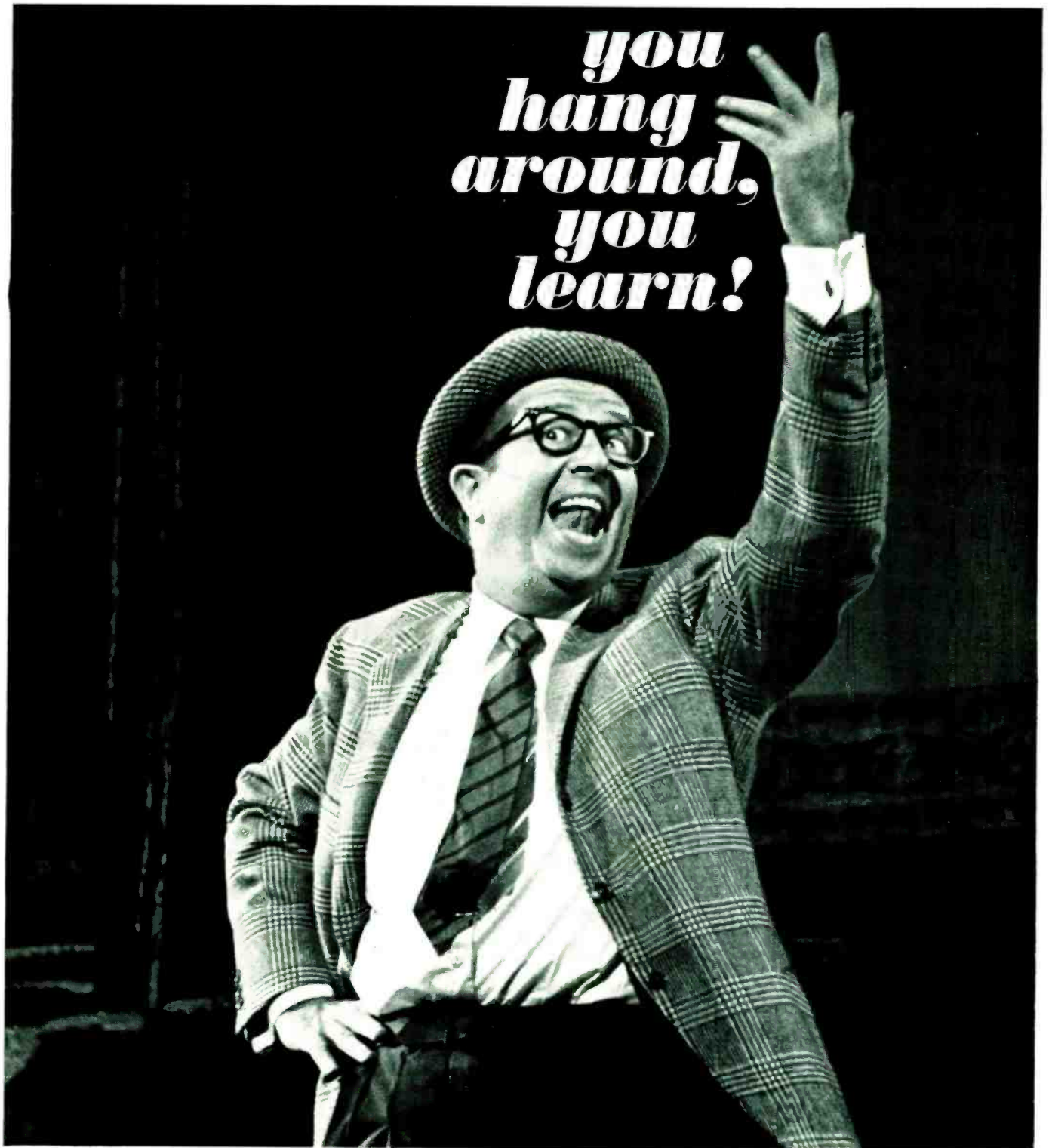
Shrewdly combining the appeals of the relatively familiar and relatively unfamiliar, the latest release in Vanguard's low-priced demonstration series is uncommonly attractive for its special musical as well as now expected technical interest. The whirling first Enesco rhapsody has been recorded before with more breath-taking virtuosity, if seldom with more piquant tonal coloring and delicate clarity; but to the still inadequately appreciated, hauntingly songful second, Golschmann brings unusually fervent nostalgia and vibrant sonority. And if Fistoulari's lusty drive in the sprawling episodic Sixth Hungarian Rhapsody (No. 9, in E flat, in the original series for piano solo) is much the same as that in his memorable set of Nos. 1 through 4 (VRS 108), he brings unanticipated poignance to the less often heard, darkly somber Fifth. Happily, too, the striking contrasts between one conductor's lyric grace and the other's dramatic power are

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preserved both by the versatile Viennese players and by the Vanguard engineers whose brightly clean wide-range recording is admirable in monophony, while revealing still more authenticity in the expansive stereo edition. R.D.D.

GERSHWIN: *Rhapsody in Blue; An American in Paris*

Johann von Kurtz, piano (in the *Rhapsody*); Hamburg International Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm von Luden, cond.

• • TOPS 6001. SD. \$3.85.

These performances are fairly literal for Gershwin, though the brasses seem to have captured the spirit and tone quality of American jazz, and Von Kurtz does a passable job with the piano solo in the *Rhapsody*. Highs are fairly bright in *An American in Paris*, but they're pretty mushy in the *Rhapsody*. P.A.

GIULIANI: *Concerto for Guitar and String Orchestra*—See Arnold: *Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra*, Op. 67.

GRIEG: *Peer Gynt: Suite No. 1, Op. 46*—See Sibelius: *Finlandia*, Op. 26, No. 7.

HANDEL: *Concertos for Organ and Orchestra*, Op. 4 (complete)

Johannes Ernst Köhler, organ; String Orchestra of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kurt Thomas, cond.

• EPIC LC 3734; 3737. Two LP. \$4.98 each.
• • EPIC BC 1101; 1103. Two SD. \$5.98 each.

Another excellent set of performances, worthy of a place alongside the Biggs (Columbia) and Kraft (Vox) sets. Köhler has a lively sense of rhythm and a crisp touch in the fast movements. In the slow ones he adds elaborations of line and texture that are discreet and in good taste. Thomas' style is once or twice, as in the opening movement of No. 4, a little heavy, and in portions of Nos. 5 and 6 the orchestra seems too loud; but generally speaking, the orchestra is first-rate, and balances and the quality of sound are good. My vote still goes to the Biggs set, but the present one deserves serious consideration. N.B.

HANDEL: *Messiah*

Soloists; J. Clifford Welsh, organ; Masterwork Chorus (Morristown, N. J.), David Randolph, cond.

• • DESIGN COMPATIBLE FIDELITY 3051. Three discs. \$9.95.

"New Jersey," wrote Louis Moreau Gottschalk in his diary a century ago, "is the poorest place to give concerts in the whole world except Central Africa." I don't know about Central Africa, but I'm sure that if our first internationally celebrated virtuoso could visit New Jersey today he would find it somewhat improved. The implication that it is a musical desert is no longer entirely justified. Oases have sprung up that support symphony orchestras and other musical ensembles: one of the great universities there holds three-week-long



seminars in the most advanced contemporary music, and the state university press is in the process of publishing a full score of *Messiah* freed of all editorial impurities. One of the greenest spots, musically speaking, in the Garden State is the community of Morristown, where the present chorus was founded six years ago. Now boasting more than two hundred members, the choir has been well trained by David Randolph, who has shown excellent taste and a commendable adventurousness in his programs.

There are apparent here very few of the faults that might have been expected in a suburban chorus that does not have a long experience. The unnamed soloists are all plainly of professional caliber, and the chorus turns in a creditable job. The recording is especially interesting because the same disc is equally effective whether played for stereo or monophonic reproduction. Only one thing keeps the set from being considered among the big-league performances: the accompaniment is played on an organ. N.B.

HANDEL: *Water Music: Suite*—See Bach, J. C.: *Symphonies*, Op. 18.

LALO: *Symphonie espagnole*, Op. 21—See Walton: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*.

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsodies: No. 5, in E minor* ("Héroïde-Élégaïque"); *No. 6, in D* ("Carnaval de Pesth")—See Enesco: *Rumanian Rhapsodies, Op. 11: No. 1, in A; No. 2, in D*.

LISZT: *Mephisto Waltz*—See Chopin: *Etudes: Op. 10; Op. 25*.

MACDOWELL: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in D minor*, Op. 23—See Prokofiev: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 3, in C*, Op. 26.

MAHLER: *Kindertotenlieder; Four Songs*

Jennie Tourel, mezzo; New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond.
• COLUMBIA ML 5597. LP. \$4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6197. SD. \$5.98.

Both of these groups of songs are realized so well that one must go back to the Kathleen Ferrier-Bruno Walter versions to find any real competition for them. Actually, not even that closes the issue, since Ferrier did not record *Das irdische Leben* and Tourel's performance of this one song justifies acquiring the present collection.

The four songs (three of them from Rückert) are among the finest of Mahler's many fine songs and belong in any comprehensive vocal collection, irrespective of what one may feel about Mahler the symphonist. The distinctive emotional force of his music is fully realized in these simpler forms, and the performances are wonderfully sympathetic. The *Kindertoten* cycle is, of course, a masterpiece and accepted as such universally.

In its poignancy it is quite unexcelled. Technically this disc is unlikely to win any prizes, but the sound remains adequate, with the stereo preferable. R.C.M.

MARTINU: *Fantaisies Symphoniques; Memorial to Lidice*

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Karel Ančerl, cond.
• SUPRAPHON LPV 416. LP. \$5.98.

The *Fantaisies Symphoniques* constitute Martinů's sixth symphony. There are three movements, all of them laying special stress on brilliant orchestration, strong contrasts, tunefulness, and a general sense of improvisation and rich stirring of the musical pot. It all comes off most impressively under Ančerl's inspired conducting; unfortunately, however, the recording cannot match that of the same work by Charles Munch and the Boston Symphony. The *Memorial to Lidice* is a short, solemn, heartfelt little piece written during World War II. A.F.

MASCAGNI: *Cavalleria rusticana*

Giulietta Simionato (ms), Santuzza; Raquel Satre (ms), Lola; Anna di Stasio (c), Mamma Lucia; Mario del Monaco (t), Turiddu; Cornell MacNeil (b), Alfio. Chorus and Orchestra of L'Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Tullio Serafin, cond.


• LONDON A 4240. Two LP. \$9.96.
• • LONDON OSA 1213. Two SD. \$11.96.

This version's chief advantage over its competitors is in the breadth and naturalness of London's stereo sound. Otherwise, I'm afraid it promises more than it achieves. Simionato is a fine artist who on the stage brings a dignity and womanliness to the role of Santuzza that elevates the opera above its normal level whenever she is in sight. On this recording, however, her controlled performance, though well sung, seems somewhat lacking in passion. The same might be said of Serafin's conducting, especially in the opening twenty minutes or so. He lavishes much care and affection on the villagers' choruses and the little instrumental interludes. They are not worth it, and the music does not sustain itself. With the visual attractions of a good production, his slow pacing and careful phrasing would undoubtedly be welcome, but on records, it tends to bring things to a halt. This isn't music to linger over.

Del Monaco here makes his way through the role of Turiddu in an especially graceless fashion, and his voice does not sound as fresh as it did on the previous London *Cavalleria*. Cornell MacNeil brings his imposing instrument to Alfio's music, but the results are not quite what was hoped for; he betrays an insistent throb on sustained tones—particularly in his entrance song—which does not augur well. His duet with Santuzza goes well, though, and makes for the recording's most vital moments. The chorus and orchestra are both first-rate, the other soloists average.

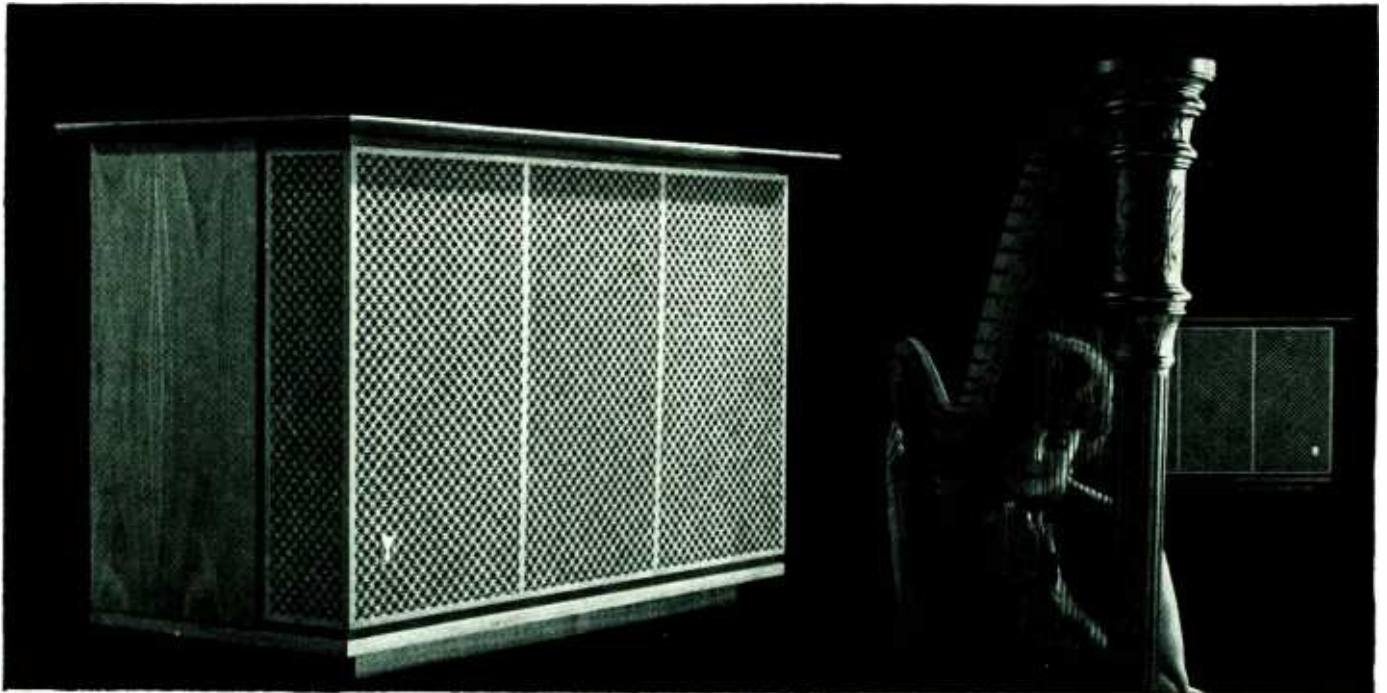
The fourth side of the album, devoted to a recital of Italian songs by Mr. del Monaco, adds nothing to the merits of the release. C.L.O.

MENDELSSOHN: *Capriccio brillant, Op. 22*—See Chopin: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in E minor, Op. 11*.


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MENDELSSOHN: *Midsummer Night's Dream: Overture; Scherzo; Nocturne; Wedding March*
†**Schubert:** *Rosamunde, Op. 26: Overture; Entr'acte after Act II; Entr'acte after Act III; Ballet Music No. 2*

Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond.

- LONDON CM 9237. LP. \$4.98.
- • LONDON CS 6186. SD. \$5.98.

Almost every time the incidental music from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Rosamunde* appears on discs it appears back-to-back. These two suites make highly compatible groove-fellows, but this arrangement never allows us to hear either Mendelssohn's or Schubert's lovely incidental music complete. Ansermet offers the more important excerpts here. He seems to me rather too heavy-handed with the Mendelssohn, especially in the ethereal Overture and Scherzo; but his Schubert is completely in the proper vein. The sound is rounded, though the stereo effect is not very great. P.A.

MOZART: *Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 22, in E flat, K. 482; No. 23, in A, K. 488*

Robert Casadesu, piano; Columbia Symphony Orchestra, George Szell, cond.
• COLUMBIA ML 5594. LP. \$4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6194. SD. \$5.98.

The last word on K. 482 has not yet been said on discs, but while waiting for it we could do worse than accept the present recording; no better one is available. Casadesu turns in his customary clean, elegant type of performance, and in the great slow movement he and Szell achieve profundity and eloquence. In the finale the soloist fills in nicely some of the spaces Mozart left open.

In K. 488 Casadesu takes the marvelous Adagio rather fast (in the purely orchestral portions Szell slows it down a bit), and he sometimes ignores Mozart's legato marks. Here the orchestra sounds particularly beautiful, although the sound throughout this recording is very fine; only in one passage of the first movement of K. 482 is the balance imperfect. It seems to me, however, that both Clara Haskil's and Serkin's readings of K. 488 are warmer and more poetic than this new version. N.B.

MOZART: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 3, in G, K. 216—See Bruch: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1, in G minor, Op. 26.*

MOZART: *Quartets for Flute and Strings: in D, K. 285; in G, K. 285a; in C, K. 285b; in A, K. 298*

Samuel Baron, flute; Members of Fine Arts Quartet.

- CONCERTDISC M 1215. LP. \$4.98.
- • CONCERTDISC CS 215. SD. \$4.98.

All of Mozart's flute quartets are here offered on one disc, for the first time in stereo. Baron's playing is first-class—accurate in pitch, practically noiseless in production, facile in technique, and pure, if rather cool, in tone. He is ably seconded by the string performers, and the recording is excellent. From the

standpoint of performance the Epic and Vanguard monophonic discs containing all four quartets are on a par with this one, but if it is stereo you want in this music, this is the disc for you. N.B.

MOZART: *Rondos: in D, K. 382; in A, K. 386—See Beethoven: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 3, in C minor, Op. 37.*

MOZART: *Symphonie concertante for Violin, Viola, and Orchestra, in E flat, K. 364—See Bach: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in A minor, S. 1041*

MOZART: *Symphonies: No. 39, in E flat, K. 543; No. 40, in G minor, K. 550*

Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, cond.

- DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON LPM 18625. LP. \$5.98.
- • DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON SLPM 138125. SD. \$6.98.

The E flat Symphony has been very well served on records. There are excellent performances, finely recorded, by Klemperer, Böhm, Jochum, and Karajan, to which can now be added the present one. Fricsay conveys the dramatic character of the introduction and the mellow lyricism of the main body of the first movement. His Andante sings from start to finish. The Trio of the Minuet sounds like a sublimated peasant dance, and the finale has the proper wit and spirit. On the other hand, Fricsay's view of the G minor, which is also that of some other highly respected conductors, is one I cannot share. He takes both of the outer movements at a deliberate tempo, which certainly makes for precision and clean-cut playing in general but drains these movements of the sweep and fervor that they should have. G minor, it is well known, was Mozart's favorite key for passionate outbursts; but what we have here is gentle, well-behaved melancholy.

Aside from a scrambling bassoon in the finale of the E flat, both works are played with technical finish. The balances permit the woodwinds to be heard when they should be, but in the E flat Symphony, even with the bass controls turned up considerably more than usual, the basses seemed lacking in definition and presence. Otherwise the sound in both versions is good. N.B.

MUSSORGSKY: *Pictures at an Exhibition (orch. Ravel)*

NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond.
• • RCA VICTOR LME 2410. SD. \$4.98.

For a feature review including this recording, see page 53.

OFFENBACH: *Les Contes d'Hoffmann (excerpts)*

Rita Streich (s), Olympia; Hanna Ludwig (s), Giulietta; Hedi Klug (s), Antonia; Ursula Gust (ms), Nicklausse; Rut Siewert (ms), Voice of the Mother; William McAlpine (t), Hoffmann; Martin Hopner (t), Spalanzani and Nathan; Randolphe Symonette (bs-b), Lindorf; Coppelius, Dapertutto, Miracle. RIAS

Chamber Choir; Radio Symphony Orchestra (Berlin), Richard Kraus, cond.
• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON LPM 19230. LP. \$5.98.

- • DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON SLPM 136230. SD. \$6.98.

DGG has managed to get quite a bit of Hoffmann onto this disc, and the engineering job has been well done in both mono and stereo. The production's pleasant aura tends to compensate for the uninteresting vocalism, but it must be noted that Rita Streich's "Doll Song" is accurate but lifeless (no pun here); that the other women are just decent provincial-level singers; that William McAlpine is a competent but colorless tenor; and that Randolphe Symonette is ponderous and unidiomatic. If a potted version is desired, however, this is the best disc currently available. C.L.O.

PERGOLESI: *La Serva padrona*

Renata Scotto (s), Serpina; Sesto Bruscantini (bs), Uberto. I Virtuosi di Roma, Renato Fasano, cond.

- MERCURY 50240. LP. \$4.98.
- • MERCURY 90240. SD. \$5.98.

Pergolesi's brief, sad life was distinguished by the fact that his comic works found a wide degree of acceptance from his contemporaries, while the serious operas over which he labored were nearly all flat failures. Today his most popular work is still the delectable intermezzo (or intermezzos, really, since *La Serva padrona* is made up of two interludes) which took all Europe by storm within a few months of its first performances as intermezzo to his own *Il prigionier superbo*.

The only important happening in the plot is the capture of Uberto by his scheming maid, Serpina. Musically, it is a succession of delightful arias and duets in which Serpina alternately defies and cajoles, and Uberto turns from severity to bewilderment to capitulation. The present performance is as good as we are likely to hear. Fasano and his orchestra can't be bettered in this sort of music, and the two roles are in excellent hands. Scotto manages to convey all of Serpina's sauciness and a good measure of her pathos, real or affected; her two best-known arias, "*Stizzoso mio, stizzoso*" and "*A Serpina penserete*," go extremely well. Bruscantini is an experienced hand at the buffo game, and while he is a bit uncomfortable at the bottom of the scale, he is more at home on top than most basses, and he has the character well in hand.

Mercury's sound is a trifle harsh and close-to in both versions; the stereo edition contains some nice effects of coming and going that are naturally absent from the monophonic record. Endorsed. C.L.O.

PROKOFIEV: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 3, in C, Op. 26*
†MacDowell: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in D minor, Op. 23*

Van Cliburn, piano; Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Walter Hendl, cond.

- RCA VICTOR LM 2507. LP. \$4.98.
- • RCA VICTOR LSC 2507. SD. \$5.98.

As John Briggs points out in his notes for this album, there is something especially appropriate about a recording of this Prokofiev concerto by the Chi-

cago Symphony, for the composer gave the work its world premiere at a concert of that orchestra in 1921. I was present on that occasion, and I will never forget it. There was a steely, relentless all-outness to Prokofiev's playing which has never been equaled by any subsequent pianist, but Cliburn comes closer to it than most. One suspects that this entire interpretation was based on a close study of Prokofiev's own recording; if so, it couldn't have had a better model.

The performance of the MacDowell on the other side is also a beauty. The romantic qualities of the music are superbly appreciated as well as its splash and dash. Political or nationalistic considerations of an obvious sort may have dictated this coupling, but no one need apologize for the MacDowell. It ought long since to have taken its place alongside the overplayed concertos of Grieg and Tchaikovsky, and it certainly will do so when it is so finely performed and so magnificently recorded as it is here. A.F.

PROKOFIEV: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 2, in G minor, Op. 63*

†Saint-Saens: *Havanaise, Op. 83*

†Tchaikovsky: *Sérénade mélancolique, Op. 26*

Leonid Kogan, violin; State Orchestra of the U.S.S.R., Kiril Kondrashin, cond.
• MONITOR MC 2051. LP. \$4.98.

These performances present Kogan in an unusually lyrical vein. One is not likely to encounter any more songful recorded interpretations of any of these three predominantly lyrical works. The violinist's approach causes him to broaden the tempos throughout most of the Prokofiev concertos, but this treatment is eminently suited to the nature of the music, and there is sufficient bravura in the last movement to put it across effectively. The two shorter pieces are marked by warmth and stylistic elegance. Kondrashin's accompaniments are sympathetic, if not very polished, and the recorded sound is satisfactory. P.A.

PROKOFIEV: *Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67*

†Tchaikovsky: *The Nutcracker, Op. 71: Orchestral Suite*

Leonard Bernstein, narrator (in the Prokofiev); New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond.

• COLUMBIA ML 5593. LP. \$4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6193. SD. \$5.98.

The twenty-fourth *Peter and the Wolf* and the forty-fifth *Nutcracker Suite* now available on American discs, both skillfully, warmly, and richly performed and beautifully recorded. A.F.

RACHMANINOFF: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in C minor, Op. 18*

†Rimsky-Korsakov: *Easter Overture, Op. 36 ("Grande Pâque Russe")*

Raymond Lewenthal, piano; Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel, cond.

• • WESTMINSTER WST 14076. SD. \$5.98.

This strikes me, I'm afraid, as a thoroughly routine record. The tempos

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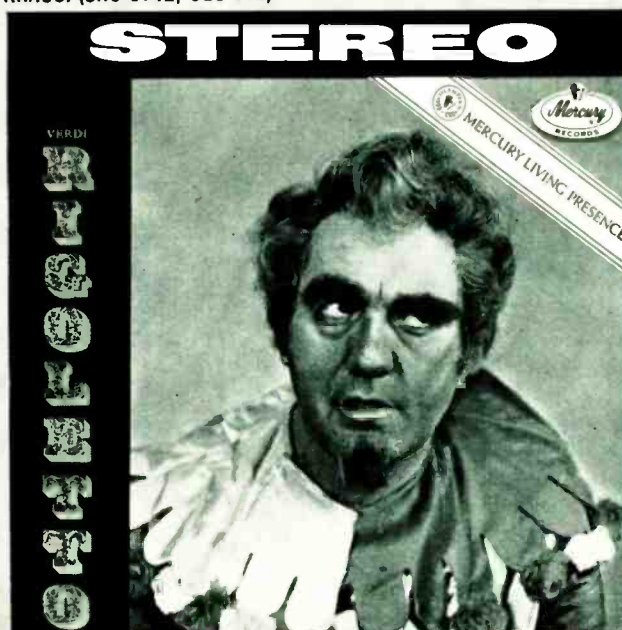
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are fast (which is all for the good), but the rhythm and phrase contours are flat and tensionless (which isn't). The orchestral playing is not the best either; the attacks are flaccid and some of the first-desk playing is mighty shaky. Nor is the engineering distinguished: an excessive amount of hall resonance clouds the balance, obscuring much instrumental detail. H.G.

RESPIGHI: *Pini di Roma; Fontane di Roma*

NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond.
• • RCA VICTOR LME 2409. SD. \$4.98.

For a feature review including this recording, see page 53.

RIEGGER: *Trio for Piano, Violin, and Cello; Quartet for Strings, No. 2*

John Covelli, piano; William Kroll, violin; Alexander Kouguell, cello (in the Trio); Kroll Quartet (in the Quartet).
• COLUMBIA ML 5589. LP. \$4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6189. SD. \$5.98.

Issued to commemorate Wallingford Riegger's seventy-fifth birthday, this record presents works selected from highly contrasting periods in his career. The Trio was written in 1920 and reminds one much of Fauré; its idiom is classically inspired, sweetly melodious, often exquisitely tender and gentle in expression, but without sentimentality. The quartet dates from 1948 and takes us close to Bartók. It is consistently atonal, forceful, pungent, and aggressive, but with profound reserves of feeling behind it. In both cases the facture of the music—its forms, its build, its relationship to the instruments—is altogether masterly; both works indicate clearly why Wallingford Riegger is one of the major Americans. He could not ask for more sympathetic interpretation than he receives here, and the recording is in harmony with the performance. A.F.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Easter Overture, Op. 36 ("Grand Pâque Russe")*
—See Rachmaninoff: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in C minor, Op. 18.*

SAINT-SAENS: *Havanaise, Op. 83*
—See Prokofiev: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 2, in G minor, Op. 63.*

SCHUBERT: *Rosamunde, Op. 26; Overture; Entr'acte after Act II; Entr'acte after Act III; Ballet Music No. 2*—See Mendelssohn: *Midsummer Night's Dream: Overture.*

SCHUMANN: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 54*
†Bach: *Concerto for Clavier and Orchestra, No. 1, in D minor, S. 1052*

Sviatoslav Richter, piano; State Radio Orchestra of the U.S.S.R., Alexander Gauk, cond. (in the Schumann), Kurt Sanderling, cond. (in the Bach).
• MONITOR MC 2050. LP. \$1.98.

Richter has made better versions of both works for other companies. In these

bargain-price reissues of recordings processed from inferior Soviet tapes, the piano tone is blatant, and the orchestral playing in the Schumann is shabby and insensitive, with careless attacks, unsympathetic phrasing, and incredibly poor intonation. Richter's playing begins with characteristic sensitivity, but before very long he starts to hustle along with what appears obvious annoyance at his inept accompaniment. At the reduced rates, the Bach will pass muster provided one is not too fussy about the niceties of baroque ornamentation and is undisturbed by the overlarge orchestra. On the whole, the disc seems to me an unfortunate exploitation of the pianist. H.G.

SHOSTAKOVICH: *Symphony No. 11, Op. 103; Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in F, Op. 101*

Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, Eugene Mravinsky, cond. (in the Symphony). Dimitri Shostakovich, piano; U.S.S.R. Radio Symphony Orchestra, Alexander Gauk, cond. (in the Concerto).
• MK-ARTIA 201B. Two LP. \$5.98 each.

Shostakovich's Eleventh Symphony is a huge descriptive affair, filling three LP sides and describing the events of the Revolution of 1905 in some detail. In reviewing earlier recordings of it by Leopold Stokowski and André Cluytens, I suggested that its "program" be taken less than seriously and that underneath all its surface rhetoric and descriptive effects lay a work of genius. That opinion is very difficult to sustain in face of the present performance, which is practically all rhetoric and nothing else.

In reviewing previous records of the Second Piano Concerto, I have suggested that the old razzmatazz is beginning to sound a bit tired, and that view is completely borne out by the composer's own interpretation. A.F.

SIBELIUS: *Finlandia, Op. 26, No. 7; Kuolema, Op. 44; Valse triste*

†Grieg: *Peer Gynt: Suite No. 1, Op. 46*
†Alfven: *Midsommarvaka (Swedish Rhapsody, No. 1, Op. 19)*

Mormon Tabernacle Choir (in *Finlandia*); Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.
• COLUMBIA ML 5596. LP. \$4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6196. SD. \$5.98.

These four popular works from Scandinavia, here issued in an album called "Finlandia," are all given rather heavy-handed treatment. Ormandy has been far more expressive in earlier recordings of the *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 1 and *Midsommarvaka*, while this *Finlandia* becomes distorted in a strange version that has the Mormon Tabernacle Choir singing the hymnlike portions of the tone poem. The reproduction, however, is impressive, especially in the well-separated stereo edition. P.A.

SMETANA: *Trio for Piano, Violin, and Cello, in G minor, Op. 15*

†Suk: *Elegy, Op. 23*

Suk Trio.
• SUPRAPHON LVP 302. LP. \$5.98.

Smetana's chamber music was inspired by tragic events in his own life—the two

Quartets by his deafness, and this, his only Trio, by the death of his daughter Fredericka, aged five. It is not surprising to find pathos here, but for the most part the music rises above personal feelings to achieve heights of beauty and purely musical drama. The work as a whole is immensely attractive, and one wonders why it is not more frequently performed.

The short *Elegy* by Josef Suk, originally written for small instrumental ensemble without piano, was intended to accompany a tableau celebrating the mythological castle of Vyšehrad (also pictured in Smetana's tone poem of that name). Later, the composer arranged it for violin, cello, and piano, the form in which it has been recorded. In contrast to Smetana's heroic conception of Vyšehrad, Suk's is quiet and contemplative.

The Suk Trio, a Czech ensemble comprising Josef Suk (the composer's grandson), violin, Josef Chuchro, cello, and Josef Hála, piano, plays both works in glowing fashion, and the well-balanced reproduction is faithful—considerably better than that of most recent Supraphon releases I have heard. P.A.

SUK: *Elegy, Op. 23*—See Smetana: *Trio for Piano, Violin, and Cello, in G minor, Op. 15.*

TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Nutcracker, Op. 71; Orchestral Suite*—See Prokofiev: *Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67.*

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Pique Dame (highlights); Eugen Onegin (highlights)*

Valeria Heybalova (s), Liza; Melanie Bugarinovich (ms), The Countess; Alexander Marinkovich (t), Hermann (in *Pique Dame*). Valerie Heybalova (s), Tatiana; Drago Startz (t), Lenski; Dushan Popovich (b), Onegin (in *Eugen Onegin*). Chorus and Orchestra of the Belgrade Opera, Kreshimir Baronovich, cond.

• LONDON 5567. LP. \$4.98.
• • LONDON OS 25205. SD. \$5.98.

A highly pleasurable selection from London's complete versions of these two interesting operas. The sound is not quite the company's best, and the Belgrade Opera orchestra is not a choice ensemble (the *Onegin* Polonaise, perfunctory and ragged, is the one disappointing band on the record). But the singing is all very good. Heybalova is especially fine as Tatiana, with a bright, steady tone and intelligent phrasing; despite a few gusty moments, her passionate rendition of Liza's scena on the overside is also splendid. Popovich is in fine, mellow voice for Onegin's aria, and Startz puts his lovely lyric tenor to good use in Lenski's. Bugarinovich is perhaps not quite decrepit-sounding enough for the Countess, but sings well; and although Marinkovich's firm tenor is not really beautiful, he characterizes Hermann nicely. Though a few of these passages are rather awkwardly excerpted, London has at least avoided the end-of-band fade-out. Committed to those who, unlike myself, don't care to own complete editions of these affecting operas. C.L.O.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Sérénade mélancolique, Op. 26*—See Prokofiev: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 2, in G minor, Op. 63.*

TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Sleeping Beauty*, Op. 66

Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, Anatole Fistoulari, cond.
● RICHMOND BA 42001. Two LP. \$3.96.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Swan Lake*, Op. 20

London Symphony Orchestra, Anatole Fistoulari, cond.
● RICHMOND BA 42003. Two LP. \$3.96.

Now reissued on the inexpensive Richmond label, these albums were the first "complete" recordings of Tchaikovsky's two popular ballets. Actually neither is complete in the strict sense of the word, though each contains the major portions of the evening-long ballets as they are performed today. More extensive versions of the composer's scores, and more balletic recorded performances, have appeared since London Records originally released these discs; but if you don't mind Fistoulari's tempos—which seem to me excessively fast in some of the movements, great ballet bargains, especially in that their recorded sound is still of very high quality. P.A.

TRIMBLE: *Four Fragments from the Canterbury Tales*

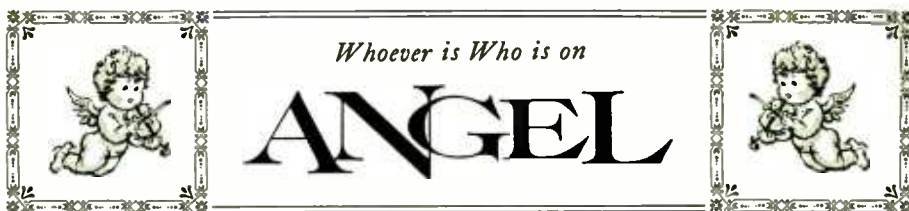
†Chanler: *Nine Epitaphs*

Adele Addison, soprano; Robert Conant, harpsichord; Charles Russo, clarinet; Martin Orenstein (in the Trimble); Phyllis Curtin, soprano; F. Ryan Edwards, piano (in the Chanler).

● COLUMBIA ML 5598. LP. \$4.98.
● COLUMBIA MS 6198. SD. \$5.98.

Seldom in a long life of record reviewing have I been so utterly beguiled, captivated, seduced, entertained, and generally delighted by a new piece on discs as by Lester Trimble's *Four Fragments from the Canterbury Tales*. The cycle begins with the nature painting in the first lines of the prologue and goes on from there to the portraits of the "verray parfit gentil knyght" and his "yong squier"; the fourth fragment is the wife of Bath's meditation on "bigamy and octogamy" in the opening portion of her own prologue. The musical setting is neither archly archaic nor self-consciously modern, although the harpsichord provides an archaic tinge; one feels, rather, that the composer has followed no program but that of good sense and good taste, has responded to Chaucer's magnificent poetry with a rich, subtle, and sensitive flow of music, and, in general, produced one of the real masterpieces of modern American song. Part of this impression is due to the performers. Miss Addison sounds, like Chaucer's squire, "as fresh as is the month of May," and so do the very lively instrumentalists with her. The interpretation is as beautiful as the work which the poet and the composer have provided, and the recording leaves nothing to be desired in either the stereo or mono version.

Before commenting on the Chanler songs one must, unfortunately, observe that Columbia has here reverted to the inexcusable policy of issuing song cycles without printing their texts in the notes. Trimble does not suffer from this because Chaucer's text can be found anywhere; but the text of Chanler's *Nine Epitaphs* is taken from an obscure book



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Love in Bath (an English spa, not a tub) is the pure spirit of Handel, with the inimitable stamp of Beecham. "The world's wittiest musical peer" (*High Fidelity*) has arranged 20 arias, dances, and choruses from Handel into a delightful ballet. Beecham wrote the scenario, Gainsborough painted the lovely Elizabeth Lindley portrait which graces the cover. The Royal Philharmonic plays to match. Angel (S) 35504

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by Walter de la Mare. Miss Curtin sings very well, with beautiful tone and fine phrasing, but her enunciation is not clear enough to project the poems as they should be projected. This is doubly regrettable because Theodore Chanler has long been known as one of the finest song writers in the United States, and the *Four Fragments* is the first important recorded example of his work.

The nine epitaphs constitute, one gathers, a kind of satirical English *Spoon River Anthology*. They have been set very simply, deftly, and atmospherically. They would, one is sure, be marvelous if one could understand them. That one cannot understand them is the fault of somebody in the Columbia organization who richly deserves to be spanked. A.F.

VERDI: *Rigoletto*

Renata Scotto (s), Gilda; Fiorenza Cossotto (ms), Maddalena; Alfredo Kraus (t), The Duke; Ettore Bastianini (b), Rigoletto; Ivo Vinco (bs), Sparafucile; *et al.* Chorus and Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Gianandrea Gavazzeni, cond.

• MERCURY OL 3112. Three LP. \$14.94.
 • MERCURY SR 39012. Three SD. \$17.94.

Yet another entry in the *Rigoletto* donnybrook (the second in stereo), and one of the wildest operatic recordings ever made by a major company. It has moments of thundering melodramatic excitement; unfortunately, some of them occur

in passages properly reserved for a warm tenderness or resigned sadness.

Let no one accuse any of the participants of niggardliness. This is the most complete *Rigoletto* on records (as befits a performance bearing the Ricordi imprimatur), including some bars usually cut in the Gilda/Duke "Addio"; the cabaletta to "Parmi veder" ("Possente amor," with chorus, but without the repeat called for by the score); and some music in the final scene that is sometimes cut. Most of the directions in the score are followed—for once the baritone adheres to the specification that he *not* cry out after the abduction of Gilda—though many of the musical traditions of performance are preserved, particularly with regard to interpolated high notes and holds where none are marked. Indeed, the only omissions of significance occur in the accompanying booklet, which for some reason does not list the singers who take the roles of Monterone, Ceprano, Marullo, Borsa, Countess Ceprano, Giovanna, the Page, or the Usher. I suppose this doesn't matter much, except that the Monterone is quite exceptional, delivering his curse with a plentiful voice and impressive fury.

Gavazzeni's rhythms are not slack, but they are in general a bit slower than is customary. There are two notable exceptions: the "Questa o quella," which plumps along so rapidly as to be nearly graceless, and the *Vendetta* duet. The usual practice with this last number is to start rather slowly, quickening the beat steadily to the climax. Gavazzeni leads into the opening bars at a headlong clip, leaving the singers to build their own climax. This would work if the singers were highly skilled at variation of color and volume, but they are not, and the piece is to some extent spent before it is half over.

Bastianini and Scotto both have their problems with this music. The baritone is splendid when dramatic punch is called for—the first scene, the first section of *Cortigiani*, and most of the last act are fine. He seems unable, however, to scale his vibrant voice down below a mezzo-forte, or to bring much variety of color to it. Consequently, the dialogue with Sparafucile is totally lacking in atmosphere; the long second-scene duet with Gilda is lost in shouting; the cantabile of *Cortigiani* ("Miei signori, pietà") is rough; and many individual lines, such as "Ma in altr'uomo qui mi cangio" (in the "Pari siamo") are treated as so many lumpen notes to be hacked over. Scotto, too, is much too muscular, and frequently sounds edgy and short of breath, though it is good to hear a Gilda who can stand up during the *Vendetta* duet and the last-act ensembles.

The best of the principals, in fact, is a new tenor, Alfredo Kraus. Reports of his European engagements had certainly not prepared me for the sort of singing heard here: it may be that his voice carries less well than it would seem. For Mercury, however, he is a magnificent Duke, the most elegant on records since Dino Borgioli on the wonderful old Columbia set. His voice is a true lyric tenor, with no hint of the *robusto* on one hand, or the *tenorino* on the other. It is steady and resonant throughout its range, and of a lovely quality. Kraus seems quite a sensitive and lively artist, and fills his work with a measure of grace otherwise missing in this production. He soars to a ringing D flat at the end of his duet with Gilda, and to a beautiful, forward D



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natural to round off the "Possente amor." His "Parmi veder" is meltingly done, and he leads the Quartet in memorable fashion. Altogether, a most exciting disc debut (or rather, recorded opera debut, for Kraus, who is himself Spanish, has recorded Spanish music for Montilla)—this may be the tenor we have needed to do justice to Bellini and Donizetti.

Fiorenza Cossotto is an excellent Madalena. Ivo Vinco a solid, but not extraordinary, Sparafucile. The chorus sings well, and the orchestra does its job; I have a hunch that some of Gavazzeni's tempos are due to consideration for his rather stiff-voiced baritone and soprano, though even Kraus's "La donna è mobile" is a bit more deliberate than usual. (I have not checked the metronome markings.) Mercury's sound is, to my ears, quite fine, the orchestra being particularly well captured. It is certainly superior to its only stereo competition (Columbia), even if it once or twice seems to place the singer in one speaker, the orchestra in the other. The mono edition is perfectly adequate, but the stereo has considerably more impact. All in all, an interesting, frequently imposing release, though far from the most polished of performances. Now come on, Mercury—who sings Monterone? C.L.O.

VIVALDI: Concertos for Violin and Strings, Op. 8, Nos. 1-4 ("The Four Seasons")

Anshel Brusilow, violin; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.
 • COLUMBIA ML 5595. LP. \$4.98.
 • • COLUMBIA MS 6195. SD. \$5.98.

Soloists; New York Sinfonietta, Max Goberman, cond.
 • • LIBRARY OF RECORDED MASTERPIECES, Vol. 1, No. 8. SD. \$8.50 on subscription; \$10 nonsubscription.

Wolfgang Schneiderhan, violin; Festival Strings Lucerne, Rudolf Baumgartner, cond.
 • ARCHIVE ARC 3141. LP. \$5.98.
 • • ARCHIVE ARC 73141. SD. \$6.98.

For a feature review of these recordings, see page 54.

WALTON: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra
 †Lalo: *Symphonie espagnole, Op. 21*

Zino Francescatti, violin; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. (in the Walton); New York Philharmonic, Dimitri Mitropoulos, cond. (in the Lalo).
 • COLUMBIA ML 5601. LP. \$4.98.
 • • COLUMBIA MS 6201. SD. \$5.98.

It is difficult to understand why the Walton is not the most popular of modern violin concertos. It has everything—romantic long lines, softly caressing orchestral color, tunes, a big symphonic structure, and plenty of display for the soloist. Yet one never hears a live performance of it and this is its only extant recording, at least in the United States. Perhaps Francescatti's splendid performance and the excellent recording which Columbia's engineers have given it here will help to establish the concerto as it deserves to be established.

A monophonic version of the Lalo on the other side, long a specialty of the house of Francescatti, has been in the record catalogues for some years. Now we can have it in stereo too. A.F.

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DONIZETTI *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Regnava nel silenzio and Mad Scene; VERDI *Ernani*, Ernani! involami; VERDI *I Vespri Siciliani*, Bolero: Merce, diletta amici; DONIZETTI *Linda di Chamounix*, O luce di quest'anima.
 Stereo OS-25111 Mono 5515

HANDEL ACIS AND GALATEA

with Peter Pears, Owen Brannigan, David Galliver, The St. Anthony Singers and Philomusica of London—Sir Adrian Boult.
 Stereo SOL-60011/2 (2 records) Mono OL-50179/80

BETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 9

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 Stereo CS-6143 Mono CM-9033

MUSIC OF HANDEL

Alcina: Torna a vagheggiar and Ombre pallide (album also includes excerpts from *Esther*, *Jephtha* and *Rodrigo*).
 Stereo SOL-60001

Miss Sutherland also appears as a Guest Artist in London's *Fledermaus* Gala recording, singing *Il Bacio*.
 Stereo OSA-1319 (3 records) Mono A-4347

RECITALS AND MISCELLANY

FERNAND ANSSEAU: *Recital*

Méhul: *Joseph: Champs paternels*. Berlioz: *La Damnation de Faust: Nature immense*. Meyerbeer: *L'Africaine: O paradis*. Massenet: *Manon: Le Rêve*. Werther: *O Nature, pleine de grace; J'aurais sur ma poitrine; Pourquoi me reveiller*. Hérodiate: *Adieu donc vains objets*. Fevrier: *Monna Vanna: Air de Prinzi-valle*. Gluck: *Orphée et Eurydice: J'ai perdu mon Eurydice*. Alceste: *O moments délicieux*. Gounod: *Roméo et Juliette: Salut! Tombeau*. Saint-Saëns: *Samson et Dalila: Vois ma misère*. Bizet: *Carmen:*

Air de la fleur. Auber: *La Muette de Portici: L'amour sacré*.

Fernand Anseau, tenor; Tilkin Servais, baritone (in the Auber); Orchestra.
• Rococo R 26. LP. \$5.95.

Fernand Anseau was what could honestly be described as an exemplary singer. The tone was steady and brilliant, evenly modulated from a melting half-voice to a heroic forte. The diction was simply perfect, the attack true, the temperament strong but never exaggerated or out of good taste. In a career that spanned twenty-seven years, he sang roles ranging from the French lyric repertoire to the early Wagner operas.

The recordings here are all taken from the period of Anseau's greatest vocal prowess; they are acoustical, except for the early electrical recording of the

Muette de Portici number. Every excerpt here is distinguished by Anseau's amplitude of voice and soundness of musical and stylistic instinct, and no one interested in good singing will want to be without his exquisitely turned "*Le Rêve*," the three *Werther* excerpts, or the *L'Africaine* and *Carmen* arias. In the lively Auber duet he is rousing abetted by the baritone Servais. The quality of the recording is surprisingly good, with a minimum of surface noise, and the voice well forward.
C.L.O.

DIMITRI BASHKIROV: *Piano Recital*

Liszt: *Valse oubliée, No. 2, in A flat*. Prokofiev: *Visions fugitives, Op. 22: Nos. 3, 10, 16, 11*. Schumann: *Intermezzos, Op. 4; Romance, Op. 28, No. 2*. Scriabin: *Waltz in A flat, Op. 38*.

Dimitri Bashkirov, piano.
• MK-ARTIA 1531. LP. \$5.98.

A pupil of the noted Soviet piano pedagogue Alexander Goldenweiser. Caucasian-born Dimitri Bashkirov was the twenty-five-year-old winner of the Marguerite Long Prize in Paris in 1956. Since that time he has concertized widely, although it was not until this winter that he appeared in the United States. To judge from the present disc, Mr. Bashkirov is definitely a "pianistic" pianist. His treatment of the instrument stresses personal charm and exquisite sound. But while this artist places emphasis on whether a given effect will sound aesthetically convincing when played on the piano, he appears to be an admirable musician who varies his personal style according to the material.

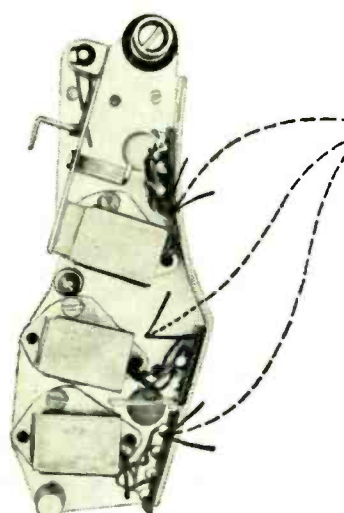
Thus, Liszt's *Valse oubliée* No. 2 has piquant charm and silvery shimmer, the group of Prokofiev *Visions fugitives* is given with a sharp "Policeman's Whistle" exactitude of rhythm, and the Scriabin has an appropriate *languueur* in contrast to the more mellifluous, singing quality on evidence in the Schumann *Romance*.

The record also contains the only available version of Schumann's outstanding *Intermezzos*, Op. 4 (once in the catalogue in a performance by Grant Johannesen). Here Mr. Bashkirov is not quite as successful as he is in the other selections. For one thing, the double-dotted notes in the first piece are not quite as precise as they could be, the pianist overlooks some of the *attacca* markings linking the pieces, and he occasionally exaggerates the tempo, especially at points where Schumann has indicated sharp, and sudden, contrasts between loud and soft. Also, some of the pianissimos have a dry, "choked-off" quality, as if the pianist were producing them with the soft pedal instead of with his fingers. (But this effect might also be due to distant microphone placement; an example occurs in the *alternativo* section of the last intermezzo.) In spite of these flaws, however, this performance does do justice to one of Schumann's very finest, and inexplicably neglected, compositions, and it is good to have a recording of the work available once more.

The sound is a bit congested in spots, but otherwise is satisfactory.
H.G.

INGE BORKH: *Operatic Arias*

Dvořák: *Rusalka: Song to the Moon*. Gluck: *Alceste: Divinités du Styx*. Mas-




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cagni: *Cavalleria rusticana: Voi lo sapete.* Verdi: *Macbeth: Vieni, t'affretta; La luce langue. La Forza del destino: Madre pietosa Vergine. Un Ballo in maschera: Ma dall'arido stelo.* Debussy: *L'enfant prodigue: Air de Lia.* Giordano: *Andrea Chénier: La mamma morta.* Cilea: *Adriana Lecouvreur: Io son l'umile ancella.*

Inge Borkh, soprano; Orchestras, Anatole Fistoulari and Rudolf Moralt, conds.
 ● LONDON 5555. LP. \$4.98.
 ● ● LONDON OS 25195. SD. \$5.98.

For some reason, the "Song to the Moon" from *Rusalka* is given prominent billing on the jacket—perhaps because its relative unfamiliarity is thought to be a selling point. It is a lovely, evocative piece, and Borkh sings it affectingly, though she does not erase memory of Joan Hammond's splendid English-language edition.

The rest of the recital is uneven. The quality of Borkh's voice is, as usual, appealing—round and cool—and her high tones are really stunning. Moreover, she is an intelligent artist who pays close attention to stylistic matters. Still, she has not mastered the ability to project declamatory recitative without seeming to wrench her voice from its moorings, and is unable to sustain high tessitura at less than nearly full volume. These shortcomings are, of course, quite grave in the Verdi numbers, and conspire to keep her versions of these arias out of the top bracket. The *Macbeth* selections also suffer from a failure to treat runs and ornaments completely naturally (a failure shared by most of her contemporary colleagues), though the ringing top makes an exciting effect. She is at her best in the verismo numbers where she can set her instrument on a connected line and give her tone free rein. The accompaniments are all right (though the *Forza* aria offers us the scrawniest-sounding bunch of monks in many a *Pater noster*), and the sound is excellent in a hectic way. C.L.O.

FREDERICK FENNEL: "Marches for Orchestra"

Walton: *Coronation March, 1953: Orb and Sceptre.* Beethoven: *Die Ruinen von Athen, Op. 113: No. 4, Marcia alla turca.* Sibelius: *Karelia, Op. 11: Alla marcia.* Wagner: *Tannhäuser: Fest-Marsch.* Schubert: *Marche militaire, in D, Op. 51, No. 1 (orch. Guiraud).* Grieg: *Sigurd Jorsalfar, Op. 56; Homage March.* Borodin: *Prince Igor: Orchestral Suite: No. 18, Polovtsi March.*

Eastman-Rochester "Pops" Orchestra, Frederick Fennell, cond.
 ● MERCURY MG 50271. LP. \$4.98.
 ● ● MERCURY SR 90271. SD. \$5.98.

Fennell's pops-orchestral releases have been fewer and generally less consequential than those in his deservedly acclaimed Eastman Wind Ensemble series, but the present march program is so formidably recorded—in blazing monophony as well as more broadspread, if almost 100 realistic stereo—that it is sure to achieve popularity as a sonic spectacular. Indeed it may be overspectacular for some tastes (I should prefer more warmth and less razor-edged sharpness), yet the sensational engineering further galvanizes the nervous verve of Fennell's readings of the familiar

Beethoven, Schubert, and Sibelius marches in particular, while it gives the super-Elgarian *Orb and Sceptre* overwhelming weight and power. Definitely not a safe choice for apartment dwellers, this will tempt less inhibited audiophiles to crash new sound barriers. R.D.D.

ELISABETH RETHBERG: Recital

Puccini: *Madama Butterfly: Un bel di. Tosca: Vissi d'arte.* Handel: *Sosarme: Rendi il sereno.* Verdi: *Aida: O patria mia; Ritorna vincitor.* Weber: *Der Freischütz: Leise, leise.* Mozart: *Nozze di Figaro: Heil'ge Quelle; Deh vieni, non tardar.* Die Zauberflöte: *Ach, ich fühl's.* Wagner: *Tannhäuser: Dich teure Halle. Lohengrin: Elsas Traum.* Giordano: *Andrea Chénier: La mamma morta.* J.

Strauss: *Zigeunerbaron: Saffis Zigeunerlied.*

Elisabeth Rethberg, soprano; Orchestra.
 ● ASCO A 115. LP. \$3.98.

This disc makes an excellent companion to Camden's "Art of Elisabeth Rethberg"; between the two, we get a fine cross section of the famous soprano's art. Everything here is done with the bright, even tone that characterized her singing at its best. While a bit more dark shading might be desired in some of the Italian arias (I find her later Victor electricals more satisfying in this respect), there could hardly be any improvement in her singing of the three Mozart arias or the two by Wagner on this record, or in her version of Saffi's song from *Zigeuner-*

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baron. Her impeccable musicianship and instinct for appropriate style are very much in evidence in all these selections. The sound, considering the acoustic origin, is satisfactory. C.L.O.

AKSEL SCHIÖTZ: *Recital*

Schubert: *Liebesbotschaft; Ganymed; Der Wanderer an den Mond; An die Laute*. Bellman: *Fredeman's Epistles: No. 25, Blasen nu alla!; No. 30, Drick ur ditt glas; No. 31, Opp, Amaryllis!* Wolf: *Heb auf dein blondes Haupt; Der Tambour; Verschwiegene Liebe; Auf dem grünen Balkon; Anakreons Grab*. Brahms: *An die Nachtigall; Salamander; Im Waldeinsamkeit; Mein Müdel hat einen Rosenmund*.

Aksel Schiøtz, baritone; Paul Ulanowsky, piano; Richard Dyer-Bennett, guitar.

• DYER-BENNET DYBX 2. LP. \$4.98.

•• DYER-BENNET DYBXS 2. SD. \$5.95.

This is the first commercial recording made by Aksel Schiøtz since he launched his comeback as a baritone after the operation that ended his career as a tenor. Fortunately, we need not fall back on our admiration for his courage and determination as justification for this release, for the essentials of Schiøtz's art are intact. To be sure, his voice has suffered—it is short on range and volume. (And it is typical of his artistic intelligence that he refuses to apply even the slightest pressure or force to make the tone sound a bit more secure.) The voice

itself, however, was never an exceptional one—pleasant and flexible, surely, but not superior to that of many other lyric tenors. What Schiøtz always had—and still has—is the musical insight to demonstrate for us just how a song should go. The gift is indefinable, but is apparently the product of a combination of instinct and training. It is also very rare.

With Schiøtz, the gift is almost entirely musical. He enunciates clearly, but makes practically no effort to inflect or shade in the manner of, say, Lehmann. He knows just where to take a ritard, and (just as importantly) where not to; where to break a phrase, where to carry it over. He is the musical equivalent of the great natural dramatic reader, who in scanning a poem knows from the start exactly how he will divide and subdivide it, and what curve he will maintain. Thus, even so ambitious a song as *Ganymed* is done to satisfaction, because the singer comprehends and projects its structure, its musical meaning. And the secret of a gem like *Verschwiegene Liebe*, a beautiful little study in parallels, is told with precision.

But the record's real treasure is the group of songs by Carl Michael Bellman, a Swedish minstrel who for a time enjoyed court favor. They are full of a fine, fatalistic, drain-life-to-the-dregs atmosphere—one can see the Reaper smiling from behind the bar. Schiøtz does them to a turn, and Dyer-Bennet supplies not only the guitar accompaniments, but a postilion horn imitation. For the other songs, Ulanowsky provides some of his very best work, entering fully into the singer's approach. The sound is flawless, and an excellent accompanying leaflet gives full texts and translations of all the songs. C.L.O.

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MAURICE SHARP: "Music for a Golden Flute"

Maurice Sharp, flute; Cleveland Sinfonietta, Louis Lane, cond.

• Epic LC 3754. LP. \$4.98.

•• Epic BC 1116. SD. \$5.98.

The Cleveland Sinfonietta is made up of Cleveland Orchestra people, and on this disc several of its elegant soloists are most elegantly put forward. Most important of the soloists in this program is, of course, Maurice Sharp, who plays the Griffes *Poem*, for flute and orchestra; Arthur Foote's *Night Piece*, for flute and strings; Honegger's *Concerto da Camera*, for flute, English horn, and strings; and Howard Hanson's *Serenade*, for flute, harp, and strings. The Foote and Hanson pieces are slight. The Griffes may well be that composer's finest work; much of his music begins to sound sadly dated, but the free, rhapsodic, highly colored impressionism of the *Poem* still holds interest. The Honegger is a delightful, somewhat neoclassical piece with a strong contrapuntal texture offsetting the lack of polyphonic variety in other compositions on the disc.

Sharp's grand playing is fully matched by that of his colleagues, Harvey McGuire (English horn), Alice Chalifoux (harp), the orchestra, and the conductor. The recording is excellent, and the whole thing has real distinction. A.F.

LIANG TSAI-PING: "China's Instrumental Heritage"

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The appeal of Oriental music—as with Oriental art—lies in a sparse beauty of line rather than in chromatic opulence. Yet, on the emotional plane, the impact of an understated, time-polished theme plucked out on the zitherlike *Cheng* can be as devastating as the Berlioz Requiem in full cry. Lyrichord's third release in the realm of Chinese instrumental music features, in addition to the *Cheng*, the *Hsiao*, or bamboo flute; the gourdlike *Sheng*; the *Hsun*, resembling an ocarina; and the fiddlelike *Nan-Hu*. The music is exotic, but lovely. Anyone willing to meet the fascinating world of the Orient halfway will be thoroughly beguiled by *Wild Geese Alighting on the Sandy Shore*, the haunting *Farewell*, and the 1,300-year-old *Spring River in the Flowery Moonlight*. Professor Liang and his fellow musicians provide definitive performances, and the reproduction is superb. O.B.B.

EVA TURNER: Operatic Arias

Verdi: *Aida: Ritorna vincitor; O patria mia. Il Trovatore: D'amor sull'ali.* Mascagni: *Cavalleria rusticana: Voi lo sapete.* Puccini: *Tosca: Vissi d'arte. Turandot: In questa reggia.*

Eva Turner, soprano; Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham and Stanford Robinson, conds.

• ANGEL COLC 114. LP. \$5.98.

Eva Turner's large, steely voice is well caught here, and delivers its knockout punch in the *Turandot* excerpt—no one would care to belittle the record, even presuming his ability to get up off the floor at its end. By and large, though, she strikes me as an amazingly uninteresting performer, with almost no sense of color or proportion, still less of character or even mood projection. Her only noticeable effort in these directions here is the dismaying sob at the conclusion of "*Vissi d'arte.*"

I don't doubt that the voice and temperament must have made considerable impact in the opera house; singers do not achieve Turneresque reputations with a "good field, no hit" sort of endowment. But on records, in these oftheard selections? Well.

It should be observed that Angel has done its usual painstaking job on the

processing and on the accompanying literature; seven arias for nearly six dollars is a dubious bargain, though.

C.L.O.

ROGER VOISIN and JOHN RHEA:
Music for Trumpet and Orchestra, Vol. 3

Roger Voisin, John Rhea, trumpets; Kapp Sinfonietta, Emanuel Vardi, cond.
 • • KAPP KC 9050S. SD. \$5.98.

Fanciers of the prince of brass instruments will find here more of the admirable playing we have come to expect of Roger Voisin, first trumpet of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In an attempt to build up a repertory where very little exists Mr. Voisin and his colleagues have

had recourse to arrangements. Of the ten works on this disc, at least seven—by John Stanley (1713-1786), Purcell, Legrenzi, Telemann, and Daquin—are either transcriptions from keyboard pieces or highly doctored editings. Purcell's Overture to the *Duke of Gloucester's Birthday Ode* seems not to have been tampered with much; it is a delightful piece, with an animated, dancy section in which telling and idiomatic use is made of the trumpet. The other two genuine trumpet pieces are interesting curiosities. One is a march for three trumpets and timpani by C. P. E. Bach and the other a piece for seven trumpets and timpani by J. E. Altenburg, an eighteenth-century trumpeter who wrote a valuable treatise on his instrument. Good sound. N.B.

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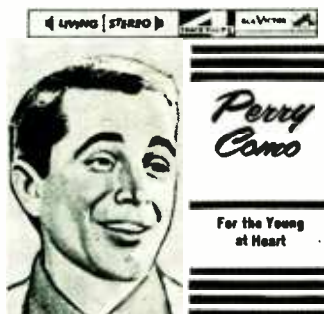


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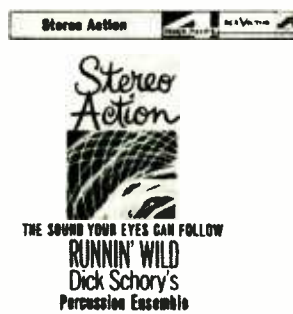
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Burton, Lerner, Andrews, T. H. White.

AFTER LISTENING to Columbia's original cast recording of *Camelot*, I simply cannot reconcile myself to the generally negative reviews this musical received. Certainly the music does not strike me as the inept, feeble collection of tunes so many critics alleged it to be. If they expected Loewe to produce a score superior to that he provided for *My Fair Lady*, or for that matter even to equal it, that surely was whistling in the dark. The music for a *My Fair Lady* or for a *Show Boat* comes along once in a lifetime, and one should be thankful that both these scores came in our lifetime.

In my opinion, Loewe has written in *Camelot* a gay and altogether charming collection of melodies, distinguished for the elegance of the writing, for the tremendous variety of mood and pace the composer achieved, and for his refusal to succumb to the temptation, which would have been very easy,

to introduce "period" music into his score. What a relief . . . not a madrigal, or even the suggestion of one, included. Although Lerner's lyrics seem to me to be in general prosaic or even pedestrian, I will go on record as saying that I think Loewe's score quite the best written for a musical since *My Fair Lady*; I ask for nothing better.

In a cast which is a little short of vocal strength, the always dependable Julie Andrews must carry most of the load. Needless to say, she does so to perfection. Most of the time she sings like an angel (or as I assume angels sing) and always sounds like the lady Queen Guinevere should be. Loewe has provided her with some very graceful songs, particularly *The Simple Joys of Maidenhood*, *I Loved You Once in Silence*, and the lightly tripping *Then You May Take Me to the Fair*, in which she is utterly captivating. Her vis-à-vis Richard Burton is a mu-



Tammy Grimes and cast.

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"The Unsinkable Molly Brown." Original Cast Recording.
Capitol WAO 1509, \$5.98 (LP); SWAO 1509, \$6.98 (SD).

THIS is just about the most old-fashioned musical to appear on Broadway since the days of George M. Cohan, who, as a matter of fact, might well have written the book, with an assist from David Belasco. Meredith Willson's score, though not as ancient-sounding, adds up to little more than a rewrite of his music for *The Music Man*. Yet despite these handicaps the show sounds like wonderful fun, thanks mainly to the presence of a Boston hoyden, Tammy Grimes. Without any previous musical comedy experience, this remarkable artist sings and acts with all the aplomb and command of an Ethel Merman. In fact, *Molly Brown* is kept afloat only by the extraordinarily vital and versatile performance of this enormously gifted girl.

Two years or so ago, I enthusiastically reviewed her only previous recording, but even that did not prepare me for the devastatingly brilliant work she produces in this otherwise ordinary musical. Miss Grimes is not content to play the role of Molly Brown, a girl from the wrong side of the Denver tracks who has ambitions to become someone of importance, in the usual superficial manner of musical comedy leading ladies. She really lives it, as you may hear in *I Ain't Down Yet*, and again later in the wistful wonder of her delight in owning *My Own Brass Bed*, a number which many singers would turn into something offensively mawkish. As Molly's career takes a turn upward and she acquires a certain amount of social status, Miss Grimes in-

vests *Bea-u-ti-ful People of Denver* with a charming insouciance that is entirely in character. The same sort of amused indifference is heard as she sings *Bon Jour*, where she has an opportunity to display her newly acquired, if rather limited, linguistic talents. And so it continues, with Miss Grimes determined to project every facet of the personality that is Molly Brown.

For a change these days, we have a leading man who can sing, although I find Harve Presnell's performance of *Leadville Johnny Brown* rather wooden. (But anyone stacked up against the tremendously vibrant Miss Grimes could suffer this plight.) In any case, Willson has not really given the hero much in the way of songs. *I'll Never Say No* is a tediously old-fashioned number, and *If I Knew* little better. Presnell does, however, rise to the challenge of *Leadville Johnny Brown*, a soliloquy of some substance. There is practically nothing provided for the remaining members of the cast, although they do their best with the little that comes their way.

Capitol has expended great care on this production, even if it has hardly taken fullest advantage of the stereo possibilities offered. Once again this company has followed its custom of including a separate booklet giving complete details about the careers of everyone associated with the production. This is an excellent innovation and one I would recommend to become general practice. J.F.I.



"Sound Effects in Stereo, Vol. 1." Audio Fidelity DFS 7006, \$5.95 (SD). Sidney Frey's compendium of fifty characteristic sounds of our times may well be the *ne plus ultra* of sonic *divertissements* for fanatical audiophiles. This disc is, in brief, a sampling of the plethora of mostly man-made noises commonplace in our life today: from jet planes, air hammers, racing cars, and steamship whistles to the clatter of office machines and the insidious battery of

household cacophonies—barking dogs, dripping water, creaking doors, and the imperious peal of the telephone bell. A few of these sounds (like the too closely miked tap-dancer steps which explode as violently as the immediately following firecrackers) are grotesquely larger than life; others, like the jet planes, just have to be attenuated to levels at least somewhat below those capable of rupturing eardrums. Mainly these sound effects are only too realistically "live."

Luckily for timid investigators, each of the fifty bands ends in a locked groove, so that there is no chance of one effect automatically succeeding another. This means, of course, that the intrepidly omnivorous listener needs a sharp eye and steady hand to guide his pickup to the next or some specific other band. But this handicap, to say nothing of the anguished protests which may be raised on the part of his family and neighbors, has little chance of dampen-

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ing the confirmed addict's craving for such powerfully stimulating audiodisiacs. In fact, we don't doubt that he'll fully share the zestful relish with which we suspect Sid Frey assembled this collection. R.D.D.

"An Evening with Mike Nichols and Elaine May." Mercury OCM 2200, \$4.98 (LP).

With these thirty-one-and-one-half minutes of uninterrupted merriment, the team of Nichols and May again prove themselves to be, as they did in their earlier recording *Improvisations to Music* (Mercury 20376), two of the most creative humorists of today. Three of the sketches, highlights from their current Broadway show, are based on situations as familiar as the back of one's hand, but I doubt that they have ever before been so brilliantly exploited. If you've ever tangled with the telephone company or its operators over the return of a wayward nickel (sorry, dime), then *Telephone* will hit you until the chuckles hurt. New York residents will readily recognize, in *Disc Jockey*, the now departed impresario who conducted after-midnight radio interviews with visiting nonentities and will relish the team's cuttishly satirical treatment of his program. *Mother and Son* is a six-minute telephone conversation capable of convulsing all but the staunchest adherent of Momism. How the problem in *Adultery* is solved, I would leave you to discover for yourselves. Everything adds up to a real feast of genuine humor. J.F.I.

"I Believe." Mahalia Jackson; Chorus and Orchestra, Johnny Williams, cond. Columbia CL 1549, \$3.98 (LP); CS 8349, \$4.98 (SD).

Mahalia Jackson is so immersed in the meaning of her songs that the effect of her singing is always inspiring. In this particular collection, a moving statement of her personal credo, her belief in God, she sings with her usual ardor and dramatic conviction. As is customary on her records, the orchestra and chorus, providing a very effective accompaniment, include members of Mahalia Jackson's church. Columbia's sound is faultlessly clear in both stereo and monophonic versions, but it seems to me that Miss Jackson's voice is better delineated on the mono disc. O.B.B.

"Tambó." Tito Puente and His Orchestra. RCA Victor LPM 2257, \$3.98 (LP); LSP 2257, \$4.98 (SD).

Puente, whom I've known mainly by his hard-driven Latin-dance performances, surprises me here (and gives the "provocative-percussion" purveyors stiff competition) by the sheer energy and thunderous weight of his present showpiece program, topped by an all-percussion *Rumba-Timbales*, fast and intricate *Cuero Pelao*, fascinatingly antiphonal *Ritual Drum Dance*, and vibrant *Son Montuno*. There are more conventional screaming-brass bits and some of the pieces break down in raucous chaos, but there also is a prodigal wealth of original timbre contrasts, permutations, and combinations in as dramatically full-blooded and realistic recordings as I've ever heard in a pops disc. The LP has no less sonic impact, but in such tumultuous music making the air spacing and panoramics of stereo are incomparable advantages. R.D.D.

"Romantique." Capitol Symphony Orchestra, Carmen Dragon, cond. Capitol P 8542, \$4.98 (LP); SP 8542, \$5.98 (SD).

This is one of Carmen Dragon's quieter excursions into the realm of light classical mood music, as well as one of his most successful. In general, "Romantique" is the appropriate title for the program of concert miniatures he has selected, including as it does such salon favorites as Elgar's *Salut d'amour*, Bolzoni's *Minuet*, the *Melody in F* of Rubinstein, and Tchaikovsky's *Chant sans paroles*. (The term seems misapplied, however, to the sonorous and intense Adagio for Strings of Samuel Barber, the one really substantial piece of music in this concert.) The conductor's string arrangements are discreet and tasteful, and make no effort to inflate these little pieces beyond reasonable limits. They are played to perfection by the string section of the Capitol Symphony Orchestra, and the whole project is greatly benefited by the very considerable warmth and crystalline purity of Capitol's recorded sound. J.F.I.

"Folk Songs of France." Monitor MF 339, \$4.98 (LP).

A bright array of songs and dances from French provinces steeped in rich and original folk tradition. Sometimes sung in the *parois* of the region and to the accompaniment of infrequently heard instruments—like the *ixistu*, a flute with three holes held and played with one hand, and the *atabel*, a drum played with one stick—these old folk songs still retain the primitive overtones of a popular art now refined. High spots of the record are the tender *Magali* from Provence, a droll version of *Mon père m'a donné un mari* from Champagne, and a lovely *Agur Maria* (Ave Maria) from Pays Basque. Texts and translations are enclosed, and jacket notes sketching the history of each song lend added interest. O.B.B.


"Percussion Orientale." David Carroll and His Orchestra. Mercury PPS 2002, \$4.98 (LP); PPS 6002, \$5.98 (SD).

As in his first release ("Latin Percussion") in the "Perfect Presence Sound" series, Carroll's materials may have little ethnic authenticity, but they rise well above the usual pseudoexotic and "spectacular percussion" levels by their lack of affectation (in performance as well as scoring), their interpretative verve, and of course by the crystalline clarity of their recording. The present dance band *divertissements* on the *Ballet Egyptien*, *In a Persian Market*, *Saint-Saëns Bacchanale*, *Scheherazade*, *Cui Orientale*, *Borodin Dance of the Slave Maidens*, etc. are amusing translations rather than tasteless caricatures; and apart from finger cymbals, sponge-hammered piano strings, bamboo log, and an extremely odd Bakoura (shell trumpet?), the prime aural attractions are provided by more conventional instruments. The monophonic edition is excellent, the SD even better. R.D.D.

"Rosie Solves the Swingin' Riddle."

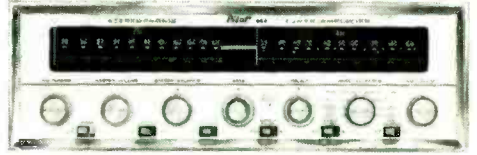
Rosemary Clooney; Nelson Riddle and His Orchestra. RCA Victor LPM 2265, \$3.98 (LP); LSP 2265, \$4.98 (SD). In her two previous recordings for RCA

Continued on page 80

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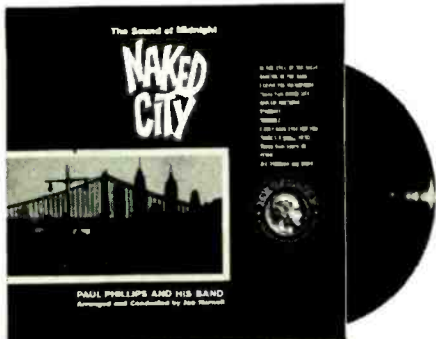
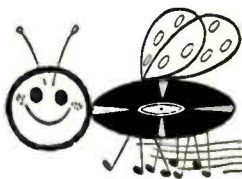
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Victor, Miss Clooney, usually one of the most unruffled of vocalists, often seemed to me to sound uncomfortable with the hip arrangements of Bob Thompson and the blatant ones provided by Perez Prado. One has no such feeling in listening to these smooth, swinging performances of some great songs in which the singer is admirably supported by Nelson Riddle and his orchestra. Riddle's ability to write arresting and unusual arrangements tailored to fit a singer's individual style has never been more handsomely showcased, and Miss Clooney seems inspired by what he has provided for her. Her simple and honest way of selling a song is admirably displayed in great versions of *I Get Along Without You Very Well*, *By Myself*, and *April in Paris*, in which Riddle's orchestral writing for the Clooney vocal is completely fascinating. As a matter of fact, the entire record is such a joy that I can even forgive Miss Clooney for tampering with Douglas Furber's original lyric for *Limehouse Blues*. J.F.I.

"Italian Songs and Dances." Monitor MF 345, \$4.98 (LP).

Moving up and down the Italian peninsula in a whirl of tarantellas, mazurkas, waltzes, and quadrilles, Monitor's program is a sparkling and fast-moving one. These are the songs and dances of the people performed in every city and village, in the streets and at home, on every festive occasion. Popular tunes set to lively rhythms, they are easily reflective of the warmth and exuberance found in Italian folk music. O.B.B.

"The Scots Guards at the Opera." Regimental Band of the Scots Guards, Lt. Col. S. Rhodes, cond. Angel 35789, \$4.98 (LP); S 35789, \$5.98 (SD).

It's surprising how good such familiar opera overtures as *Zampa*, *Cenerentola*, *Pique Dame*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Mignon*, and *Barber of Seville* can sound in expertly scored transcriptions, at least when these are played by an ensemble as large and skilled as the forty-four-man Scots Guards Band. Interpretatively these performances may be a bit routine, but sonically they are delightfully piquant as well as impressively sonorous. They are impeccably recorded in both monophony and stereo, but of course enjoy a more appropriate operatic ambience in the latter. R.D.D.

"Tonight in Person." The Limelitters. RCA Victor LPM 2272, \$3.98 (LP); LSP 2272, \$4.98 (SD).

The Limelitters (who after a successful record debut for Elektra have now switched their allegiance to RCA Victor) are a trio of very talented artists who obviously have a tremendous potential. Whether this potential will ever be realized depends mainly on their ability to develop a more individual manner of handling their material, both vocally and stylistically, than they now possess. Until this is achieved they will continue to sound like The Weavers and to resemble The Kingston Trio in the matter of presentation. Since they are so successful with unaffected and moving versions of *The Far Side of the Hill*, *Seven Daffodils*, and *Molly Malone*, it is evident that they do not need to fall back on the glib introductions or the too hearty attempts at humor that disfigure some of their songs here. The recording comes from a live performance at Hollywood's

Ash Grove, where the trio's performances, on this evening at least, were received with boisterous acclaim by the audience. J.F.I.

"Written in the Stars." Dick Jacobs and His Orchestra. Coral 757339, \$4.98 (SD).

This suite of twelve orchestral vignettes typifying the signs of the zodiac is the work of Rod McKuen, who according to the liner notes writes not only serious music but also *double entente* (sic!) songs for Elsa Lanchester. His *Zodiac Suite* falls into neither of these categories, being a series of short mood pieces that are long on pretty melodies but rather deficient in character and originality. This is pleasant, light listening, however, with much of its appeal stemming from Dick Jacobs' artful and sonically imaginative arrangements. This is easily one of the best examples of Coral's stereo engineering I've heard. It presents the orchestra in perfect balance, with adequate but not overemphasized directionality and in a sound clean as a whistle and smooth as velvet. J.F.I.

"Wandering with the Obernkirchen Children's Choir." Edith Mueller, cond. Angel 35839, \$4.98 (LP); 35839, \$5.98 (SD).

With considerable charm, the Obernkirchen Children's Choir present a program of traditional and children's songs. They sing with a pureness of tone quality that is all loveliness, and a skillful use of choral effects enhances their performance. My only criticism is that conductor Edith Mueller keeps her charges singing inevitably the same type of song—always in the upper ranges and always Alpine-sounding. The same dynamic level is maintained as is the same balance of voices. A venture into a more varied repertoire with an occasional dramatic entry would help dispel this monotony. The stereo version underscores the crystalline qualities of the recording with finer, brighter sound than its monophonic counterpart. O.B.B.

"Brazen Brass Goes Hollywood." Henry Jerome and His Orchestra. Decca DL 74085, \$4.98 (SD).

As in his earlier "Brazen Brass" (DL 74056), Jerome's performances feature antiphonies between open (left) and muted (right) brass choirs, and the extremely stereoisitic recording makes the most of the contrast-and-combination potentialities, as well as of some fine growling trombone pedal tones, Donald Butterfield's tuba contributions, and the glitter of an effective channel-linking centered rhythm-and-percussion section. The program itself is devoted to film score hits, which seldom have sounded as excitingly sonorous as they do here. The modulation level, however, is far too high for comfort and must be drastically lowered in playback for one to relish these varicolored timbres at their best. R.D.D.

"Face to Face." Pete Martin interviews great entertainers. Decca DXD 166, \$7.96 (Two LP).

The faces that meet here are those of a dozen great people in show business and that of the *Saturday Evening Post's* Pete Martin, a handy man with a microphone, a much better one with a pen.

Continued on page 82

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In these brief interviews, actually carefully screened excerpts from lengthier conversations Martin held while gathering material for his *Post* articles, the stars are given a chance to comment on some aspect of show business. For me the most interesting sequences were Mary Martin's account of how she got her start on Broadway, Crosby's and Como's opinions on today's pop singers, Hope's concern for the rising comedians, and Danny Kaye's affectionate tale of his farewell to Edinburgh.

By the merest coincidence, all these stars record for Decca, which has retrieved from its vaults recordings made by these artists years ago. Some might well have been permitted to gather a little more dust, while others will be as welcome today as they were when originally issued. Among the latter put Danny Kaye's delightfully demented *The Lobby Number*, Hope and Crosby in *Road to Morocco*, and Hope with Shirley Ross in their original version of *Thanks for the Memory*. The rest seem like very small beer these days. J.F.I.

"Banjos Back in Town." The Banjo Barons, Jimmy Carroll, cond. Columbia CL 1581, \$3.98 (LP); CS 8381, \$4.98 (SD).

Old-time tune-favorites are so often fancied-up or percussively atomized nowadays that it's a great relief to hear Carroll's frankly corny treatments dominated by two or three lusty banjo strummers. To be sure, an electric organ has anachronistically snuck in, but it's pretty well drowned by the rest of the energetic little orchestra, which also includes, appropriately, what sound to me like kazoos. The dozen medleys here include no fewer than thirty-six tunes (of the *Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie* and *Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Re* genera) and they never have been packed with more rowdy gusto. The more cleanly focused LP edition is less coarse-toned, if also less expansive, than the SD, but in either case be sure to turn the volume way down in playback or the closely miked overamplified banjo explosions are likely to burst your eardrums.

R.D.D.

"On the Swingin' Side." Vic Damone; Orchestra, Jack Marshall, cond. Columbia CL 1573, \$3.98 (LP); CS 8373, \$4.98 (SD).

Two of the most somnolent of today's pop singers tried to blossom forth as addicts of vocal swing recently, though neither Perry Como nor Dean Martin could really make it. Now Vic Damone tries to make the same transition, and though he is perhaps a little nearer the mark, his is not a completely successful venture either. When, as in *Falling in Love with Love* or *Swinging Down the Lane*, Damone establishes a free-swinging momentum and carries it through to the end, he is pretty convincing; but too often he seems to slip back, perhaps subconsciously, into his more accustomed role of ballad singer. In two cases he was up against an impossible task, I think, for neither *Speak Low* nor *Deep Purple* lends itself to any sort of swinging manipulation, not even by Ella Fitzgerald. Presumably the arrangements are by conductor Jack Marshall, since they carry the stamp of his usual busy style. In any case, they serve as an admirable prop to the Damone voice, which, on this occasion, is in excellent shape. J.F.I.

"How To Bowl Your Best." Joe Wilman. Epic LB 2700, \$3.98 (LP).

1946 Champion and ABC Hall of Famer Wilman doesn't try to make it seem easy: bowling for him is a deadly serious business and his pupils will sweat hard as he goads them on through endless drills in fundamental foot- and arm-work. But he also makes the impossible seem at least plausible—that the novice bowler willing to follow directions, and indifferent to looking ridiculous as he practices swinging his wife's flatiron, actually can improve his game by home study with a phonograph record. As a non-kegler, however, it all sounds to me like far more work than play. R.D.D.

"Great Music from European Operettas." Halina Mickiewicz; Polish Radio Orchestra, Stefan Rachon, cond. Bruno 50165, \$3.98 (LP).

These are such indifferent performances of the operetta music and they are offered in such dismal sound that my interest was neither aroused by the familiar music nor piqued by the more obscure excerpts. Only the two arias from Malutin's operetta *Unquiet Happiness*, well enough sung by Krystyna Bodalska, held my attention at all. Completing this curious assortment of music are several coloratura show stoppers, Arditi's *Parla*, Dell'Aqua's *Vilanelle*, Benedict's *Carnival of Venice* and *La Capinera* among them, all sung in Polish by Halina Mickiewicz, purportedly "The Nightingale of Warsaw." Chivalry demands silence. J.F.I.

"Tenderloin." Original cast recording. Capitol WAO 1492, \$5.98 (LP); SWAO 1492, \$6.98 (SD).

Having espoused in *Fiorello* the cause of The Little Flower in his attempt to clean up New York politics, the team of Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick now take up the cudgels in support of the late Dr. Brock's crusade to remove the iniquitous Tenderloin district from the face of New York City. This begins to look like a flagrant case of typecasting which might, heaven forbid, involve them in musicals on Samuel Seabury or Joseph McCarthy. Unfortunately, Dr. Brock has not proved the inspiration that La Guardia was, either to composer or lyricist. Although Bock's score contains a few good tunes—notably *The Picture of Happiness* and *Good Clean Fun*—it is on the whole very uneven, and it seems to me that Harnick has fallen down rather badly in his lyrics.

Most of the better songs fall to the men in the cast, and both Maurice Evans, making his American debut in a musical, and Ron Husmann, a refugee from *Fiorello*, make the most of them. In voice and technique Evans sounds very much like Martyn Green—which is to say that the voice is serviceable and used very knowingly. In view of the importance of the ladies to the plot, they seem to have been shortchanged. Only Wynne Murray and Eileen Rodgers are given a solo apiece; and since neither song makes much of an impression (the fault of the composer), it would be unfair to judge them by these efforts. LP and SD are very similar. J.F.I.

"A Bunch of Bongos." Willie Rodriguez; The International All-Stars. Grand Award GA 33-421, \$3.98 (LP); GA 253 SD, \$4.98 (SD). Crest-riding Command evidently has

decided that its lower-priced alter-ego label, Grand Award, warrants a "Provocative/Persuasive" series too, and many of the same instrumentalists, headed here by bongoist Rodriguez, are no less sensationally and stereoisotically recorded in the present strenuous batch of cha-chas, mambos, sambas, and merengues. Some of them get tiresomely raucous, but the best of them communicate their gusto to listeners only scarcely less effectively than to avid dancers. Remarkably, the monophonic edition is almost as impressive, sonically, in everything save the stereo version's spaced antiphonies. R.D.D.

"Blazing Latin Brass." Nick Perito and His Orchestra. United Artists WWS 8502, \$5.98 (SD).

Newest and gaudiest of all the current sensationalist series, United Artists' also boasts the most inspired of title slogans, "Wall-to-Wall Stereo." Well, it's broad-spread, all right, but to my ears stretched a mite thin in the center, and I regret that the full potentialities of the truly ultrabright recording have not been exploited by arrangers and performers as imaginatively inspired as UA's advertising-copy writers. The present program has energy as well as brilliance to burn, but the excessively high-level brass often is painfully strident and the percussive decorations are plastered on far too extravagantly. The less strenuous pieces here demonstrate vividly how well Perito's ensemble (which includes Ferrante and Teicher with their prepared pianos) can play when it forgets about trying hard to be sensational. R.D.D.

"Dynamic Twin Pianos." Ferrante and Teicher. United Artists WWS 8504, \$5.98 (SD).

Latest entrant into the field of sonic spectaculars is Ultra Audio's "Wall-to-Wall Stereo," an effect achieved by the use of almost every recording technique known to modern engineers. There is a deliberate exploitation of intentionally wide separation and channel switching, and the listener who does not object to thirty-five minutes of almost continuous head-swiveling will find this a feast of sound. Whether the unusual sounds that the team summon from their prepared pianos are musical will be a matter of personal taste. One can hardly object to their treatment of the original works written expressly to demonstrate their sound theories, but the well-known standards take a severe beating at the hands of these dynamic pianists. The double-fold album is handsome, the liner notes refreshingly frank both as to the recording techniques and the manner in which the pianists achieve the innumerable odd sounds. You're also told exactly how the latter should emerge from your speakers. J.F.I.

"Ireland, My Ireland." Eileen Donaghy; Orchestra. Epic LF 18004, \$3.98 (LP). Miss Donaghy possesses a bright, fresh voice that, in its limpid quality, seems to be the soprano equivalent of the famed "Irish tenor." *Girl with the Brogue*, *Homes of Donegal*, and *Glenswilly* stand out in an unpretentious, unhackneyed array of songs. Avoiding both burlesque and bathos, Miss Donaghy's recital should raise an echo in any displaced Irish soul. O.B.B.

"Patachou Sings Hit Songs from Hit Broadway Shows in French and English." Patachou; Jo Basile. His Accordion and Orchestra. Audio Fidelity AFSD 5948, \$6.95 (SD).

Patachou's program of a dozen Franco-American comedy songs is an enterprising venture, but one that is only partially successful. The French side, which includes four of the best songs from *Irma La Douce*, is a complete joy, while the American side is only intermittently pleasurable. The fault lies mainly with her choice of songs, which—though all excellent numbers—are not particularly well suited to her style. Her voice is too heavy for so lighthearted a song as *I Could Have Danced All Night*, and so wistful a number as *Hello, Young Lovers*; and her version of *Just in Time* lacks the lilt necessary to bring this song to life. Her most successful efforts are reserved for a sardonic account of *Mack the Knife*, and a quite charming version of *I Could Write a Book*. J.F.I.

"Game Calling in Hi-Fi," Vol. 1. Russ Caede, caller; Art Mercier, narrator. Mercury GC 100, \$4.98 (LP).

The most singular and specialized instruction record yet, but much more impressive (to non-Nimrodian listeners at least) for its raucously realistic "calls" for fox and coyote, crow and hawk, squirrels, geese, and ducks of both the puddler and diver species than for its somewhat high-powered and overdramatized narration. Perhaps actual hunters will better relish the Mercier pep talks on how to kill wildlife more efficiently and exten-

sively; my own sympathies are all with the hapless animals and birds now at the mercy of today's technologies. R.D.D.

"Swingin' Spirituals." Delta Rhythm Boys. Coral CRL 57358, \$3.98 (LP); CRL 757358, \$4.98 (SD).

The appeal of these souped-up spirituals will vary with the tastes of the individual listener. Suffice it to say that the Delta Rhythm Boys bring their customary tight harmonies and free-wheeling style to bear upon the likes of *Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho* and *The Old Ark's A-Moverin'*. The results are jazzy rather than reverent—which seems precisely what the group intended. Excellent sound, with the neatly separated stereo edition placing the Delta Rhythm Boys in their customary squad-front formation. O.B.B.

"The Exciting Eloise Trio." Decca DL 74077, \$4.98 (SD).

Eloise Lewis and her two vocal sidemen, Bucky and Bert, swing their way through eleven exemplars of Caribbean song, ranging from easygoing calypsos to torrid cha-chas. The trio keeps a collective weather eye on mainland audiences. As a result, their style is closer to New York than to Kingston; however, they command their material well enough to adapt it without deforming it. *Marianne*, for example, emerges in a fast, low-down arrangement that barely relates to the calypso-type original. *Yellow Bird* and *Jamaica Farewell* display still other facets of this versatile, skilled, and highly attractive group. Decca's sound is warm and polished. O.B.B.

"The Shearing Touch." George Shearing, piano; String Choir, Billy May, cond. Capitol ST 1472, \$4.98 (SD).

Although Billy May's string arrangements are full of treacle, George Shearing is always in superb form. It is not easy to single out any one number for special commendation, but I particularly liked his diaphanous treatment of *Misty*, his rollicking, humorous statement of *Honeysuckle Rose*, and the lightly jazz-inflected version of *Like Young*. In the last the string choir suddenly comes to life in an equally brilliant effort, and the unanimity of musical ideas produces what is probably the finest band on the record. J.F.I.

"Spectacular Harps." Robert Maxwell, His Harps and His Orchestra. M-G-M E 3836, \$3.98 (LP); SE 3836, \$4.98 (SD).

The glittering but overclose and sharp recording, the extremely high modulation level, and the exaggerated stereoisms here are characteristic of the whole new M-G-M "spectacular" series (which also devotes a disc each to accordions, brass, percussion, and harmonicas). My main objection, however, is less to the glassy unnaturalness of the sonics than to the fanciness of the scoring, in which harps are used more like super-guitars and glockenspiels than themselves. When Maxwell relaxes a bit, as he does in his own more songful *Ebb Tide* and *Chapel in the Pines*, or swings with verve in his jumping arrangement of *Little David Play on Your Harp*, there is less meaningless jangling and a lot more real musical interest. R.D.D.

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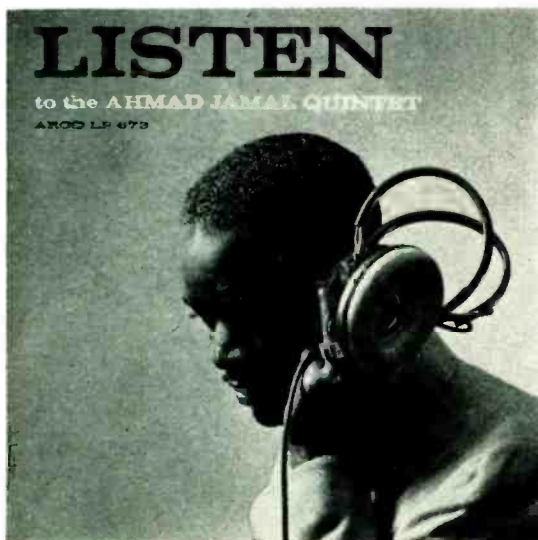
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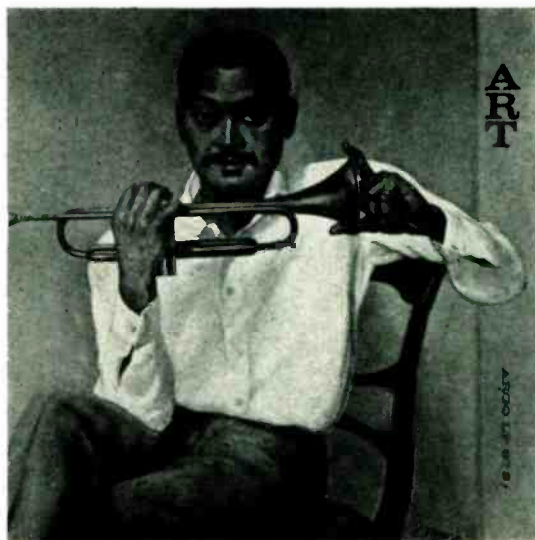
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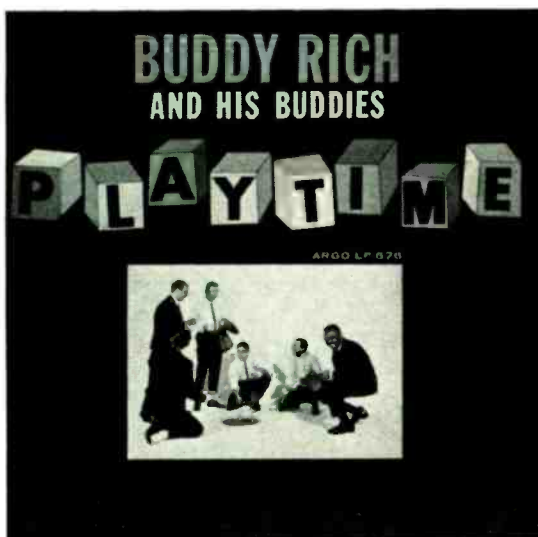
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Count Basie, Joe Williams: "Just the Blues." Roulette 52054, \$3.98 (LP); S 52054, \$4.98 (SD).

No one else can tease the blues from a piano with the sly effectiveness of Count Basie, but lately he has rationed his blues solos more than reason would seem to demand. Here he makes up for this with solo spots on almost every selection. And his band shakes the stiffness out of its muscles in these pieces, too, sneaking and slithering around with cogent effect both in ensembles and solos. Even Joe Williams, a rather wooden singer, warms up occasionally, notably on *Mean Old World*, a performance that gets the best of everything from Williams, Basie, and the band. Williams is at his worst on ballads and fortunately there are only a couple in the set. But Basie and the band are heard sufficiently—particularly on the first side—to make up for Williams' ubiquitous presence.

Oscar Brown, Jr.: "Sin and Soul." Columbia 1577, \$3.98 (LP); CS 8377, \$4.98 (SD).

Brown is not, strictly speaking, a jazz performer. However, many of the songs he sings in this remarkable collection of his own compositions come directly from jazz (he has written words to three jazz instrumental pieces, Nat Adderley's *Work Song*, Bobby Timmons' *Dat Dere* and Bob Bryant's *Sleepy*) or draw on some aspect of it. "Being a Negro," Brown remarks in the liner notes, "is not always pleasant but it is vigorous exercise for the soul. . . . The melodies I make up grow out of tunes, rhythms, chants, calls, and cries that have always sung to me. My lyrics are verses about feelings I've felt and scenes I've dug."

And what a wonderful, meaningful mixture he has made of these basic materials! His songs are skillfully drawn vignettes, each with a sharply focused point of view—poignant, ironic, humorous, or glaringly bitter. He makes especially effective use of street cries and work songs. His humor is Rabelaisian in an essay on the importance of staying "cool." He creates a gentle lullaby that gives dignity and strength to a sentiment that was once expressed mawkishly by Irving Berlin in *Russian Lullaby*. And he builds a brilliantly chilling and vivid portrayal of a slave auction in *Bid 'Em In*. As a performer, he projects with tremendous authority, and he is given unusually good accompaniment. Not all of the songs in this collection hit the mark squarely. What is amazing is that most of them do, and that they treat with freshness and honesty themes usually considered only in terms of stereotypes.

Dave Brubeck: "Brubeck à la Mode." Fantasy 3301, \$4.98 (LP).

Brubeck's arrangement with Fantasy Records where he is able, apparently, to record with anybody *except* his regular quartet (which is under contract to Columbia) seems to have a happily relaxing effect on him, as though he were playing for his own kicks instead of trying to impress the Brubeck cult. This time he is heard with two regular members of his quartet (Joe Morello, drums, and Gene Wright, bass) plus clarinetist Bill Smith in a group of airy, swinging originals by Smith. With Morello and Wright providing a wonderfully lifting, propulsive foundation, the entire set moves with an infectiously rhythmic quality. Smith plays his clarinet more or less in the Goodman tradition, getting a pleasantly ripe, seasoned sound, and Brubeck's piano solos are blessed with simplicity and an absence of the pretentiousness that clouds so much of his playing with his own quartet.

Stan Getz and Strings: "Cool Velvet." Verve 68379, \$5.98 (SD).

Getz's long stay in Europe appears to have given him a tremendous lift musically. His playing on this disc is so richly serene, so full of calm assurance and strength, that one scarcely recognizes him at times. This is a mood album, but in place of the wispiness that has sometimes characterized his playing, Getz expresses himself with quiet guts. He takes greater advantage of the full range of the tenor saxophone than he used to, occasionally reaching down into its nether regions for a rough-toned, baritone-like grunt to give momentum to a lyrical flight. The accompaniment, however, is the usual big string orchestra business—swoops of violins and trickling harp glissandos. It would smother a less assertive performer than Getz has become. But he manages to rise above it as he goes through a generally well-selected program—*'Round Midnight*, *Born to Be Blue*, *It Never Entered My Mind*. However, *Whisper Not*, which should be right down Getz's alley, is strangely limp.

Freddie Hubbard: "Open Sesame." Blue Note 4040, \$4.98 (LP).

Freddie Hubbard is in the forefront of the new school of young jazz trumpeters who combine virtuosity and an essentially melodic solo conception with a gorgeously full-blown tone that takes advantage of the fact that this is a *brass* instrument they are playing. For some reason, this disc is split between three pieces that show off Hubbard's prowess splendidly (Side 1) and three on Side 2

which make one realize that he is not yet quite the polished and assured musician that he at first appears to be. He is helped on both sides by a stimulating young drummer, Clifford Jarvis, who churns up an exuberant stream of excitement that complements Hubbard's buoyant style beautifully on the faster selections. The other members of the group are Tina Brooks, an occasionally provocative tenor saxophonist; pianist McCoy Tyner; and Sam Jones, bass.

Franz Jackson and the Original Jazz All-Stars: "A Night at Red Arrow." Pinnacle 103, \$4.98 (LP).

There is nothing wrong with traditional jazz. The real problem lies with those who play it and those who pay to hear it. Jackson heads a fine group of veteran traditionalists who are capable of overcoming the performance problem. But even this fine group has to kow-tow to its audiences. On this disc, which is presumably representative of the band's evenings at the Red Arrow, a club outside Chicago, there are magnificent performances by trumpeter Bob Shoffner and banjoist Lawrence Dixon (abetted to an only slightly lesser degree by Jackson on clarinet, and John Thomas, trombone) recorded cheek by jowl with some of the tiresome comic (?) vocal routines that the customers apparently insist on. But the good portions of this disc are so good that one can easily overlook the trite sections.

I haven't heard a trumpeter develop a solo with the casually moving assurance that sixty-year-old Bob Shoffner shows on *Red Arrow Blues* since the unaffected days of Louis Armstrong in the Twenties. The man is magnificent all through the set—crisp, clean, unhurried, and exactly right. And Dixon plays the banjo with the driving lift that makes it a marvelously effective rhythm instrument, instead of plodding along with the dull thump common to the young revivalists. There are times when the band has trouble getting together, but once Shoffner takes command, with Dixon pulsing exuberantly under him, it swings irresistibly. Traditional jazz becomes a vivid, vital, current reality. Now if they could get rid of those vocals, the millennium might be with us.

Don Jacoby and the College All-Star Dance Band. M-G-M 3881, \$3.98 (LP).

Notice the word "dance" in this band's title. It is important because this seventeen-piece group, representing as many different colleges, is not a show-off band, out to demonstrate that, despite its youth, it can sound just like a Herman Herd or

a Basie Brigade. It is a dance band with jazz colorations but, unlike professional jazz bands making a dance album, this group does not equate dancing with sleepwalking (*vide* the recorded efforts of Count Basie or Maynard Ferguson). These players have life and spirit and, considering that they were brought together for the first time for this recording, they form a remarkably clean and bright ensemble. This is easily one of the best jazz-tinged dance albums that has come along in quite a while.

Budd Johnson: "And the Four Brass Giants." Riverside 343, \$4.98 (LP); 9343, \$5.98 (SD).

Although Budd Johnson has been an important contributor to a steady string of consequential jazz groups for more than thirty years, he has managed to remain in relative obscurity (even to many jazz fans) until quite recently. A product of Kansas City in the late Twenties, a member of Louis Armstrong's big band in the early Thirties, the right-hand man

in Earl Hines's band from 1935 to 1942, a colleague of Dizzy Gillespie's in the Forties and, last year, one of the stand-out members of Gil Evans' twelve-piece band. Johnson has been in the jazz vanguard all these years and has constantly made his influence felt. But it is only in the past few years that he has received recognition as a strong and distinctive soloist on tenor saxophone (he also played, with Evans, soprano saxophone). On this disc he has assembled a magnificent brass section (Ray Nance, Clark Terry, Nat Adderley, and Harry Edison), and has written arrangements for this quartet, his tenor saxophone, and a rhythm section that sparkle with vigor and zest. The brass team really roars when it gets together, its individual members are all fascinating soloists, and Johnson himself plays in a clean, surging style that cuts through the accompanying horns like a sharp knife. This is an exciting, swinging group heard in a varied set of arrangements (Nance switches to violin on two of them) that allow everyone to appear in his best light.

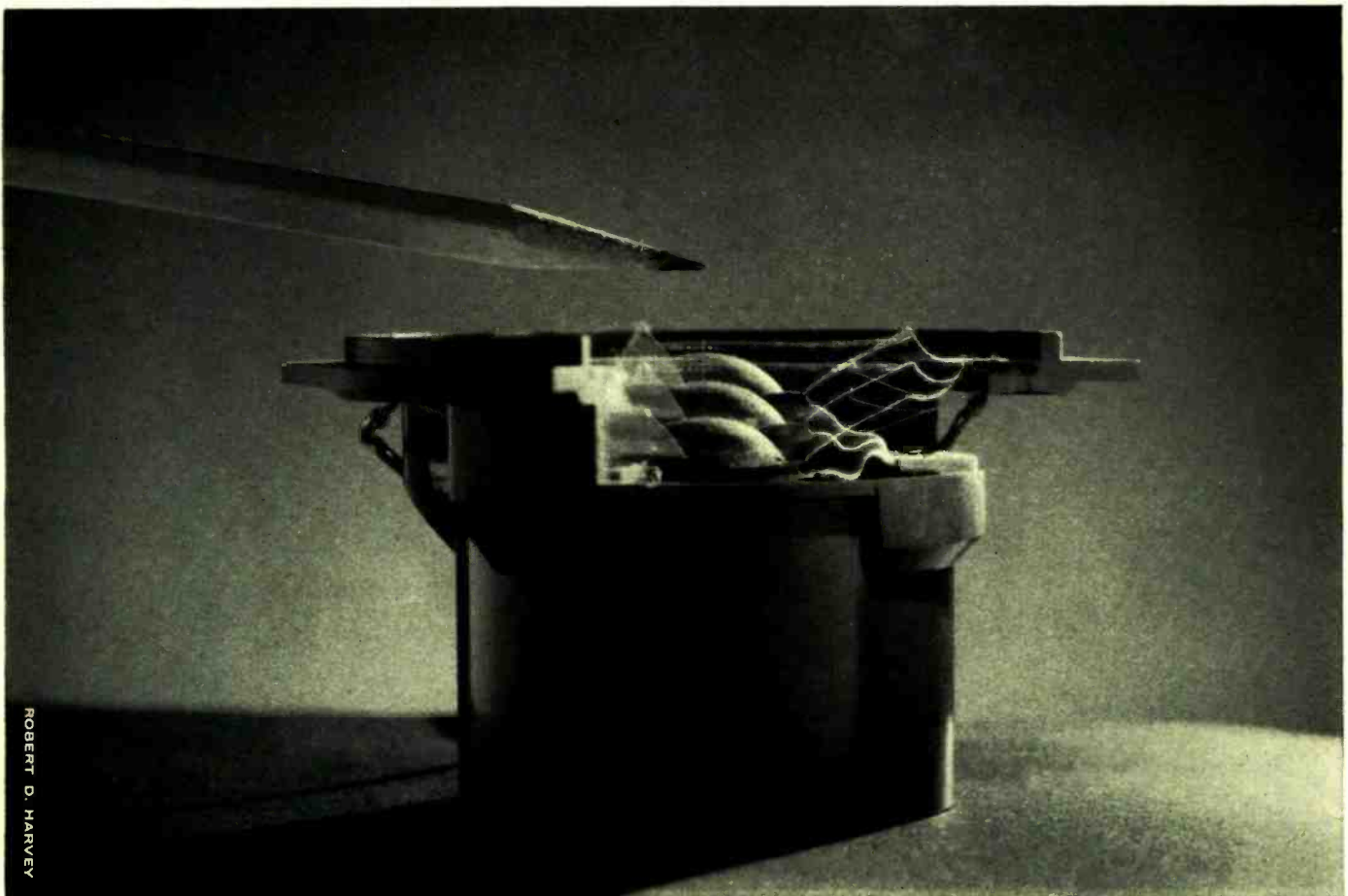
Ramsey Lewis Trio: "In Chicago." Argo 671, \$3.98 (LP).

The Lewis trio shows more honest, swinging spirit in this set than in any of its earlier discs. Lewis, the pianist, has a light, tickling style that can be worked up into a strong head of steam (*Old Devil Moon*), and he even ventures to make a direct, forthright attack occasionally (*Delilah*). But along with this the trio continues to dish out pretentious nonsense (the prime example here is a thing called *Folk Ballad*), and to resort to such unrecordogenic gimmicks as long hand-drum solos. Still, for that twilight audience that wants something meatier than Liberace but lighter than Brubeck, there is no doubt that Lewis has worked out a highly viable pastiche.

Little Brother Montgomery: "Tasty Blues." Prestige/Bluesville 1012, \$4.98 (LP).

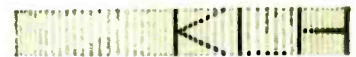
Eurreal Montgomery is one of the blues

Continued on page 88



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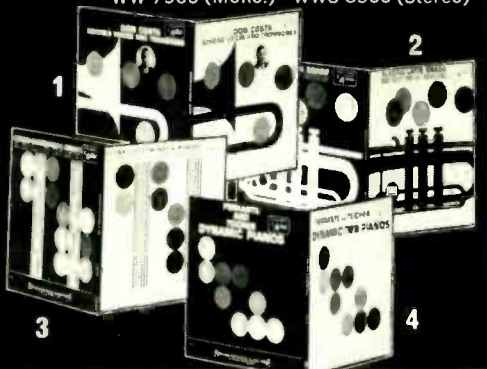
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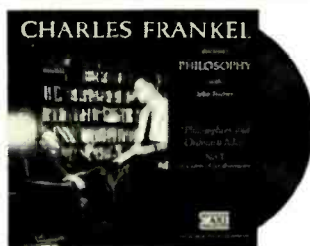
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men who built a degree of reputation in the Thirties and Forties, and seemingly disappeared in the Fifties when rock 'n' roll came along to overwhelm and corrupt his métier. Now he is being rediscovered for recording purposes, and the return to the studios represented by this disc provides a very pleasant renewal of acquaintance with his gently moving piano playing and his plaintive, penetrating singing. About half of these selections are instrumental (he is accompanied by Julien Euell, bass, and Lafayette Thomas, a guitarist who is new to me but is extremely effective in this type of blues performance) and in this setting Montgomery's piano is consistently charming. His singing is erratic, however. There are times when his nasal keening fails to project and turns listless and monotonous. But when he becomes properly involved in his songs (as he does with *Something Keeps Worrying Me*, for instance, he has the true blues singer's cry.

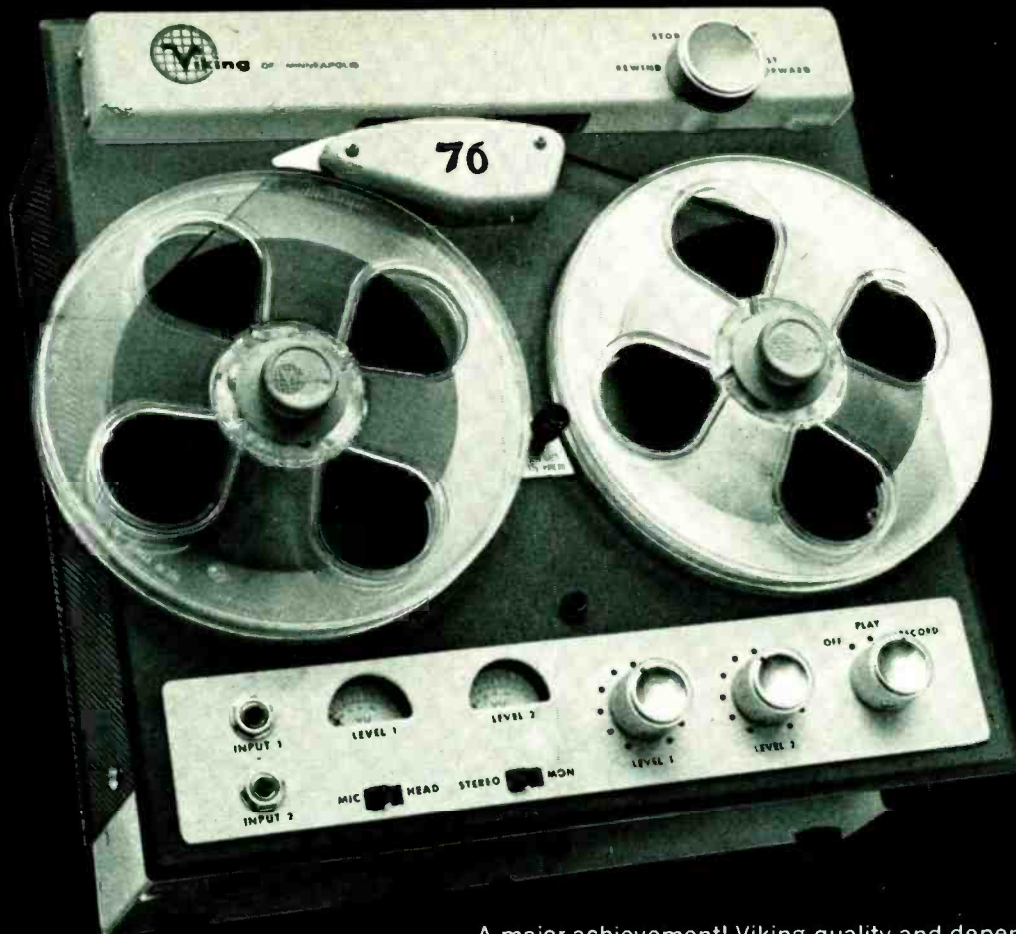
Jimmy Rushing and Dave Brubeck.
Columbia CL 1553, \$3.98 (LP); CS 8353, \$4.98 (SD).

Jimmy Rushing rarely has to fight for attention on his records. But he is constantly crowded here by Paul Desmond, who plays some of his most warmly airy alto saxophone in this set. Offhand, the mixture of Rushing and the Dave Brubeck Quartet would seem to be one of the more unlikely meetings in jazz. Yet it has worked out splendidly. Rushing is thoroughly relaxed, showing no evidence of the hurry and strain that have appeared on his recent records. And the Brubeck Quartet, settling comfortably into the role of accompanist with no pressure on it to be "significant" or thought-provoking, holds to the simplicity that is by far its best quality. Drummer Joe Morello and bassist Gene Wright lay down a powerful rhythmic base for Rushing, while Desmond noodles behind him understandingly and turns his solos into models of intense feeling expressed with disarmingly casual directness. In this atmosphere Brubeck drops all pomposity and falls into his most winningly unaffected style. The tunes are standards that Rushing has done frequently before. One interesting variant is the slow, silken approach to *Evenin'* which Rushing has always done in the past as a rousing shouter. It makes a good switch, too.

Ben Webster: "The Soul of Ben Webster."
Verve 68359, \$5.98 (SD).

A sterling group of swingers take off on this disc. They include, in addition to Webster, tenor saxophonist Harold Ashby, who is a leaner, rougher-toned version of Webster, trumpeter Art Farmer, guitarist Mundell Lowe, pianist Jimmy Jones, bassist Milt Hinton, and drummer Dave Bailey—a seemingly disparate assemblage which jells remarkably well. Webster does two of his broad-bottomed ballads (*Chelsea Bridge* is one of them), but otherwise he is heard in an urgent, driving groove that has been slighted in his recent recordings. When Webster puts his mind to it—as he seems to here—there are few jazzmen who can match the tremendous surging strength of his playing. There's nothing fancy here—just straightforward, swinging jazz, for which one should be grateful.

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the Tape Deck

Reviewed by R. D. DARRELL

The following reviews are of 4-track 7.5-ips stereo tapes in normal reel form.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5, in C minor, Op. 67; Coriolan Overture, Op. 62*

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond.
• • RCA VICTOR FTC 2032. 38 min. \$8.95.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 7, in A, Op. 92*

Symphony of the Air, Leopold Stokowski, cond.
• • UNITED ARTISTS UATC 2215. 34 min. \$7.95.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 9, in D minor, Op. 125; Leonore Overture No. 2*

Joan Sutherland, soprano; Norma Proctor, contralto; Anton Dermota, tenor; Arnold van Mill, bass; Chorale de Brus-sus; Chœur de Jeunes de l'Eglise Nationale Vaudoise; Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond.
• • LONDON LCI 80051. 80 min. \$9.95.

Throughout the whole recorded repertory it would be hard to find a more dramatic Fifth than Reiner's, a more richly romantic Seventh than Stokowski's, or a cooler or more classical Ninth than Ansermet's. And each of these exerts such powerfully polarized magnetic attractions and repulsions that for once potential purchasers can find little help from reviewers—who themselves split widely in their evaluations of the earlier stereo disc versions. You'll just have to hear them for yourself to decide whether (for you) Reiner's vigor is exciting or repellent; whether Stokowski's somewhat feminine grace is or isn't beguiling; whether Ansermet's lucidity enhances or minimizes the grandeur of the Ninth.

About the only features here I can be reasonably objective about are the recording characteristics: somewhat coarse and hollow in the louder passages of the Fifth; purer and more luminous in the other two reels, although I personally crave greater sonic weight and more of a big auditorium ambience in the Ninth. This last tape has the advantage, however, of eliminating the inner-groove distortions of the too crowded disc sides. Ansermet's performance is also notable for its exceptionally fine vocal quartet; Van Mill is perhaps a bit overexpressive in his solo recitative, but I don't know of any other version, old or new, in which all four voices are as freshly attractive and as well matched in ensemble. And the "filler" overture is one of the most tautly dramatic readings I've ever heard of *Leonore* No. 2.

DVORAK: *Symphony No. 4, in G, Op. 88*

Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond.
• • EPIC EC 806. 36 min. \$7.95.

I may have been unduly kind to Perlea's Teutonically romantic Fourth (on Vox) in my anxiety to win as wide a tape audience as possible for music as endearing as this. In any case, Szell's deservedly famous, far more idiomatically "Czechish" performance completely overshadows Perlea even at his best, and its appearance now provides a Dvořák Fourth that I cannot merely recommend but assert to be quite mandatory for every serious tape library. Not only is the processing ideal, with an absolute minimum of background noise and optimum channel differentiation, but the smooth expansiveness of the stereoism, the airy acoustics, and the luminosity with which the Clevelanders' inspired playing has been captured combine to give this first Epic tape release a top technological rating. I stress these sheerly sonic virtues because they are likely to be taken for granted by auditors spellbound by the wondrously songful music itself.

HAYDN: *Symphonies: No. 94, in G ("Surprise"); No. 101, in D ("Clock")*

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Pierre Monteux, cond.
• • RCA VICTOR FTC 2030. 47 min. \$8.95.

The Frenchman's restraint, lucidity, and piquancy reveal a Haydn considerably different from the more relaxed and expansive "Papa" of Viennese-schooled conductors, but his individual approach is one I find invigorating, though—in the *Clock* Symphony—scarcely as searching as Woldike's. The Vienna Philharmonic's vibrant timbres and warm sonorities are revealed here in the unflawed transparency of the original master recording.

MOZART: *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, in A, K. 622; Concertos for Horn and Orchestra: in D, K. 412; in E flat, K. 447*

Gervase de Peyer, clarinet; Barry Tuckwell, horn; London Symphony Orchestra, Peter Maag, cond.
• • LONDON LCL 80053. 54 min. \$7.95.

At last we can supersede the competent but never wholly satisfactory Goodman/Munch Clarinet Concerto taping of 1957 with what is surely the finest version, in performance as well as sound, which has yet appeared in any medium. De Peyer's is a new name to me, but he plays like

an angel here, and his own relaxed yet resilient grace is matched to perfection by Maag's tender, appropriately small but sturdy little orchestra, and by the most translucent and air-borne of stereo recordings. Barry Tuckwell's performance in the two horn concertos has many of the same qualities; more romantically suave than Stagliano, he lacks some of the Bostonian's bravura; and of course neither he nor Stagliano ever can efface the memory of Dennis Brain's unapproachable monophonic versions. Yet there is ample enchantment here, and De Peyer's work alone is irresistible.

SAINT-SAENS: *Symphony No. 3, in C minor, Op. 78*

Berj Zamochian, organ; Leo Litwin and Bernard Zighera, piano; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond.
• • RCA VICTOR FTC 2029. 34 min. \$8.95.

As the enthusiastic author of the liner notes for the disc version of this work, the farthest I can decently go here is to claim that the present taping approaches my memory of the original master tape I heard even more closely than the stereo disc edition. Even after long and close familiarity I can find nothing in the recorded performance that might make me want to revise my initial estimate of it. But it behooves me to state that Paul Affelder (May 1960) and other reviewers have been less unreservedly enthusiastic—some of them noting an excess of hall resonance, others finding that the organ and brass tend to overwhelm the strings in the finale, and at least one comparing Munch's performance unfavorably (except in the finale, ironically) with the famous old monophonic one by Toscanini. Fortunately there is an alternative choice: the generally praised Mercury version conducted by Paul Paray with the great Marcel Dupré as organist. And there may be some tape listeners who will still cling to the out-of-print Urania 2-track reel by Swarowsky and Eitner, which remains the most poetic of all, although it is less sensorially stereoistic.

SCHUBERT: *Symphonies: No. 2, in B flat; No. 8, in B minor ("Unfinished")*

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Münchinger, cond.
• • LONDON LCL 80038. 50 min. \$7.95.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 9, in C*

London Symphony Orchestra, Josef Krips, cond.
• • LONDON LCL 80043. 50 min. \$7.95.

Münchinger's *Unfinished* will appeal most

strongly to listeners of romantic temperament who are not likely to be disturbed by its somewhat exaggerated tempo and dynamic contrasts. The lovely Viennese playing and warm stereo recording are shown off to even greater degree in the more smoothly lyrical Second, in a first tape edition which in itself makes the whole reel a rewarding investment. Krips's Ninth, however, is a sheer necessity for more than Schubertians only, for it is music of universal appeal. This first tape edition is happily the most engaging and invigorating of all available stereo versions. I long cherished the 1952 monophonic LP by Krips and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, but his newer reading is more mature, more dramatically robust in the imperious finale, and yet—thanks in part to the soaringly expansive stereoism—even more radiant and heart-moving. If you've ever wondered why the work itself has been called the symphony of "heavenly length," you'll find the answer in these all-too-short fifty minutes of truly angelic music making.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Don Juan, Op. 20; Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28; Tod und Verklärung, Op. 24*

Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond.
• • EPIC EC 805. 54 min. \$7.95.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Also sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30*

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond.
• • LONDON LCL 80023. 33 min. \$7.95.

The more popular Strauss tone poems inexplicably continue to fare poorly on tape. Stokowski's recent *Till* for Everest was humorless and graceless, and his coupled *Don* excessively emotional, although its languishing moments were balanced by some remarkably high-spirited ones. Szell avoids these extremes in his generous grouping of all three favorites, yet for all his energy and dramatic forcefulness I feel a lack of essential gusto in his overinsistent *Till* and *Don*. And his *Tod und Verklärung*, effectively somber and agitated in its earlier pages, falls short of genuinely transfiguring radiance and compassion in its last ones. The recording itself, which dates back several years, is cleanly competent and natural rather than particularly impressive. I should add, however, that the tape is not as free from background noise as its companion (Dvořák Fourth) debut release.

Von Karajan's *Zarathustra* is disappointing. One would think it almost impossible to minimize the drama here, but for once even the "Sunrise" opening fails to make an electrifying impact. Perhaps the conductor takes the Nietzschean metaphysics more seriously than Strauss's score: at any rate he makes the music seem unconscionably sluggish, schmalzty, and pretentious. Even the recording seems a bit muddy at times, although this well may be the fault of the orchestra rather than of the engineers, since many details are captured extremely well—not least the usually submerged climactic midnight chime strokes. I shan't abandon my old but still incomparable 2-track tape by Reiner, at least until that ageless masterpiece is reissued in a 4-track version.

VERDI: *La Forza del destino*

Renata Tebaldi (s), Donna Leonora; Mario del Monaco (t), Don Alvaro; Ettore Bastianini (b), Don Carlo; *et al.* Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, cond.

• • LONDON LOV 90009. Two reels: approx. 85 and 81 min. \$25.95 (with libretto).

VERDI: *Il Trovatore*

Renata Tebaldi (s), Leonora; Giulietta Simionato (ms), Azucena; Mario del Monaco (t), Manrico; Ugo Savarese (b), Count di Luna; *et al.* Chorus of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino; Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Alberto Erede, cond.

• • LONDON LOR 90005. Two reels: approx. 51 and 77 min. \$21.95 (with libretto).

Here are two of the favorite Verdian standards in the extensive London catalogue, both notable for more nearly complete scores than competing versions on discs, and both exhibiting characteristic merits (and defects) of London's star singers and early stereo engineering. Technically the shortcomings are few and minor: if we never get the thrills of the more recent *Rheingold* and *Aida*, the less markedly stereoisitic technology is still sufficient to provide authentic opera house breadth and immediacy.

Although Tebaldi and Del Monaco are in fine voice throughout (the former, as always, singing beautifully; the latter at least robustly, if with scant refinement), neither brings vivid characterization to his respective role. For me, the honors go to lesser luminaries: Bastianino and Corena in *La Forza*; Tozzi in *Il Trovatore*. Simionato's Preziosilla and Azucena both have been highly praised, but a certain vocal unsteadiness prevents my enjoying them wholeheartedly. Perhaps it is simply musical prejudice which colors my personal reactions to the over-all performances, but *Il Trovatore* only sporadically approaches full dramatic conviction, it seems to me, whereas the fresher imagination in *La Forza* and the more assured craftsmanship (on the part of both composer and conductor) hold me spellbound for the full two and three-quarter hours the present taping runs. In this case, at least, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts: one may quibble a bit about details, but these detract only infinitesimally from the force of the music drama itself.

WAGNER: *Tristan und Isolde: Isolde's Narrative and Curse; Prelude and Liebestod*

Birgit Nilsson (s), Isolde; Grace Hoffman (c), Brangäne; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Hans Knappertsbusch, cond.
• • LONDON LOL 90022. 38 min. \$7.95.

Pending the receipt of the just announced complete *Turandot* reels from RCA Victor, the present work gives tape-ophiles their first hearing of the fabulous Miss Nilsson. It is no disappointment, for the soloist lives up to her great reputation for both vocal and dramatic virtuosity. In addition, she is given superb support both by the well-contrasted and scarcely less attractive voice of Miss Hoffman and by a sumptuously rich orchestra un-

der the veteran Knappertsbusch. Yet even the tender loveliness of Nilsson's singing in the quieter passages and her magnificently ringing high tones in the climaxes must share honors with the stereo engineering here, which gives us true opera house depth as well as lateral spaciousness. As in *Das Rheingold*, the Wagnerian orchestra is never belittled, yet the more distant soloists are not submerged by it. A promising augury for future—and hopefully more extensive—Nilsson and *Tristan* tapings!

"G. I. Blues." Sound Track Recording with Elvis Presley and the Jordanaires. RCA Victor FTP 1045, 27 min., \$7.95.

The one and only Elvis, echo-chambered here to overlifesize proportions but more personality-packed than ever, sings a lusty *Frankfort Special* and the title song, a heavily rocking *Blue Suede Shoes* and *Shoppin' Around*, even a quite straightforward *Pocketful of Rainbows*, in addition to other songs from his current film hit. You may not like him, but it's impossible to deny that he commands a powerful magnetism of a distinctively individual kind.

"The Great Sound of Les Elgart." Les Elgart and His Orchestra. Columbia CQ 695, 28 min., \$6.95.

These big-band performances, in broad stereo, have enormous energy, weight, and brilliance. They lumber clumsily at their worst, but at their best (as in the antiphonal, marchlike *Ginger Snap* and a sonorous *If I Could Be with You One Hour Tonight*) they are infectious swinging.

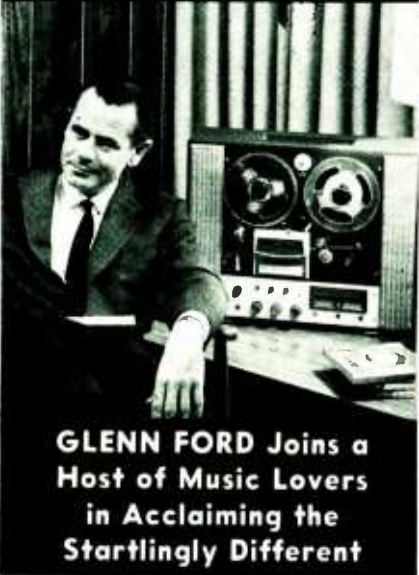
"Hits from the Hills." The Merrill Station Choir. Epic EN 606, 34 min., \$6.95.

The somewhat misleading title actually refers not so much to the country-styled music as to the predominance of compositions by Billy Hill (*Wagon Wheels, In the Chapel by the Moonlight*, etc.) augmented by an even jauntier *Indiana* and a richer *You're the Only Star*. But what gives these lightweight materials real distinction is the charming and fresh-voiced singing and the unmannered, buoyant accompaniments. Expansively and brightly recorded, in rather close mikings, these varied performances make a far better "sing along" program than most issued specifically for that purpose.

"Soul of Flamenco." Sabicas and Ensemble. ABC Paramount ATC 817, 39 min., \$7.95.

Sabicas is incapable, I think, of ever producing an uninteresting or a sonically ineffective record. This all-flamenco program (in which he is supported by his guitarist-brother Diego and an unnamed singer and dancer) is likely to have a stronger appeal for *aficionados*, however, than for listeners unfamiliar with the subtle idioms and intricate techniques of this genre. As always, his performances are distinguished by enormous vitality and virtuosic bravura, and the closely miked, well-spaced stereo recording is dryly brilliant. Even so, some of the rhapsodies are spun out to what seems to a nonspecialist unconscionable length. Yet even the newcomer cannot fail to be spellbound by the originality and variety of the spirited *Farruca del Camino* for guitars alone.

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"Spectacular Harps." Robert Maxwell and Ensemble. M-G-M STC 3836. 27 min., \$7.95.

Like many other "spectaculars," this most interesting of M-G-M's entries struck me as painfully strident in its excessively high-leveled and closely miked stereo disc edition, but the taping proves to be far less sonically sharp and intense, and at the same time more authentically glittering. And if Maxwell is too often determined to make harps sound more like super guitars, mandolins, and glockenspiels than like themselves, he also is capable of less jangling music making when he relaxes a bit, as he does with his own songful *Ebb Tide*, and *Chapel in the Pines*.

"Swing Dat Hammer." Harry Belafonte; Belafonte Folk Singers, Robert de Cormier, cond. RCA Victor FTP 1025, 38 min., \$7.95.

Pure folklorists may legitimately criticize Belafonte for some softening of the rough edges of his prison- and work-song materials here; but if he does tend to dramatize them, he is careful never to sentimentalize their essential pathos and irony. The moving lament *Look Over Yonder*, the rollicking *Grizzly Bear*, and the vigorous *Rocks and Gravel* are first-rate songs, yet what gives this expansively recorded program its distinction is the long concluding jailhouse evening scene, *Talkin' and Signifyin'*. It is an extraordinary spoken and sung sound-picture of Negro prison life which surely must rank among the most authentically evocative of all documentaries which have been given us on records.

Tchaikovsky: *Nutcracker* Suites Nos. 1 and 2. *Swan Lake*: highlights. Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. London LCL 80037, 43 min., and LCL 80045, 44 min.; \$7.95 each.

These are abridged versions of Ansermet's celebrated complete *Nutcracker* and his extensive *Swan Lake* recordings, and they provide intoxicating introductions to the musical delights and technological splendors of those releases. Yet I can recommend them only to those tape buyers who are convinced they cannot afford the longer reels. Fine as the more familiar excerpts may be, they can give no more than tantalizing tastes of the unbounded treasures to be heard in the complete works.

"Wild Percussion and Horns A-Plenty." Dick Schory's New Percussion Ensemble. RCA Victor FTP 1056, 31 min., \$7.95.

This reel edition reveals even more impressively than the magnificent stereo disc both the inspired bravura of the Schory Ensemble performances and the magnificent authenticity of these big auditorium sonics. Lou Wills, Jr., taps buoyantly in *Dancing on the Ceiling*, and a broken-field runner staggers catastrophically in *Stumblin'*. And as always, Schory also explores the more delicate and poetic potentialities of percussion and brass timbres and of stereo technology: hear the French horn sonorities of *Till There Was You*, the echoing multi-trumpet pyramids of *The Peanut Vendor*, and above all the haunting cymbal surges and evocative French horns in a magical realization of *Beyond the Sea*.

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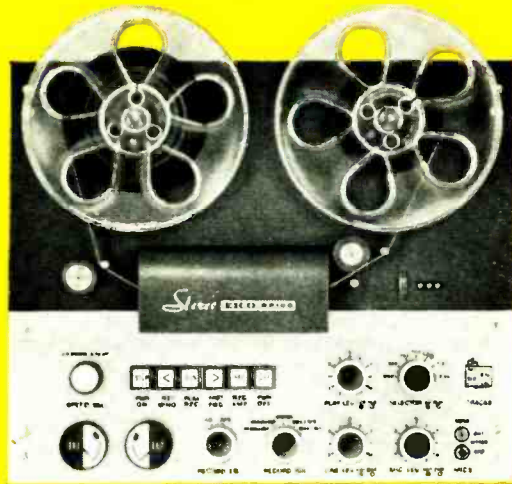
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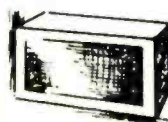
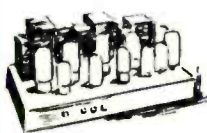
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 CIRCLE 34 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

High Fidelity Newsfronts

by RALPH FREAS



Tape Turntables. Ampex has added two units to its tape recorder line—well, not really, because the new Models 934 and 936 are not recorders. Actually, they are tape “turntables.” Both are two-speed (7½ and 3¾ ips) units for playing four-track stereo, two-track stereo, full-track and monophonic tapes. Neither of the new units can be used to make recordings.

“There are a lot of fine recorded tapes on the market,” an Ampex executive, John Larson, told us, “and plenty of people who just want to listen to them.”



Tape player without preamps.

The 934 and 936 differ in one major respect. Whereas the 934 (\$199.50) feeds the recorded signals to an external preamplifier, the 936 (\$249.50) has self-contained preamplifiers.

The deck and playback heads in both are the same as those included in the Ampex record/playback units, Models 960 and 970. The new units possess a reasonably full complement of controls (fast wind, play, stop, speed, and a head-shift lever to change from two to four track). The 936, with its built-in preamplifiers, also has listening level and on-off controls. Until April 30, purchasers of any Ampex 900 series playback or record/playback unit will receive at no charge six four-track stereo recorded tapes, along with a brass-finish metal rack for tape storage.

Arms Against Distortion. Dynaco has introduced a 16-in. version of the B & O tone arm and cartridge. In so doing, the manufacturer underscores the longer arm’s stereo advantages.

“You wouldn’t think,” Dynaco’s David Hafler told us, “that you could hear the difference between two per cent and one per cent distortion; the difference between a 12-in. and a 16-in. arm. But it is audible.”

The fact that tracking-error distortion diminishes with an increase in tone arm length should come as no news to any reader of this magazine. Less well known perhaps is the contention that, with

stereo, the longer arm also offers greater accuracy in channel balance and greater equality in crosstalk.

Hafler calls the new TA-16 arm the “Isodyne” (*Iso*, equal; *dynes*, work, unit of work or force). By means of a ten-degree offset in the lateral pivot of the arm, the TA-16 is supposed to counteract the rotational force inherent in a spinning disc. This force inclines the stylus to work slightly harder against the right side of the groove than the left. “Isodyne” (the ten-degree offset) cancels out the rotational force and makes the stylus work equally on both sides of the groove.

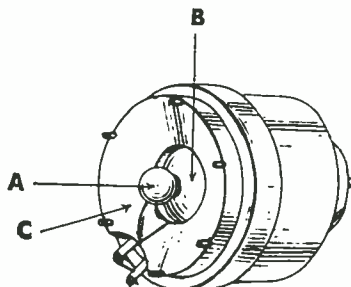
Also new from Dynaco is a viscose-damped arm-lifter, or cueing bar, to be sold “for under \$10” as an accessory for both the 12-in. and 16-in. arms.

Polyurethane Pocket-fuzz. Some component buyers incline to a curiosity that runs them smack into trouble with their purchases. This thesis was aired by University’s Victor Brociner as he explained the finer points of the firm’s new “Sphericon Super Tweeter” (Model T-201). The unit’s diaphragm is tiny—about the size of a nickel. To disperse its sound over a wider area, a “diffractor sphere” sits directly in front of the diaphragm. This sphere, with an assist from the “conoidal ring” around the diaphragm, disperses the sound—says Brociner—120 degrees in all planes.

How does the customer run into trouble? “See this gap between the sphere and the diaphragm?” Brociner asked. “We insert a little piece of damping material here to smooth out the response. Let me show you.”

With tweezers, Brociner extracted from the eighth-of-an-inch gap a minute square of plastic foam (polyurethane isocyanate, we learned), reminiscent of the bits of fuzz one often finds in one’s pockets.

“Just as a car’s shock absorbers smooth the ride,” Brociner explained, “this bit of plastic foam smooths the tweeter’s



The T-210’s Diffractor Sphere (A), Diaphragm (B), and Conoidal Ring (C).

frequency response to plus or minus two db from 3 kc to 22 kc.

“Fortunately, the tweeter operates almost as well without it. You’d be surprised how many people write to ask if the bit of plastic is packing material. I’m astonished that they are able to find it, and I’m sure that many others simply take it out without considering what it’s for.”

Then Brociner brightened and placed a small plastic case with a metal mesh front on his desk.

“This is our new model T-203 for people who don’t want to tear apart their old enclosure to install it,” he said. “The crossover is built in, and the tweeter can be connected right to the amplifier terminals or across the main speaker connections. Simple? Makes it easier for the user, and we’ll cut down the number of queries we get about that little piece of plastic.”

Ultrasensitive. Avery Fisher buzzed for his secretary and asked for a special file.

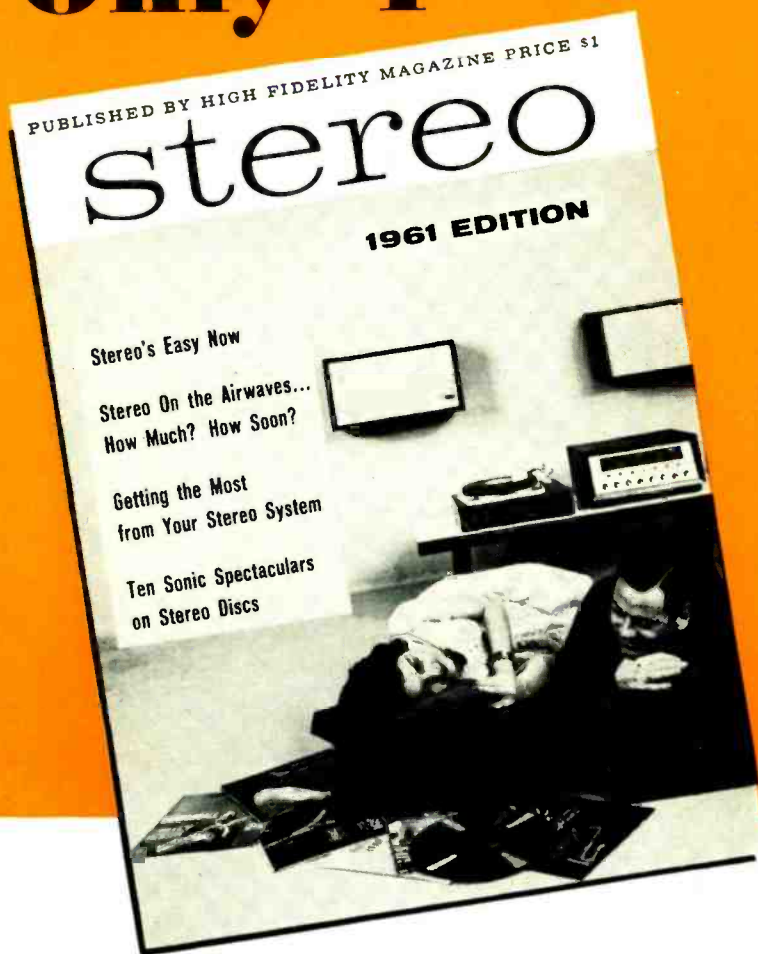
“Anyone can make fancy claims for a piece of equipment,” he said. “I prefer to have my customers speak for our new FM-200 tuner.”

When the file came, Mr. Fisher plucked out a letter and tossed it across the desk. It bore the signature of a delighted Milwaukee listener who had, among other things, pulled in a station in Cleveland, 325 miles away.

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Reverb Reducer. So much has been said about reverberation-inducing devices that one reads with a sort of perverse pleasure about a product that rejects it. The product? A microphone, Electro-Voice’s “664” cardioid dynamic unit. Not new (it has been around for about two years or so), the 664, in the manufacturer’s words, “features highly directional sound selectivity that reduces pickup of reverberation and ambient noise up to fifty per cent.” E-V spokesman Larry LeKashman emphasizes that directionality is by no means the only virtue of the 664; but he points out that, for many amateur recordists attempting stereo-phony at home, a directional microphone makes two-channel effects easier for the amateur recordist to control.

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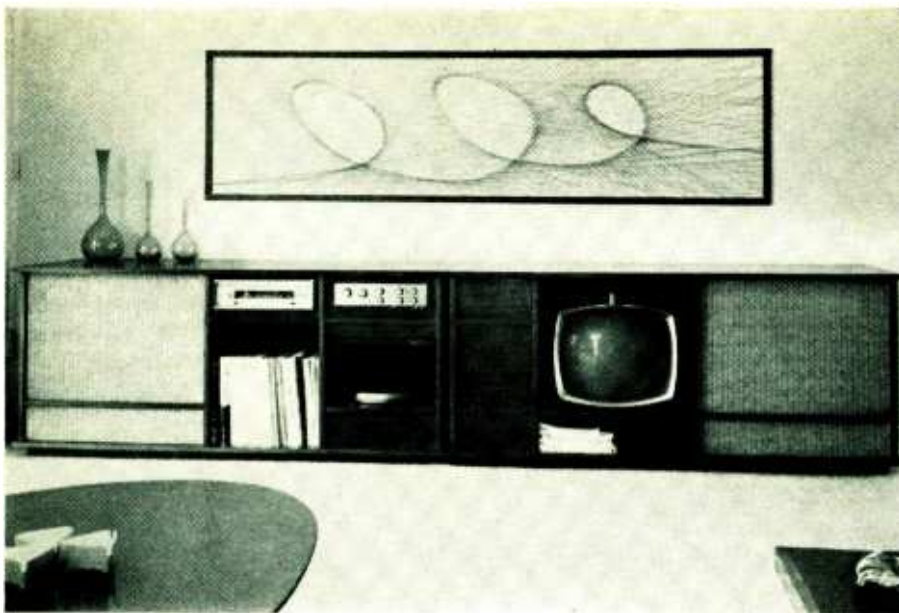
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CONSTRUCTING the complete component cabinet (shown above) was, for RCA engineer Doug Climson, a necessary afterthought to assembling audio gear. After getting the rig that suited his tastes and pocketbook, one end of his living room was a tangle of "spaghetti" and hardware. Let's admit right away that component manufacturers have come far in the aesthetics of design. The wires and cables that link these attractive pieces of equipment together, however, still pose a problem. The fact that the three Climson children—all under seven—live an active life in the listening room added still another complication. Cabinetry was indicated.

Commercial cabinets didn't suit Mr. Climson for several reasons. As he tells it, "Few I examined gave adequate speaker separation. The hanging shelf idea, used successfully by many, was considered and discarded. Shelving didn't solve the exposed wire problem. Nor did I think it rugged enough."

Do-it-yourself cabinetry seemed to be the answer, and a series of drawings he made brought the project into reasonable perspective. Power tools weren't needed since the local lumberyard agreed to do the cutting from four-by-seven-foot

sheets of walnut veneer plywood. A local carpenter gave assurance that cleat-reinforced butt joints would provide desired strength. The trickiest problem Climson faced was the place to build it.

"Joining the two horizontal and four vertical pieces for each half of the cabinet was done in the kitchen in one evening," Doug Climson explains. "Thereafter, I did the detailed work with the frame in place in the living room. Gluing veneer strip to the exposed plywood edges took the most time."

The entire job, at a relaxed pace in spare time, took Climson about a month. Periodic oiling of the surface, the only finishing needed, followed.

"The cabinet has been in use," he estimates, "for about six months—subjected to child and party hazards—and I don't think I would change the design if I had to do it again."

The principal material costs totaled \$126. The over-all dimensions of the cabinet are: 10 ft. 4 in. long, 27 in. high, 24 in. deep. Detailed construction notes and drawings of the Climson cabinet are available to HIGH FIDELITY readers. Send requests to the Audio Editor, High Fidelity, The Publishing House, Great Barrington, Mass.

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eccentric offshoot of Satie, was far too full of genuine musical ideas to succumb to an image created by journalistic sensation seekers. He had begun composing during his student days at the Paris Conservatoire, and had already a substantial number of large-scale works behind him. Furthermore, he believed that the musical language did not really lend itself to an expression of the comic. The production of *Le Boeuf sur le toit* had been a hilarious affair, it is true, but this early score is not really comic; it is a brilliantly orchestrated fantasy on popular South American tunes (Milhaud had spent some twenty months in Brazil as secretary to the French Ambassador Paul Claudel), one of which happened to have this faintly amusing title.

With the success of *Le Boeuf*, Milhaud began to pour out a vast quantity of works, which over the years were to embrace examples of all forms of secular, sacred, and dramatic music and which he was to conduct in many parts of the world. He must be the most widely traveled of contemporary composers. Several of his major works have been written on journeys across the Atlantic and the Pacific—he writes with incredible speed—and although, as we shall presently see, he is deeply rooted in the traditions of an ancient Jewish family from Provence, travel has constantly excited his musical imagination. Impressions of the East and of the folk music of North and South America are echoed in his music; folk songs from France jostle with Hebrew tunes. Milhaud is able to tackle anything—operas, oratorios, symphonies—but he is not in any way immodest in his outlook. On the contrary, he approaches certain of his bigger tasks with true humility. While in chamber music he boasted that he could rival the production of Beethoven, he announced that the symphony for full orchestra (as opposed to his "symphonies" for chamber orchestra such as the early *Printemps* and *Pastorale*) requires maturity and that he would not attempt to write in this form until the age of fifty. His first large-scale symphony was in fact written when he was forty-seven, for the anniversary of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

This was the work, together with the suite *Kentuckiana* and the *Opus Ameri-*

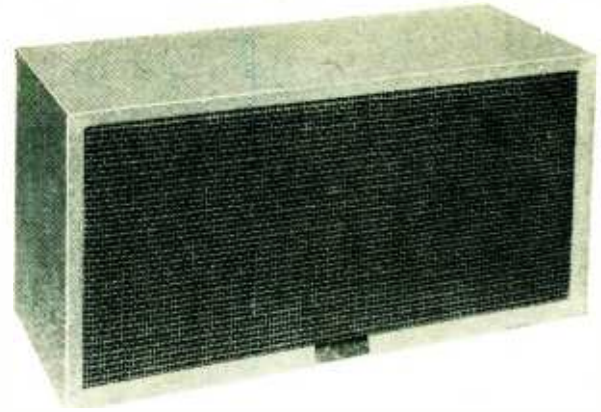
canum No. 2, that he conducted in London on his first appearance there after the War. I was at that time in charge of his studio concerts for the BBC Third Programme, and our difficulty was to arrange for him to proceed without discomfort from his wheelchair to a comfortable seat on the rostrum. It is a piece of bitter irony that this most active and energetic of composers had become almost wholly crippled by arthritis. From 1940 there were periods when even his arms and hands were affected and music then simply couldn't be written. The wonderful thing was that throughout this time his musical mind seemed to become all the more alive and acute. I shall never forget the impression made at the London concerts by his brilliantly vivacious *Kentuckiana* suite. This was a new Milhaud, jaunty, jocular, and alive with fantastic rhythms. "The poor man may have lost the use of his legs," my neighbor whispered to me as we watched Milhaud conducting from his armchair, "but they go on dancing in the relentless rhythms of his music."

Dear Darius! Anyone else so afflicted would certainly have been forgiven for resting on his laurels. Not so with Milhaud. When he was not actually laid up, his activities were redoubled. Nor did he travel any the less. His devoted wife, the cousin Madeleine whom he had married in 1925, looked after the wheelchair, and the journeys went on as before all over Europe and across the Atlantic. It was about this time that he began to return for several months each year to Mills College, California, where he had taught during the War and until 1947, as well as to teach at the Paris Conservatoire.

It was in Jerusalem that I next saw him. He was there with his lifelong friend, the poet and philosopher Armand Lunel, to make arrangements for the opera *David* which he was to write for the three-thousandth anniversary, in 1954, of the founding of Jerusalem. Milhaud is a devout Jew, and I could see that this visit to Israel had aroused deep associations. In his memoirs *Notes Without Music*, Milhaud gives a fascinating historical account of the old Jewish communities in Provence, of which he is

Continued on page 100

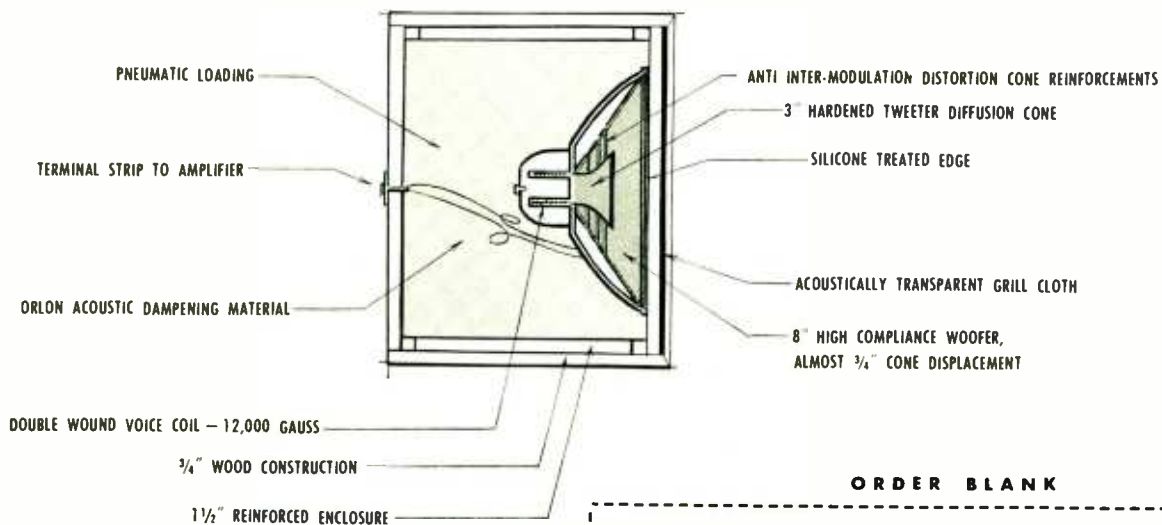
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CIRCLE 75 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

MILHAUD

Continued from page 98

a descendant. Jews, he explains there, had settled in this region as traders long before the Christian era. In remote times there were persecutions, but in the later Middle Ages the Provençal Jews lived peacefully as subjects of their benevolent overlord, the Pope at Avignon. Strange as it may seem to us today, the Pope's portrait normally hung on the walls of ancient Jewish homes in Provence, facing an engraving of Moses and the Tablets of the Law, and in the picturesque old synagogues prayers were offered for the Pope as head of state. One of these papal prayers of the Jews, Milhaud set to music. It is one of a series of works inspired by ancient Provençal texts, another being the cantata *Couronne de gloire* ("Crown of Glory") written to commemorate the founding of the modern synagogue at Aix-en-Provence by Milhaud's great-grandfather. On his maternal side there are similarly fascinating records. One of the Jewish patriarchs among his maternal ancestors had been the Pope's doctor. Like many of the Jews of this community Milhaud remained closely attached to his family and its traditions.

The opera *David* was first given in Jerusalem in concert form with the Kol Israel Orchestra augmented by the Israeli Police Force band. The following year it was magnificently produced at La Scala under Nino Sanzogno. It was not, of course, the first of Milhaud's works inspired by Jewish subjects. His two magnificent song recitals, the *Poèmes juifs* (1916) and the *Chants populaires hébraïques* (1925), for instance, were psychological interpretations of Jewish scenes and characters. It is illuminating, I think, to compare these rather somber song recitals with the *Quatre chansons de Ronsard*, written for Lily Pons, an unmistakably Gallic work sparkling with gaiety. Behind such works of Jewish and French associations is an ancestral background built from the merging of two cultures. Milhaud is a Frenchman and a cosmopolitan, a Jew attached to ancient religious practices and a twentieth-century sophisticate.

It was thus natural that Milhaud should feel himself perfectly at ease in coöperating not only with Armand Lunel but with writers closely associated with the Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths. He collaborated over many years with Paul Claudel, the great Catholic writer who provided him with the text of his opera *Christophe Colomb* and the scenario of his ballet *L'homme et son désir*. Milhaud also wrote the incidental music for several of Claudel's religious plays, among them *La Sagesse* and *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, and set his translation of the 129th Psalm. The correspondence between Claudel and Milhaud, covering a period of forty-three years, is shortly to be published. Likewise Milhaud has been inspired by the Catholic poet Francis Jammes, the author of the text of his first opera, *La Brebis égarée*; and his long friendship with André Gide.

the most prominent Protestant writer in France of his time, resulted in his setting of *Alissa*, the text of which is drawn from Gide's *La Porte étroite*.

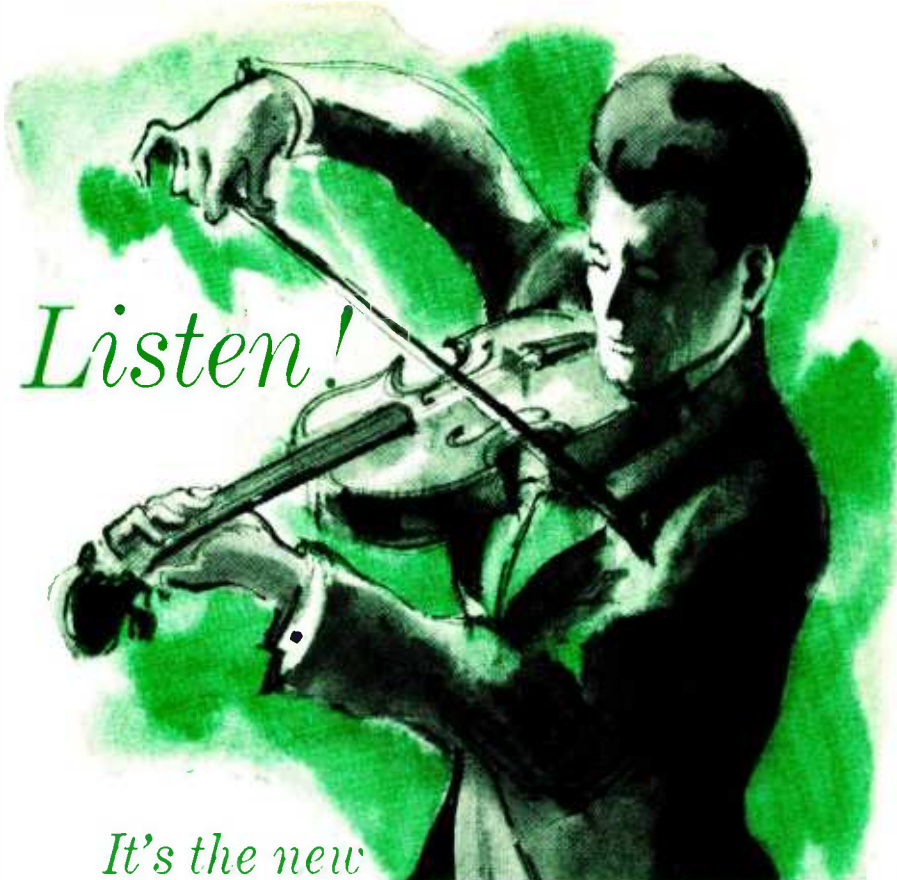
In the technical spheres of composition Milhaud in his youth created something of a stir by innovations with polytonality. By what law, he asked, must music revolve around a single tonal pivot? The musical mind, he maintained, is perfectly capable of responding to music based on two or more such pivots, and he proceeded to show that there were examples of two or more keys employed simultaneously in the music of Bach. The last movement of his Fifth String Quartet, written in 1920 and dedicated to Schoenberg, ends with each of the four instruments playing in a different key (A, D flat, C, and B flat). This was an extreme example of Milhaud's harmonic audacities, and though there are some daring passages in many of his later works, notably the great climax of *Les Euménides*, polytonality has not been systematically cultivated. Here and there in his work we find combinations of several tonalities, but never for long stretches. His technical procedures have been simplified. Polytonality has been reduced to tritonality or bitonality.

I have frequently thought that one is likely to find the surest clue to the workings of a composer's mind in his opinions of other composers. Milhaud happens to have some very strong feelings both on contemporary figures and on those of the past. He must be one of the few French composers who wholeheartedly admire Berlioz. It is an odd fact that in modern times the reputation of this great French composer has been almost entirely confined to countries other than France. The French are notoriously cruel to the children of their revolutions, and the common opinion held by French musicians—at least until just the other day—was that the harmony of the revolutionary Berlioz is crude and that his genius as an orchestrator has been vastly



overrated. Milhaud sees Berlioz in an utterly different light. On a recent visit to him at his apartment in the Boulevard de Clichy in Paris I observed that Berlioz is one of the two composers—the other is Erik Satie—whose portraits hang from the walls of his music room. The unexpected sight of this portrait intrigued me, and I was anxious to know more about Milhaud's admiration for a com-

Continued on next page



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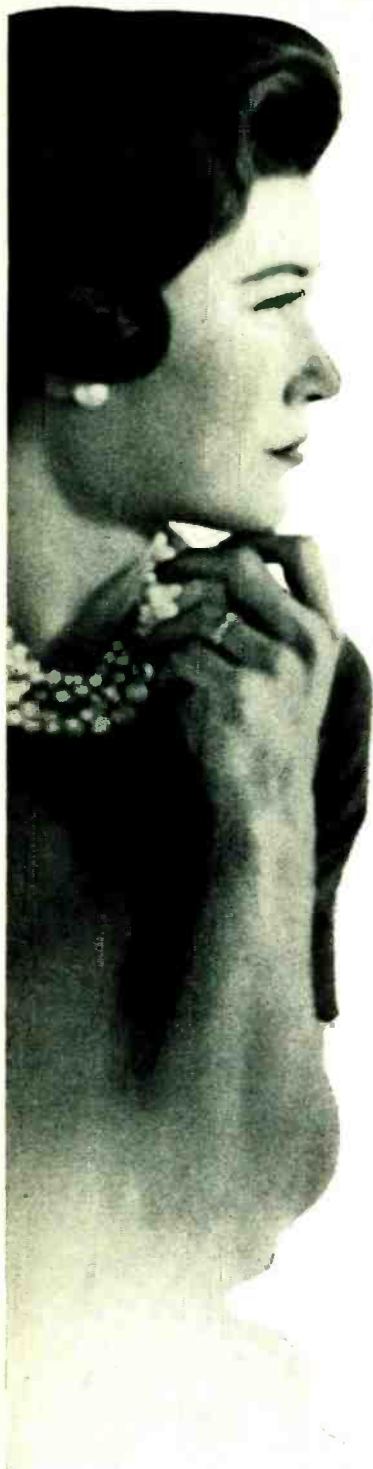
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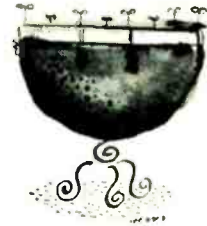
CIRCLE 25 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

MILHAUD

Continued from preceding page

poser who, though his genius cannot be denied, was guilty, I suggested, of certain harshnesses or extravagances. The passage in Berlioz's Requiem for flutes and trombones alone seemed to me a case in point; I find it a self-conscious effect. Milhaud insisted that this was a hair-raising piece of instrumentation, and he made it clear to me that Berlioz was altogether a composer after his heart—he could do no wrong. Mahler, similarly, is a composer he greatly admires, though not uncritically; Schoenberg too, though not Bruckner and certainly not Brahms.

Gradually, I began to have a new light on Milhaud's musical personality. What he stands for is music that must on no account be precious. Preciosity, he maintains, an excessive attention to prettiness of detail, a supersensitive response to the beauty of sound for its own sake—this "decadent" aesthetic as it used to be called, and rightly so, as Milhaud



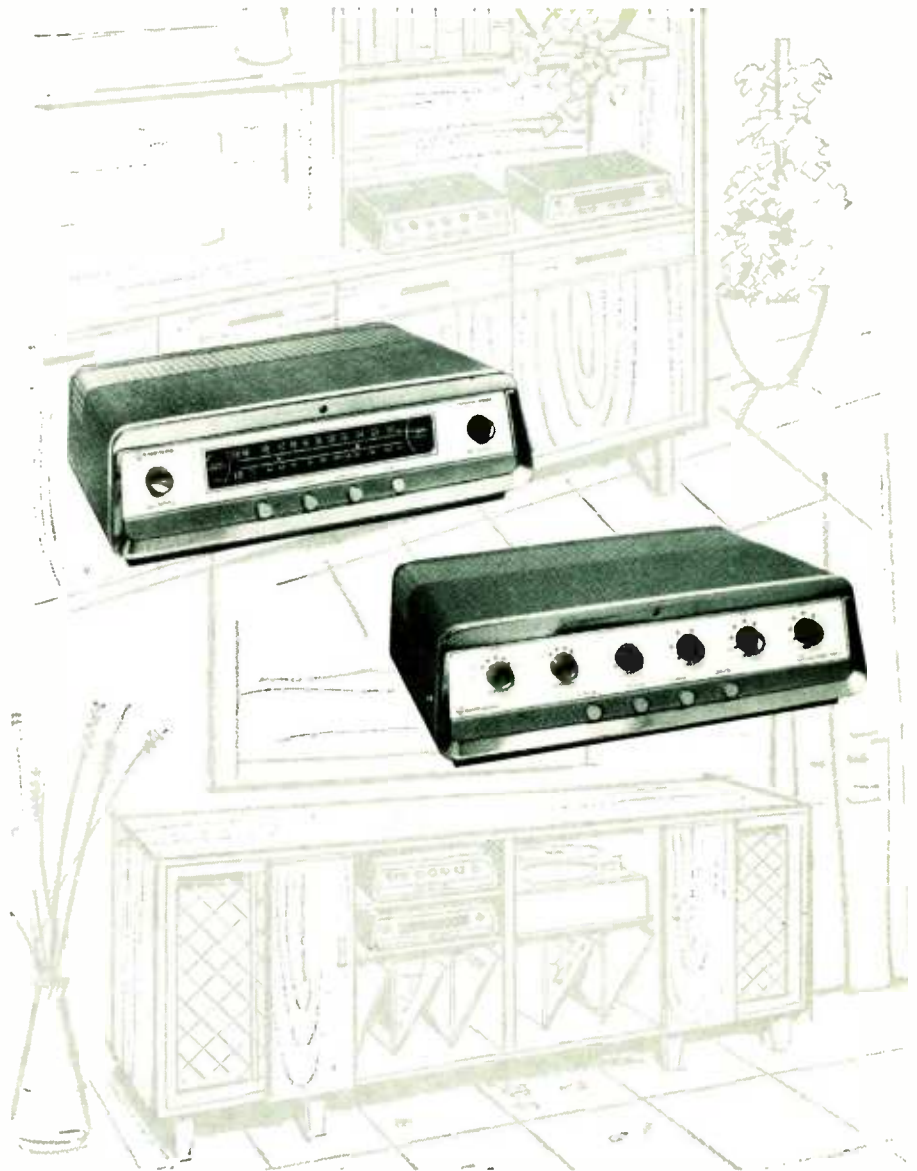
believes—can lead nowhere. He is the enemy of Impressionism, "which caused music to be scattered into pieces," as he put it, "or to vanish away like smoke or a show of fireworks." Here, I believe, we may begin to understand Milhaud's phenomenal fertility. If musical Impressionism, where the color of every note must be carefully pondered and assessed, where a refinement of sensibility brings to the surface all sorts of ambivalent feelings which ultimately cancel themselves out and leave music to vanish into thin air—if all these ravishments can be forgotten, then indeed the way may be opened for a sturdier and more vigorous type of music. Milhaud believes that once Impressionism has been abandoned, music will again be written fluently and abundantly.

What, in this context, had Milhaud to say of the two idols of the golden age of French music, Debussy and Ravel? Debussy had been the greatest revelation of Milhaud's youth, and he maintained that his admiration has not diminished over the years. He did not mean this in any contradictory sense. Debussy, in Milhaud's view, is not essentially an Impressionist composer; the poetic reverberations in his work go far beyond the fleeting Impressionist aesthetic. With Ravel it was another matter. Though the two composers were rather close friends—at the beginning of his career Milhaud received much encouragement from Ravel—the latter's artistry and refined workmanship, his preoccupation with dainty filigree work, is precisely

what Milhaud feels to be so sterile. There are only a few pages of Ravel that genuinely move him. Significantly, they are the big dramatic effects in the Concerto for the Left Hand and the tenderness of the final scene of *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*. Milhaud denounced *La Valse* as "an overelaborate work in the style of Saint-Saëns shot through with memories of the Russian ballet."

I have been privileged to know Milhaud's music over many years. I have followed his evolution and observed the response to his music in many countries. But it was in this close scrutiny of his own personal reactions that I felt I had come nearest to an understanding of his musical mind. In the end I felt that the choice of those pictures of Berlioz and Satie told me as much as anything about Milhaud. He has the idealism, the vigor, and the rough-hewn qualities of the one and, deep down, the naïveté and poetry of the other.

As for his theory that the musical language does not lend itself to an expression of humor, this may very well be. But a fantastic story Milhaud told me about Satie and Schoenberg proved that he himself has a very keen sense of humor. I had not known that the works of these utterly dissimilar composers were known to each other. Incredible as it may seem, Schoenberg, during the time he was lionized in Vienna, was much attracted to Satie's tiny pieces and planned to have them performed there. A difficulty arose, however, over the inscriptions that appear in Satie's works. His pieces, as is well known, are covered with all sorts of droll remarks, printed in red, intended for the private amusement of the performer. This point had completely escaped Schoenberg, who arranged to have Satie's freakish remarks translated into German and declaimed in a rhetorical manner from the platform during the performance. "Ah, le fourneau!" ("the fat-head") Satie burst out when told of this ponderous project. And as he told me of this untoward episode, Milhaud laughed heartily.



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eight a week. She remembers all too vividly the time in the middle of her career when she sang ten performances in a row. Nowadays the pace is not so hectic, nor, for that matter, so exciting. Basically, the difference is due to AGMA, which has established a maximum of four appearances a week per artist in return for the weekly paycheck. Beyond that, the management must pay an extra fee, which the artists often would welcome but which is seldom forthcoming. Managerial foresight and an extensive roster have reduced the average number of performances for even the most sought-after *comprimario* to a relatively quiet two or three a week.

Miss Votipka has used this unaccustomed leisure not only to teach, but also to reflect a little on the pleasures and vicissitudes of her way of life. She refers to her repertoire as "Western Union parts"—not many lines, but usually important ones. "What's more, it's all the job I want or can really handle. Leading parts? No, I never had such great ambitions, because I never thought I'd be better than Flagstad or Traubel. Those women and others like them were born for star roles. I had a nice voice, and I was always a good musician and a quick study, so I've stayed right in my little nest. I do my little part, and I love it there. It's warm and comfortable."

And from that nest Tippy and her colleagues have been insulated from the *Sturn und Drang* of the prima donna world. It has given them all delight to see the ascent to fame of one-time members of their league—Harshaw and Votipka were fellow Valkyrs more than once, and Paul Franke was often a Messenger to the Verdian King of Egypt whom Lucine Amara served as a Priestess—but essentially they remain content away from the uncertainties of stardom. As Votipka says, "the star's dressing room is right next to the exit."

The rewards of a *comprimario* career are not for everyone, though. "It depends on your personality. If you're always wishing for the top, then it's rough. But if you enjoy your little bits, without that consuming desire to be bigger than anyone else, then it's marvelous."

There are others who appreciate this attitude, and not the least of these are the opera managers. Among those who most fervently bless the availability of a flexible roster of *comprimari* is young Robert Herman, Artistic Administrator of the Metropolitan (and son of Brooklyn Dodger baseball immortal Babe Herman, an unlikely but evidently effective heritage). Generally speaking, Herman, together with Rudolf Bing and other members of the managerial staff, has the leading singers for most productions set well over a year in advance—subject only to the vagaries of whim, weather, and viruses. Final complete casts for the majority of the operas are not promulgated until five weeks in advance. The complexities of scheduling and running rehearsals so that all the space and all the artists are efficiently utilized is the

responsibility of Company Manager Frank Paola, but the initial headaches are Herman's. With seven and sometimes eight works to mount each week of the season, the headaches can be profound.

The stars, though, and not the myriads of small parts, give the trouble. "The *comprimari* are no problem at all," Herman claims. "The Metropolitan has the finest group in the world, soloists so rich and flexible that we can without hesitation substitute one for the other and be assured of high standards. If De Paolis has sung a role one night, then Paul Franke could do it the next, or Charles Anthony the third."

Perhaps things were easier in the pre-AGMA days, when a good leather-lunged *comprimario* could be used until he dropped for not a dime more than his weekly salary, but Herman doesn't yearn



for the past. More often than not he tries to use his casting assets in a sparing and careful manner. "If an artist sings roles like Guillot, Remendado, and L'Incredibile, then three performances a week is the absolute maximum I'd ask for him." There's no sense in squandering hard-to-come-by riches.

The requirements of drama being what they are—very few Western Union messengers are female—active male *comprimari* outnumber their sister artists by close to two to one, with tenors and baritones predominating. The Met's roster book has three pages devoted to men, two to women. This disparity is one of the guides Herman and the Met staff must use in hiring new talent. Another and more cogent criterion is established by the Association's long-term plan to develop new stars. Harshaw and Amara were not accidents. The chance for growth and development is most definitely offered, and talent and ambition are nurtured. As Herman puts it, "We don't engage a *comprimario* as a general rule unless we feel that the artist has potential. And an artist will usually have the opportunity to sing major roles, at least at the student performances, to exhibit that potential on the stage.

"There are, though, those wonderful few, such as De Paolis, Cehanovsky, Lawrence Davidson, Calvin Marsh, and Thelma Votipka, who are happy doing the tiny roles and who make a real artistic performance out of them."

Backstage at opera houses and recording companies the wheels turn and plans are made and schedules are published, but for any managerial operations to make sense, the basic need must still be human artistry and, more particularly, human devotion. To labor beautifully in relative obscurity is the *comprimario's* lot; that there are enough opera singers to whom this is reward enough is one of the wonders of this irrational art.

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RECORDING HALLS

Continued from page 33

violinist took precipitous flight.

Often musicians are turned around to aim the sound at some part of the hall (usually made of wood) which reflects. On the other hand, when Everest records in Pittsburgh, the engineers remove the wooden shell in the Syria Mosque. This reflector supposedly enhances sound, but Everest finds that it actually soaks up the lows of the double basses, timpani, and big drum. The brick wall at the back gives those instruments "something to push against."

Walthamstow Town Hall, a British auditorium much favored for recordings, has a big balcony which the engineers must decide either to cover up or leave open. The problem is solved according to the taste of those working there or the requirements of the situation at hand. Curved ceilings are notorious for slap-back, and at Manhattan Center in New York (a difficult hall to work with in spite of its popularity) gobobs—an acoustical shield—are sometimes placed on the ceiling to prevent sound from leaking into the balcony.

Most engineering triumphs have been achieved over exceptionally lively halls. Excess reverberation can be dampened and brought under control with drapery and careful miking, but there is relatively little that one can do with a dead hall where the sound is blotter-dry and high frequencies die aborning. The result: most engineers prefer an overlive hall.

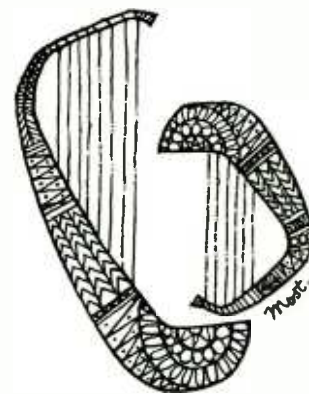
But wait: the choice is not always clear-cut. Once a recording has been made, reverberation cannot be eliminated. It can, however, be added. Some engineers would rather risk an overly dry recording, knowing that a nice, round echo can be added later. The classic technique for this is the echo chamber. The recorded sound is simply played into the chamber and re-recorded en route from its resonant walls. The echo chamber is *de rigueur* in the pops and semi-pops field; it produces a poly-voiced-Prezley or creamy-Melachrino effect—the sort of I-love-you-even-though-I'm-way-out-here kind of sound. Pop records, so the story goes, are made by setting up an echo chamber and then deciding whose voice will be sent into it.

The echo chamber apparently saw more use in recordings of classical music some years ago, when skills to bring about consistent sound at the recording session were lacking. To this day Columbia has a famous stairwell in which very well-known recordings have bounced up and down stairs picking up some needed reverb. A while back, *Scheherazade* was sent down the stairwell, awakening a stray dog who sought refuge from Seventh Avenue. The dog was, it turned out, something of a music critic. His opinions may be heard occasionally on the finished recording.

Columbia, Everest, and Capitol acknowledge the use of the echo chamber and electronic reverberation devices, arguing that any means of improving sound is legitimate and desirable. Many others, however, feel that their effect hardly ap-

proximates the resonance of a real hall. The discovery and exploitation of halls with fine acoustics thus remains a subject of major concern.

Any list of recording locales in common use has to begin with London and Vienna—the two major international recording centers. In London the halls most prized and used are Kingsway Hall in the building of the West London Mission of the Methodists and Walthamstow Town Hall. From the plethora of recordings made by many companies at these places one can mention as examples from Kingsway Hall the London *Daphnis and Chloë* under Pierre Monteux and the Angel *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Abduction from the Seraglio*, and *Falstaff*; the London *Peter Grimes* and the Angel recordings of Delius and Sibelius under Beecham tell what is being done at Walthamstow. One or the other is ranked first by nearly every company recording in London. When they are unavailable, the Town Halls of the suburbs of Wembley, Hornsey, and Watford are often used. The only other really important recording site in London for orchestral music (the Royal Festival Hall is virtually never used) is the EMI studios in Abbey Road, St. John's Wood (the Handel-Beecham *Solomon* is an example of EMI studio sound).



Vienna's halls are many. The Musikvereinsaal (home of the Vienna Philharmonic) is popular; its elaborate baroque interior produced the quality sound of Beethoven's Ninth under Von Karajan (Angel). The Sofiensaal (a ballroom in which Johann Strauss used to conduct) is used exclusively by London, and was the scene of the *Rheingold*, *Aida*, and *Fledermaus* stereo recordings. And, of course, Vienna's bulky Konzerthaus has three different halls that are frequently employed by the smaller companies (see "Night Lights in the Konzerthaus," HIGH FIDELITY, November 1959).

In Paris, the Salle Wagram (a big, barnlike convention hall structure that was the scene of Capitol's *Carmen* under Beecham), the Salle Pleyel, the Salle de la Mutualité (favored by London's engineers), and the Théâtre de Champs Elysées have been used but without really exceptional results. In Milan, the Scala theatre is commonly used for operatic recordings but it has drawbacks—its plushness eats up the brilliance of the sound, and streetcars bang and rattle

outside. An abandoned basilica is sometimes used as an alternative but it too has the streetcar problem—solved only by recording in the dead of night.

The lobby of the Brescia Opera House served for Mercury's recent recording of Paisiello's *Barber of Seville*. The theatre itself was deemed unsatisfactory; as the engineers were on their way out, dejected and discouraged, one of them took note of the lovely resonance produced by their footfalls in the lobby!

In Rome, the small hall of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, the Rome Opera House, and the Foro Italico concert hall of the Italian Radio are used. Victoria Hall in Geneva (for the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande) and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam are two fine European concert halls which hold up as recording studios—their rich, mellow sound is distinctive. Germany has many new halls and studios—the old ones were gutted during the war. Good results have been obtained in Berlin and Cologne.

In New York, ballrooms are the thing: Manhattan Center (favored by RCA), the St. George Hotel in Brooklyn (favored by Columbia), and the Great Northern Hotel (favored by Mercury). All provide spacious quarters well adapted to stereo recording. Elsewhere in this country, the big concert halls are commonly used: Boston's Symphony Hall and Chicago's Orchestra Hall (noted for its proscenium which radiates out into the hall itself, obviating the usual proscenium problems) are considered particularly good. The Syria Mosque in Pittsburgh, Northrup Memorial Auditorium, Minneapolis, and the Eastman Theatre, Rochester, are used in recording the orchestras of those cities. Other locales include a beer hall in St. Louis, the Capitol Tower in Los Angeles, and the Broadwood Hotel Ballroom in Philadelphia. In Detroit, what with the short-comings of the Ford Auditorium, a dilapidated old theatre and a high school auditorium have been used. Several years ago Columbia/Epic abandoned Severance Hall in Cleveland in favor of the more resonant Masonic Hall; but the former has since been renovated, the acoustics are now satisfactory, and the recording engineers have moved back in.

According to the people who ought to know—recording directors—stereo has not signaled any fundamental change in recording philosophies. But it has enormously magnified old problems and introduced some new ones. Stereo demands more room to work in so that directionality can be achieved. Even more important, it demands optimum reverberation for its sense of depth. Columbia's move from the Academy of Music to the Broadwood Hotel Ballroom for their Philadelphia Orchestra recordings was prompted by the need for better stereo separation.

The ultimate choice of a hall for recording and the use made of it rests on a subtle combination of taste and technique. "Realism" is a relative and a subjective term, and recording acoustics is still more art than science. Like any art, it demands skill, knowledge, taste, and discretion; it is certainly not the easiest to master.

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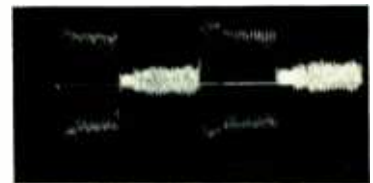
EQUIPMENT REPORTS

Continued from page 50

tweeters. In a "live" listening room, the diffusion of high frequencies effectively compensates for this rise, resulting in what sounds like a flat response. Above 11 kc, where our microphone response begins to roll off, the Ionovac continues to hold forth without change. With due allowance for the 6 db/octave slope of the characteristic, the response of the tweeter could be said to be within plus or minus 1.5 db from 3 kc to beyond 12 kc, with the upper end limited by our microphone.

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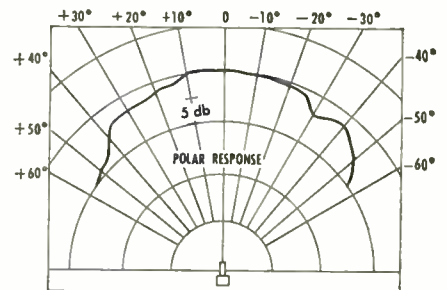
Tone burst pictures showed good transient response. The photo of a



Typical burst (with "reflections").

typical tone burst, taken at 3.6 kc, was taken indoors, and some ringing is due to room reflections.

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Continued from page 41

equally, with one side in antiphase to the other in order to increase the reverberance of the sound and produce greater spatial realism. At appropriate levels these signals also add filler to the potential gaps left by the filter system.

In the early days of my work I found that certain repertoire lent itself more readily to successful stereophonic simulation than did other kinds: music of massive quality with wide tonal contrasts, orchestrations with long and frequent solo passages where solo instruments emerge clearly from the accompanying orchestral colors, slower movements offering greater time opportunity for adjustment—all these offer excellent potentialities for conversion. Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Respighi's *Pines of Rome* and *Fountains of Rome*, with their massive colors and programmatic nature proved ideal. Contrapuntal works with little tonal contrast (in terms of separation of instrumental ranges) represent much more of a problem. This is not to say that their conversion is not possible or desirable, merely that it is more difficult.

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ADVERTISING INDEX

Key No.	Page	Key No.	Page
1	Academic Recording Inst. 88	53	Lafayette Radio 4
2	Acoustic Research, Inc. 27	54	Lafayette Radio 112
3	A.E.S., Inc. 99	66	Lansing, James B., Sound, Inc. 63
4	Airex Radio Corp. 110	55	Leslie Creations 111
5	Allied Radio 80	56	London Records 69
6	Angel Records 67		
7	Argo Records 84	57	Marantz Co. 97
8	Argos Products 104	58	McIntosh Laboratory, Inc. 19
9	Arrow Electronics 111	50	Medallion Records 80
11	Audio Devices 24	59	Mercury Records 65
12	Audio Dynamics 20	60	Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co. 8
13	Audio Empire 1	61	Music Guild 78
14	Audio Exchange 18	62	Myer's Emco 111
15	Audio Exchange 111		
16	Audio Fidelity 52	63	Opera Magazine 104
17	Audio Unlimited 111		
18	Audio World 111	10	Parliament Records, Inc. 71
19	Audion 111	64	Pickering & Co. 2
20	Bel Canto 90	65	Pilot Radio 79
21	Benjamin Electronic Sound Corp. 110	44	Precision Electronics Professional Directory 111
22	Bogen-Presto 81		
23	Book-of-The-Month Club 5	67	RCA Victor Division 61
24	Book-of-The-Month Club 7	68	RCA Victor Division 74
25	Bozak, R. T., Co. 102	69	RCA Victor Division Inside Front Cover
26	British Industries Corp. 28	70	Reeves Soundcraft 98
27	Carston Studios, Inc. 111	71	Rek-O-Kut 6
28	Columbia Records Inside Back Cover	72	Roberts Electronics, Inc. 93
29	Commissioned Electronics 111	73	Roberts Electronics, Inc. 93
31	Dixie Hi-Fi 111	74	Sargent-Rayment Co. 106
32	Dressner 111	75	Sarkes Tarzian, Inc. 100
33	Dual 16	76	Scott, H. H., Inc. 17
34	EICO 94	77	Sherwood Electronic Labs. 105
35	Electro-Sonic Labs. 10	78	Shure Bros. 83
36	Fairchild Recording Equipment 68	79	Sonotone Corp. 101
37	Fisher Radio Corp. 11	80	Sound Reproduction 111
38	Fisher Radio Corp. 13	81	Stromberg-Carlson 21
39	Florman & Babb 111	82	Stromberg-Carlson 23
40	Fortissimo Records 59	83	Stromberg-Carlson 25
		84	Switchcraft, Inc. 110
26	Garrard Sales 28	85	Tandberg 70
41	Glaser-Steers Corp. 107	86	Thorens 26
42	Grado Laboratories, Inc. 73		Trader's Marketplace 109
43	Gramophone 107	87	Transis-Tronics 9
44	Grommes 103		
95	Harman-Kardon, Inc. 22	88	United Artists 88
45	Heath Co. 14	33	United Audio Products 16
46	Heath Co. 15	89	United Stereo Tapes Back Cover
47	HiFi 111	90	University Loudspeakers, Inc. 12
48	Hi-Fidelity Center 110		
49	KLH Research & Development Corp. 86	91	Vanguard Recording Society, Inc. 72
51	Kersting Mfg. Co. 111	92	Viking of Minneapolis 89
52	Key Electronics 111		
		93	Westminster Records 57
		94	Wollensak 108

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