

SUMMERTIME STEREO *How To Wire the Outdoors for Sound*

+

high fidelity

MAY
1961

THE MAGAZINE FOR MUSIC LISTENERS 60 CENTS



IN THIS ISSUE

The Budapest
String Quartet



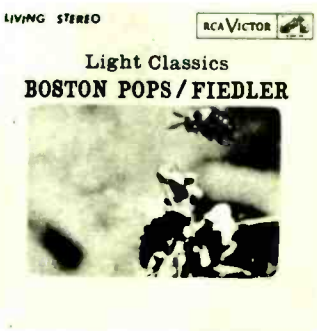
A fresh selection of airy delights as open and friendly as a picture window. Anderson's "Syncopated Clock," Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel" overture, the "Scherzo" from Mendelssohn's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," readily remembered Tchaikovsky and Bach...marching zestfully off to Sousa!

Grieg, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Brahms...and beer. Pops concerts at Symphony Hall provide them all and, Fiedler submits, they are completely compatible. Exhibits in his defense (in this album) are works of the above composers... and any jury worth its malt will be swept away by these memorable airs and melodies.

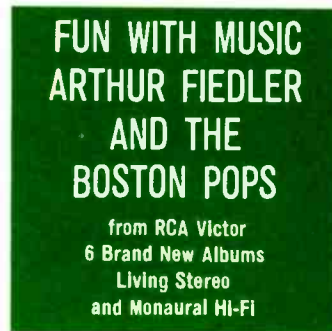


When the Pops plays Loesser, the more the merrier! Fiedler brings the rich sound and substance of the full Boston Pops orchestra to the hit scores of "Guys & Dolls," "Hans Christian Andersen," "The Most Happy Fella," "Where's Charlie?" and "Greenwillow." And the effect is breathtaking.

Dormant emotions arise! Thrill to the fire and thunder of slashing hoofbeats with the "Ride of the Valkyries," to the heat and passion of "Ritual Fire Dance," and to the romance and splendor of "Song of India." All are delightfully portrayed by an inspired Maestro leading the Boston Pops.

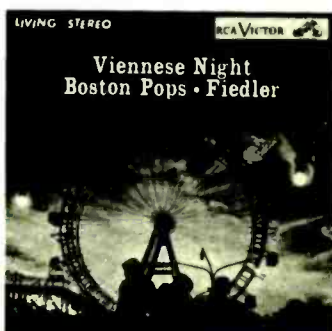


If music were to come in colors, this album would be an evening rainbow...softly blended brights and blues artfully cast across the heavens. "Jalousie," "Moonglow" and theme from "Picnic," "Hernando's Hideaway," a medley of dance themes through the years, and a very special golden ending all its own.



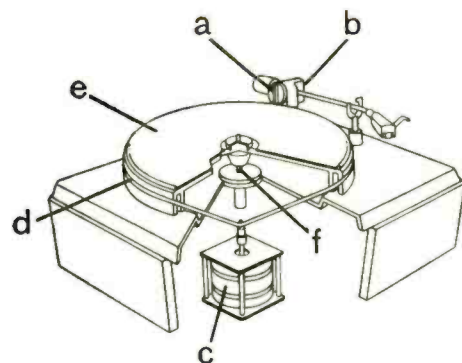
A sure sign of spring is Fiedler and the Pops whetting tuning forks and pitching in for their opening concerts. It happens in Boston every year. It can be yours every day. Note here.

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high fidelity

MAY 1961
volume 11 number 5

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MUSIC

- Four Russians Called Budapest** 30 Philip Hart
A foursome of strong-minded individuals forms one of the world's finest ensembles.
- Composer on the Rebound** 39 Patrick Cairns Hughes
Singers not satisfied with pretty vocalizing are revitalizing the lifework of Gaetano Donizetti.
- A Note from Timbuktu** 29 Robert C. Marsh
An editorial.
- Notes from Abroad** 8
London, Paris, Milan, and Hamburg are covered by our music-minded correspondents.
- Music Makers** 49 Roland Gelatt
- The Romantic Piano Concerto, Part I** 64 Harris Goldsmith
A HIGH FIDELITY discography.

EQUIPMENT

- Prokofiev on the Patio** 35 Norman Eisenberg
Now is a good time to consider wiring your outdoors for high fidelity-sound.
- Noise, the Uninvited Guest** 43 Donald C. Hoefler
Hisses, clicks, thumps, and the like all have causes—and cures.
- Equipment Reports** 45
- Bozak B-302A Speaker System**
- Fisher 202-R Stereo FM/AM Tuner**
- Shure M7/N21D Stereo Cartridge**
- Ampex 936 Tape Player**
- High Fidelity Newsfronts** 87

REVIEWS

- Feature Record Reviews** 51
- Rimsky-Korsakov: Tsar Saltan (Bolshoi Theatre)**
- Schumann: Orchestral Music (Szell, Fleisher.)**
- Other Classical Record Reviews** 53
- The Lighter Side** 71
- Jazz Record Reviews** 77
- The Tape Deck** 81

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AUTHORitatively Speaking

"Four Russians Called Budapest," p. 30, is the culmination of an interest in the Budapest String Quartet which Philip Hart has been nourishing since the early Thirties, when he acquired the first of his almost complete collection of their recordings. Later, as owner of a Portland, Oregon, record shop and a concert manager in the Pacific Northwest, Mr. Hart's associations with the Budapest progressed from intimacy with the recorded performances to acquaintance with the performers themselves. He says that he found it difficult "to write of any active musicians honestly and critically" while involved in a business relationship with them, and it is only now, as Associate Manager of the Chicago Symphony and chamber music devotee purely as a private citizen, that Mr. Hart has been persuaded to express the opinions formed on twenty-five years' observation. Not unexpectedly, critical objectivity is compounded with understanding and affection.

In his present reincarnation, onetime well-known British band leader Spike Hughes is latter-day critic, composer, and broadcast commentator Patrick Cairns Hughes. Mr. Hughes now lives mainly in the country (Sussex) and writes books: witness *Great Opera Houses*, *Famous Mozart Operas*, *The Toscanini Legacy*. He also writes—at intervals less frequent than we could wish—for HIGH FIDELITY. Readers who recall his treatment of Rossini ("The Swan Who Could Laugh," July 1960) will be especially pleased to see that he is herewith (p. 39) rescuing from too, too rarefied heights another workmanlike composer: see "Donizetti—Composer on the Rebound."

Donald C. Hoefler makes his first appearance in these pages with "Noise, the Uninvited Guest," p. 43. Actually, this manifesto is largely concerned with methods of speeding the intruder on its way. Mr. Hoefler admits (he says "reluctantly," but we don't believe this) to a quarter century of experience in high fidelity, both as amateur and professional. He was engaged in early experiments with Major Armstrong and subsequently he himself designed and built a number of FM broadcast stations. Thence followed a stint as chief engineer of the pioneering Continental FM Network, and after that an assignment as recording engineer for RCA Victor. In this last-named capacity he was in charge of restoration work for many reissues of early Victor recordings, including the company's well-known Caruso album. Mr. Hoefler now devotes all of his time to writing on high fidelity and related subjects—from a mountaintop villa overlooking San Francisco's Golden Gate. We're a bit green-eyed at that thought.

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74. **BARTÓK**
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 Hungarian Sketches
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76. **BEETHOVEN**
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 pianist



35. **RIMSKY-
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 conductor



85. **SAINT-SAËNS**
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86. **VIVALDI**
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BOCCHERINI
 Concerto in B flat
VIVALDI-BACH
 Concerto in G
 Antonio Janigro
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 The Solisti
 di Zagreb



73. **MOZART**
 Symphony No. 40
 in G minor AND
HAYDN
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 No. 104 in D
 Vienna
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 Herbert
 von Karajan
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23. **TCHAIKOVSKY**
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 Artur Rubinstein
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* See HIGH FIDELITY Magazine,
May 1959, page 39

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CIRCLE 11 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Notes from Abroad



LONDON—Whatever the frostbite or pinpricks of coexistence and Cold War, the West goes on being fervent about Soviet artists. Since illness forced postponement of Sviatoslav Richter's promised London visit, this town has surmised with rumor about his recording plans. I hear that a fisher for one Western label had an enjoyable day out with him in Paris. Together they went to the Louvre. Richter saw the *Mona Lisa* for the first time. He delighted in it. "You must come and spend a few days with me in Moscow," he told his companion. The companion accepted with alacrity. In Moscow he, in turn, blithely inspected art galleries, a church or two, relics of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and the like. It is said that he also spent an engrossed hour at the Ministry of Culture. . . .

Simultaneously, or a little later, another Western label was talking with Richter and his entourage about a possible concerto recording schedule for the pianist and the Leningrad Symphony Orchestra.

As to the outcome of these comings, goings, and huddles I hope to say something a month hence. Meantime the situation is as inscrutable as the *Mona Lisa's* smile.

Oistrakh and Son. Two other great Soviet artists, David (father) and Igor (son) Oistrakh have recently been playing fiddle together or severally—in concertos and chamber music by Bach, Vivaldi, Shostakovich, Beethoven, Brahms, Prokofiev, Bruch, Lalo, Sarasate, and even Ysaÿe—before rapt, bursting houses at the Festival and Albert halls here, as well as in the provinces. After their first London performance of the Bach Double Concerto an attendant handed up red-ribboned violins made of yellow chrysanthemums. I had thought this type of floral tribute lapsed for all time under Edward VII. Its revival is a happy thought. David smiled chubbily, Igor in that poised and courteous way which audiences here find equally endearing.

At Wembley Town Hall the two of them contrived, between swarming public engagements, to put in seven sessions for DGG with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Their taped output comprised two Double Concertos (that of Bach and Vivaldi's A major), the Bruch Concerto (soloist Igor), and the two Beethoven Romances Op. 40 and Op. 50 (soloist David). Having conducted the Bach and Beethoven, Sir Eugene Goossens handed the baton to David, who took over the Bruch. In Moscow, it seems, Oistrakh Senior often conducts concertos with his son as soloist. This was the first time he has done so abroad or in any recording studio anywhere.

On mounting the podium he said to the orchestra (through an interpreter). "Please don't look upon me as a conductor. I am just one of yourselves, just a fellow musician." The RPO warmly applauded this sentiment—and thereafter ignored it. In the Vivaldi "Double" the Oistrakhs dispensed with conductor altogether, relying instead upon George Spinks, at the harpsichord.

Otello's Mighty Pedal Note. Decca/London has a new *Otello* on the way. Von Karajan is the conductor; the three principal singers are Tebaldi (Desdemona), Del Monaco (the Moor), and Bastianini (Iago). It is expected that the recording, made in Vienna, will be completed by the end of this month (the first sessions were held as long ago as February).

If you have it by you, open your *Otello* score and look at the first page. Somewhere below the percussion staves you will see an organ bass-pedal effect combining C natural, C sharp, and D (yes, that is what I wrote and what Verdi intended) which inaugurates the storm over Cyprus and continues for hundreds of bars until the weather clears up and Iago and Roderigo can get on with their plotting in the dry.

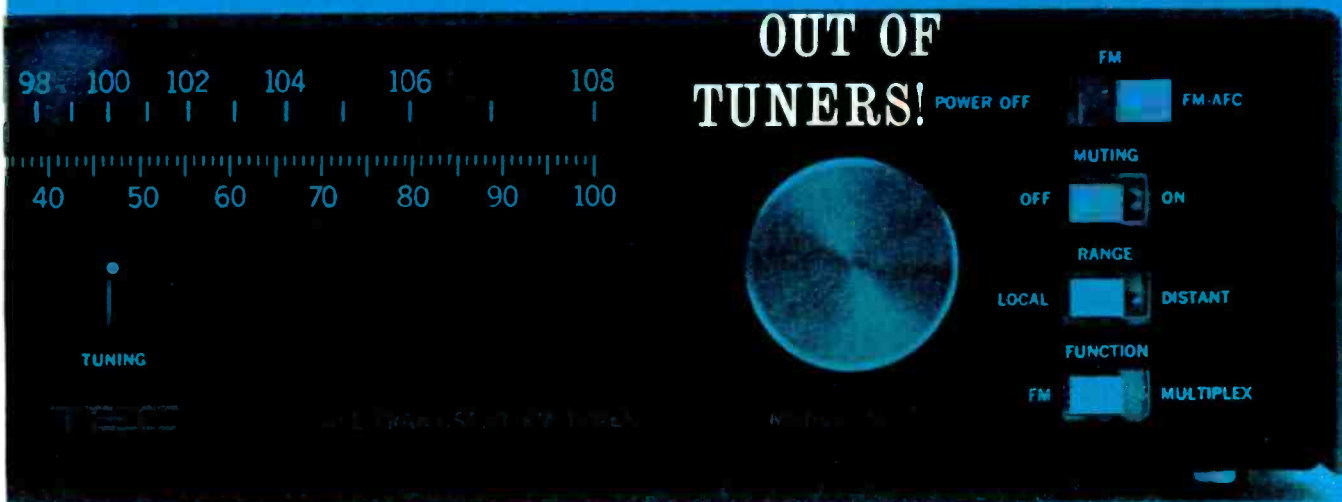
Having looked at his own *Otello* score, a Mind at London's headquarters said, "We must do something special about that organ pedal. Which organ in Britain has the best 'natural' 64-foot pipe?" Mind No. 2 replied, "That's easy. The organ in Liverpool (Anglican) Cathedral has the best 'natural' 64-foot pipe in Britain. When do we take off?"

With half a ton or so of equipment, one artistic director (John Culshaw), and three engineers on board, a recording coach left Decca House the following Saturday morning. Reaching Liverpool at sundown, the team met the Cathedral organist, bowed smartly every time they saw anybody who looked like a Dean or member of the Chapter, and carried out preliminary surveys. Between services on Sunday they lodged their machines in a neo-Gothic cell off the nave and, tempering exuberance as much as possible with tact, started laying out cable in all directions.

Recording began after Evensong. The first problem was to discover which registration, or combination of organ stops, would give the stormiest effect. The first problem was also the last. The team signed off at three in the morning not with one best effect but eight. That is to say, they returned to Decca House with eight ten-minute pedal notes on tape, each embodying an alternative registration. The one heard on the record

Continued on page 10

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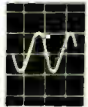
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CIRCLE 29 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Notes from Abroad

Continued from page 8

was determined only after experimental matching with the actual orchestral-choral tone in Vienna.

Thirty-five-Instrument Orchestra. Here is something that may, if you understand me, be a record. At HMV's Abbey Road studio three months were spent on approximately 2,000 takes for what is, in a strictly musical sense, a single long-play.

With Yehudi Menuhin as a kind of master of ceremonies, "Instruments of the Orchestra" (provisional title) should be on sale in your shops, on the Capitol label, in the autumn. Mr. Menuhin speaks prefatory pieces, each as concise as an acorn, for thirty-five instrumental solos. In reply to readers who object that no right-minded orchestra ever carries that many different instruments, let me say at once that the series starts with a primeval bone flute (played by Peter Andry, artistic director) and ends with sixteen kitchen pieces, including certain sultry, long-lashed specimens, viz., gourds, claves, and maracas.

Mr. Menuhin himself played the violin and viola examples. For the rest he drew crack players from the Royal Philharmonic, Philharmonia, and London Philharmonic orchestras. Twice Menuhin turned up with a notion or two of his own. Double-bass pizzicatti, he pointed out, are often used in jazz. To prove his point he put on a record of a bull-fiddle, tenor saxophone, clarinet, and cymbals doing a frivolous bit from a Rodgers number, *Sing for Your Supper*, as presented in a pop album, *Sweet and Dry*. When it came to the trumpet demonstration, he had his player use a wow-wow mute as well as the ordinary one and do a stint that sounds like Donald Duck laughing himself to death.

Very shrewdly, the recording is to be issued as four EPs as well as in LP form. After finishing his English commentaries, Mr. Menuhin went through them all again in French, Italian, and German for independent releases. That is how and why it came about that the takes aggregated 2,000. "Some day," he said, mopping his brow at the end, "I'd like to do versions in Hebrew and Russian."

American buyers may raise a brow or two at the narrator's English accent, which is several degrees east of mid-Atlantic. "All brass instruments are tubes," he says. Also: "Cymbals are clashed together. . . . Sometimes the player uses a soft stick."

Anglo-American understanding has found a new center of (and for) gravity.

CHARLES REID

PARIS—In the early 1920s The Six gave some concerts together, and each member of the group contributed a short piano piece to their *Album des Six*. But the only really collective work they ever turned out was the music for Jean Cocteau's *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel*,

a ballet-farce powered by a couple of rapid-fire narrators: among other japeries, a general makes a speech (effects by Poulenc) and is eaten by a lion under the table (*marche funèbre* by Honegger). The music was not published, but the show was produced in Paris in 1926 by the Ballets Suedois, a company that was then competing seriously with the Russians for avant-garde favor.

A few years ago Cocteau found his text still amusing, and recorded it for Pathé-Marconi, with new music composed by Pierre-Philippe—and not even a reference on the jacket to Poulenc and company. Disloyalty to old friends? No, the bleak truth was that The Six's original score had apparently gone the way of the poor general. At least it was not to be found anywhere in France.

Forty Years Forgotten. Lucien Adès, an active patron of twentieth-century music and at the time director of the Véga enterprise, noticed the disc and became interested in the mystery. He and his assistants went over the circumstances of the last performance of *Les Mariés*, did some deduction, and then persuaded the French cultural attaché in Sweden to enter the case. Last summer their hunch paid off: a copy of the score was found silently gathering dust in the Royal Library in Stockholm.

Now the silence is about to be broken, and in a pleasantly nostalgic way. Adès has left Véga and formed his own company, and one of his first releases this fall will be *Les Mariés de la Tour* in what may come to be known as the Ur-version. Cocteau and Pierre Bertin, who had the roles thirty-five years ago, will be the narrators, and Darius Milhaud will conduct the orchestra of the Paris Opéra. The American label is not yet definite, but negotiations are well under way, and Adès has assured me that his records will positively be distributed in the United States, in fancy albums and with English texts.

Another Adès project worth watching for is *Wozzeck*. He has arranged to record the new production scheduled for November at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, with Pierre Boulez conducting. The cast was not complete when these notes were written, but I understand that the role of Marie will be sung by Helga Pilarczyk, who impressed Paris in Berg's *Lulu* last year. She is also on Adès' list for a recording of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*.

Grand Choeur. Francis Poulenc continues to provide employment for a lot of musicians, singers, and sound engineers. His *Gloria*, which was heard first in Boston last winter, has just been recorded in Paris for Angel. Rosanna Carteri, brought up from Italy for the occasion, is the soloist; the chorus is that of the French national radio network; and Georges Prêtre conducts the Orchestre National. The other side of the disc has the same orchestra and conductor, with Maurice Duruflé as soloist, in Poulenc's Concerto for Organ, Strings,

Continued on page 12



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Notes from Abroad

Continued from page 10

and Timpani, a work of which the composer himself is very fond. Prêtre's verdict, after listening to the last playback: "Formidable, formidable."

Sieglinde from Paris. Régine Crespin is a handsome, dark-eyed, self-assured woman who would probably be recognized as a Parisian anywhere in the world. She is, however, a fairly rare sort of Parisian: she sings Wagner at Bayreuth. The coming season will be her third, and as a festival preliminary she has just recorded for Capitol a Wagnerian miscellany: the *Wesendonck* Lieder and numbers from *The Valkyrie*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan and Isolde*, and *The Flying Dutchman*. Prêtre, who must certainly be the hardest working conductor in town these days, is again present with the Orchestre National.

During a break in a session at the Salle Wagram, Pathé-Marconi's favorite recording hall, Mme. Crespin talked about her non-Bayreuth plans for the next few months, ticking off the cities while young Prêtre (he looks more like an Ivy League fullback than Ivy League fullbacks do) beamed about her success: "Let's see, Geneva, Monte Carlo, Tel Aviv, maybe Buenos Aires and Mexico City, and then London for *Tosca*—with Di Stefano—and *Der Rosenkavalier*."

Amneris from Paris. Rita Gorr, the French mezzo who stole the show from Tebaldi in *Aida* at the Opéra here three years ago, has signed for a three-month engagement at the Met next winter. New York is to be congratulated.

ROY MCMULLEN

MILAN—The talk of the season here was, of course, Callas' return to the Scala in a strange and unjustly forgotten opera by Donizetti, *Poliuto*, originally written for Naples but banned by the censor and later rewritten for the Paris Opéra. *Poliuto* itself was the least of the opening night attractions, however: all the papers concentrated on Callas—her return, her latest love affairs (if any), her voice, her diet, her figure. In the process no one even mentioned the conductor. (The leading conservative paper of Florence, *La Nazione*, spoke of the "moving moment" when Prince Rainier and Grace Kelly entered the theatre, etc., etc.) Actually, *Poliuto* is a fascinating piece. It deals with the early Christian persecutions, and wicked tongues say that Callas chose it because there is only one leading female role in it—namely, Callas'.

And what of the great prima donna? Your correspondent looked forward to the event with a certain amount of trepidation, and discovered that in part—let us face things squarely—Callas is not what she once was. A magnificent stage presence, yes: when she appears, her personality simply sings the edges off everyone else, dramatically. She is a magnificent actress (how much the Vien-

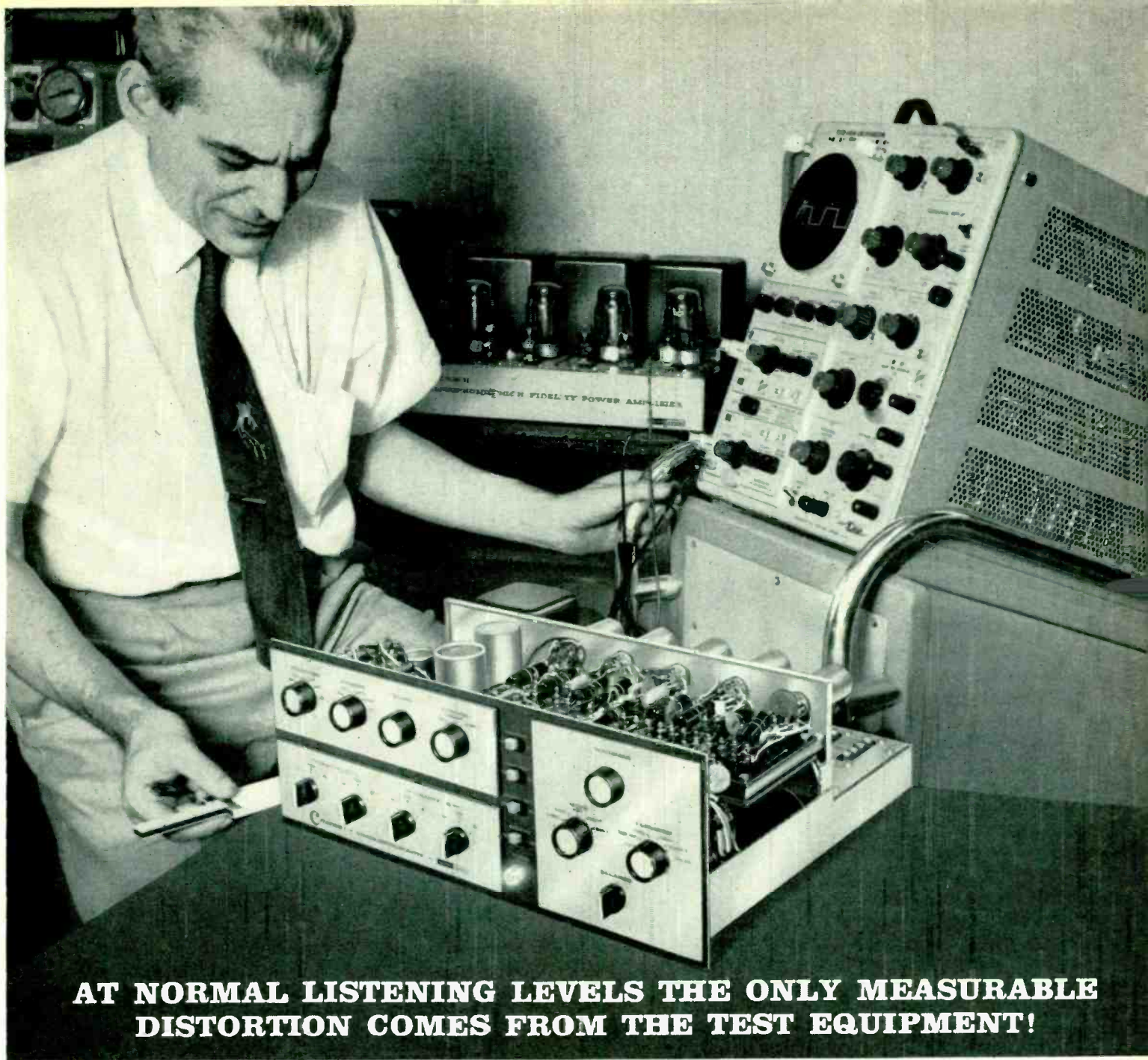
nese could learn from her!), her "stage presence" is unbeatable. But when she reached B or high C, her voice became tight, metallic, unpleasant. As the evening wore on, she showed the strain, too—something which she never did before. In the last act, the critics in the press box winced, and there was an audible hiss of sympathy from the audience, when she flattened—and flattened like a ton of bricks—in several high notes. It was a memorable comeback, but not a flawless one.

Sutherland in Sicily. Meanwhile a (for the Italians) new sensation was offered in the way of prima donnas: Joan Sutherland, the Australian soprano whose recordings for London and last winter's New York appearances have made her already well known in the States. Italians take a very dim view of foreign singers: they are not given the critical benefit of the doubt. It is therefore a measure of Sutherland's sensational success that the Palermo audience cheered itself hoarse when she opened the season there as the prima donna in Bellini's *I Puritani*. Palermo, of Lampedusa's *Leopard* fame, is the elegant, lazy, aristocratic capital (operatic and otherwise) of Sicily [see HIGH FIDELITY, November 1960]; and the season's opening there is something to see. They decorated the boxes with thousands of flowers, and the brilliant audience was certainly the Scala's rival in elegance and in the presence of female beauty. Veteran critics said they had never seen a foreigner achieve the success that Sutherland received (and deserved). Several weeks later, Miss Sutherland opened the season at Venice's Teatro Fenice, in *Lucia*, the role which has made her famous. Again, the same success, the same thundering ovation. To have pulled off the opening of the season at Palermo and Venice in the same winter is quite a feat for anyone in Italy, and a stupendous achievement for a foreign singer.

Naturally, all the theatre oldsters have started comparing Callas with Sutherland; but this is not yet (in our opinion) fair. Miss Sutherland has an ever increasing command of the voice, a beautiful top C and (in Palermo) top D, which cuts across orchestra and chorus like a bright sword; her low register is a lot fuller than when the writer of these notes supervised a broadcast with her in 1958 (in a BBC series). But she is not yet a Callas: particularly she has not Callas' instinctive feeling for what to do at the particular moment on the stage. I don't care what people say: a prima donna who is a second-rate actress is not yet, as far as I'm concerned, a topflight prima donna; and Sutherland, while by no means a bad actress, is occasionally a bit stiff, a bit (shall we say) Anglo-Saxon and puritanical in her stage deportment.

The English press—a trifle chauvinistically, one feels—are talking of Miss Sutherland in terms of Melba and Rethberg. There is no doubt that she has immense talent and a splendid, ringing

Continued on page 14



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NOTES FROM ABROAD

Continued from page 12

voice; there is every reason to believe that she will become a great prima donna. If she is not one yet, she is well on the road to becoming one; and the successes of Palermo and Venice may well prove significant milestones along a fabulous career. One certainly hopes this promise comes true: great prima donnas, it has been said, come only once a generation. Eviva Signorina Sutherland!

H. C. ROBBINS LONDON

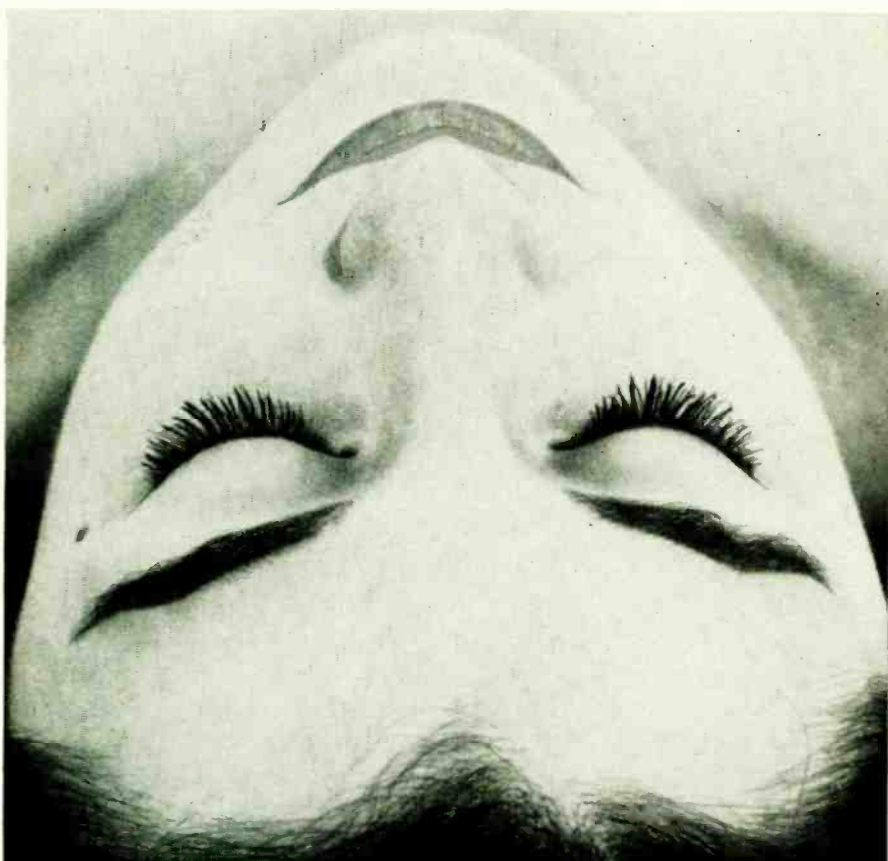
HAMBURG—Franz Liszt, born 150 years ago this October, will hold pride of place in the forthcoming release lists of Deutsche Grammophon. One contribution to the celebration will probably already be in the record shops when you read this: back in December, Herbert von Karajan recorded an album including the *Hungarian Fantasia* (with Shura Cherkassky and the Berlin Philharmonic), the *Mephisto Waltz*, the *Rhapsodies Nos. 4 and 5*, and *Mazeppa*.

Preparations for DGG's Liszt anniversary issues were made well in advance. For instance, a test pressing of the *Hungarian Coronation Mass*, made in Budapest's Coronation Cathedral under the baton of Janos Ferencsik, has been safely stored away since 1959. Again, early this year a recording team was sent to Hungary in order to tape the *Faust Symphony* and the *Esztergom* (or *Gran*) Mass of 1855.

East-West Agreements. The idea behind these recording expeditions behind the Iron Curtain is to combine the authenticity of Hungarian performances in rendering Liszt's scores with the refinements of Western stereo technique. DGG recording sessions in Hungary are being regularly made under a joint production scheme worked out between the German firm and Qualiton, a state-owned monopoly. Under this agreement DGG supplies recording equipment and technical staff. Qualiton acquires the right to issue the ensuing recordings in Eastern countries, while DGG retains its rights for the West. "This scheme," so Herr Hans Rutz of DGG commented, "is working out well. We have similar agreements with VEB Schallplatten in East Germany, with Polski Nagrania in Warsaw, and with Artia in Prague. Coöperation with the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra and its conductor Karel Ančerl, for instance, is being extended. The success of our Prague recording of Dvořák's *Requiem* is so encouraging that we now want to follow it up with a recording of the composer's *Stabat Mater*."

More Verdi, Puccini. Efforts to extend its recording activities in the Soviet orbit are not, however, diminishing DGG's attention to Italian opera. Conductor Gabriele Santini has been signed up for a new *Don Carlos* recording, scheduled

Continued on page 16



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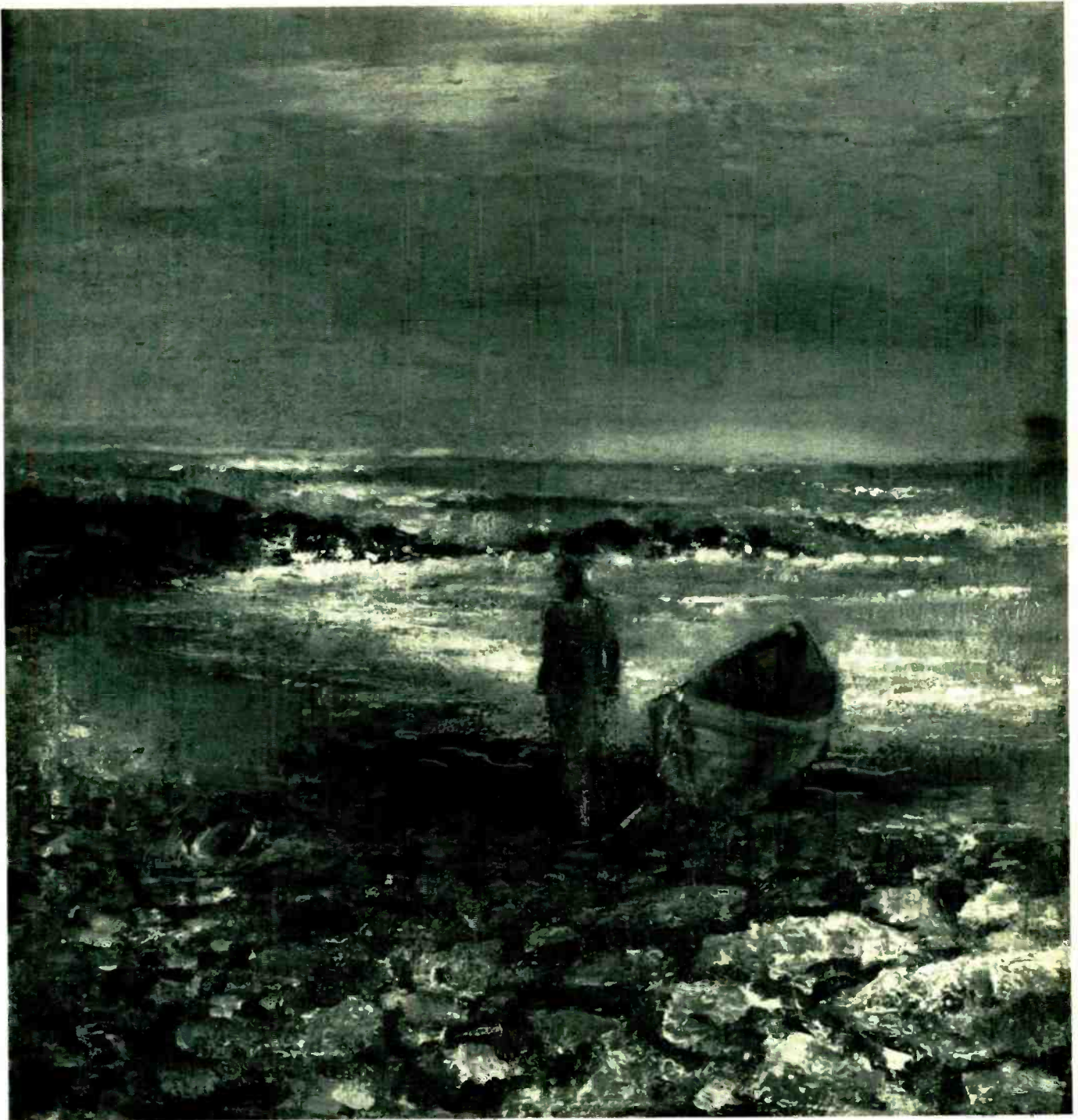
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NOTES FROM ABROAD

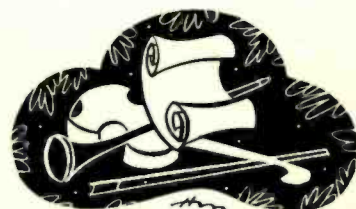
Continued from page 14

to take place at La Scala in August with Boris Christoff (Filippo), Antonietta Stella (Elisabetta), and Oralia Dominguez (Eboli). On the docket for July is a new *La Bohème*, to be taped in Florence. Virginia Zeani has been chosen to sing Mimi.

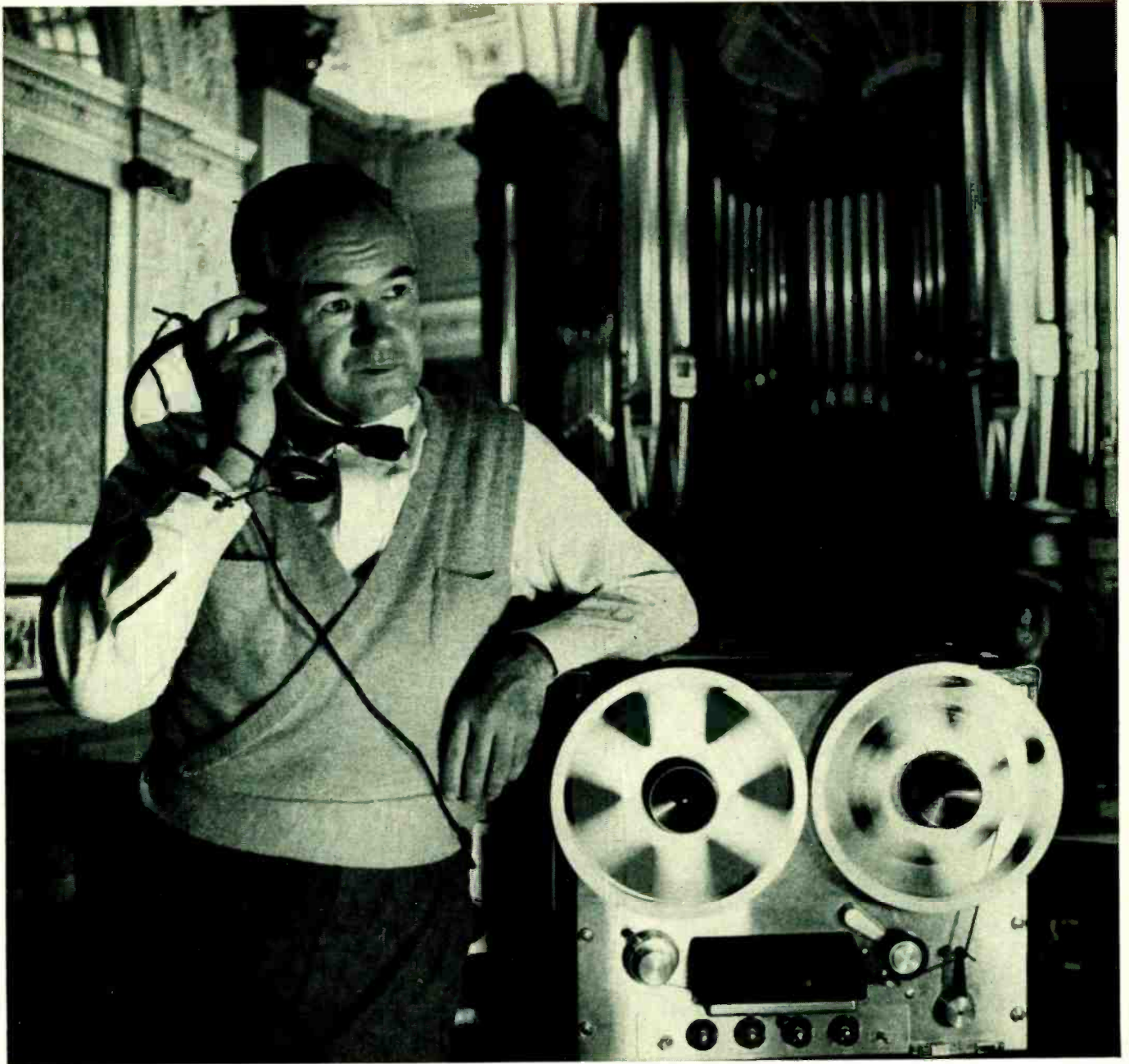
Old Dutch Organs. Since Telefunken acts as distributor in Germany for RCA Victor and London records, the company does relatively little with classical repertory itself. There is one branch of Telefunken's activities, however, which deserves to be better known to record collectors. For the past few years a young musicologist, Dr. Gerhard Gellrich, has been building up a series of recordings issued here under the title "*Das Alte Werk*." A former student of philosophy in Heidelberg and music in Vienna, Dr. Gellrich is passionately devoted to the task of recapturing the sound of old instruments, especially that of Renaissance and baroque organs. Outstanding specialists on the church music of the Netherlands, such as Anthon van der Horst and Piet Kee, have already participated in the project, for recordings of music played on the Strümpfler Organ in Naarden (built around 1760), the organ made by Arp Schnitger and his sons in St. Laurens Kerk in Alkmaar (1722), the organ in St. Michael's Kerk in Zwolle, and another one at Oosthuizen (dating back to 1521). Each record of the series, initially released on 7-inch discs but now including 12-inch ones, is issued with what Herr Gellrich calls an "*Orgelbrief*"—an exact description of the history and specifications of the instrument recorded.

Old German Organs. Although quite a number of famous old organs in Germany were destroyed during the war, the sound of some of them is not irretrievably lost. A thorough search in the Telefunken archives recently brought to light a recording made in 1942 in the famous Eosander-Kapelle of the Charlottenburg Castle, Berlin, with Fritz Heitmann playing parts from J. S. Bach's *Dritter Teil der Clavier-Ubung* on the organ built by Arp Schnitger during the first decade of the eighteenth century. The instrument was destroyed in 1945. Heitmann used to say: "Playing on this organ means getting to the heart of eighteenth-century style." A new 12-inch recording just about to be released will enable us to share this experience.

KURT BLAUKOPF



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CIRCLE 68 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Letters



Piano Roll or Disc?

SIR:

Harris Goldsmith's review of the new Asco recording "Great Pianists of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" (*HIGH FIDELITY*, February 1961) expresses surprise at the fact the piano sound is amazingly lifelike, "in view of the fact that these are mostly acoustical recordings." Quite obviously the recordings on this particular disc are not acoustic originals, but recordings from piano rolls made by Welte-Mignon and other companies in the early years of this century. While the performances preserved on these rolls have great historical interest and are, in some cases, the only mementos we have of the playing of certain great composers and virtuosos of the period, they do have certain inherent artistic and technical limitations which the listener and reviewer should bear in mind in evaluating them. The interesting history of these rolls and a judicious appraisal of their virtues and defects appeared in an article in *HIGH FIDELITY* of June 1958, written by Paul Moor.

I suspect that Mr. Goldsmith was misled by the fact that the record manufacturer failed to mention that the performances were piano roll transcriptions. Perhaps Asco or some other enterprising company will eventually favor us with a collection of original recordings by the keyboard giants of fifty years ago. I might add as a footnote that Telefunken has recently issued a series of twenty-five ten-inch LPs devoted to selections from the vast Welte-Mignon collection. They can be obtained here from some shops specializing in imported recordings.

Robert R. Howard
Milwaukee, Wis.

SIR:

I once had a large collection of player piano rolls. And the titles and artists mentioned in this review are awfully familiar! Was Harris Goldsmith deceived into thinking these were recorded for phonograph instead of being much more "mechanically" cut into player piano rolls? He notes that "Nikisch sounds like a theory teacher seated at an old

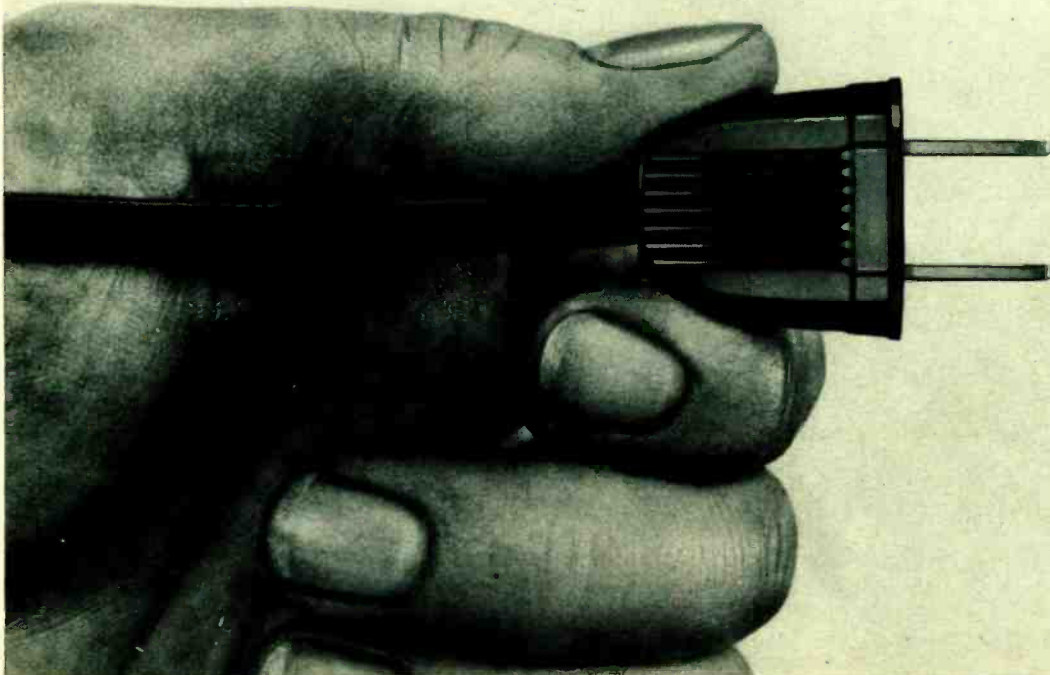
Continued on page 22

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LETTERS

Continued from page 20

upright piano. . . ." Maybe he was!
 Donald W. Athearn
 Warner, N. H.

The information upon which Mr. Goldsmith based his review was provided by an official spokesman for Asco, who gave assurance that all the performances reproduced on Asco 119 were taken from acoustical discs. The same spokesman maintained this stand after some question was raised as to the records' authenticity.

An engineer who participated in the project contends that every one of the recordings is from a piano roll. His knowledge on this point would appear to be first-hand; nonetheless, Asco's present stand in the matter, as we construe it, is that no fewer than eleven of the fifteen recordings presented are from acoustic disc originals. The remaining four are conceded to be taken from piano rolls.

In any event, it can be stated that our readers are correct in suspecting that at least some—and perhaps all—of the performances on Asco 119 are drawn from piano rolls, recently recorded by electrical means. —Ed.

Tristan Errata

SIR:

I should like to correct two small errors which appeared in your review of the London recording of *Tristan und Isolde* (HIGH FIDELITY, April 1961). Your reviewer states that Miss Regina Resnik, our Brangäne, filled in at short notice for Miss Grace Hoffman. This statement is quite incorrect. Miss Hoffman was the Brangäne of our highlights record from this opera, conducted by Hans Knappertsbusch, but Miss Resnik was cast for the part of Brangäne in our complete recording right from the beginning, and particularly because we felt that it was important that the timbre of Brangäne's voice should differ as much as possible in a recorded performance from that of Isolde. I should also like to point out that our Kurwenal is called Tom Krause, and not Thomas. "Tom" is a common Finnish Christian name, and not the abbreviation of "Thomas."

T. A. McEwen
 London Records, Inc.
 New York, N. Y.

The misspelling was not Mr. Marsh's, but our own. —Ed.

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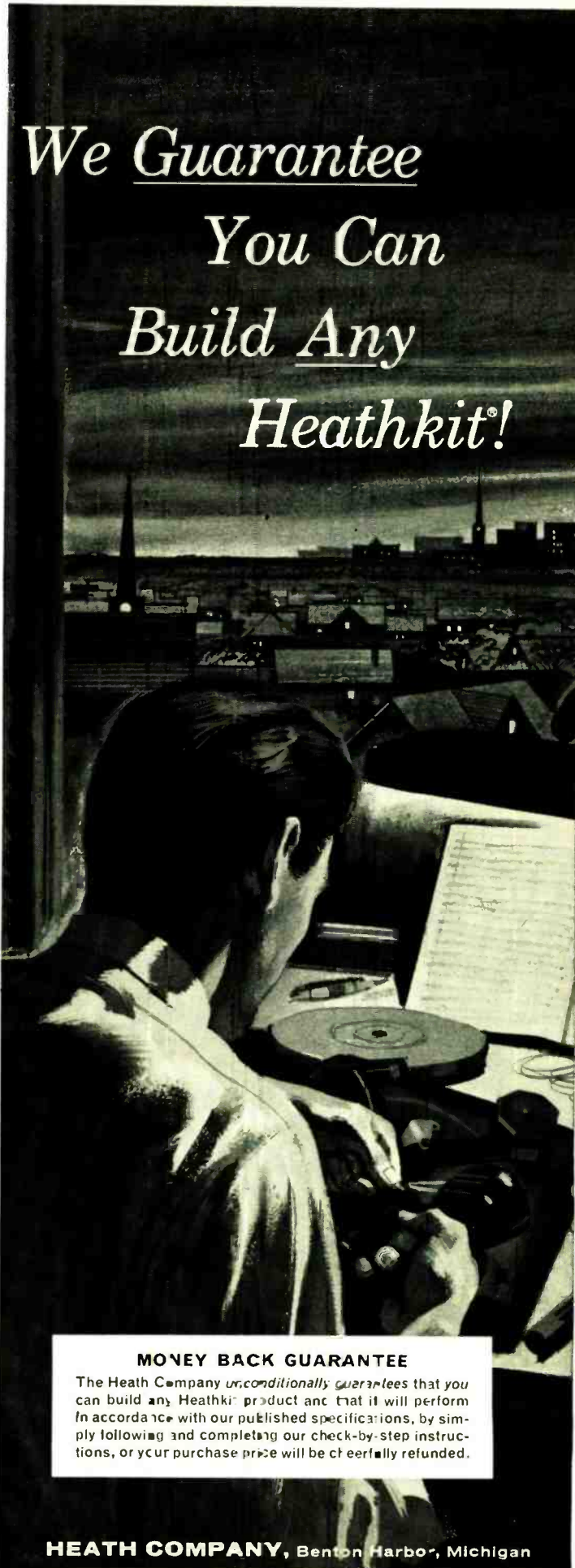
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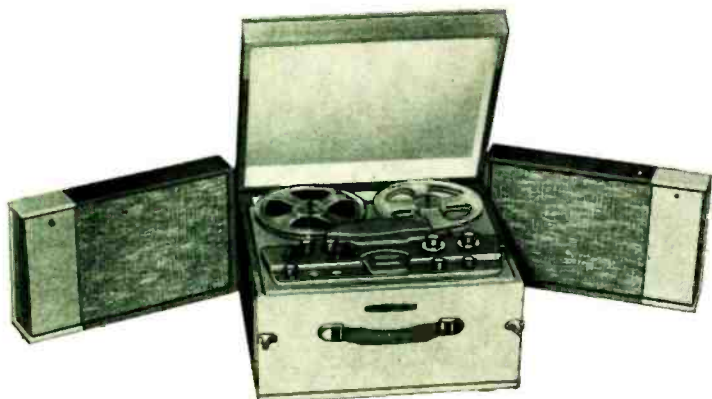
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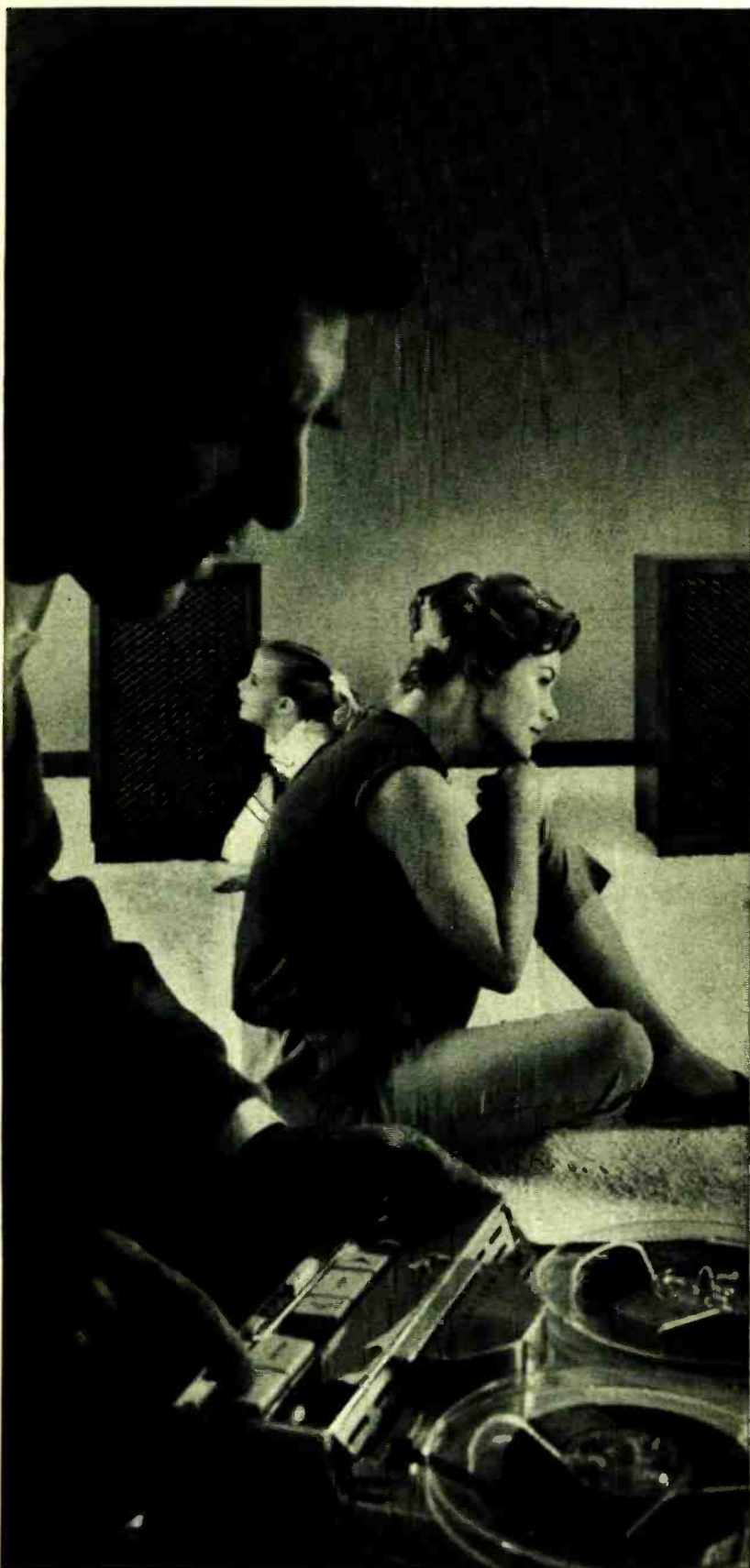


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No amplifier meets or exceeds McIntosh performance. The best test equipment available proves McIntosh amplifiers are the best.

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3. Techtronic #502 Dual Beam Oscilloscope.
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*Continuous power as measured by the square of the RMS output voltage, divided by the resistance of the non-inductive load resistor.

A Note from Timbuktu

WE OFFER our belated, but hearty, congratulations to composer Aaron Copland, who is celebrating his sixtieth birthday this season, trusting that our prefatory good wishes will not be less welcome if we immediately take him to task.

In an interview occasioned by that happy anniversary, Copland is reported to have complained that records always repeat the same performance so that "it would never occur" to him to turn to them for anything as familiar as a Beethoven symphony. "Recordings," Copland concluded, "are really for people who live in Timbuktu."

What Copland seems to ignore is the fact that records, and tape, are an unsurpassed medium for providing a variety of different performances of a particularly admired piece of music. Just behind the typewriter where I write these words is a rack of steel shelves lined with discs. For every composition I care anything about there are at least three performances, carefully picked to show the interpretative range of the score. Some works may be documented with a dozen discs.

Were I dependent on live performances, my outlook would not be broader but narrower than it is. My view of the *Eroica*, for example, would be restricted to the performances the Chicago Symphony has given in recent years under Fritz Reiner and such eminent guests as André Cluytens and the late Sir Thomas Beecham. The very different—but equally valid—approach of Otto Klemperer would be quite unknown to me.

The thing that offends Copland, I think, offends me as well: the tendency of naïve persons to identify a great work of music with the single performance they know best. Recorded music can be dull indeed if you constantly replay only a single favorite version to the point at which you know precisely what will happen at each measure. This robs listening to music of the sense of creativity and expectation essential to its maximum effect. Yet it seems pointless to blame records for this. If you had only one painting and, in time, you grew tired of it, would you blame the artist?

Mr. Copland, however, goes from disinclination to hear recordings of standard repertory to a total

rejection of the idea of listening to records at all.

If I were fortunate enough to reside in a city where, during the course of the winter and summer seasons, I could count on hearing superlative performances of music representing every major period in the history of the art and every major style within those periods, I too might do without records. The fact is that no city in the world can present the range of live music needed to satisfy the listener of really catholic taste. Records fulfill that function, and they fulfill it for everyone.

Certainly no music benefits more from recording than the work of the contemporary composer. I can think of few scores of Aaron Copland which I heard in the concert hall before I heard them on records, and always it was the recording that provided familiarity through repeated performances. The only reason I know this composer's *Dance Symphony* at all is that a Japanese orchestra recorded it a couple of years ago.

Admittedly, the contribution of a recording to the popularity of an effective score is hard to judge, inasmuch as there is both give and take in the relationship. *Appalachian Spring* got onto records at an early date because Serge Koussevitzky felt it to be a fine work; and since he was right, it now has a firm place in the repertory. But wasn't its acceptance accelerated by the fact that these Koussevitzky discs existed to enable the public and performers to become acquainted with this music?

Records should not be the whole of anyone's musical life. Without frequent listening to live performances a narrowing of outlook is almost certain, and with it a loss of contact with the vital processes of music making. Yet recordings have something to bring every serious musician and listener; while we as individuals are severely bounded by factors of time and space, with records we can travel freely in past centuries of music history or contrast the performance styles of great musicians and great orchestras in cities separated by thousands of miles. None of us can in our own persons have been everywhere and heard everything.

In fact, all of us, to some extent, live in Timbuktu.

ROBERT C. MARSH

AS high fidelity SEES IT



*The world's leading string
quartet is also that great rarity:
a true musical democracy.*



Four Russians

AMONG MUSICIANS there has long been a saying, usually attributed to Jascha Heifetz, which runs as follows:

ONE Russian is an anarchist;

TWO Russians are a chess game;

THREE Russians are a revolution;

FOUR Russians are the Budapest String Quartet.

For more than a quarter of a century, four exuberant Russians masquerading as Hungarians have been the most widely traveled, the most highly paid, the most enthusiastically acclaimed of professional string quartets. Violinists Joseph Roisman and Alexander Schneider, violist Boris Kroyt, and cellist Mischa Schneider—plus others who have been at one time or another members of the Quartet—are the creators of a unique musical institution with a Hungarian name, a Russian brilliance of technique, a predominantly German repertory and tradition, and a sense of style strongly influenced by a great French quartet. And unlike most quartets, which end up as one leader and three followers, the Budapest Quartet

is a musical democracy which has fused four extroverted individualists into a profitable and musically rewarding ensemble.

While a good many other groups have disintegrated because of irreconcilable temperaments or expired from sheer starvation, the Budapest—in spite of personnel changes and its uncompromising standards—has prospered for nearly three decades. It has sold over two million long-playing records (a figure regarded with considerable awe throughout the record industry) and it is, by common consent, the Number One chamber music attraction in the concert hall. Moreover, in its concerts as in its recorded repertory, the Budapest has won and held this preëminence without diluting its musical integrity. It presents the same image to Topeka as it does to New York City.

The Budapest String Quartet was at the midpoint of recording its stereo version of the complete Beethoven quartets when its members gathered at



BY PHILIP HART

Called Budapest

9:30 one morning last year in the East 30th Street studio of Columbia Records in New York City. Joseph Roisman was the first to arrive, wearing a short-sleeved white shirt and his usual businesslike expression, as he warmed up on tricky passages from Beethoven's *Harp* Quartet. Mischa Schneider was breaking in a new G string on his Gofriller cello, playing alternate *arco* and *pizzicato* passages from the same piece. On his music stand was a dog-eared cello part in the margin of which he had carefully noted the city and date of every performance in which he had played this particular work. Mischa's cello parts are a veritable historical atlas of the Quartet's travels since 1930, ranging from Indonesia to Israel to Idaho.

In the control room, second violinist Alexander Schneider—invariably known as Sascha—was gradually waking himself up by reading the *New York Times*. A few minutes later, violist Boris Kroyt arrived with his wife, Sonia, who soon departed uptown on a shopping tour. Kroyt's warming up was

interrupted by the arrival of Recording Director Howard Scott and Engineer Fred Plaut. While Plaut set up the microphones in front of the Quartet's chairs, the three players in the studio gathered about Scott to determine, in a typically animated argument, the time they were to meet that evening at Scott's apartment for dinner. All decisions—from a questionable reading in late Beethoven to the choice of a lunch time restaurant—are reached by the Quartet in an atmosphere resembling a debate in the French Chamber of Deputies.

While the dinner appointment was being settled, Sascha emerged casually from the control room, cast a bemused eye at his three colleagues in argument, and removed his sports jacket, revealing an elegant red and gray plaid waistcoat. He was about to unpack his Strad when he noticed that Scott had retreated from the argument, and forthwith he descended upon Scott himself.

"What kind of a . . . do you think you are?" he railed in mock rage at Scott. "Because I'm just a

The Budapest String Quartet



Mischa Schneider



Joseph Roisman



Alexander Schneider



Boris Kroyt

lousy second violinist, you ignore me! If I were a conductor, I know what you would say. "Yes, Maestro! No, Maestro! Certainly, Maestro! Just as you say, Maestro!" He rubbed his hands in exaggerated obsequiousness and walked away from Scott, grinning with satisfaction.

In a few minutes the four players took their places in front of the microphones, not in their normal concert positions, but in a wide curving arc, each sitting on his own idea of the most comfortable chair: Roisman at the extreme left on a low-backed wooden chair; then Sascha on an old-fashioned wooden piano bench, the lid tilted forward by stuffing the *New York Times* under one edge; Kroyt on a chair identical with Roisman's; and Mischa, at the extreme right, on a cushioned adjustable piano stool.

Both Scott and Plaut have worked for many years on the Quartet's recordings and are well versed in its special brand of humor. Despite their many years before the microphones in Europe and this country, the Budapest still approaches each recording session as an ordeal, in which everything conspires to frustrate a good performance.

"Just wait," remarked Plaut, who first recorded the Quartet in 1941. "They will talk again about how wonderful it was in London." (The Quartet last recorded there in 1936.)

"In the early days they complained about having to stop every 4½ minutes," continued Plaut, as he adjusted the balance controls on the console. "Then, when tape came, they stopped every time they made a mistake or thought they could play a passage better. Now they usually go through a whole movement, or even two, without stopping."

By this time, everyone was ready for the first take, and, after one false start, the Quartet played straight through the opening movement of Opus 74, while Scott made occasional notations in his miniature score.

The end of the movement marked the beginning of another argument. There were three alternatives: to listen at once to the tape; to repeat the movement just played; or to go on to the next movement. In this case, under Scott's quiet persuasion, the decision was quickly made: they went on to the slow movement. At its conclusion, another noisy argument ensued as the four moved to the control room.

"We should play the whole quartet all the way through, and then do it movement by movement."

"It is absolutely impossible to play so early in the morning."

"I think we should meet at Howard's at 7 o'clock."

"We must hear how it sounds now, before we waste time."

"I whistled an E flat two bars before G."

"How will Joe get his nap if we meet at 6 o'clock?"

"It is best to get one movement at a time right."

"Now, in London, it was better. . . ."

While his three colleagues took their places in the crowded booth, Sascha drew up a chair outside the open door, and settled down with his newspaper. Mischa sat next to Scott, following the score intently, now and then requesting Plaut to replay a passage. Once, when there was an obviously wrong note, the offending player took an exaggerated bow. Sascha periodically abandoned the *Times*, either to listen to a crucial second-violin passage or to engage in animated conversations on Scott's outside telephone.

By this process of intense dedication, relieved by outbursts of nimble humor—a process repeated for eight to twelve days every year for nearly three decades—the Budapest Quartet made another contribution to the recorded repertoire for which it has become world-famed.

There was a time when the Quartet could create a first-class musical scandal by lunching at four separate tables in New York's Russian Tea Room; now it is generally agreed that the secret of its durability is the very individuality of the personal forces that have been so successfully channeled into great performance, without shattering the Quartet by centrifugal force. Not that the brink of crisis has not on occasion been reached. Sascha Schneider, certainly the most extraordinary second violinist before the public, was absent from the group for ten years because it was impossible for him, at the time, to realize his own artistic aims within the Quartet.

Another reason for the Budapest String Quartet's continued success as an entity is that it was formed, not by a single agreement among four men or by one player's choice of three colleagues, but rather by the gradual acquisition of new members discriminatingly chosen to fit into the ensemble. Though founded in 1917 by four Hungarians, the Quartet did not attain its present distinction until it was invaded by Russians between 1927, when Roisman joined as second violinist, and 1936, when Kroyt replaced the last Hungarian. Although all four members of the Quartet were born in Russia, each completed his studies in Germany or Austria—Roisman and Kroyt in Berlin, Sascha in Vienna, and Mischa in Leipzig. Stylistically, they balance Russian volatility with a solid German tradition. As Russians they avoid the typically dry German tone, but they have an individual and collective respect for the composer's text which seems more German than Russian. On a number of occasions members of the Quartet have spoken highly of the old Capet Quartet, a French group active in the 1920s and 1930s, whose records, never issued in this country, reveal qualities of balance, texture, and intensity similar to the Budapest. Residents of the United States since 1938, and all naturalized citizens, the members of the

Quartet are an extraordinarily cosmopolitan group.

In operation, the Budapest is a "democracy" in which both musical decisions and business matters are settled by a majority vote, though if a one-man minority has sufficiently strong convictions his colleagues will find a mutually acceptable compromise.

"What do you do," the Quartet is often asked, "when you have a two-to-two tie?"

"We ask the composer."

If the composer is alive, he is consulted directly; if not, the score and other relevant musicological data are studied. This is not as fatuous as it may sound: when three or four of the Quartet agree upon an interpretative liberty, it is accepted with the authority of collective insight. When there is no such preponderance of agreement, the conservative course of a more literal reading is preferred.

Contrary to legend, the Quartet does not avoid joint social engagements whenever possible, and some of my own most delightful times with them have been occasions, often after concerts, when I thoroughly enjoyed the interplay of these four varied personalities in a relaxed setting.

At any gathering, one is aware of the presence of the Quartet—not just their physical presence, but a special magnetism in the atmosphere—as they enter a room. Sascha will probably embrace his hostess—and any other pretty woman—with exaggerated but nonetheless genuine affection. Roisman will politely but intently inquire about his host's pipes and tobacco. Kroyt will turn on the television to learn the latest baseball scores, information eagerly discussed by all four. Mischa will survey the walls and bookshelves to locate new or interesting paintings and books. Before the evening is out, Sascha may give a "Lieder recital," in exaggerated German and with Kroyt at the piano.

A critical moment in the history of the Budapest Quartet is now recalled by its members as "The Night We Lost Joe." Walking back to their hotel in the pitch dark after a concert in Nagoya, Japan, in 1953, his colleagues suddenly discovered that Roisman had fallen into a deep ditch, breaking his left wrist. An Army doctor set the fracture, and the Quartet returned to the States.

Back in Washington, X-rays showed that Roisman's bones had not been set properly in view of the delicate control required of a violinist's left hand. After the fracture was broken again and reset, Roisman faced a difficult recovery not knowing whether he would ever play again. At first he could not even place his Guarneri del Gesu under his chin—his wife had to hold it for him—but through special exercise and remarkable perseverance, he not only recovered full use of his left hand but, within five months, was playing again in the Quartet.

This episode reveals an intensity of purpose which is not apparent from the urbane and reserved appearance of Roisman on the concert stage. The least extroverted member of the Quartet, his calm

sense of purpose is a stabilizing force among his more volatile colleagues. Having been "graduated" from second violin to first, he seems never to have forgotten his resolve not to dominate the Quartet. I once heard a long and vitriolic diatribe by the "leader" of another quartet to the effect that Roisman played too much "inside" the Budapest. Yet, it is this very role of "first among equals" that so distinguishes Roisman's contribution.

Roisman was born in Odessa in 1900 into a musical family; as a young girl, his sister played duets with David Oistrakh, another native of Odessa. Through the generosity of the wife of a wealthy importer, Roisman and Kroyt both, though not together, were sent to study in Berlin. Roisman returned to Russia during World War I, but emigrated

in 1923 via Czechoslovakia. There he met his wife, herself a Hungarian and the only authentic touch of Budapest in the present Quartet. Eventually he settled in Germany, where he joined the Budapest Quartet in 1927.

Roisman's attitude towards his colleagues is often one of tolerant amusement: the last to join in rehearsal clowning, he is the first to remind the others, "Gentlemen, we have work to do." When the Quartet goes to a party, he is more inclined to sit on the sidelines, smoking one of his vast collections of pipes, watching the amusing antics of Kroyt and the cavorting Schneiders with a quiet smile. Traveling, he knows the best Chinese restaurants—a taste he shares with the Schneiders—and is the first to arrive at the airport for the next

Continued on page 91

The Budapest String Quartet on Records

Chronology and Personnel

- 1933-36 Joseph Roisman, Alexander Schneider, Ipolyi, Mischa Schneider
 1936-45 Joseph Roisman, Alexander Schneider, Boris Kroyt, Mischa Schneider
 1945-48 Joseph Roisman, Edgar Ortenberg, Boris Kroyt, Mischa Schneider
 1948-54 Joseph Roisman, Jac Gorodetsky, Boris Kroyt, Mischa Schneider
 1954- Same as 1936-45

Recording Companies and Locale

- 1933 Beethovensaal, Berlin (His Master's Voice)
 1933-36 Abbey Road Studio, London (His Master's Voice)
 1938-39 Victor Studio, Camden, New Jersey (RCA)
 1940-45 Liederkrantz Hall, New York (Columbia)
 1946-50 30th Street Studio, New York; Hollywood Studio (Columbia)
 1951-55 Coolidge Auditorium, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Columbia)
 1956- 30th Street Studio, New York (Columbia)

None of the recordings made previous to 1950 is currently available. These include the Columbias of 1940-50 vintage (first issued on 78 rpm, later on LP) as well as the earlier HMVs and RCA Victors. The highlights of the available Budapest recorded repertory, all on Columbia discs, may be summarized as follows:

Haydn—The best of the Budapest's Haydn is in the Opus 76 group (1954; SL 203, ML 4922/24) and in the Opus 33, No. 2, which fills out the Brahms String Quartet set.

Mozart—Mozart's string quintets are one of the crowning glories of chamber music, and the Budapest has recorded them superbly twice: once with Milton Katims, and, in 1957,

✓ with Walter Trampler (M3L, ML 5191/93). The six *Haydn* Quartets (1953, SL 187) are well played, but even more exciting is the performance of Mozart's last four quartets ✓ (1955; SL 228, ML 5007/8), possibly because this session was the first after Sascha's return.

Beethoven—Now engaged in its third Beethoven cycle, the Budapest recorded most of the sixteen Beethovens between 1934 and 1945 for HMV and Columbia. In 1951-52, it recorded an excellent integral cycle in the Coolidge Auditorium (SL 172/74, ML 4576/87). The new stereo series, begun in 1958, promises to be even better sonically, and it has Alexander Schneider back in the Quartet. Opus 18 has already been released (M3S 606, MS 6074/76) as have the Middle Quartets (M4S 616, MS 6185/88); the Late Quartets will be taped shortly. A good example of the current best of the Budapest is the first record of Opus 59.

✓ **Schubert**—Though the *Trout* Quintet is one of the Quartet's best sellers (1950; ML 4317), I sense an excess of bass and lack of Viennese spirit; but the three last quartets are excellent ✓ (1953; SL 187, ML 4831/33).

✓ **Brahms**—Fine as the three String Quartets are (1950-54; SL 223, ML 4799), the two String Quintets with Trampler (1958; MS 6025, ML 5281) are even better. The Piano Quintet in F minor has been recorded with Clifford Curzon (1950; ML 4336).

✓ **Others**—First-rate performances of two Dvořák ✓ Quartets (1955; ML 5143) and the Piano Quintet with Curzon (1953; ML 4825). Debussy and Ravel played with brilliance, clarity, and impeccable musicianship, but lacking the dry tone considered by some to be idiomatic in French music (1957; MS 6015, ML 5245). An "Encore" disc worth treasuring for superb readings of the Schubert *Satz* and Wolf *Italian Serenade* is ML 5116, issued in 1955.



Summertime Stereo

by Norman Eisenberg

Prokofiev on the Patio

**Poolside, patio, or old-style side porch—any site can
be wired for summertime stereo listening.**

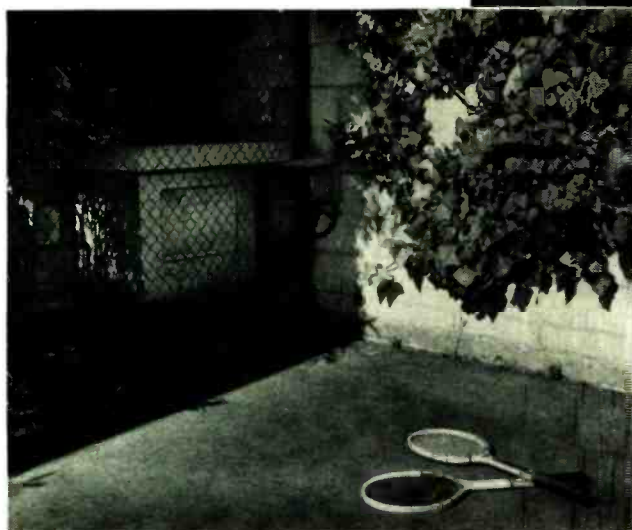
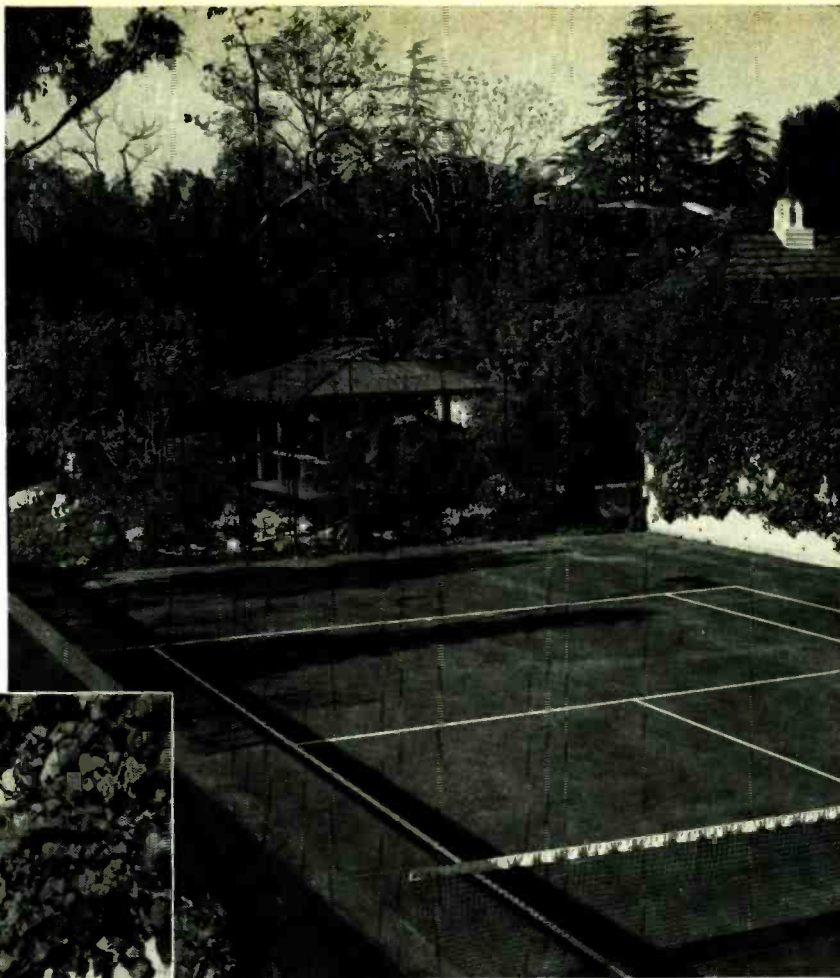
FOR THOSE who would prefer, when “summer is in,” to hear more dulcet notes than those of the “l’hude sing[ing] cuccu” the obvious thing to do is to wire the outdoors for sound. You may not exactly transform your backyard into another Tanglewood, but you can provide some sonic semblance thereof. Music-at-home, including stereo, need not be always music-within-four-walls. You can take it with you when you move out under the sun and the stars. If electric rotisseries and portable bars can be transported out of their traditional habitats, why not the apparatus for reproducing music?

The exact logistics of such a move will vary, of course, with the equipment you own or expect to, as well as with the area—patio, lawn, swimming pool, or whatever—that is involved. One obvious approach would be simply to pick up your present stereo equipment and carry it outdoors. Actually this procedure might do for listening on a porch or adjoining terrace, but at any distance from the house the length of AC power cord required could pose a safety problem, particularly if children are

running about. In any case, the use outdoors of the same sort of speaker systems used successfully indoors may not always prove satisfactory. Aside from the effort of carting them back and forth (and even “bookshelf” systems can be fairly heavy), there is the all-important matter of how they may sound when used in an acoustic environment that differs sharply from the one for which they were expressly designed. Ordinary high-fidelity speakers are intended for use in rooms; the physical structure and limits of a room become, in a very real sense, part of the speaker system by representing the acoustic load into which the speaker works. Patently, no such load exists outdoors. At that, the huskier types of indoor speakers, housed in weatherproofed enclosures, have been used for outdoor sound.

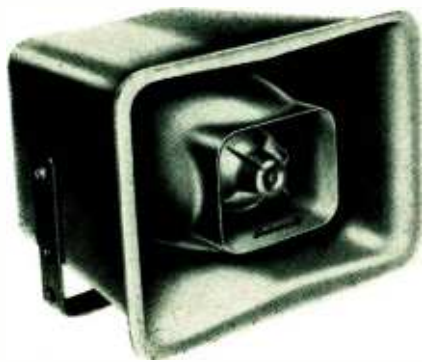
Most fanciers of outdoor high fidelity, however, would do well to consider the specially designed outdoor speaker. Typical models are offered by Electro-Voice (the “Musicaster” priced from \$54); Jensen (model HF-100, \$77.70); and University (the “LC” series, starting at \$34.50). All of these are two-way speaker systems with built-in frequency

Summertime Stereo

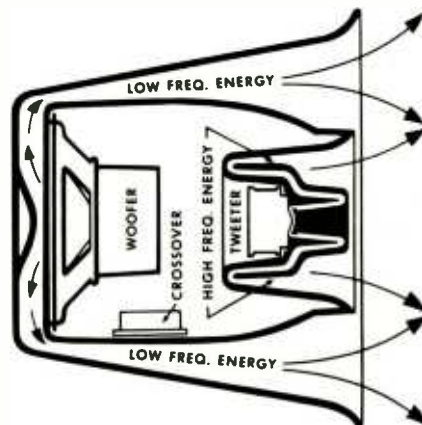


Large outdoor area is served by speaker in weatherproof housing protected by a wire fence. Remote control box inside the tennis court permits player to serve music as well as tennis balls. Installation is at the Beverly Hills home of Capitol Records president Glenn Wallichs. Outdoor speaker, right, is secured to a post and adjacent roof for unobtrusive sound reinforcement. It requires no baffling.





Typical outdoor speaker, requiring no baffling, is MLC by University. Cut-away view at right reveals how all the elements of a complete two-way speaker system are contained in a compact, sturdy housing.



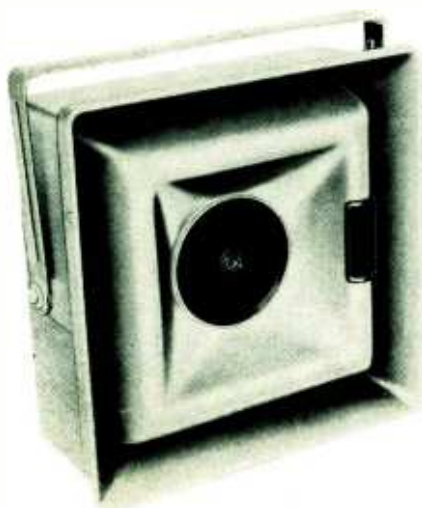
division and horn-loading on woofer and tweeter. The integral bass horn, in particular, suggests something of the speaker's having its own built-in acoustic environment so that such a speaker needs no further baffling or "installing"—bracket it to a convenient tree or porch roof, or simply set it on the ground, and it is ready to play. What's more, these speakers are weatherproofed and may be left permanently in place outdoors.

A new departure in outdoor speakers is represented by the \$47.50 Bozak M-108, a weatherproofed 8-inch cone driver that may be installed in a small box or simply bolted to a plywood panel, which in turn is set in place wherever needed. Another innovation is the Audax CA-60-P "Patio Speaker"—a portable weatherproof-housed bookshelf system priced at \$59.95. This speaker comes with its own volume control and detachable legs.

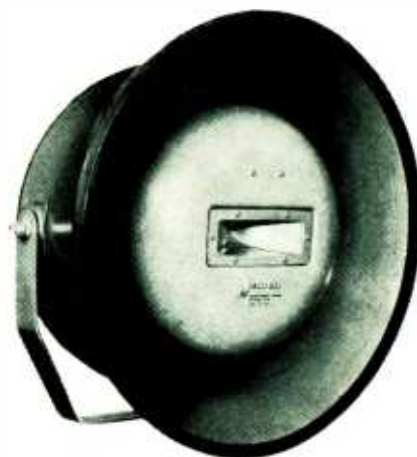
WITH extension speakers, of course, there is no need to duplicate an existing sound system. The added speakers may be connected to the amplifier inside the house and will reproduce whatever program sources are connected to it. For relaxed

listening, an automatic changer or slow-speed tape deck will of course be more convenient than a turntable in this kind of installation.

To connect the added speakers, ordinary lamp cord will do for distances up to fifty feet. TV twin-lead also may be used; it can be attached to walls, trees, and the like with little "stand-off" insulators. For longer stretches, choose a thicker diameter wire (lower wire-size number) to minimize signal loss. (This wire is available in "weatherproof" versions, which boast a tougher, more durable insulation than do ordinary cords.) Be sure—and this is important in transferring maximum undistorted amplifier power to the speakers—to match the output impedance of the amplifier to the combined impedances of the indoor speakers and the new extensions. For speakers in series, simply add the individual impedances to get the total. Thus, two 8-ohm speakers in series should be connected to the 16-ohm tap on the amplifier. If no suitable impedance can be found on the amplifier for a series speaker hookup, connect the speakers in parallel. Since most outdoor speakers are rated at 8 ohms, combining one (or more) in parallel with



Electro-Voice "Musicaster," at left, and Jensen "Weatherproof" contain a two-way horn speaker system with integral baffling. This type of speaker may be suspended or simply set on the ground.



any existing speaker requires using the 4-ohm tap on the amplifier.

Of course, impedances notwithstanding, speakers connected in series will all function at the same time. When they are connected in parallel, however, it becomes possible to cut one in or out without affecting the other. You may not care to have the indoor speakers at work when the amplifier is driving the outdoor system; depending on relative speaker efficiencies and available amplifier power, such a double load can reduce the signal level available either indoors or outdoors. For this reason, it may be preferable to connect the outdoor speakers in parallel, via a speaker selector switch (available at most dealers for about \$1.00) which permits you to choose indoor, outdoor, or both systems. For stereo, of course, you would need two switch boxes. These can be installed wherever practical—at the amplifier inside the house or at any spot along the connecting lines outside.

Another useful accessory for outdoor speakers is a speaker level control or "pad" that permits you to control outdoor volume. Such a control, whose impedance should match that of the speaker, may be inserted anywhere in the connecting lines between the switch and speaker.

Finally, outdoor speakers may be wired directly to the connecting lines, or they may be connected by phone plug and jack. This latter method, of course, permits you to disconnect the outdoor speaker and reposition it at will. Special jacks, with multi-contacts, can be wired for such service; details on these devices, as well as on switch boxes and "pads"—as they apply to a specific installation—can be obtained from your local audio dealer or by a query to the speaker manufacturer.

Since acoustics outdoors can be more random and variable than indoors, it is impossible to generalize about speaker placement except to say that experimentation is indicated and that not much in the way of stereo effect is likely without at least six feet of separation between speakers. Stereo or mono, listening to outdoor speakers suggests a certain modification of criteria on the part of the sound fancier. For instance, the full, deep bass he may have become accustomed to from a super (indoor) woofer just won't be reproduced by most outdoor speakers. Or, to put it another way, even if the speaker used did reproduce the lowest octave or so, chances are those tones wouldn't be heard in the open air. Another factor is that the outdoor speakers are apt to be more directional than indoor speakers. Sound energy, radiated from them, tends to fall off fairly rapidly as one moves "off axis" or off the direct line from the center of the speaker. Some ingenuity on the user's part can compensate, to a degree, for both the weaker bass and the directional quality. Try to take advantage, when installing the speakers, of nearby structures and reflecting surfaces to reinforce the sound. The juncture of a porch column and the porch roof,

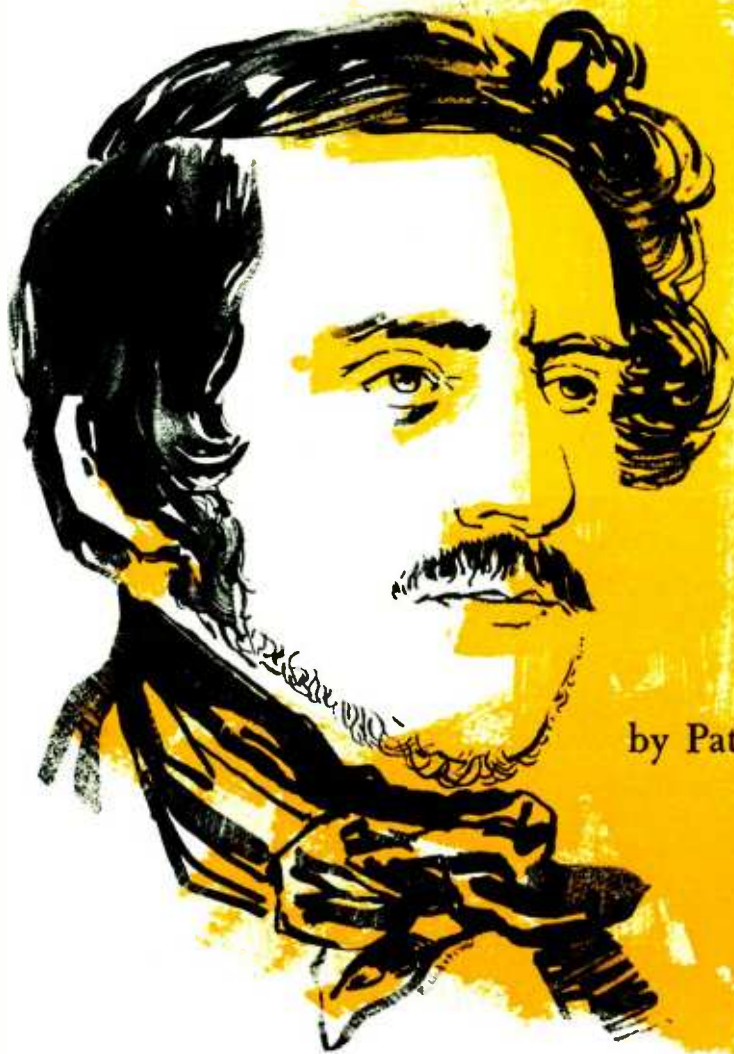
for example, would be an ideal spot for mounting an outdoor speaker. In general, try placing the speakers fairly high and angling them in the direction where you will usually be sitting. Proper placement will produce good outdoor stereo as well as enhance monophonic reproduction.

Yet another aspect of outdoor listening is the random noise of the surroundings which can, to an extent, be overcome by correct speaker placement and sufficient signal level. On the other hand, often the latter may have to become a compromise with what neighbors will tolerate. At that, keep in mind the manner in which outdoor speakers concentrate their sound energy; thus, neighbors in line with the speakers (in front or behind) are likely to hear almost as much as you do—but those on either side of the speaker axis will hear considerably less.

FOR those who don't care to become involved with outdoor extension speakers, there are any number of portable sets which—if they do not afford the near-professional performance of correctly installed outdoor speakers—nevertheless are undeniably convenient. These, of course, do require that long power line trailing back to the house for operating voltage. The second speaker for stereo is made part of a compact package, but it is removable for best positioning. A few, such as Liberty Music Shop's "Scott Custom Stereophone" (\$250), boast impressive specifications and features. Most, however, are not to be taken as substitutes for the real thing but rather as make-do expedients useful in a relatively small area. The do-it-yourselfer will get his best dollar's worth from such units available as kits, for example the Heathkit model GD-10, priced at \$69.95.

The man who insists on complete portability, without any trailing entanglements with the program or power resources of the house, might consider a transistorized unit such as the "Crown," a very compact stereo player imported from Japan and selling in New York for under \$100. This unit runs on six flashlight batteries which can power the single play turntable and built-in amplifier for an estimated thirty-five to fifty hours before needing replacement. An increasing number of transistorized tape recorders, lightweight and with built-in battery power supplies, are also available—as well as the kind that can be plugged into the cigarette lighter outlet of an auto. Relying on these, however, for any measure of critical musical performance would be capricious, since neither fidelity nor stereo is likely to be very discernible. Yet, for some people the mere fact of getting something to play somehow might have its own unique attractions.

A recent, and somewhat staggering, type of "outdoor" speaker is the kind that plays under water, such as University's MM-2UW. To hear it, your ears must be at least partially submerged. Just as soon as we can, we'd like to do a TITP (Tested in the Pool) report on this one. . . .



by Patrick Cairns Hughes

DONIZETTI *Composer* *on* *the Rebound*

**The composer of *Lucia*
wrote seventy other operas.
More and more of them are
being rediscovered.**

A NUMBER of rather exotic-sounding titles have begun to appear in the annals of the international operatic repertoire and in the pages of the LP catalogues of late years—titles like *Anna Bolena*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Poliuto*, *Maria di Rohan*, *Don Sebastiano*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Linda di Chamounix*, *Il Furioso*, *La Favorita*, *Emilia di Liverpool*. Their composer: Domenico Gaetano Maria Donizetti.

Since the centenary of the composer's death was commemorated in 1948, when the Teatre Donizetti in his native Bergamo began to draw annual atten-

DONIZETTI



tion to operas whose names had become no more than an entry in the larger encyclopedias, there has been a widespread excavation of the vast depths of Donizetti's prodigious output. Almost until he died, paralyzed and insane, Donizetti composed with a fluency and professional disregard for posterity characteristic of the fertile expertness of the eighteenth century classical composer-craftsmen. An early romantic Donizetti may have been (the influence of the English historical novel is clearly marked in the titles of such operas of his as *Alfredo il Grande*, *Elisabetta al castello di Kenilworth*, and—above all—*Lucia di Lammermoor*), but he lived and worked in a hard, practical, and unromantic world in which singers were more important than the composer and, since novelty was the lifeblood of the opera house, in which they had to be constantly provided with new, custom-built material. A standard international repertoire as we understand it today was unknown. A composer's new and successful opera went the rounds of the Italian theatres, perhaps to the capitals of the more important European countries, and then made way in the schedules for the composer's next new opera.

Donizetti, gifted with a facility barely equaled by Rossini and surpassed only by Mozart, wrote two, often three, sometimes four new operas a year for twenty-six years. Although there may have been much repetition of idiom and form and technical procedure, he very seldom had to resort to a bottom-drawer to make use, in a new work, of material from an earlier and unsuccessful one, as Rossini frequently did. When Donizetti was told that Rossini had taken three weeks to write *The Barber of Seville* and teasingly replied "Well, what do you expect? He was always so lazy!" he spoke as one whose own fabulous productivity was the result of a strict routine. Donizetti refers constantly in his letters to "my usual eight hours work a day"—a day which began at seven o'clock every morning and, with a break at midday, ended at four in the afternoon.

In general it was this schedule which enabled him to turn out *Don Pasquale*, for instance, in ten days and *Maria di Rohan*, a three-act *opera seria*, in eight—with, admittedly, a little extra time needed for orchestration. Highly geared productivity seems to have been the secret of Donizetti's fantastic output; in addition to 71 operas, he composed 31 cantatas, 116 religious works with organ or orchestral accompaniment, 21 concert overtures, a symphony in four movements, 19 string quartets, 3 quintets, 183 songs and arias, 56 vocal duets, trios, and quartets, 44 piano solos and duets, and 19 "various" compositions including concertos for clarinet, cor anglais, and a double concerto for violin and cello. It is a formidable list and enough to discourage any young composer dreaming of immortality.

Although Donizetti's facility has for the past two or three generations formed the subject of a cautionary tale to demonstrate the ephemeral quality of Italian opera as a whole, the fact is that Donizetti's music has never been entirely out of circulation in the 113 years since his death. In spite of what teachers and textbooks would have us believe, three operas of one kind or another have kept a steady place in the international repertoire. In the 1880s, for instance, London—which until recently faithfully reflected the cosmopolitan operatic trends of the day—could count on hearing *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, and *La Favorita* regularly every season. Today the three Donizetti operas with which even London is fairly familiar are *Lucia*, *Don Pasquale*, and *L'Elisir d'amore*—the same immortal *Lucia*, it will be noticed, but *Lucrezia Borgia* and *La Favorita* displaced by the two comedies.

It is a significant change and due, I believe, to the fact that while there have always been one or two sopranos capable of attracting an audience with a classic coloratura part like *Lucia*, there have been few adventurous enough, once public taste had changed, to tackle the less familiar, less popular, but no less exacting works. The reinstatement

A SHORT GUIDE TO DONIZETTI ON RECORDS

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THE COMMON INABILITY of performers to impart to Donizetti's "serious" operas the dignity of their often tragic themes, while at the same time preserving the composer's effortless flow of light, appealing melody, has been greatly responsible for keeping such a work as *Lucia di Lammermoor* slightly outside the bounds of today's standard repertory. The release, some years ago, of Angel's recording (3503) with Callas, Di Stefano, Gobbi, and Serafin seemed a near-perfect reconciliation of these two divergent elements. The deletion of that edition from the catalogues and its subsequent replacement by a markedly inferior version, again dominated by Callas (Angel 3601; S 3601), leaves the field virtually clear for the excellent new La Scala production on Mercury (OL 2108; SR 29008). Without containing a single unimpeachable voice, this manages to be a *Lucia* of considerable dramatic strength as well as charm. The cast, with young Renata Scottò in the title role, ably assisted by Di Stefano and Bastianini, eschews all gratuitous showmanship; and the music benefits immeasurably thereby. Much of the credit for the success of this version belongs to Nino Sanzogno, who conducts with an understanding of the tricky problems posed by the score, and firm, flexible control of his forces. Mercury's impeccable reproduction is a further inducement to acquiring this set.

Passing mention should be made of Cetra's *Lucia* (1205), which features some sensational singing by Lina Pagliughi, and a good supporting cast. However, since it rarely displays that penetration of the composer's total conception which distinguishes the Mercury recording, it must rank a distant second-best.

La Favorita is considered by many persons to be among the noblest of Donizetti's tragic utterances; and indeed some portions, notably in the final act, clearly bear out this evaluation. Sad to say, London's recording (A 4322; OSA 1310) comes close to destroying whatever viable features the work comprises. Simonato gives one of her infrequent poor performances, chopping up the music's lines, while Poggi's pallid voice and the lugubrious conducting of Erede deliver the final blow of the ax. That Donizetti can be soul-stirring and melodically lithe at the same moment is an alien thought in this production. I have not been able to obtain a copy of Cetra's edition of this opera.

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One of Donizetti's lesser efforts, *Linda di Chamounix* pits snippets of lovely, occasionally moving music against vast stretches of tediously conventional writing and a libretto bursting with ludicrous clichés of situation. There is some superior singing from Valletti and Capecchi in Columbia's beautifully engineered set (M3L 403), but Antonietta Stella as the heroine possesses neither the required ease of production nor that mingling of ingenuous grace with sober dramatic projection the part calls for. Joan Sutherland, in a recital for London (5515; OS 25111), tosses off Linda's famous aria "O luce di quest'anima" with elfin lightness and gleeful mastery of its technical demands. This album, which also contains some stylishly sung excerpts from *Lucia*, is wholeheartedly recommended as a "Donizetti sampler."

Those two ageless charmers, *Don Pasquale* and *L'Elisir d'amore*, are the only items in the Donizetti discography that provide a measure of appetite-whetting competition. Cetra's *Pasquale* (1242) is traditionally Italian, with tasteful, decidedly buffo characterization from Bruscantini, and a charming pair of lovers in Noni and Valletti. Mario Rossi supplies a bubbling orchestral underpinning for a whole which has but one major weakness, the dreadfully mannered Malatesta of Mario Borriello.

This role should never be entrusted to a singer of such uncontrollably buffo inclinations.

Epic's version (SC 6016), nimbly led by Molinari-Pradelli, is altogether different and quite unique. Capecchi's Don is vocally rather thick, but his warmly human, noncaricatured interpretation is unexpectedly moving. This fine singing actor eliminates some of the more obvious *commedia dell'arte* aspects of the character, and his lead is followed by the remainder of the cast, which, like Cetra's, includes a winning pair of lovers in Bruna Rizzoli and Petre Munteanu. The Malatesta (Giuseppe Valdenigo), however, exaggerates the prevailing mood and sounds downright gloomy. To sum up, both productions are skillful, with the ultimate choice depending on whether one prefers proven tradition or a bit of experimentation. I lean slightly towards the latter.

Any of the three available recordings of *L'Elisir* would not be out of place in a carefully chosen collection. Cetra's expert performance (1235) is once again a traditional version—the cast is essentially the same as that employed for *Pasquale*—but antiquated sonics and an occasional lack of bounce in Gavazzeni's conducting rank it below the newer sets.

The Angel album (3594 B/L; S 3594 B/L) takes only four sides (to London's six) with no loss in sound quality, and is distinguished by the incomparable vitality of Serafin's conducting. Taddei is a superb Dulcamara, and the poker-voiced delivery of Panerai lends greater comic interest to the figure of Belcore than is usually encountered. And while Carteri's shrill, unsteady Adina is out of place, Alva is a light-voiced, intelligent Nemorino. For its version of *Elisir* (A 4321; OSA 1311), London has assembled an all-star cast, and, as might have been expected, it fails to produce the kind of unified style we hear—and virtually see—in the Angel. Di Stefano's "Una furtiva lagrima" is, to be sure, heavenly singing; and Hilde Gueden's Adina is as supple and attractive, as a separate entity, as Corena's Dulcamara is wittily effective. Conductor Molinari-Pradelli governs with sufficient good humor, but he has too many individual styles to contend with. In short, London's is a rather disjointed, *phonographic* performance.

A few words are in order for the Cetra *La Figlia del reggimento* (1213), a pleasant little thing with faintly serious overtones, sung here by a dispirited Pagliughi and a Valletti well below his best vocal level. Rossi leads with sparkling animation and Bruscantini lends a solid characterization, but the two stars of the cast are against them, Donizetti, and us.

Two comic miniatures which shouldn't be overlooked are Cetra's one-acters, *Il Campanello* (50027) and *Rita* (1257). The former is hilarious nonsense, with Bruscantini and Capecchi irresistibly funny in the principal roles, and conductor Simonetto keeping things moving with a sure hand. *Rita* is milder, but none the less a joy. A trio of highly accomplished young unknowns, under Umberto Cattini, do well by this slender pleasure.

In conclusion, a brief paean for a fabulous Angel collection of "Mad Scenes" (35764; S 35764), which finds Maria Callas portraying various operatic ladies in varying stages of mental derangement. The high point is unquestionably the long final scene from Donizetti's early masterpiece *Anna Bolena*, which finds Callas on display as the miracle she can be in music ideally suited to her. Anyone who bothers to dwell on her obvious technical shortcomings in the face of such inspired artistry is an ungrateful wretch. The wildly erratic "La Divina" projects this extraordinary role with hair-raising intensity. HERBERT GLASS

ment in modern times of *Don Pasquale* and *L'Elisir d'amore* as staple items in the repertoire dates virtually from Toscanini's rather apprehensive inclusion of *L'Elisir* in the Scala program of 1901. At that time Caruso was at his best and—a circumstance difficult to believe—Donizetti's enchanting comedy had not been heard at La Scala for nearly a quarter of a century.

The revival of *L'Elisir d'amore* led naturally to that of *Don Pasquale*, when it was discovered that Donizetti's comic operas demanded no greater virtuosity of the singers than did Rossini's *Barber of Seville*. Once this was realized, there was no lack of performance of two comedies filled with good tunes, witty ensembles, sparkle and gaiety. Donizetti's serious operas, however, were written as vehicles for an outstanding generation of singers who, the more they sang of his music, the more they demanded a new Donizetti opera each season. Once that generation died out, and early nineteenth-century Italian opera fell into disrepute, it was generally assumed from a superficial acquaintance with the vocal score that the "serious" Donizetti was best forgotten, having not even the charm, it seemed, of a good period piece.

In our own day that opinion has been reversed. The twentieth-century revival of interest in his music has been concentrated on those very operas which we were assured were as dead as mutton since the Golden Age of Singing for which they were intended, the atmosphere in which they thrived, and the audiences by whom they were enjoyed had gone forever. That the serious operas, like *Maria Stuarda* and *Anna Bolena*, have sprung into vigorous life once more may be attributed to several things. To begin with, since Puccini's *Turandot* was produced in 1926 no composer has written a work that has achieved genuine *international* popularity; the inability of contemporary opera to interest the general operagoer is something without parallel in musical history and leaves us with no alternative but to rely on revivals for acceptable novelty.

Another factor has been the long-playing record, which today supplies armchair listeners with a choice of operatic fare consisting of more than twice as many operas as can be found even in the vast repertoires of Munich, Vienna, and Milan. Among these recordings are some nine Donizetti operas, several in more than one version. Nine is not a large proportion of seventy-one, but it attests the growing interest in the byways of opera.

Finally, we have seen the rediscovery of Donizetti by singers. Most latter-day vocalists we cannot honestly compare with the Great Voices of the Past, but the new generation has learned the extremely important art of application. A generation ago there was apparently nobody but Conchita Supervia who could cope with the great Rossini roles for mezzo-soprano in *The Barber*, *Cenerentola*, and *L'Italiana in Algeri*. Today there are a dozen or more singers who, though not the equal of

Supervia, have learned to apply their mezzo-soprano voices to the demands of Rossini.

Much the same thing has happened with Donizetti. An increasing number of sopranos are beginning to discover that the vocal difficulties of his leading roles are not by any means insuperable.

Anne Boleyn, Mary Stuart, Linda, Leonora, and the rest—even Lucia—do not need great singing; they need sympathetic singing. Drama has to be put into Donizetti's music by the singers, for it is not already there as it is in a Verdi opera. Everything depends on the singer's understanding of character and situation and his (or particularly, her) dramatic interpretation of the deceptively simple vocal line. There is a passage in *Lucia* (the famous duet beginning "*Il pallor funesto*") in which the music gives absolutely no clue that Lucia is telling us to "see these pale and haggard cheeks." The orchestra plays the sort of gay, elegant figure one finds every other moment in *Don Pasquale*; only Lucia's tone of voice, her vocal expression, convinces us that we are listening to *opera seria*.

Just how important acting is in a Donizetti opera I always remember from a broadcast many years ago of *La Favorita*. I followed the performance with a score, without paying much attention to the words of an opera I was hearing for the first time, and had the shock of my life when the heroine suddenly fell down stone-cold dead on the last page. There had been nothing in the vocal acting to suggest that the music was not entirely appropriate to a charming romantic comedy with a happy ending. And so it can be with all Donizetti's operas. They need what today's young singers have to an encouraging degree: dramatic intelligence and acting ability. The beauty of Toti dal Monte's voice was enough to capture the audience at Covent Garden in *Lucia* in the 1920s, when she sang the only performance of the work heard at London's Royal Opera House for fifty years until its revival (by popular demand) with Joan Sutherland in 1959. But Maria Callas, whose voice has never had any pretensions to real beauty, enraptured the Scala audience with her acting performance in *Anna Bolena* to show what a Donizetti opera needs and deserves if it is to make its effect.

The Donizetti revival has included works even more neglected than those mentioned above. The successful performance of the comic and sentimental operas like *Rita*, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, *L'ajo nell'imbarazzo* ("The Embarrassed Tutor"), *Betty*, the uproarious one-act *Campanello di notte* ("The Night Bell"), which was written in a week to get the impresario of a little Naples theatre out of dire financial trouble—this has been the result of normally inquisitive excursions into the back room to see if there was any more where *Don Pasquale* and *L'Elisir d'amore* came from. And one of the nontheatrical works revived in this new Donizettian age is the composer's Requiem Mass for Bellini. This is

Continued on page 94

NOISE



the Uninvited Guest

**If more than what you bargained for comes out of
your rig, there's something you can do about it.**

BY DONALD C. HOEFLER

NOISE, as defined by the august body of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, is: "any extraneous sound tending to interfere with the proper and easy perception of those sounds which it is desired to receive." Which means, being translated, noise is any sound you don't want. And in spite of latter-day improvements in program sources and reproducing equipment, noise is still with us.

The sources of noise are legion, and many of them are elusive. Obviously, extraneous noise inherent in the program source itself—whether broadcasts, tape, or records—is beyond the scope of the listener to repair. Noise which derives from characteristics of one's own listening environment (including poor room acoustics) can to some extent be controlled—often by experimenting with speaker placement, positioning of furniture, effect of upholstery and drapery fabrics, etc. Finally, there are the noises for which the reproducing equipment may be directly or indirectly responsible, and for these specific remedies can be prescribed. This article will consider first those noises connected with equipment common to all sound-reproducing systems—amplifiers and speakers; it will then deal with noise peculiar to disc reproduction, tape recording, and radio.

Perhaps the most common affliction in any electronic apparatus is hum. Most electric power mains carry alternating current which has an audible frequency (50-60 cps). AC hum can sneak into amplifiers through two routes. One, of course, is directly through the power cable. The power supply in the equipment is supposed to change the current to pure DC before it ever reaches the amplifying

sections, but if there is a malfunctioning part, or a misadjustment, some AC may get through. Result: hum. The other means of entry is more subtle. If there are powerful AC cables nearby, hum may enter the system through the air, by induction.

The first step in fighting hum is to make certain that everything is correctly grounded. Next, locate any hum-reducing adjustments on your amplifier and make sure that they are correctly set. It is also imperative that the balance adjustment of the push-pull stage of the amplifier be correctly set. Some amplifiers can be readily adjusted by the owner, following the manufacturer's instructions; others, which require instruments and a special familiarity with the equipment, are best handled by a professional serviceman.

Other relatively simple and often effective attacks on hum include replacing the rectifier tube in the power supply. The electrolytic capacitors in the filter may be of the plug-in type, in which case they can easily be replaced if necessary. A simple thing like reversing the power plug in the AC receptacle also sometimes does the trick. Check the interconnecting cables between components to be sure that there is solid bonding between the outer shield and the shell of the plug at each end, and that good insulation prevents the inner wire from touching the shield.

Induced hum is avoided for the most part by proper amplifier design—clearly a matter out of your hands—but some aspects of amplifier functioning can be controlled by the owner. If you ever remove a shield can from a tube or an entire section, be sure to replace it firmly. You may have to do

this, for instance, when replacing a tube whose hum or noise level has increased greatly. Big offenders on this count, incidentally, are the miniature twin triodes, such as types 12AX7, 12AU7, and 12AT7. Finally, remember that sometimes hum can be induced in a magnetic phono cartridge from a nearby amplifier. Placing that amplifier farther away will reduce such hum.

Another kind of noise is the "ping" effect, resulting from so-called "microphonic" tubes. The elements of these tubes are so sensitive that a ping is heard when they are struck, and in some instances it will be heard when even a control knob or any part of the chassis is touched. Sometimes microphonic tubes will also rebroadcast air-borne noise. Shock-mounting of tubes often reduces the ping effect, but a tube that has become microphonic after use should be replaced.

A special class of noises, inherent in some tubes (and transistors), is known variously as "shot effect," "flicker effect," and "partition noise." All these noises sound the same—hissy or raspy—and all stem from irregularities in the flow of electrons in the tube or transistor. Partition noise is peculiar to pentodes, and thus will not occur in all-triode amplifiers. But when any of these tube noises occur, the only remedy is replacement. Many tubes have low-noise, low-microphonic counterparts, and while these may be more expensive than the original tubes, they often are worth the added cost.

Thermal noise is similar to tube noises, but is caused by conductors and resistors. Any resistor which has become discolored from overheating could well be noisy, and should be replaced. And carbon composition resistors generally are noisier than other types. Whenever a noisy resistor is discovered, it should be replaced with one of a higher wattage rating. Better yet, use lower noise types, such as deposited carbon, metal film, or wire-wound.

In connection with loudspeakers, noise is often simply a matter of sympathetic vibrations. If you detect buzzes coming from the speaker enclosure, chances are some screws are loose, glue has dried up, or bracing has come unfastened. Some simple cabinet work is called for. In a few rare cases, a speaker itself may become defective, with a torn cone or rubbing voice coil. Such a defect cannot be cured except by skilled craftsmen; in most cases the speaker must be replaced. As for vibrations caused by rattling windows or singing vases, draw the drapes, remove the *objets d'art*—or turn down the volume.

Aside from noise identified with the amplifying equipment and speakers, each mode of sound reproduction is subject to its own variety of ills. In record reproduction, "clicks" and "pops," for instance, are a common source of annoyance. While such noises are associated with operating any kind of switch, they seem to result most often from the off-on action of a turntable or record changer. Most players have built-in "muting circuits" to

silence the switching action. If yours does not, a capacitor—0.05 mfd, 200 volts DC rating—can be wired across the switch terminals to render it silent. To avoid switching noises that originate elsewhere in the system, simply remember to turn down the volume control when operating a given switch.

Dirty records as the source of clicks, pops, and similar unseemly sounds should need no discussion at this late date, but these noises may also result from a defective stylus or incorrectly installed arm and cartridge. Other noise problems of record reproduction have to do with the electromechanical process of translating the groove wiggles into electric signals. "Needle talk" or chatter is noise radiated directly into the air from the pickup and record surface. It is a highly distorted version of the original, with absence of bass due to the small size of the radiating surfaces. If you ever hear it, remove the stylus from the record and look for trouble. Perhaps stylus force is excessive, or the stylus may be receded so that the magnet pole pieces are scraping the disc, or there may be a chip out of the stylus, or the tone arm may be binding. Any of these conditions can mean the ruin of records, and should be immediately corrected.

The noise aptly called rumble results from turntable motor vibrations being sensed by the stylus. Low or inaudible rumble is basically a matter of good turntable design, but if rumble increases with prolonged use, you can do something about it. Check the rubber motor mounts to be sure that none is torn or broken. If your turntable or changer has spring mounts, make sure that they are free to compress and expand, rather than screwed down tight. Check lubrication as recommended by the manufacturer, but do not lubricate excessively, as this may affect speed regulation or even cause damage. Since the turntable mat provides some rumble damping, it should be replaced if it has lost its resiliency. Severe cases of persistent rumble are not likely to be cured except by professional help, and often the best cure for rumble is a new player.

A distinct kind of hum can also be radiated by the turntable motor and picked up by the leads running through the tone arm. Often this hum can be reduced by using shielded cable, with enough inner conductors to accommodate all the terminals on the cartridge. Do not connect the shield to the cartridge or arm, but ground only its other end at the preamp chassis. Keep this cable as far as possible from the motor and all power transformers.

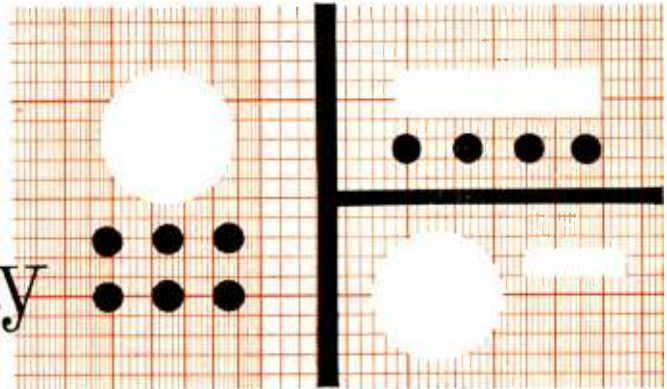
Finally, in connection with record-playing equipment, remember that record equalization is intended, in great measure, for noise reduction. If your equalization control is not set correctly, not only will fidelity be impaired, but the noise level may also go up and mask some of the music.

Tape recording and playback also has its share of noises. Some may be caused by physical and magnetic anomalies in the tape, and are unavoidable. However,

Continued on page 90

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

high fidelity



EQUIPMENT REPORTS

AT A GLANCE: The Bozak B-302A is a three-way speaker system housed in a furniture-styled cabinet. Elements include the well-known B207A (a 12-inch woofer with a pair of cone tweeters mounted across it), and a new version of Bozak's midrange speaker, the B-209A. The crossover network provides frequency division at 800 and 2,500 cycles. A choice of cabinet styles and finishes is available; the unit tested was housed in the "Urban" cabinet, finished in oiled walnut. Impedance is 8 ohms. Prices vary with cabinet: "Urban," \$254.50; "Contemporary," \$249.50; "Provincial," \$290.

IN DETAIL: Over the years, the name of Bozak has come to be associated with the "infinite baffle" approach to loudspeaker design. In essence, this means using an enclosure of sufficient size so that the rear waves of sound produced by the woofer cone are prevented from interfering with the front radiation. It also involves, for best results, the use of high quality speakers, with a woofer of fairly low resonant frequency and suitably matched drivers to handle the upper portions of the audio spectrum.

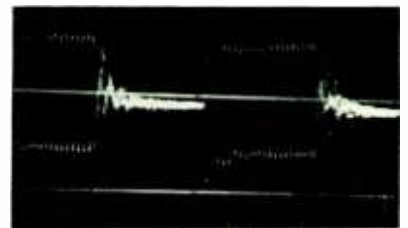
Although the B-302A is the smallest of Bozak's "regular size" infinite baffle systems, it is by no means a bookshelf system. On the leg-base furnished for the "Urban" model we tested, it stands 30 inches high, is 24 inches wide, and 20 inches deep. Dimensions for the "Provincial" and "Contemporary" models vary slightly. Cabinetry, by the way, is of a high order—very solid, heavy, and showing careful workmanship and finish.

Theories in loudspeaker design, much like the sound itself, always are subject to lively discussion. In any case, and theory notwithstanding, Bozak speakers generally have earned a place among the better reproducers available, with a loyal following among many critical listeners. The B-302A should support this reputation. Its performance is quite smooth, with outstanding transient response (indicated by the tone-burst photo), and the solid, clean bass familiar to Bozak listeners. Deep organ passages sounded particularly fine. The plotted response curve indicates substantial output below 40 cycles and, as Hirsch-Houck Laboratories puts it, with "distortion low enough so that it can be 'pushed' without breakup."

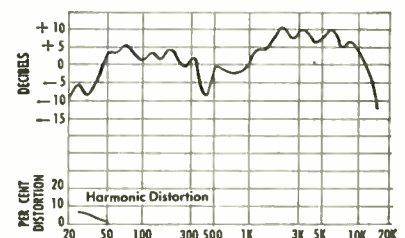
Response upward was uniformly clean (the measured "dip" at 400 cycles had no apparent effect on the sound), with the upper range somewhat on the bright side (reflected in the general rise in the curve above 2,000 cycles). Some listeners called this a surprising "presence" effect; others felt it was "too brilliant," particularly when heard at loud levels and/or fairly close-up. At lower levels, much of this tonal edge was softened, as it likely would be in a large or acoustically damped room. In any case, this is the sort of thing that: a) makes loudspeaker evaluating a precarious business; and b) is actually best determined by listening on the part of the prospective buyer.

The B-302A can be driven satisfactorily by amplifiers of 20 watts power output or higher.

Bozak B-302A Speaker System

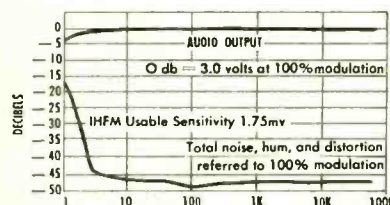


Tone-burst photo and response and distortion curves, Bozak B-302A.



Fisher 202-R

Stereo FM/AM Tuner



AT A GLANCE: The Fisher 202-R consists of separate FM and AM tuning sections, and an output for feeding multiplex signals to an adapter. It is self-powered. The unit is of premium quality, offering performance of the highest order on both FM and AM, and featuring some noteworthy circuit developments that enhance its performance and facilitate its use. Price: \$329.50. The same FM performance (without AM) is available in the Fisher FM-200 tuner, \$229.50. Cabinets are extra.

IN DETAIL: The impression of a really superb instrument that one gets when using and listening to the Fisher 202-R is quite borne out by the test results from Hirsch-Houck Laboratories. For instance, the set's limiting action is described as "fantastically good." Sensitivity, by IHFM standards, was measured at 1.75 microvolts, which places this tuner in the very top ranks for extremely high, usable sensitivity. Distortion, at 100% modulation, was impressively low, only 0.42%. Capture ratio was clocked at 5.5 db; hum level was measured at -58 db. These are outstanding figures that often approach the valid limits of test equipment; few commercial signal generators, for instance, are quite good enough to measure hum in the region of -60 db. According to the lab, "full performance, sans distortion and noise, is obtained from any signal of 3 microvolts or more."

Equally noteworthy are the construction and circuitry of this tuner. Quality and care are everywhere evident. The FM section uses six IF stages, of which four act as limiters for most signals; and since the ratio detector contributes additional limiting action, there are, in effect, five limiters. The combined action of these circuits produces that famous "velvet silence" of background for even the weakest of FM signals.

The interstation squelch, to cut out noise between stations, uses a 3-megacycle oscillator which generates a signal that is used to cut off the last IF stage in the absence of an incoming signal. H. H. Labs. points out that "unlike sets using audio squelch circuits, the squelch in the 202-R would be effective with multiplex adapters."

Another special feature, which makes for foolproof tuning, is the "micro-tune AFC." With it operative, the AFC is automatically disabled when you touch the tuning knob. You then tune to a station, guided by the dependable signal meter on the front panel. When you let go of the knob, the AFC comes on to lock in the signal. This action is smooth and effective, and it simplifies tuning without sacrificing tuning accuracy. The AFC also can be switched off completely, or left on continuously, as desired.

The warm-up drift, as well as drift caused by line voltage changes, is moderate. The AFC reduces them to negligible proportions.

The AM section features four degrees of bandwidth, or selectivity, with a front-panel control to select the degree most suitable for a particular AM signal. The "ultra-wide" position, of course, permits reception of strong local stations with the widest possible AM frequency range. The other switch positions reduce the AM frequency range somewhat but also cut out a lot of noise and interference, a useful feature when pulling in a weak or distant AM station. The AM sound, in the two wide positions of the switch, is remarkably good; in the "ultra-wide" setting it extends, says the lab, to beyond 10,000 cycles. With some stations, this may inevitably increase background noise, but with judicious use of the switch, and perhaps also your amplifier tone controls, you possibly can begin to enjoy some of those AM-FM stereo broadcasts. And on some AM stations, which come in with less background noise and fairly wide range, the difference in sound with FM—on direct A-B comparison—can be slight indeed.

Each of the output jacks for AM and FM is paralleled to a duplicate jack for feeding a stereo recorder, or two separate recorders, or—conceivably—two different stereo systems at once. Audio outputs are cathode followers with added feedback and thus can drive very large capacitive loads without any loss of high frequencies. In fact, the laboratory points out, "the 10-kc response rises a little for all except the largest capacities. This could drive up to 1,000 feet of shielded cable without degradation of sound."

The set is provided with a generous number of controls for adjusting its performance to individual requirements. The minor intricacies of using the "local-distant" switch, or the "75-ohm-300-ohm" antenna switch, or the "micro-tune sensitivity" adjustment, and others are all explained in the accompanying instruction booklet.

Measurements and technical data aside, the 202-R is one tuner you are reluctant to turn off. One would be tempted to call it a connoisseur's item, if it were not for the thought that the clean sound of music it is capable of delivering should be experienced by everyone.

N.E.

REPORT POLICY

Equipment reports are based on measurements and listening tests. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with HIGH FIDELITY'S editorial department. Many equipment reports are prepared for us by Hirsch-Houck Laboratories, a completely independent organization whose staff was responsible for the original Audio League reports. Some reports are prepared by members of the HIGH FIDELITY staff using laboratory data supplied by Hirsch-Houck Laboratories or by other independent testing organizations. All reports are signed.

AT A GLANCE: The performance of the well-known Shure Studio Dynetic pickup—originally used in an integrated arm and cartridge design—is now available to those who own any good tone arm, since Shure Brothers has released the stylus of that pickup, the N21, mounted in the lower-priced M7D cartridge. Because most of the performance qualities of these cartridges are determined by the stylus design, the new version offers a relatively inexpensive way to get one of the best stereo pickups.

The M7/N21D is extremely smooth, both in frequency response and in channel separation. It has high compliance and tracks heavily recorded grooves at 2.5 grams force. Price: \$36.75.

IN DETAIL: As with all stereo cartridges, we measured the response of the M7/N21D by playing the Westrex 1A test record. The new cartridge proved to be unusually smooth over the entire range up to 15 kc (the upper limit of this record). The swaybacked curve is characteristic of this record, and shows that the cartridge response is actually within better than 1 db over the entire frequency range. In other words, if the curve were translated to an actual response curve for the cartridge, it would be virtually flat. Both channels have identical response curves except for the slight 1-db dip (negligible) at 12 kc on one channel.

Channel separation curves are equally smooth. With many stereo cartridges, we have found considerable variation in channel separation in the 3- to 8-kc region, but such variation was not evident in the M7/N21D. As with other Shure pickups reported on in the past, channel separation in the M7/N21D throughout the audible range is completely adequate for today's stereo records.

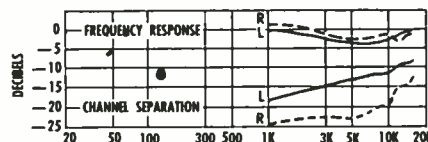
The tracking ability of the N21 stylus is as excellent as we have found it to be in the past. The Cook 60 test record, the most severe large-amplitude tracking test we apply, is easily handled at 2.5 grams force. Needle talk is very low. The arm resonance was about 6 or 7 cps in our test arm, and would be subsonic in any arm likely to be used with this cartridge.

The output of this pickup is on the low side, being 2.9 millivolts at 5-cm/sec stylus velocity at 1 kc. Its susceptibility to induced hum is fairly low, similar to that of the standard Shure cartridges but not quite as low as the Studio Dynetic's.

Listening quality reflects this cartridge's extreme smoothness of response. There is a notable lack of record hiss and extraneous noises. The sound is unstrained and effortless, with practically no coloration. As is the case with very flat transducers (speakers as well as cartridges), the sound is not brilliant or flashy in any sense.

In our view, its "naturalness" of sound makes the M7/N21D one of the outstandingly fine stereo cartridges presently available. H. H. LABS.

Shure M7/N21D Stereo Cartridge



AT A GLANCE: You might call the Ampex 936 tape player a "tape phono," which is to say it is a transport for playing recorded tapes. It has no "record" function. The unit operates at 7½- and 3¾-inch-per-second speeds and is designed to play four- or two-track stereo tapes and all monophonic tapes. The 936 includes twin playback preamplifiers, equalized for the head complement. Its output may be fed to suitable high-level inputs on an external control amplifier or directly into a power amplifier since the 936 is furnished with a level control. A companion model, the 934, is available without preamplifiers for \$50 less. Signals from the 934, of course, must be fed to tape-head inputs on an external preamp or control amplifier.

In use, the 936 tape player proved an excellent performer, mechanically smooth and capable of delivering a wide-range signal with very low distortion. Price: \$249.50.

IN DETAIL: Because the owner will use the 936 tape player in conjunction with an existing system, only the most necessary controls are found on the deck: a single volume control, fast forward and reverse, play control, stop button, and power on-off.

In using the 936 tape player, we hooked it into a system in two ways: first, directly to a stereo power amplifier (the 936's own preamplifiers are equalized for this connection) and, second, to the tape inputs of a control preamplifier. When connected directly to the power amplifier, the balance between channels was just about perfect and the lack of a control to boost one channel or the other was of no consequence. High and low frequency response was full and true and, in our listening room and to our ears, everything desired in such a unit. The facilities to adjust the bass and treble were,

Ampex 936 Tape Player



of course, missing—perhaps an inveterate knob-fiddler would be uncomfortable without such controls. Of course, few people would operate the unit in this fashion, but it is comforting to know that the direct-to-power amplifier hookup, should the need arise, does produce fully satisfactory results. Once this was determined, the unit was connected to a control preamplifier and so used for extended listening periods.

The 936 has the same playback head and basic transport mechanism as the Ampex 970 recorder reported on here previously. Our laboratory tests, made with the NCB alignment tape, showed that the playback frequency response on that unit was smooth from 50 to 10,000 cps being only a few db up at the low end and down on the high frequency end.

In operation, the 936 is extremely quiet. The tape drives are brought to a halt by a shut-off device that is activated when no tape tension is applied to it. This, of course, cuts off the tape drives at the end of a reel but it has a special valve in preventing spillage should the tape snap or become obstructed in any way.

In its tests of the 970, our laboratory gave a clue to the smooth operation of the 936. They pointed out that "wow and flutter are 0.03% and 0.07% respectively at 7½ ips. Mechanically, the 970 is as good as it is electronically."

Like other models in the Ampex "900 Series," the 936 changes speeds by the raising or lowering of a button between the reels; up for 7½ ips and down for 3¾ ips. A small button pointing backward out of the tape-head cover selects two- or four-track operation.

The 936 player may be installed horizontally either in a sturdy pull-out drawer or placed in the well, cut out for that purpose, of a lift-top cabinet. In either case, ventilation should be provided by leaving the rear of the mounting space open. (If the 934, without preamplifiers, is built into a system, ventilation is not as important but the unit should be located as close to the control amplifier or preamplifier as possible. This obviates any losses due to excessive lengths of connecting cables.)

Incidentally, Ampex thoughtfully provides connecting cables (with phone-type plugs at one end and pin-type plugs at the other) so that the user can hook up and play without making a trip to the store for special cables. A small thing, but one that most users will appreciate.

In sum, the 936 player is a valuable addition as a music system program source. Even at excessively high volume levels its response was easy-on-the-ears and distortion-free.

R.F.



NEXT MONTH'S REPORTS

Weathers PS-11 stereo pickup system

an integrated arm and cartridge design which uses transistor modules to amplify its signals.

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a new entry in the growing roster of giant-size amplifiers.

Lafayette KT-650A FM tuner

a kit which makes extensive use of printed circuits.



Music Makers

by ROLAND GELATT

IN THE SPRING a recording director's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of opera. At no time has it been truer than in this spring of 1961. Operas continue to be consistently good sellers—and the emphasis these days, with the record business somewhat in the doldrums, is on repertoire that pays off. Here is a preview of what the sound engineers expect to tape between now and fall.

London Records, as Charles Reid notes on page 8, has begun its 1961 opera schedule with an *Otello*, starring Tebaldi, Del Monaco, Bastianini, and the Vienna Philharmonic under Von Karajan. (Incidental intelligence: RCA Victor also has a new *Otello* ready for release, with Rysanek, Vickers, Gobbi, and Serafin conducting the Rome Opera House Orchestra.) After warming up on *Otello*, London's crew will turn their attention to *Lucia*, featuring Joan Sutherland as the demented lady from Lammormoor. Her associates in the enterprise will be Renato Cioni (a young tenor highly regarded by Miss Sutherland and her husband), Robert Merrill, Cesare Siepi, and the English conductor John Pritchard. Later in the summer Joan Sutherland will have a return engagement with London's microphones in *Rigoletto*. Fernando Previtali will conduct, and the cast is to be rounded out with Cornel MacNeil, Giulietta Simionato, Siepi, and an as yet unchosen tenor (but hopefully Giuseppe di Stefano). Miss Sutherland will also take part this summer in a stereo remake of Handel's *Messiah* under Sir Adrian Boult.

The ill-fated London recording of *Ballo in maschera* begun last year with Jussi Bjoerling (see "Music Makers," November 1960) is to be undertaken anew, this time with Carlo Bergonzi in the role of Riccardo. Other participants will remain unchanged: to wit, Birgit Nilsson, Sylvia Stahmann, Simionato, MacNeil, and Georg Solti conducting the Rome Opera House Orchestra. Also on London's 1961

docket is a *Don Pasquale*, in which Fernando Corena will portray the testy old bachelor and Graziella Sciutti his shrewish young bride. There is a good possibility that this may be the summer when London will finally make its long-awaited recording of Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur* with Tebaldi in the starring role, though at press time a definite decision had not yet been made.

RCA Victor's operatic plans for the late spring and summer are almost as ambitious as London's. Richard Mohr and his contingent of RCA technicians will set up headquarters first in Vienna for a complete recording of *Die Walküre*. Herbert von Karajan is to preside at the podium, and the cast includes Nilsson (Brünnhilde), Rita Gorr (Fricka), Jon Vickers (Siegmund), and Hans Hotter (Wotan). Thereafter, the RCA crew goes to Rome for a rendezvous with Leontyne Price. The Negro soprano is scheduled to make two operas this summer: *Aida* (with Gorr, Vickers, Merrill, and Solti conducting) and *Il Tabarro*. A new *Bohème* will also be taped in Rome. It is intended to be a restudied, non-heavyweight performance (akin to RCA's recent *Butterfly*) and will feature Anna Moffo, Richard Tucker, Robert Merrill, and Giorgio Tozzi.

The international EMI firm (Angel and Capitol here) got off to a head start by completing two opera recordings early this year. In London a stereo remake of *Norma* was put on tape under Tullio Serafin's baton, with Maria Callas as the Druid priestess and Franco Corelli as her lover; others in the cast include Christa Ludwig (Adalgisa) and Nicola Zaccaria (Oroveso). And in Berlin a complete recording of *Tannhäuser* was caught by EMI's microphones; Franz Konwitschny conducts, and Elisabeth Grümmer, Marianne Schech, Hans Hopf, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and Gottlob Frick comprise the principals. Summer plans were still rather vague when we went to press, but there

seems a good possibility that Victoria de los Angeles will participate in a new recording of *La Bohème*. Puccini's *Tosca* is also down for EMI attention (but not, as once anticipated, with the celebrated Callas-De Sabata combination); present commitments call for Floriana Cavalli as Tosca, Franco Corelli as Cavaradossi, Tito Gobbi as Scarpia, and Gabriele Santini conducting.

Deutsche Grammophon's proposed summer activities in Italy are noted by Kurt Blaukopf on page 14. In addition, the DGG group hopes to record Mozart's *Idomeneo* under Fricsay's direction, with the cast of this summer's Salzburg production. As for Mercury, Harold Lawrence and his crew will be returning to Italy for further opera work in collaboration with Ricordi, but no details as to repertoire are available.

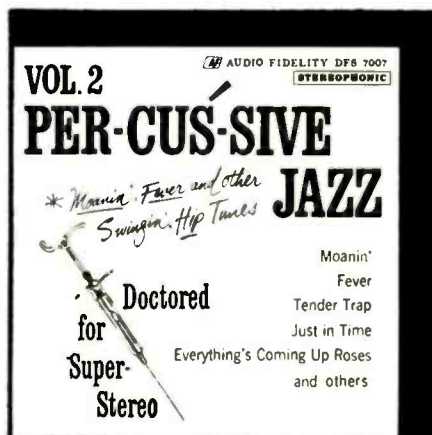
RANDOM NOTES: A few months ago, Nathan Broder noted in these pages that a few bars had been cut from the Max Goberman recording of Vivaldi's Sinfonia in B minor, "the only occasion in the whole series [he wrote] where the performances have not been completely faithful to the Ricordi scores." The omission turns out to have been an engineering error, and the Library of Recorded Masterpieces is making handsome amends. Subscribers who bought the defective disc have now received a replacement with the missing bars restored. . . . Next season the Boston Symphony plans to give 221 concerts over the course of fifty weeks. During its first season, sixty years ago, the orchestra gave twenty concerts and twenty public rehearsals. . . . In Washington the Library of Congress has been gathering an invaluable Archive of Recorded Poetry and Literature, much of it specifically recorded for this collection. A paperbound checklist is available for 70 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C.

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Records in Review



Tsar Saltan at the Bolshoi Theatre.

Rimsky's Russian Fairy Tale, In Full and to Fine Effect

by Conrad L. Osborne

THE Russian fairy-tale opera is a genre almost totally unfamiliar to Americans. Yet a number of Russian operatic composers—Tchaikovsky and Dargomijsky come to mind—tried their hand at it, and Rimsky-Korsakov was virtually pre-occupied with it, as witness *Le coq d'or*, *The Snow Maiden*, *The Invisible City of Kitezh*, *Sadko*, and *Tsar Saltan*. The last-named, completed in 1899 and first performed in 1900, is perhaps the last of the race, with the lone exception of *Love for Three Oranges*. In issuing the Bolshoi Theatre's 1959 production of the complete work, MK-Artia has introduced us to not only a representative opera of its type, but one of manifold beauties in its own right.

The plot is much too involved to recount in any detail. Briefly, it concerns the triumph of good as represented by the Tsar's wife Militrissa, her son Prince Gvidon, and an enchanted Swan-Queen, over evil, as represented by Militrissa's

two elder sisters and an old hag. It also represents the victory of beauty and enchantment (the Swan-Queen and the wonders of the bewitched isle of Buyan) over ugliness and everyday reality; indeed, it might be said that beauty and enchantment are the equivalent of good in this opera.

The libretto, suggested to Rimsky by Stasov, is by V. I. Byelsky, but the original tale is from Pushkin, and the fairy-tale framework is employed as a means of presenting social commentary and criticism. There is, for example, a long scene at the Tsar's court, satirical in intent, in which a Jester and an Old Man talk of the boyars' stupidity, the silliness of the Tsar's military enterprises, and the sad lot of the populace. All this is not even hinted at in the synopsis included with the set, and is brought up by way of example only in the excellent notes by A. Kandinsky.

The work's musical structure is most

interesting, and cunningly suited to the material. There are trumpet fanfares at the opening of each scene, and orchestral bridges which help create a sense of continuous flow. The beauty and appropriateness of the orchestral writing is astounding, and the orchestra is the musical key to the opera. The voices relate the story, but the instruments convey its emotional meanings; significantly, every one of the work's important themes is introduced, not in an aria or vocal ensemble, but in the orchestra (often by a solo instrument), and reaches its final development there. The interludes are vividly descriptive and fascinatingly scored; Rimsky washes the isle of Buyan in colors as evocative as those of the Sinbad movement in *Scheherazade*. An entire scene is dominated by the Flight of the Bumble Bee, which takes its place quite neatly as a suitable musical device. One does not realize how insidiously the motifs are intro-

duced—or to what good effect—until the lengthy, quasi-symphonic introduction to the final Scene of the Three Wonders is reached. Here the entire musical content of the opera, crowned by the captivating theme evolved for the Swan, is recapitulated in an interlude whose effect is of overwhelming lyric inspiration. It seemed to me on first hearing that the opening scenes were not of any great interest, and I still feel that Rimsky really rises to the occasion only when his story moves into the bewitched realm of Buyan—fortunately, this constitutes a good two-thirds of the work. In any case, *Tsar Saltan* is as much ceremony as opera, and the very completeness of the early exposition is essential to its progress—the power of the later portions would be weaker without it.

In view of the importance of the orchestra, it's a lucky thing that the Bolshoi forces, under Vassily Nebolsin, play so extraordinarily well. The many lovely obbligato passages are expertly executed, and the ensemble (including the chorus) performs crisply, enthusiastically. Of the singers, only Petrov, a splendid dark bass known from a few previous recordings, is outstanding, though G. Oleinichenko, who sings the Swan-Queen in a fresh, high soprano, is also appealing. The tenor Ivanovsky reveals a sturdy, but not especially beautiful voice as Gvidon; the other men fill their roles—mostly character parts—capably. The women (apart from Miss Oleinichenko) are another matter. All of them have sharp, edgy voices with which they tend to yap and scoop. The best of them, E. Smolenskaya, alternates some fine moments with some ear-piercing ones.

We are again confronted, incidentally, by the entertaining Russian reluctance to divulge performers' first names. I have been hearing Miss E. Smolenskaya for twelve or thirteen years now, ever since she turned up on a 78-rpm abridgment of *Prince Igor*, and have yet to glean the faintest notion as to what her parents decided to call her. I should feel emphatically ungallant, having to refer to "R. Tebaldi," "B. Nilsson," or "V. de los Angeles."

The surfaces of these discs are immaculate, and the sound pleasing—not quite as sharp or clear as on the best Western recordings, but well registered and never overloaded. The effect is always highly musical. A libretto is enclosed, together with the aforementioned informative notes, but, regrettably, is of service only to those who can read Russian. Including translations with future releases would add immeasurably to the pleasure of the series.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Tsar Saltan*

G. Oleinichenko (s), The Swan-Queen; E. Smolenskaya (s), Militrissa; E. Verbitskaya (c), Babarika; V. Ivanovsky (t), Prince Gvidon; I. Petrov (bs), *Tsar Saltan*; et al. Chorus and Orchestra of the Bolshoi Theatre (Moscow), Vassily Nebolsin, cond.

• MK-ARTIA 206 C. Three LP. \$17.94.



George Szell: susceptible to tenderness too.

The Sound and Sentiment Of Robert Schumann

by Robert C. Marsh

WHATEVER REPUTATION for austerity may have been attributed to conductor George Szell, it surely will go by the boards when one hears his reading of these Schumann works. Any man who can convey the Lorelei themes of this romantic music so persuasively—"Das hat ein wundersame, Gewaltige Melodei" (They hold a wonderful essence/Of powerful melody)—must be in rapport with all the tender sentiments.

So far as I know, this is only the third time we have been offered a comprehensive edition of the Schumann symphonies, and it seems strange that amid all the proliferation of Beethoven and Brahms (Bruno Walter alone has given us both the Nine and the Four on two separate occasions) the Schumann symphonies, with their unfailing lyricism and Rhenish poetry, should go in need of recorded performances. Paul Kletzki and Sir Adrian Boult, who were responsible for the earlier complete sets, each missed the basic emotional quality of this music. Szell has captured it—in both its flights of romantic exuberance and its darker pages of melancholy. The result is one of the most significant albums to appear this season.

The two problems facing a Schumann conductor are the sound and the sentiment he must project. Both are difficult, and both must be solved if the performance is to succeed.

Consider first the matter of sound. Schumann is the perfect example of what happens when a composer writes instrumental music from concepts that apply validly only to the piano. Play the worst

page in Schumann on the keyboard and it makes sense—in pianistic terms. Try it with the orchestra, and the useless doubling of the wind band against the strings makes for heavy, dun-colored textures. It is no happenchance, therefore, that the finest Schumann conductors are good pianists as well. Through one instrument they determine what the composer was after, and through the orchestra—with judicious editing of parts and even more judicious rehearsing—they achieve it.

What of the sentiment? Schumann and Schubert are the most important of the early figures in the romantic movement. To understand them one must recognize that although their music gives freer expression to emotion than did that of their forebears, they are not errant sentimentalist indifferent to controlled artistic communication. To do Schumann justice the conductor must strike a fine balance, knowing how much feeling to project and how much to hold back.

The more I hear of this album—and I have already gone through it three times—the more I am impressed with Szell's success in dealing with these problems. The sound he gets is filled with the blazing light and song which the composer's triumphant pages require, but it also has the firm alto voices and the somber colorings which his other nature demands.

As for the performances, the *Spring Symphony*, *Manfred Overture*, and the *Concerto* were warmly reviewed when they first were issued. The same qualities are found in the three items that

make their first appearance in this album. I was in Cleveland for the preparation and concert presentation of the *Rhenish* and know that Szell put four days' work into developing a performance which was still immature in terms of the recording made a fortnight later. Here the movement of every line blends so fully with what is happening, has happened, and is going to happen that the effect of total integration becomes quite astonishing.

We know from Szell's older Cleveland version of the Fourth that he is certain to excel in a score that is tightly con-

structed. The surprise, then, is the Second, with the slow movement done full justice in both its ravishing main theme and the contrasting sections (how wonderful to see their function realized), the opening movement breath-takingly—but never distressingly—fast, and the finale as boisterously high-spirited as Schumann ever could become.

The recorded sound represents the middle main floor rows of Severance Hall with admirable fidelity, and the consistency in quality between the mono and stereo is remarkable. In the two-channel version everything spreads out and the

image becomes slightly more vivid, but the fundamentals remain the same.

SCHUMANN: *Symphonies: No. 1, in B flat, Op. 38 ("Spring"); No. 2, in C, Op. 61; No. 3, in E flat, Op. 97 ("Rhenish"); No. 4, in D minor, Op. 120. Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 54. Manfred, Op. 115: Overture*

Leon Fleisher, piano (in the Concerto); Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond.
 • EPIC SC 6039. Four LP. \$19.92.
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CLASSICAL

BACH: *Chaconne in D minor*—See Vivaldi: *Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra, in D, P. 209.*

BACH: *Matthaeus-Passion, S. 244*

Elsie Suddaby (s); Kathleen Ferrier (c); Eric Greene (t), Evangelist; Henry Cummings (bs), Jesus; William Parsons (bs); Bach Choir; Jacques Orchestra, Reginald Jacques, cond.

• RICHMOND BA 43001. Three LP. \$5.94.

This *St. Matthew Passion* is a transfer to LP of a recording that dates back some dozen years. It is on the whole an undistinguished affair, with a few good qualities and some serious faults. The reason for its revival is implied on the cover, which names only one performer: Kathleen Ferrier. Apparently it is hoped that her presence will be enough to cause many people to buy the album, especially at the low price asked for it. I would not be surprised if it were. In the alto arias of this recording Ferrier's voice pours forth with thrilling effect, big, gorgeous, vibrant, and accurate in pitch. In one or two spots it is revealed as not very agile, but that is not of much consequence in this work.

Otherwise, there is little to praise here. The sound is acceptable, though it is cleaner in the solo portions than in the choral selections. There is some respectable if unexciting singing by Miss Suddaby and Mr. Parsons, but the performance of two of the most important roles, the Evangelist and Jesus, is crushingly mediocre, in the latter case completely devoid of the ecstasy and profundity immanent in the music. The work is sung in English, using a translation that makes drastic changes in Bach's recitative, and it is complete except for some recitative, the chorale No. 21, the middle and *da capo* portions of the bass aria No. 29, and the entire bass aria with obbligato gamba, No. 66, with its preceding accompanied recitative. N.B.

BALAKIREV: *Bercesse; Nocturne No. 2, in B minor; Sonata for Piano, in B flat minor; Valse di Bravura*

Natalie Ryshna, piano.

• CONTEMPORARY SFM M 1007. LP. \$4.98.

• • CONTEMPORARY SFM S 2007. SD. \$5.98.

Mily Balakirev (1837-1910), one of the leading figures among the Russian nationalist composers, at one point in his career forswore music altogether and embarked upon a job as a railway official. A highly eccentric personality, Balakirev lost this position, and returned to music a bitter, neglected man. Today he is primarily known for his *Tamar*, and the virtuosic showpiece of pianism, *Islamey*.

The present works, characterized by fine workmanship and feeling, reflect many different compositional trends: for one, in the *Valse di Bravura*, there is a pronounced Schumann influence; the last movement of the Sonata has some resemblance to certain of Tchaikovsky's earlier creations—most particularly his Second Piano Concerto. The programmatic *Bercesse* (mother rocks child to sleep, wild wakes up frightened from bad dream, etc.) and contrapuntal first movement of the Sonata, however, could be attributed to Borodin or Rimsky-Korsakov, the similarity between the first subjects of the present sonata and Rimsky's piano concerto being especially striking. Withal, this is exceptionally gracious and well-proportioned music.

Natalie Ryshna plays with ingratiating tone and abundant romantic tenderness. Yet, without wanting to seem ungrateful for the opportunity of hearing this seldom performed music, I feel that some of it (the second and fourth movements of the Sonata, in particular, and the *Valse*) would benefit from a more driving rhythmic sense and greater continuity than Miss Ryshna's essentially intimate style can provide. The sound of the two-channel pressing is much better than that of the monophonic version, and the surfaces are without the crackle that blemished my review copy of the latter. H.G.

BARBER: *Adagio for Strings, Op. 11*
 —See Tchaikovsky: *Serenade for Strings, in C, Op. 48.*

BEETHOVEN: *Romances for Violin and Orchestra: No. 1, in G, Op. 40; No. 2, in F, Op. 50*

†Mendelssohn: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in E minor, Op. 64*

Arthur Grumiaux, violin; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond.

• EPIC LC 3762. LP. \$4.98.

• • EPIC BC 1120. SD. \$5.98.

Whatever Arthur Grumiaux essays, it seems, he interprets with tonal beauty and musical honesty. In the simple, songlike Beethoven Romances, his style is fairly chaste, in a manner that befits the music. In the romantic, ebullient Mendelssohn Concerto, his tone takes on a brighter, more silken luster and his phrasing has a freedom which imparts freshness without in any way violating the composer's intentions. Haitink's accompaniments are in good order, as is the recorded sound. The very nature of this music is such that there is little difference between the one- and two-channel editions if both are played through two speakers. P.A.

BERG: *Three Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6*

†Schoenberg: *Begleitungsmusik, Op. 34*

†Webern: *Six Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6*

Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Robert Craft, cond.

• COLUMBIA ML 5616. LP. \$4.98.

• • COLUMBIA MS 6216. SD. \$5.98.

The lush and overblown pieces by Alban Berg ring no bells with me, but the Schoenberg is one of the most curious and interesting of that composer's works and the Webern is one of the masterpieces of the twentieth century.

The full title of the Schoenberg is *Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspiel—Music for the Accompaniment to a Scene in a Motion Picture*. No particular scene is specified, but there is a significant subtitle: "Threatening Danger, Fear, Catastrophe." In his notes, Craft suggests that the whole thing is meant satirically, but I am not so sure; Schoenberg always hankered after popular success in a roundabout sort of way, and in this work he may have been attempting to demonstrate that the 12-tone technique adapts itself very easily to dramatic situations. At all events, the piece is quite powerful, with no suggestion of threatening danger, fear, or catastrophe about it at all, although it would probably seem the essence of all these states in association with the right images on the screen.

The Webern is an amazingly prophetic piece composed in 1909. It is in the aphoristic, highly colored style which until recently seemed an odd offshoot of musical evolution and is now perceived as the main stream. But whether prophetic or not, Opus 6 is supremely beautiful, and it is beautifully played and recorded. Craft uses the original version,

for a very large orchestra, which has not previously been recorded. A.F.

BLOCH: Sacred Service

Robert Merrill, cantor; Choirs of the Metropolitan Synagogue and Community Church of New York; New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond.
● COLUMBIA ML 5621. LP. \$4.98.
● ● COLUMBIA MS 6221. SD. \$5.98.

Bloch's genius for sounding like all the Old Testament prophets rolled into one, yet without any obvious Hebraicisms, is nowhere more brilliantly displayed than in this famous and intensely moving work, which might be described as the B minor Mass of Judaism. The performance has the typical warmth, eloquence and flair of Bernstein, and the recording is extremely fine. My only criticism is that the text is given only in English; it should also have been given in Hebrew, in the original alphabet and romanized, since Hebrew is, of course, the language in which it is sung. A.F.

BOISMORTIER: Trio in D, Op. 50, No. 6; Concerto in E minor, Op. 37—See Couperin: *Troisième Concert royal, in A*.

BORODIN: Quartet for Strings, No. 2, in D: Nocturne (arr. Sargent)—See Tchaikovsky: *Serenade for Strings, in C, Op. 48*.

BRAHMS: Sonatas for Violin and Piano: No. 1, in G, Op. 78 ("Rain"); No. 3, in D minor, Op. 108

Toshiya Eto, violin; Brooks Smith, piano.
● DECCA DL 10030. LP. \$4.98.
● ● DECCA DL 710030. SD. \$5.98.

Toshiya Eto, who came from Tokyo in 1948 to study at the Curtis Institute under Efrem Zimbalist, is one of an increasing number of Oriental musicians who are quite capable of giving a valid interpretation of Western music. His treatment here of the two Brahms sonatas is big-toned and along fairly broad lines. Although in the faster movements one looks for greater inner tension and perhaps a bit more variety of nuance throughout, these are estimable performances. Brooks Smith's collaboration at the piano is excellent, though he too doesn't always sound as expressive as he might have been. Decca's reproduction is clear and lifelike. P.A.

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 4, in E minor, Op. 98

Hamburg State Philharmonic Orchestra, Joseph Keilberth, cond.
● TELEFUNKEN TC 8039. LP. \$1.98.
● ● TELEFUNKEN TCS 18039. SD. \$2.98.

This bargain-priced Fourth offers a good deal for the money—a strong, vivacious performance, with an unusual amount of flow to the second movement, fairly bright sound, and satisfactory stereo

separation. Keilberth may not rank with the very finest interpreters of this symphony, but his account of it and Telefunken's transfer to discs should more than satisfy the budget-minded. For those to whom price matters less, I would recommend **Klemperer** or Kubelik in stereo, Paray or Toscanini in mono. P.A.

CHOPIN: Piano Works

Mazurkas: Op. 6, No. 2; Op. 17, No. 4; Op. 63, No. 3; Op. 67, No. 4; Op. 68, No. 1, No. 2. Polonaises: Op. 40, No. 2; Op. 71, No. 1. Preludes: Op. 28: No. 15, No. 17. Waltzes: Op. 18, No. 1.

Halina Czerny-Stefanska, piano.
● SUPRAPHON SUA 10012. LP. \$5.98.

Mme. Stefanska is a real interpreter of this music, not merely a perfunctory commentator. Her playing is warm, flexible, and authoritative. Even when she pulls the tempo about to a degree which some listeners will find excessive (in the Valse, and in some of the Mazurkas, for example), the distinction of her musicality makes her interpretations sound persuasive. The *Raindrop* Prelude is given an enchanting tonal beauty here, and the sedate C minor Polonaise moves aristocratically. The player's finely drawn filigree is most impressive in the graceful, early D minor Polonaise (the late opus number merely indicates posthumous publication). Mme. Stefanska plays all of the music in a Slavic style, with emphasis on the rounded, melodic passages rather than on the angular harmonic skeleton, but the style does not lead her astray as happens so often with other musicians of her interpretative school.

The sound of this Czechoslovakian-made disc is basically agreeable, but there is some distortion in loud passages throughout, and the surfaces are rather noisy. An artist of Mme. Stefanska's caliber surely deserves better engineering than she is given here. H.G.

COUPERIN: Troisième Concert royal, in A

†Leclair: *Sonata No. VIII, in D*
†Boismortier: *Trio in D, Op. 50, No. 6; Concerto in E minor, Op. 37*

Camerata Instrumentale of the Telemann-Gesellschaft (Hamburg).
● ARCHIVE ARC 3148. LP. \$5.98.
● ● ARCHIVE ARC 73148. SD. \$6.98.

Some elegant French pieces from the first half of the eighteenth century make up this disc. The Couperin suite, performed here by violin, gamba, cello, and harpsichord, reaches a high point in a big, tense sarabande. The more I hear of the music of Leclair the more I am convinced that there is no finer representation of the French rococo style in chamber music. The present sonata is a characteristically graceful and melodious example. Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (about 1691–1755) turned out a vast amount of music, all of which is forgotten today. The Trio includes a rather delicate delicate siciliano; and the "concerto," scored for the colorful combination of flute, violin, oboe, bassoon, and continuo, comprises two lively fast movements enclosing a rather neutral slow one. All the pieces are well played, especially the Boismortier Concerto, which receives a crisp,

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vital performance, although the finale seems a little hurried. Excellent sound in both versions. N.B.

DEBUSSY: *La Mer*—See Strauss, Richard: *Don Juan, Op. 20.*

DVORAK: *The Golden Spinning Wheel, Op. 109; The Wood Dove, Op. 110*

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Talich, cond.
• SUPRAPHON LPV 6. LP. \$5.98.

Late in his career, Dvořák composed five symphonic poems, four of them based on fairy-tale folk ballads by K. J. Erben. The stories are unusually grim, even for such ballads, but Dvořák's music, while it follows the action fairly literally, still manages to maintain a great deal of charm, dramatic appeal, and orchestral color. Few conductors understood and interpreted Dvořák's works as well as the late Václav Talich, who was once a pupil of the composer. The two tone poems he offers on this disc are the best known of the five. These performances, which may be considered definitive, are the only ones currently available (Urania once had a recording of *The Golden Spinning Wheel* by these same artists, but it has been deleted for some years). The sound quality is good, if not startlingly realistic. P.A.

FRANCAIX: *Divertissement for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon*—See Poulenc: *Sextuor for Woodwinds and Piano.*

HANDEL-BEECHAM: *Love in Bath*

Ilse Hollweg, soprano; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham, cond.

• ANGEL 35504. LP. \$4.98.
• • ANGEL S 35504. SD. \$5.98.

This is music for a ballet once entitled *The Great Elopement*, story and scenario by Beecham. The music consists of bits and pieces from various works of Handel, done up in late-nineteenth-century orchestrations. The result is not Handel, and certainly not Beecham. What it is I do not know, but it will probably please that public for which the late Sir Thomas could do no wrong. I propose to forget it immediately, and to remember Beecham as one of the world's great conductors when he was in the vein, as an indomitable fighter for music that he considered unjustly neglected, and—not least—as the wittiest conductor since Hans von Bülow, if not, indeed, since Berlioz. N.B.

HAYDN: *Scena di Berenice: Mass No. 3, in C ("Stae. Caeciliae"): Laudamus Te; Quoniam*—See Mozart: *Ab, t'invola agl'occhi miei, K. 272.*

JANACEK: *Folk Nocturnes; Songs of Hradčany; Wolf's Footprints*

Josef Hála, piano; Czech Singers' Chorus, Jan Kühn, cond. (in the Nocturnes); Jadwiga Wysoczanska, soprano; Hynek Kašík, flute; Toša Součková, harp. Mo-

ravian Women Teachers' Chorus, Břetislav Bakala, cond. (in the Songs). Marie Bakalová, soprano; Tatana Svábová, piano; Moravian Women Teachers' Chorus, Břetislav Bakala, cond. (in *Wolf's Footprints*).

• SUPRAPHON LPV 475. LP. \$5.98.

The *Folk Nocturnes*, with their dreamy atmosphere and their constant alternations of solo voices and ensemble, are very charming but exceedingly monotonous after awhile; there are six of them and one would have done. *Wolf's Footprints* is a dramatic ballad which makes no sense whatsoever without its full text, which is not given. That leaves the three *Songs of Hradčany*, which are rather fascinating.

Hradčany is the old part of Prague. The songs give us three views of it: the ironically named Golden Lane (a street of desolate poverty in the shadow of a great castle); the Weeping Fountain in the Royal Garden; and the summer palace known as Belvedere, which has seen war, revolution, and oppression as well as beauty. The choral setting is very curious, full of exceedingly recondite harmonies which the recording may or may not have captured fully; one is constantly on one's toes to hear the subtle and unusual things that are going on.

A.F.

LECLAIR: *Sonata No. VIII, in D*—See Couperin: *Troisième Concert royal, in A.*

LEONCAVALLO: *I Pagliacci*
†Verdi: *Operatic Chorus: Nabucco: Va, pensiero. Il Trovatore: Anvil Chorus. Aida: Triumphant Chorus*

Lucine Amara (s), Nedda; Franco Corelli (t), Canio; Mario Spina (t), Beppe; Tito Gobbi (b), Tonio; Mario Zanasi (b), Silvio (in *I Pagliacci*). Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala (Milan), Lovro von Matačić, cond. (in *I Pagliacci* and Operatic Chorus).

• ANGEL 3618 B/L. Two LP. \$9.96.
• • ANGEL S 3618 B/L. Two SD. \$11.96.

Most of the ballyhoo concerning this album will surely center around Corelli, whose flamboyant successes at the Metropolitan have led to renewal of his con-



Franco Corelli

tract for next season. Some of his work has been obtainable on the Cetra label for several years, but this is his first recording to be released under domestic auspices.

Signor Corelli has won some renown in Italy as a combatant, his usual opponents being colleagues or members of the audience (who else?). His physique makes him sure-fire *matinée-idol* material. I believe most Americans expected him to turn out a somewhat wilder version of Del Monaco; the reverse has proved true. His voice bears a resemblance to Del Monaco's in timbre and caliber, but not in quality or production. Corelli's is much the more flexible instrument, at once freer and better controlled. A genuine legato comes to him quite naturally (he doesn't always use it to best purpose), and he has at his command a wider span of colors and dynamics. His tone is also softer in quality, with none of the steely buzz that sometimes afflicts Del Monaco's. All in all, it is an exciting, stirring dramatic tenor, perfectly suited to Canio; his is the best Canio on records, in fact, for the weight and ring of his voice gives him a natural advantage over such fine singers as Gigli and Bjoerling. The interpretation will be even better when he decides not to break the cantilena of "*No, Pagliaccio non son*"—which he can sing with suavity if he chooses—with intrusive sobs.

He is ably seconded by the male side of Angel's cast. Gobbi's previous recording of the role of Tonio caused some raised eyebrows among *aficionados*, who noted that he declined to sing the interpolated A flat near the conclusion of the Prologue. Actually, the score takes the baritone down at this point, and Gobbi didn't do that, either, selecting instead a pitch that carried the phrase upward, but not to the uncomfortable vicinity of A flat. This time he sings an A flat, and a hooty shell of a tone it is, which we would all have been better spared. The Prologue demands an ease and brilliance in the C-F tetra-chord which Gobbi does not command; once past this obstacle, though, he is splendid, whether in the honest passions of the scene with Nedda, or the assumed ones of the play-within-a-play. There is not another Tonio on records that can match his for dramatic impact. The second baritone, Zanasi, sounds much as he did at the Metropolitan, showing a healthy, warm voice which is not always quite as steady as one would like. He turns in a much better than average Silvio. Mario Spina completes the male side of the cast with a beautifully sung Beppe.

When I saw Lucine Amara's Nedda in the most recent Metropolitan production of *Pagliacci*, it seemed to me the best thing she had yet done. Under José Quintero's direction, she brought a languorous, sexy quality to the part, and acted with a spontaneity which she hadn't previously summoned; moreover, her voice, always clear and true, sounded fuller and more colorful than it had. Unfortunately, the recording doesn't bear out the favorable impression in any respect. Her singing is pallid and bumpy, her attempts at dramatic inflection—on such words as "*mi fai schifo e ribrezzo*" and "*lurido*"—artificial and adolescent-sounding. The total effect is hardly an improvement upon her previous Nedda in the old Columbia set, recorded when she was singing such roles as the Celes-


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tial Voice in *Don Carlo* at the opera house. Chalk it up to sub-par condition at the recording sessions, and hope for better the next time around.

Chorus and orchestra sound fine; Von Maticic has a few unorthodox ideas about tempos, but makes most of them stick, and leads with precision and *elan* seldom accorded this opera. The sound is excellent in both editions, the stereo not quite as realistically staged as on the recent London set, but realistically enough, with a fine crack of the whip when Nedda wards off Tonio.

The choruses on Side Four are well performed. C.L.O.

MENDELSSOHN: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in E minor, Op. 64*—See Beethoven: *Romances for Violin and Orchestra.*

MILHAUD: *La Cheminée du roi René*—See Poulenc: *Sextuor for Woodwinds and Piano.*

MOZART: *Ab, l'invola agl'occhi miei, K. 272; Non temer, amato bene, K. 505*

†Haydn: *Scena di Berenice; Mass No. 3, in C ("Stae. Caeciliae"); Laudamus Te; Quoniam*

Jennifer Vyvyan, soprano; Haydn Orchestra. Harry Newstone, cond.

• LONDON 5600. LP. \$4.98.
• • LONDON OS 25231. SD. \$5.98.

The same scrupulous musicianship that has characterized Miss Vyvyan's previous recordings is present here, along with rather more evidence of real vocal attainment. The voice is by no means a great one—it possesses a rapid tremolo and tends to pinch on awkward intervals—but it is pretty and flexible, and Miss Vyvyan employs it most expressively. One should remember in listening that the Mozart arias are among the most demanding in the literature, and from a purely vocal standpoint, the Haydn is just as difficult. I was conscious of a failure to meet the music only in some of the dramatic recitative, which calls for more grandeur of voice and temperament. Elsewhere, the soprano sustains both mood and vocal line; the excerpts from the *St. Cecilia* Mass are the finest things on the disc, with the closing *Quoniam* brilliantly done. Complete texts with translations and good sound add to the attractions of the release. C.L.O.

MOZART: *Quartet for Piano and Strings, in G minor, K. 478; Quintet for Strings, in G minor, K. 516*

Artur Schnabel, piano; Alfred Hobday, viola; Pro Arte Quartet.

• ANGEL COLH 42. LP. \$5.98.

These recordings were originally made in 1934. The performance of the great Quintet—is it not the very peak of eighteenth-century chamber music?—is a fine one, but there are other fine ones available nowadays in more up-to-date recording, for example the Budapests'. In the Quartet, however, we have the magnificent artistry of Schnabel in a performance that has not, so far as I know, been surpassed on records. Here every line in the piano part is beautifully molded, every phrase articulated with the

proper relation of note to note and of phrase to phrase, with never a miscalculation of weight or touch. It does not matter that there are a few split tones in the reproduction of the piano; the sound in general is not too bad, and here is Mozart playing of a rare quality. N.B.

MUSSORGSKY: *Pictures at an Exhibition (orch. Ravel); Night on Bald Mountain*

Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Vladimir Golschmann, cond.

• VANGUARD VRS 117. LP. \$1.98.
• • VANGUARD VR6 117SD. SD. \$2.98.

Bargain hunters for powerful demonstration materials will get much more than their money's worth in the sharply focused sonics, tremendous dynamic range, and incandescent climaxes of the present stereo edition of this recording, beside which the LP sounds relatively cramped and dull-toned for all its vigorous impact. Unfortunately, however, Golschmann (who has contributed so many fine earlier performances to this series) here strives so hard for dramatic sensationalism that his readings verge on melodrama and his own nervous vehemence is reflected in the players' tenseness and a constant tendency of the brass and percussion to drown out the perhaps undersized string choirs. Aurally as well as interpretatively there is no real competition here for such far more satisfactory versions as Ansermet's *Pictures* for London and Von Maticic's *Night on Bald Mountain* for Angel. R.D.D.

PALAU: *Concierto levantino for Guitar and Orchestra*—See Vivaldi: *Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra, in D, P. 209.*

POULENC: *Sextuor for Woodwinds and Piano*

†Milhaud: *La Cheminée du roi René*
†Françaix: *Divertissement for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon*

Francis Poulenc, piano; Philadelphia Woodwind Ensemble.

• COLUMBIA ML 5613. LP. \$4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6213. SD. \$5.98.

An oodle of Gallic charm for woodwinds. It really works in the small forms of the Milhaud and the Françaix but it's a hopeless bore in the large forms of the Poulenc. The recording is superb. A.F.

RACHMANINOFF: *Symphony No. 1, in D minor, Op. 13*

Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, Kurt Sanderling, cond.

• MK-ARTIA 1525. LP. \$5.98.

This early work of Rachmaninoff's was so cruelly damned at its first performance in St. Petersburg that the composer was thrown into deep depression. For years it was believed that Rachmaninoff had destroyed all traces of the work, but a complete two-piano draft and sundry orchestral parts were discovered in 1945. The present recorded performance is based upon a reconstruction job utilizing this unearthed material.

As is so often the case with legendary musical fiascos, the actual work itself is much better than the scathing first criti-

cisms would lead one to believe. This first symphony, like so many other composers' initial attempts at large-scaled creation, has some static moments and places where structural ingenuity sags, but it is quite stark and original in its over-all conception. The thematic material has bold splashes of color, and while this symphony is less polished than the hackneyed Second, it is also less diffuse and sentimental.

The performance by Sanderling and the Leningraders is noble and exciting. Furthermore, it is powerfully reproduced by the here excellent Russian engineering. This is the only recorded version now available, and all one could reasonably desire. H.G.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Scheherazade*, Op. 35

Concert Arts Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond.

- CAPITOL P 8538. LP. \$4.98.
- • CAPITOL SP 8538. SD. \$5.98.

North German Radio Symphony Orchestra, Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, cond.

- TELEFUNKEN TC 8042. LP. \$1.98.
- • TELEFUNKEN TCS 8042. SD. \$2.98.

There is a wide contrast between these two *Scheherazades*. Schmidt-Isserstedt's is generally slow-moving and decidedly earthbound—a real Germanic reading of a Russian showpiece. Despite his Teutonic background, Leinsdorf, on the other hand, gives a commanding account of the score, an exciting interpretation that makes itself felt from the very opening notes. Unfortunately, however, while he has been afforded fine stereo distribution, the sound is marred by a slight overlay of distortion that becomes most evident in the louder passages. Telefunken's sound is cleaner in both mono and stereo, though the two-channel edition does not offer a great deal of horizontal sonic spread; what spatial effects there are are mostly effects of depth. The dilemma of choice here can best be resolved by selecting either the recent dynamic and highly individual performance by Fritz Reiner on RCA Victor or the crisp, clean-cut, and altogether definitive one by the late Sir Thomas Beecham on Angel, both of which have been superbly reproduced. P.A.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Tsar Saltan*

G. Oleinichenko (s), The Swan-Queen; E. Smolenskaya (s), Militrissa; E. Verbitskaya (c), Babarikhia; V. Ivanovsky (t), Prince Gvidon; I. Petrov (bs), Tsar Saltan; et al. Chorus and Orchestra of the Bolshoi Theatre (Moscow), Vassily Nebolsin, cond.

- MK-ARTIA 206 C. Three LP. \$17.94.

For a feature review of this album, see page 51.

SAINT-SAENS: *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, No. 1, in A minor*, Op. 33

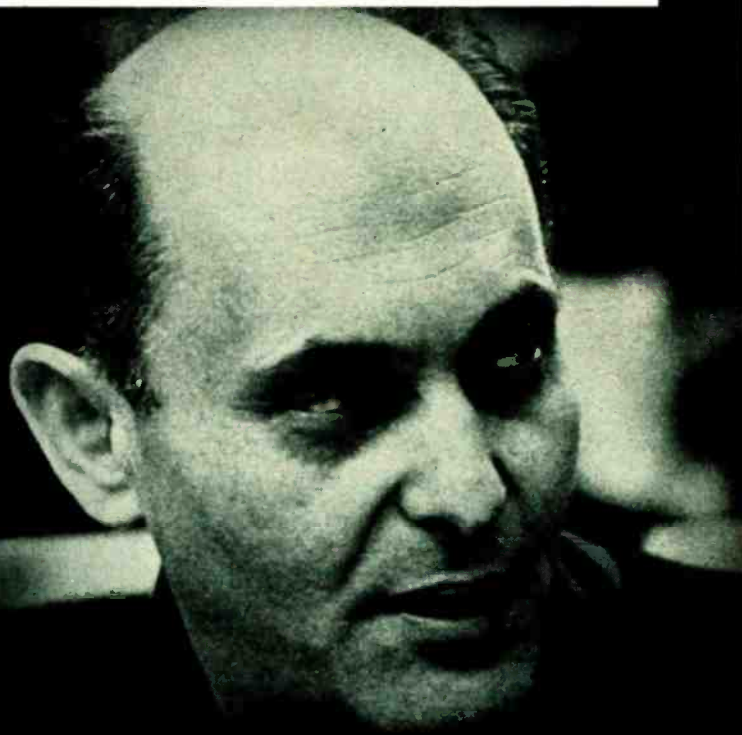
†Tchaikovsky: *Variations on a Roccoco Theme*, Op. 33

Josef Chuchro, cello; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Alois Klíma, cond.

- SUPRAPHON SUA 10091. LP. \$5.98.

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foundations of the repertoire for cello and orchestra, one realizes how pathetically meager the literature for this medium is. This, however, is not to deny the appealing quality of the music, nor the appealing way in which it is presented on this disc.

Sensitivity marks the interpretations by the young Czech cellist, Josef Chuchro, and he plays the Tchaikovsky variations with unusual expressiveness. Here, the balance between soloist and orchestra is very satisfactory. In some of the lighter passages of the Saint-Saëns concerto, however, the accompaniment—especially the horns—tends to overbalance the cello. P.A.

SCHOENBERG: *Begleitungsmusik, Op. 34*—See Berg: *Three Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6*.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 9, in C*

North German Radio Symphony, Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, cond.

- TELEFUNKEN TC 8041. LP. \$1.98.
- • TELEFUNKEN TCS 18041. SD. \$2.98.

Both these discs are best buys. The stereo represents the first two-channel edition of the score on one of the lower-priced labels, yet the Telefunken set is preferable to most of the more expensive versions. Monophonically, the margin of quality is retained, and this set takes precedence over Richmond's Krips issue. Musically, the performance is consistently that of German tradition, but the conductor is more sensitive than many of his colleagues to building a cumulative effect through firm and consistent pacing of the material. The tightness and drive that result are beneficial

in a score as long as this, which can easily shift out of its proper dramatic focus. R.C.M.

SCHUMANN: *Symphonies: No. 1, in B flat, Op. 38 ("Spring"); No. 2, in C, Op. 61; No. 3, in E flat, Op. 97 ("Rhenish"); No. 4, in D minor, Op. 120. Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 54. Manfred, Op. 115: Overture*

Leon Fleisher, piano (in the Concerto); Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond.

- EPIC SC 6039. Four LP. \$19.92.
- • EPIC BSC 110. Four SD. \$23.92.

For a feature review of this album, see page 52.

SHOSTAKOVICH: *Symphony No. 10, in E minor, Op. 93*

Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, Eugene Mravinsky, cond.

- MK-ARTIA 1523. LP. \$5.98.

According to the notes for this brilliantly recorded disc, Mravinsky has become Shostakovich's "official" conductor. If this record is any criterion, the composer has excellent reason to prefer Mravinsky over other orchestral interpreters. He finds an eloquence, a richness, a fineness, and a stature in the Tenth Symphony which I have not previously experienced, on records or in the concert hall. A.F.

SOLER: *Six Concertos for Two Organs*

E. Power Biggs, Daniel Pinkham, organs.

- COLUMBIA ML 5608. LP. \$4.98.
- • COLUMBIA MS 6208. SD. \$5.98.

These are curious and interesting pieces in a very rare medium—duets for two organs. Their composer, a Spanish monk (1729-1783), has recently been represented on records by some lively and colorful clavier sonatas. The organ "concertos" were written for performance by Soler and his royal pupil Don Gabriel de Bourbon on the two organs facing one another across the choir of the Escorial, near Madrid. Four of them are in two movements and two in three. All end with minuets. This music is in a mixture of baroque and rococo styles, usually leaning more towards the latter. As in the sonatas there are strong traces here—for example in the brilliant minuet of No. 6—of the influence of Domenico Scarlatti, whose pupil Soler may have been. Mr. Biggs plays the fine new Flentrop organ in the Busch-Reisinger Museum at Harvard and Mr. Pinkham uses a small cabinet organ dating from the eighteenth century. Good sound on the mono disc but of course not nearly as effective, for this music, as the stereo. N.B.

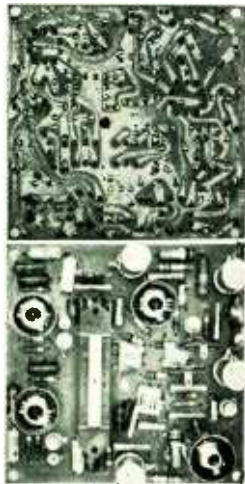
STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Don Juan, Op. 20*

†Debussy: *La Mer*

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond.

- RCA VICTOR LM 2462. LP. \$4.98.
- • RCA VICTOR LSC 2462. SD. \$5.98.

Reiner established himself as a master of both Strauss's and Debussy's musical



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speech during his Pittsburgh days. The present release, dating from the months just before his recent protracted illness, is consistent with that reputation, but it is with no disrespect to Reiner that one can point out that he has in the past done greater service to both composers.

The new *Don Juan* recording (contrary to RCA publicity, it is actually Reiner's third account of this score) was prefaced by a slow, introspective, and carefully restudied concert performance which I found remarkable. Unfortunately, when the time came to make the disc, Reiner had returned to fast tempos in the livelier sections. The result here is a sort of extreme pacing of the work in which fast is very fast and slow is very slow. This version remains a fine *Don Juan*, however.

To Toscanini the sea was obviously the Mediterranean, sultry and treacherous in the hot blast of the sirocco. That is the way he played *La Mer*. What Reiner gives us is the North Sea with its fogs and mists, its ponderous waves, and its brooding expanses of slate gray. Each is a real ocean, and each is vividly represented in its respective performance. The navigational choice is up to you.

As far as sound is concerned, the stereo *Don Juan* is tubby and lacks bite, flaws not apparent in the monophonic version or, I suspect, in the original. (I have heard that the men in the orchestra who played the session were rhapsodic about the sound of the masters.) If a mono *Don Juan* will suit you, however, you might shop around for the older, now deleted Reiner-Chicago set (L.M. 1888), which offers an even more powerful performance. *La Mer*, on the other hand, is quite undistinguished in the mono format and surges only

when Reiner's deep sea swell can spread out from two speakers. I suspect that the tape version of this disc will show a sonic improvement. R.C.M.

STRAVINSKY: *L'Histoire du soldat*

Melvyn Douglas, James Mitchell, Alvin Epstein, narrators. Members of the Kapp Sinfonietta, Emanuel Vardi, cond.
 • KAPP KDC 6004. LP. \$4.98.
 • • KAPP KDC 6004S. SD. \$5.98.

Gadgetry and monkey business! Some of the voices come out of one speaker and some out of another, and what a contribution that is, especially when, as happens several times, the voices intrude into the music, where Stravinsky emphatically does not want them! The English text employed, a new one by Stella and Arnold Moss, is not so bad, but these Broadway actors play it straight instead of satirically. Their incomprehension of the poem is matched by the glassy slickness of the musical performance. All in all, how not to record *The Story of a Soldier*. A.F.

SUK: *Ripening, Op. 34*

Women's chorus; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Talich, cond.
 • SUPRAPHON LPV 343. LP. \$5.98.

This tone poem for large orchestra is Josef Suk's *Heldeneben*, though it is neither as egotistical nor as compelling as the Strauss work. A personal expression of the composer's recollection of his life—the ambitions of youth, the passion of love, the tragic loss of his wife, and fulfillment through knowledge and creativity—the music fails to seize

either the intellect or the emotions. Talich, who conducted its premiere in 1930, evidently had real affection for this work, but even his devotion failed here to give it life. The total effect is not helped by the recorded sound, sometimes clear but often muddy. P.A.

SUK: *Serenade for Strings, in E flat, Op. 6*—See Tchaikovsky: *Serenade for Strings, in C, Op. 48*.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Serenade for Strings, in C, Op. 48*

†Borodin: *Quartet for Strings, No. 2, in D: Nocturne (arr. Sargent)*
 †Barber: *Adagio for Strings, Op. 11*
 †Vaughan Williams: *Fantasia on "Greensleeves"*

Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.

• COLUMBIA ML 5624. LP. \$4.98.
 • • COLUMBIA MS 6224. SD. \$5.98.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Serenade for Strings, in C, Op. 48*

†Suk: *Serenade for Strings, in E flat, Op. 6*

Kapp Sinfonietta, Emanuel Vardi, cond.
 • KAPP KCL 9054. LP. \$4.98.
 • • KAPP KC 9054 S. SD. \$5.98.

There is little to say about the music on these two string orchestra discs except that it is altogether delightful. Aside from the noble Adagio for Strings by Samuel Barber and the elegiac slow movement of the Tchaikovsky Serenade, this is music for pure entertainment. Choice between the two recordings will

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probably depend largely upon whether you prefer the shorter pieces performed by Ormandy or the charming, youthful Serenade of Josef Suk offered by Vardi in its first disc representation in some years. But the prospective buyer should be warned that Ormandy cuts about half of the first and last movements of the Tchaikovsky. Otherwise both conductors give orthodox but meaningful treatment to this work, with Ormandy employing somewhat more animated tempos. In both instances, stereo imparts spaciousness and directionalism to the music; it also indicates that the two orchestras are seated according to different plans. For sheer wealth of sound, Columbia and the Philadelphians take the honors; the string body seems somewhat larger than that of the Kapp Sinfonietta, and there is

greater warmth and presence in the reproduction. Another notable version well worth considering is the unusually expressive, uncut performance by Georg Solti and the Israel Philharmonic on London. P.A.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Songs

Don Juan's Serenade; The Mild Stars Shone for Us; Child's Song; Night, Op. 60; Cradle Song; Night, Op. 75; Do Not Ask; As They Kept on Saying, "Fool"; To Sleep; Disappointment; The Canary; None But the Lonely Heart; Again, As Before, Alone; Legend.

Boris Christoff, bass; Alexandre Labinsky, piano; Gaston Marchésini, cello. • CAPITOL G 7236. LP. \$4.98.

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Detroit Times

COUPERIN: LECONS DES TENEBRES, sung by ALFRED DELLER, and WILFRED BROWN, with organ and gamba.
BG-613 & *BGS-5039

BLOCH: THREE JEWISH POEMS and **COPLAND: VARIATIONS FOR ORCHESTRA** and **FANFARE**, by THE HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, FRITZ MAHLER, conductor, VRS-1067 & *VSD-2085
*StereoLab

• • CAPITOL SG 7236. SD. \$5.98.

This would be a welcome album even if the performances were ordinary, since Tchaikovsky's songs are so seldom performed or recorded in this country. Happily, the performances are simply magnificent. The entire conformation of the Christoff voice—open vowels and all—wraps itself naturally around Russian music, and his sometimes gravelly, thick bass takes on a warmth and softness which perfectly complement its resonance at full voice. Here, even more than in his Mussorgsky collection, he shows that he can articulate with a stunning, feathery lightness, as in the *Child's Song*, or intone a quiet, deep legato, as in the *Cradle Song*. And, of course, he can barrel it out with the best of them, as he demonstrates in *Don Juan's Serenade*. In fact, this is astounding vocalism and knowing interpretation from beginning to end, with highly sensitive collaboration by Labinsky and nice cello support from Marchésini.

Notes and translations are theoretically enclosed, though they were omitted from the review copy. Sound: for the most part, fine, with an occasional fuzziness (I have heard only the stereo edition). An essential record for anyone interested in the vocal literature. C.L.O.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Variations on a Rocco Theme, Op. 33—See Saint-Saëns: *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, No. 1, in A minor, Op. 33.*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Fantasia on "Greensleeves"—See Tchaikovsky: *Serenade for Strings, in C, Op. 48.*

VERDI: Operatic Choruses: Nabucco: Va, pensiero, sull' ali dorate. Il Trovatore: Anvil Chorus. Aida: Triumphant Chorus.—See Lecon-cavallo: *I Pagliacci.*

VIVALDI: Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra, in D, P. 209

†Bach: *Chaconne in D minor*
†Palau: *Concierto levantino for Guitar and Orchestra*

Narciso Yepes, guitar; Orquesta Nacional de España, Odon Alonso, cond.
• LONDON CM 9270. LP. \$4.98.
• • LONDON CS 6201. SD. \$5.98.

Mr. Yepes reveals himself on this disc as a skillful guitarist with little temperament and a narrow range of expression. The Vivaldi, a work for two violins, lute, and continuo, is here done in a version for guitar with string orchestra and without continuo. Despite this hocus-pocus, the dreamy slow movement is nicely done. In the Chaconne, Mr. Yepes challenges comparison with the great Segovia. He shouldn't. The Concerto by Manuel Palau, a Spaniard born in 1893, is Ravel with water and without the tunes. It is sensitively orchestrated and never vulgar but never very interesting, either.

The liner notes hit a new low in misinformation. Sample: "In 1829, Mendelssohn performed Vivaldi's *St. Matthew Passion* and since that time the Vivaldian Movement took on such proportions that today we are practically familiar with all of his instrumental works." N.B.

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

David Nadien, violin; Kapp Sinfonietta, Emanuel Vardi, cond.
 • KAPP 9056. LP. \$4.98.

This latest entry in the *Seasons* handicap has some good things in it, such as the eloquent reading of the slow movement of *Autumn* or the bravura of the soloist in the first movement of *Winter*, but these are offset by an approach showing a lack of familiarity with baroque style. Mr. Nadien's strong vibrato is fine for much nineteenth-century music, but in Vivaldi's time the vibrato seems to have been regarded as a special ornament, not an integral element of violin tone. In the opening movement of *Summer* Mr. Vardi slurs some phrases in a manner far more characteristic of later periods than of Vivaldi's day. There are other faults, but no purpose would be served in cataloguing them here. There are several fine recordings of this work, among the latest those recently issued by Archive and by the Library of Recorded Masterpieces. N.B.

WAGNER: Die Walküre: Act I, Scene 3. Götterdämmerung: Day-break; Brünnhilde/Siegfried Duet; Siegfried's Rhine Journey

Helen Traubel, soprano; Lauritz Melchior, tenor; NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond.
 • RCA VICTOR LM 2452. LP. \$4.98.

Perhaps someday the rich Wagnerian legacy of the Thirties and early Forties will be made available in LP form. Meanwhile, we have RCA Victor to thank for placing this performance, a broadcast of February 22, 1941, at our disposal. It is an important contribution.

Toscanini was that extraordinary being—an Italian who loved and understood Wagner; indeed, he closed his career with an all-Wagner program. His performance of the *Walküre* scene must stand comparison with the towering Walter/Lehmann/Melchior/List/Vienna Philharmonic complete Act I. As one might expect, he does not come off badly, though I think most listeners will agree with me that the Walter recording is preferable. Walter had several advantages—studio recording (very good for its time and superior to the sound of the present release); a slightly younger, more flexible Melchior; an orchestra whose mellowness and massiveness—not to speak of its whole tradition—suited it perfectly to this music; and Lehmann. The last is probably the greatest advantage of all, for though Traubel sends her voice leaping through the music most imposingly, she achieves almost none of the sense of complete identification with Sieglinde that Lehmann was able to invoke in a single inflection; for an extreme comparison, take the lines "*Mich dünkt, ihren Klang hört ich als Kind—doch nein! ich hörte sie neulich.*" The cards will seem stacked. There are moments when Toscanini sweeps all before him—the wash of the strings during the *Winterstürme* is incomparable—and others when Melchior invests his words with meanings interestingly different from those on his previous recording. In general, though, the Walter seems to me a bit closer to a final statement; Toscanini's is merely the second-best performance

of the entire scene I have ever heard.

About the *Götterdämmerung* passage there can be no such reservation, for in this music all three artists are at their greatest. One tends to forget just how exciting Traubel could be, especially in the "heavy" Wagnerian roles; to hear her huge, blooming soprano peal forth again with "*Zum neuen Taten*" serves as a compelling reminder. She finds herself extended by her final "*Heil!*", but the rest of her work couldn't be better. Melchior's finest roles were Tristan and Siegfried, and he lines out his share of the music magnificently. Toscanini and his orchestra are hampered by the shallow sound, but the violins soar ravishingly in the Dawn passage, and at least something of the Rhine Journey comes through—it sings as in no other interpretation.

Traubel, Melchior, and a fine support-

ing cast introduced me to *Götterdämmerung*. To hear them in it again is to remember what a unique experience they made of it. By combining this release with some Melchior 78s and the Traubel/Toscanini Immolation Scene, one can reconstruct, in a shadowy way, at least portions of those performances. The youngest of today's operagoers, who have never seen the Dawn break except on sweating pseudo-heroes, who have never heard the climaxes made by the voices as well as the orchestra, nor the phrases molded with genuine ease, have simply never heard this music. They must buy this record. So, in fact, should everyone. C.L.O.

WEBERN: Six Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6—See Berg: Three Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6.



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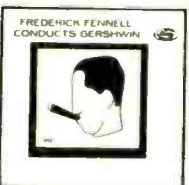
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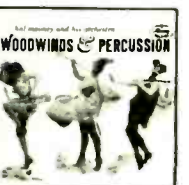
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RECITALS AND MISCELLANY

LEONARD BERNSTEIN: "Over- ture!"

Beethoven: *Leonore Overture No. 3*.
Rossini: *Semiramide*. Weber: *Oberon*.
Mendelssohn: *Ruy Blas*. Berlioz: *Ben-
venuto Cellini*.

New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bern-
stein, cond.

- COLUMBIA ML 5623. LP. \$4.98.
- • COLUMBIA MS 6223. SD. \$5.98.

Bernstein builds up a nice sense of at-
mosphere in the opening of the *Oberon*,
shows us the nobility of the Beethoven,
and finds the proper dash for *Ruy Blas*.
A somewhat lighter touch would help
at moments, particularly in the Berlioz
and Rossini, but the total effect of these
performances is always strong.

The recording is perplexing. The mono
is less resonant than the stereo, which
means it is often better-detailed and bal-
anced. The stereo, however, seems
wider-ranged and more robust, although
it often suffers in the critical boom-to-
music ratio. R.C.M.

GREGORIAN CHANT: *Christmas Masses: Midnight Mass; The Mass of the Day*

Choir of the Benedictine Abbey St. Mar-
tin (Beuron). Fr. Maurus Pfaff, cond.

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holiday of the Christian year, in the
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Christmas. Each Mass is performed com-
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lent by the pealing of bells after the
Sanctus each time as well as by the
reverberation surrounding the singing,
which gives the feeling of a large church
but does not blur the tone. It seems to
me that Father Pfaff's group has im-
proved perceptibly since it began to re-
cord some years ago: it has more flexi-
bility and finesse now. Complete texts in
Latin and English are provided. N.B.

HANS KNAPPERTSBUSCH: "Popu- lar Favorites of the Conductor's Choice"

Tchaikovsky: *Nutcracker Suite, Op. 71a*.
Schubert: *Marche militaire*. Weber: *In-
vitation to the Waltz*. Nicolai: *Die
Lustigen Weiber von Windsor: Overture*.

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Hans
Knappertsbusch, cond.

- LONDON CM 9253. LP. \$4.98.
- • LONDON CS 6192. SD. \$5.98.

There is no reason why the title of this
album should not be taken at face value,
although one does feel some surprise at
finding Knappertsbusch conducting works
so far removed from his usual musical
repertoire. To hear him conducting

Tchaikovsky, for instance, is almost as
startling as it was to hear Toscanini direct
Gershwin. The result, however, is much
less interesting: the Tchaikovsky ballet
music is unevenly projected, being ac-
ceptable enough in the Overture and
in the *Dances caractéristiques*, but com-
ing down with a thud in a pedantic and
graceless rendition of the *Valse des fleurs*.
The other performances on the disc are
much more satisfying. The Schubert
Marche militaire is a complete success,
a spirited, imperious statement, without
a trace of the German strut that dis-
figures so many performances. Weber's
ballet *divertissement* (in the Berlioz or-
chestration) is enchantingly played, with
the Vienna strings at their glorious, gold-
en best. There is enough gusto in the
performance of the Nicolai overture to
please almost anyone, though I find it
slightly lacking in humor. The sound is
London's usual sterling contribution.

J.F.I.

ANNA MOFFO: *Coloratura Arias*

Donizetti: *Lucia di Lammermoor: Il
dolce suono (Mad Scene)*. Rossini: *Il
Barbiere di Siviglia: Una voce poco fa*.
Bellini: *I Puritani: Qui la voce; Vien,
diletto. La Sonnambula: Ah, non credea
mirarti; Ah! non giunge*. Verdi: *Rigo-
letto: Caro nome. La Traviata: Ah, fors'
e lui; Sempre libera*.

Anna Moffo, soprano; Philharmonia Or-
chestra, Colin Davies, cond.

- ANGEL 35861. LP. \$4.98.
- • ANGEL S 35861. SD. \$5.98.

I think it a reasonably accurate generali-
zation to say that Anna Moffo sings the
cavatinas quite well, often movingly—
but the cabalettas less well. The fragile,
floating quality of her voice in fairly
soft, legato singing is appealing and apt;
she treats the words feelingly, too. In the
coloratura work, though, she is forced
to be much too careful, losing momentum
in the interests of poise and accuracy.
The results are rather dull, since the
passage work isn't brilliant enough to
create the necessary lift after each cava-
tina. This is pretty much the case with
the *Puritani*, *Sonnambula*, and *Traviata*
excerpts, though the last is fairly success-
ful right through to the end.

Her "Caro nome" is very pretty, ex-
cept that she has made the mistake of
choosing the high ending, and the tone is
pinched and brittle. She deserves respect
for the sensitivity of her Mad Scene, and
many of the quieter phrases are haunt-
ingly rendered; again, however, she hasn't
the *brio* to quite top it off. Certainly the
cavatinas are worth listening to, and the
entire record is pleasant, if never excit-
ing. The sound is quite good, the ac-
companiments discreet. C.L.O.

MUSIC OF THE MIDDLE AGES, Vol. VII: *The Thirteenth Century*

Russell Oberlin, countertenor; Charles
Bressler, Robert Price, tenors; Gordon
Myers, baritone; Martha Blackman, viol.
• EXPERIENCES ANONYMES EA 35. LP.
\$4.98.

The latest disc in Expériences Anonymes'
valuable series deals with the French
Ars Antiqua. It contains one work by
Perotin—the sturdy conductus *Salvatoris
hodie*—and nineteen pieces from a large
thirteenth-century collection known as

the Montpellier Manuscript. In texture they range from two to four parts. There are conducti, with Latin texts, and motets—some with Latin texts, some with French, and some with both. One of the most attractive pieces in the group, *Povre secors/Gaude*, combines a French love song in one voice—and a fine, flowing melody it is—with a Latin one in praise of the Virgin in another voice.

The rhythmical interpretation of *Ars antiqua* notation is still a controversial matter. The transcriptions performed here were made by William G. Waite of Yale University, a specialist in the field. Readers unacquainted with this type of music may find it bare and stark, because of the predominance of open fifths and fourths, but they may also find in it a strange appeal. N.B.

DAVID OISTRAKH: *Violin Recital*

Beethoven: *Sonata for Violin and Piano, No. 10, in G, Op. 96*. Vivaldi: *Chaconne*. Brahms: *Lullaby; Hungarian Dance No. 11*. Mendelssohn: *On Wings of Song*.

David Oistrakh, violin; Vladimir Yampolsky, piano.

• MONITOR MC 2042. LP. \$4.98.

The phenomenal beauty of the Oistrakh violin dominates all of these works, which are realized with the silken tone and imperceptible changes of bow characteristic of Le Roi David. At times in the Beethoven one might prefer a little more intensity, even at a cost of less opulent sound, but all these performances have persuasive qualities. Yampolsky is no straight man, as his collaboration in the Beethoven attests. Engineering is good throughout. R.C.M.

RUGGIERO RICCI: *Violin Recital*

Stravinsky: *Elégie*. Bartók: *Sonata for Violin*. Prokofiev: *Sonata for Violin, Op. 115*. Hindemith: *Sonatas for Violin: Op. 31, No. 1; Op. 31, No. 2*.

Ruggiero Ricci, violin.

• LONDON CM 9261. LP. \$4.98.
• LONDON CS 6193. SD. \$5.98.

In addition to Stravinsky's rather slight *Elégie*, this disc contains four modern sonatas for unaccompanied violin. The Bartók lies close to Bach—it is strongly polyphonic, puts a tremendous strain on the player's hands and the listener's ear in the realization of its counterpoint, and has a lofty air of being good for you because it sounds so ugly. The Prokofiev is largely a splashy, exuberant showpiece in the manner of that composer's justly popular violin concertos.

The great thing here is the pair of sonatas by Hindemith which, incidentally, are not currently available in any other recording. These sonatas were written in 1924, when Hindemith was very active as violinist and viola player. They are virtuoso pieces written from the inside out; they exploit the single line of the instrument almost exclusively and use very little counterpoint or harmony. The composer's *Eulenspiegelisch* sense of humor was at its height at the time the sonatas were written, and this has much to do with their colorful exuberance, their jugglery, and their combination of fun making and musical erudition. Who but the Hindemith of 1924 would write a sonata for violin alone and give it the general title *Es Ist So Schönes Wetter*

Draussen? And who but Hindemith—not necessarily of 1924—would end that sonata with a set of variations on one of Mozart's simplest, most folktonelike melodies? Ricci's performance is close to perfection throughout, and so is the recording. A.F.

JOSETTE and YVETTE ROMAN: *Duo Piano Recital*

Franck: *Prelude, Fugue, and Variation, Op. 18*. Infante: *Three Andalusian Dances*. Milhaud: *Scaramouche, Op. 165B*. Saint-Saëns: *Scherzo, Op. 87*.

Josette and Yvette Roman, duo pianos.
• KAPP KC 9055. LP. \$4.98.
• KAPP KC 9055S. SD. \$5.98.

Stereo is very advantageous here. The sound emerges with ideal separation and yet it is always cohesive in effect. This is of course owing to the excellent teamwork of the Romans, for they have such a strong ensemble discipline that the independent sounds of their instruments always add up to a unified totality.

The Franck piece, originally written for the organ, is familiar in a solo piano transcription by the late Harold Bauer. The present version is by the composer himself. The Roman sisters are perhaps a bit objective and metronomic here, but the performance always forges ahead. The *Scaramouche* has delightful humor and the three Infante dances and the Saint-Saëns go with tremendous crispness and vitality. Manuel Infante, incidentally, is a Spanish composer (born 1883) who has been living in France since 1909. His *Andalusian Dances* resemble Falla's *Three-Cornered Hat* triumvirate.

I enjoyed the kinetic incisiveness of this excellent duo-piano team immensely, and look forward to hearing from them soon again. H.G.

ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK: *Recital*

Thomas: *Mignon: Kennst du das Land*. Gounod: *Sapho: O ma lyre immortelle*. Saint-Saëns: *Samson und Dalila: Die Sonne sie lachte*. Bizet: *Agnus Dei*. Delibes: *Good Morning, Sue*. Salter: *The Cry of Rachel*. Chadwick: *The Danza*. Reger: *The Children's Prayer*. Weingartner: *Liebesfeier*. Mendelssohn: *St. Paul: But the Lord Is Mindful*. Schubert: *Der Erlkönig: Die Forelle*. Brahms: *Sapphische Ode*. Schumann: *Mondnacht*. Wagner: *Götterdämmerung: Höre mit Sinn*. Silcher: *Die Loreley*. Gruber: *Stille Nacht*.

Ernestine Schumann-Heink, contralto.
• ROCOCO R 27. LP. \$5.95.

Not everything about this record will appeal to everyone: some of the selections have little musical value, and some are presented in unfamiliar guise (*Bonjour Suzon* in English, and the *Lieder* with orchestral accompaniments). The sound, of course, is subject to the limitations of the acoustical process.

But lovers of great singing will find little to complain of. To my own taste, the outstanding selections are *Der Erlkönig*, rendered with astounding vocal variety, and the *Sapphische Ode*, intoned with incomparable deepness and richness. *Mondnacht* is perhaps too deliberate, but the melody is beautifully suspended, nonetheless. Collectors who don't own the singer's justly renowned version of *Stille Nacht* will find it here. C.L.O.

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The Romantic Piano Concerto

A DISCOGRAPHY

WHEN HIGH FIDELITY celebrated its tenth anniversary last month, Editor Roland Gelatt wrote in these pages ["Music Makers," April] that today "the sale of records is a 'mass' business." He went on to point out that "record dealers . . . have turned into supermarkets, and supermarkets . . . into record dealers." Inevitably, the classical discs that find their way into the housewife's grocery cart are for the most part recordings of so-called standard repertoire—that is, of music which has immediate accessibility, music to which every listener can respond readily and freely. Of such music the romantic piano concerto is the exemplar, and reasons for its popularity are not hard to find. Most of these concertos are filled with appealing melodies. Their more lyrical sections are literally "singable," or at least "hum-able," and they have furnished Tin Pan Alley with the raw material for some very popular songs. For even the most untutored listener it is an easy step from "Tonight We Love" to the Tchaikovsky First Piano Concerto, especially as performed by a magnetic virtuoso and a splendid orchestra.

The near-mass appeal of many of these works has engendered an unfortunate corollary. One detects a kind of snobbism towards the romantic piano concerto on the part of sophisticated listeners. For a time, indeed, it was *de rigueur* in fashionable circles to characterize the species as meretricious and hackneyed. Hackneyed these pieces may be, but this is a matter of the performances they are given; meretricious they are not. An outstanding performance will restore pristine freshness to even the most overplayed of the standard concertos. Even after listening to innumerable versions of this music, I say without hesitation that the Grieg A minor, the Rachmaninoff Second, the Liszt E flat are estimable and exciting works. And the fact that they are popular detracts not at all from their identity as "classical" music—in the fullest and truest sense of that term.

The present survey of the most popular works in the repertoire is not intended to be complete—with so many thousands of recorded versions, past and present, completeness is close to an impossibility. What I have attempted is a systematic scrutiny of the bulk of recordings now available, eliminating the duds and contrasting the interpretative styles of the worthy ones. Under each entry is a listing of the versions that I regard as most satisfactory.

My criteria for evaluating these discs are based primarily upon merits of performance. In cases where the choice is wide, I have weighed other factors (sound, price, etc.) with the performance itself, and have indicated what I feel to be the best all-round edition. I have not placed much emphasis on stereo; I am more concerned with the actual *tonal* characteristics of the reproduced sound, and whether it successfully conveys the essential quality of a given performer's style. The most spectacular sound is not always the most *musical*.

Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Mendelssohn's G minor Piano Concerto was completed in 1831, the D minor in 1837. Both works are in the same format (so, for that matter, is the far more celebrated Violin Concerto in E minor). Although the composer preserves the traditional three-movement form of the classical concertos, he joins the sections together into a continuous whole.

While Mendelssohn's violin writing capitalizes on the cantabile possibilities of that instrument, the composer attempts to compensate for the piano's lack of sustaining power. The writing in the keyboard concertos is very active, and abounds in arpeggios, broken octaves, and passages of gossamer *rotary motion*. The result is to make the pieces less reposeful than is the case with the violin opus, and the typically Mendelssohnian mercurialness here sounds restless.

Unfortunately, most pianists are rather patronizing to these really fine pieces. The typical performance of the G minor (the D minor, possibly an even finer work, is all but ignored in the concert hall) stresses the rippling superficiality of the exterior while minimizing the considerable spiritual depths below. Actually, in fundamentals these piano concertos depart very little from the violin work; their similar features (poetry, eloquent early romanticism, and simple strength) should be emphasized, not their different instrumental approach.

CONCERTO NO. 1, IN G MINOR, OP. 25

Rudolf Serkin's playing serves to reestablish this work in its proper dimensions. The great pianist roars into the first movement like a tornado. His finale too has enormous vitality of phrasing, and at some climactic passages the artist lunges at the music with tigerish intensity. Also characteristic of Serkin's approach is the tensile breadth and dramatic grandeur he achieves in the slow movement. (One can hear him singing along with the music here, so completely is he immersed in its substance.) The Emily Posts of the piano who sit and count percussive notes will no doubt shake their heads disapprovingly: "Too loud, too fast, not careful enough"; but to most listeners this performance will be a revelation. Here is music making with fire and purpose. Ormandy accompanies with verve, and the recorded sound is very vivid. It will be noted that Serkin's is the only stereo version yet released; the disc has a good deal of separation, especially in the strings.

Peter Katin's performance is more conservative. His playing is poetic, nimble, and poised. It is also, in my opinion, just a mite stodgy. Nevertheless, his tone comes off the disc with a rounder, more lyrical quality than does Serkin's, and the finished orchestral support is also superlatively reproduced. All told, the record makes a strong entry.

Helmut Roloff is very spruce. He plays with a clipped, classical detachment. He also offers a conventional rendition, but he is more sharply etched and objective than Katin. Unfortunately, his disc sounds woolly, overbassed, and otherwise drably engineered. Reine Gianoli, on the other hand, is given excellent bright sound for her crisp, extrovert reading. The Viennese Orchestra under Horvath, however, plays in a four-square manner that tends to dampen the bullience of the music.

✓—Serkin; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia ML 5456 (LP); MS 6128 (SD).

—Katin; London Symphony, Anthony Collins, cond. London CM 9159 (LP).

—Gianoli; Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Milan Horvath, cond. Westminster XWN 18043 (LP).

—Roloff; Bamberg Symphony, Fritz Lehmann, cond. Decca DL 9652 (LP).

CONCERTO NO. 2, IN D MINOR, OP. 40

Evaluation of the available recorded editions is facilitated here since all of them are to be had in conjunction with the first Mendelssohn concerto. As in that work, Serkin gives a staggeringly brilliant, spiritually satisfying account of the music, and Ormandy partners him in racy fashion. Katin's more modest approach sounds rather anemic when heard side by side with Serkin's. Collins gives him excellent, well-balanced support, however. Roloff gives a sharper, more cerebral profile to the phrasing than Gianoli, but the latter has far better sound. Yet everything considered, neither the Decca nor Westminster edition makes quite as strong a totality as the Katin-Collins team, and that, of course, is surpassed by Serkin-Ormandy and stereo too.

✓—Serkin; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia ML 5456 (LP); MS 6128 (SD).

—Katin; London Symphony, Anthony Collins, cond. London CM 9159 (LP).

—Gianoli; Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Milan Horvath, cond. Westminster XWN 18043 (LP).

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Rudolf Serkin

Chopin (1810-1849)

Both of Chopin's piano concertos are products of his youth. So, for that matter, are most of his non-piano solo compositions. In later years, the composer became more subjective in his style of expression, and his most intense inspiration was lavished on the instrument he himself loved and played so well.

Even in the early writing of Chopin,

one notices a technically intricate sort of pianism which is a specific hallmark of this master. The pieces are fluent and highly decorative, rather than deeply felt, but both works contain touches that foreshadow the great Chopin masterpieces to come. The E minor Concerto is a longer, more intricate work than its companion piece in F minor, and although it bears the "No. 1" insignia, it was actually composed after the "second."

Both are in conservative sonata-allegro form, with the classical double-exposition used by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven held intact. Unfortunately, this fact is usually obscured because many performers regard Chopin's orchestration as "inept" and willfully slash the first exposition section to ribbons. Furthermore, pianists tend to obscure the traditional structure of these pieces by imposing an ornate "Chopin-style" rubato from without. As a matter of fact, I have yet to hear a recording of either of these works that is a truly accurate re-creation of what the composer set down on paper. This is not to say that there are no satisfying renditions available; it is merely to note that musicians are less literal in observing Chopin's markings than they are with Beethoven's or Mozart's.

CONCERTO NO. 1, IN E MINOR, OP. 11

The two outstanding interpretations now available are those by Stefan Askenase and Artur Schnabel, and it would be difficult to imagine two more dissimilar approaches to the music. Rubinstein's way is large-scaled, fervently impassioned, and tonally robust. He employs rather fast basic tempos throughout, but he accentuates notes and "leans" on phrase lengths so as to give them breadth and sweep as well as impetus. There are no wide coloristic gradations here; Rubinstein prefers to work within a restricted, but rosy, sound palette. Wallenstein's accompaniment is uncut, but it is also, unfortunately, somewhat scrawny and unattractive to the ear. The recorded sound, too, is rather candidly literal, but it will suffice until we have a Rubinstein stereo release with first-class sonics.

Stefan Askenase gives the Concerto a more delicate subjectivity. This is an old-fashioned "salon"-type reading, with beauty of tone and sophisticated fastidiousness. Askenase studied with the famous Liszt pupil Emil von Sauer, and his playing is very definitely Teutonically oriented, with much emphasis given to a solid bass line and to harmonic clarity. While the athletic, exuberant quality of the Rubinstein reading is missing here, there is compensating grace and poetry. Van Otterloo's conducting is unusually sympathetic to the pianist's very individualistic style: it is as pleasurable as it is rare to hear the orchestral playing (here appropriately given with great elasticity of tempo) so perfectly geared to the soloist's conception. The disc boasts truly gorgeous sound quality and as a bonus provides the best available performance of the charming early *Krakowiak*. All in all, this recording strikes me as being the best edition of the Concerto too, but the subtle exaggeration of rubato may not be to everyone's taste.

Geza Anda is afforded sleek, spacious orchestral support from Alceo Galliera and the Philharmonia ensemble. An outstanding technician, the pianist gives a

youthful impetuosity to the music, and his tone is always agreeable. Lacking, however, is the ability to see the occasional niceties as simply passing details in an integrated whole. There is a touch of preciousness in Anda's work, and it prevents the performance from soaring, as Rubinstein's does, for example.

On the sleeve notes for his disc (RCA Victor), Gary Graffman calls attention to the fact that he regards Chopin's music as "unmannered." The same commendable point of view is apparent in the pianist's technically assured playing. Unfortunately, along with the fine tonal control and admirable restraint of phraseology, there is little color or personality. Since Munch cuts the exposition in the first movement, the disc is ruled out of court in any case.

The graceful, poetic Mieczyslaw Horszowski performance, for Vox, has been discontinued. A new version by the young Italian prize winner Maurizio Pollini will be reviewed in these pages next month. A Rosina Lhevinne recording (presumably for Columbia) is rumored.

—Askenase; Hague Philharmonic, Willem van Otterloo, cond. Deutsche Grammophon LPM 18605 (LP); SLPM 138085 (SD).

—Rubinstein; Los Angeles Philharmonic, Alfred Wallenstein, cond. RCA Victor LM 1810 (LP).

—Anda; Philharmonia Orchestra, Alceo Galliera, cond. Angel 35631 (LP).

CONCERTO NO. 2, IN F MINOR, OP. 21

Although Rubinstein's recent recording of the work, with Wallenstein conducting, is not ideal, it easily transcends the current competition. With the exception of a tiny cut (of no great consequence) at the end of the first movement, the orchestration here is complete and well played. Rubinstein's playing is red-blooded, mercurial, and warmly spontaneous—though much better controlled than on his earlier disc with William Steinberg. One could wish for a more intellectual reading. The disc is smooth and well processed, especially in stereo.

Guiomar Novaes plays with warmth and expansiveness, phrasing naturally and expressively within an unusually broad framework. She is not an outstanding technician, however, and tends to rely rather heavily on the sustaining pedal. I also question Klemperer's aptitude for Chopin: this conductor's stolid, monolithic beat seems to me ill-suited to the curvaceous roundness of romantic music. Even when he manages to keep together with the pianist (about half the time), his angular accentuations give the performance an awkward, lumbering gait. Vox's engineering on the newest pressings is considerably improved over the earlier editions of the performance, but it is still rather cavernous.

Vladimir Ashkenazy's disc was made at the finals of the 1955 Warsaw Chopin contest (the pianist took second prize) and has a muffled sound, severely cut orchestration, and a rushed finale. There is also a memory lapse (excellently concealed) in the first movement. Withal, the facility of the playing is breath-taking, and the pianist phrases with taste and clean contours. Ashkenazy's performance here is good enough to justify a new recording, made under studio conditions.

Witold Malcuzyński's newest effort has some eccentric angularities of phrasing,



Artur Rubinstein

and the pianist lacks the warm tone color of Rubinstein. It is a more convincing interpretation than is the earlier Malcuzyński reading, however, and the orchestral tuttis are not cut as they were there. Angel's processing, especially in the SD, is noisy and generally miserable. Indeed, the older disc was superior in this respect.

A version by the late Clara Haskil was taped shortly before her death, and still is unreleased. I, for one, await a Chopin disc by this consummate artist with very great interest.

—Rubinstein; RCA Victor Symphony, Alfred Wallenstein, cond. RCA Victor LM 2265 (LP); LSC 2265 (SD).

—Ashkenazy; Warsaw Philharmonic, Zdzislaw Gorzynski, cond. Angel 35403 (LP).

—Novaes; Vienna Symphony, Otto Klemperer, cond. Vox PL 11380 (LP).

—Malcuzyński; London Symphony, Walter Süskind, cond. Angel 35729 (LP); S 35729 (SD).

Schumann (1810-1856)

There has been a lot of writing regarding Schumann's doubling of orchestral parts and his otherwise allegedly "murky" instrumentation. One of the most interesting explanations links this procedure to the composer's activity as conductor of the Düsseldorf Orchestra: the players in that ensemble were so inept, the story goes, that Schumann reinforced his important cues so as to ensure *someone's* coming in correctly! There is probably more than a grain of truth in this supposition for in these years he tended to thicken the orchestration even in works written earlier. It must be noted, however, that there is a fondness for a rich, chordal texture in all Schumann's writing. The same idiom is apparent in his chamber music, his Lieder, his piano solo creations, and his concerted works. Who else, for example, would have composed a work for four horns and orchestra?

The textural extravagance of Schumann's music combined with its soaring rhapsodic qualities has always offered a field day to enterprising pianists. *Kreisleriana*, say, is a challenge to a performer's craftsmanship and imagination, with its hidden melodic lines, motivic fragments, and bits of color. In the piano-orchestra pieces, however, the colorful pianism tends to be submerged in the orchestral fabric. Schumann did not isolate the keyboard instrument from the orchestra as did Chopin, Liszt, and

Grieg; he prefers a "chamber-music" quality, and has the piano play in the same register as the strings and winds.

The A minor Concerto is written in a sonata-allegro form, but its relatively loose structure betrays the fact that it was originally intended as a "Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra." (The second and third movements were composed only after Schumann became convinced that the Fantasy was of sufficient scope to stand as the first movement.) Just as the violin concertos of Mendelssohn and Bruch can be said to have "feminine" characteristics as opposed to Brahms's "masculine" work in that form, so Schumann's aristocratic mercurialness shows similar diminutive features in relation to Brahms's massive piano concertos.

CONCERTO IN A MINOR, OP. 54

The advent of stereo has initiated a mass revival of this work from the recording industry. Two of the new additions to the catalogue have managed to dislodge Dinu Lipatti's twelve-year-old edition from top place: I find even more freedom and warmth in the Leon Fleisher-George Szell and Eugene Istomin-Bruno Walter sets and, of course, better sound. The latter is the more conventional, in relation to tempo and phrasing. These artists treat the work with elegant poetry and genial romanticism. (The Lipatti, in contrast, is more objectively stylized and classical in approach.) What makes their performance so attractive is the naturalness of the tempo relationships: the leisurely episodes are relatively brisk and they flow into the dramatic passages without shocking extremes.

Fleisher and Szell, on the other hand, play with great contrast of tempo. Their rendition has an electrically charged dynamism and dramatic vibrancy. Nevertheless, their reading never sounds disjointed or affected, for the extremes of tempo are subtly negotiated within a basic pulse which remains consistent throughout an entire movement and even integrates the three portions of the work into an entity. Although I was not fortunate enough to hear Artur Schnabel play this concerto, I suspect that Fleisher's way with it approximates that master's interpretation more closely than do any of the other versions. I say this not only because I know that Fleisher studied with Schnabel; his reading has a tonal hue, certain rubatos, and other rhythmic accentuations—indeed, personal mannerisms—that recall Schnabel's broad humanitarian influence. If I were pressed for a single choice, it would have to be the Fleisher-Szell, but I would never want to be without the Istomin and Lipatti sets.

Walter Gieseking's playing has an animated classicism, and he is well partnered by Von Karajan, but a certain glibness in the pianist's phrasing and a lack of true warmth become noticeable on repeated playings. Similarly, Sviatoslav Richter's beautiful pianism stresses the virtues of symmetry and lucidity, while the more spiritual ones of warmth and power are minimized. His DGG disc is well reproduced and features decent if not outstanding playing from the Polish orchestra. Moreover, the overside of this record contains memorable performances of some of Schumann's less frequently played pieces. Richter's Monitor edition is blemished by orchestral playing that is bona fide cat-chorus; avoid it.

Monique Haas and Jochum give a fine-grained, expansively inflected rendition, but their sonics are rather dated.

Van Cliburn's rendering is lavishly spread over a whole twelve-inch disc. This reading is beautifully recorded (better in mono than in stereo) and has splendid orchestral backing from Reiner. The pianist seems content, however, to shape his playing around that of the orchestra. It is a clear, natural, unaffected reading that he gives, but it lacks the needed sophistication and subtly gauged turns of phrase.

Solomon and Katin both bring more style to their performances than Cliburn does, but both are rather miniaturist and lack the necessary thrust. Both discs are well recorded, especially the Katin, but Everest's engineers have spoiled his performance by a rupturous turnover before the third movement.

—Fleisher; Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. Epic LC 3689 (LP); BC 1080 (SD).

—Istomin; Columbia Symphony, Bruno Walter, cond. Columbia ML 5494 (LP); MS 6159 (SD).

—Lipatti; Philharmonia Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Columbia ML 4525 (LP).

—Gieseking; Philharmonia Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Angel 35321 (LP).

—Richter; Warsaw Philharmonic, Witold Rowicki, cond. Deutsche Grammophon LPM 18597 (LP); SLPM 138077 (SD).

—Cliburn; Chicago Symphony, Fritz Reiner, cond. RCA Victor LM 2455 (LP); LSC 2455 (SD).

—Solomon; Philharmonia Orchestra, Herbert Menges, cond. Capitol G 7191 (LP); SG 7191 (SD).

—Haas; Berlin Philharmonic, Eugen Jochum, cond. Decca DL 9868 (LP).

Liszt (1811-1886)

Although they are called Concertos, Liszt's A major and E flat compositions are, in reality, *Konzertstücke*. Both works are readily dividable into three sections which approximate the three movements of the conventional concertos, but the use of cyclic form (i.e. the recurrence of one movement's themes in another) and the otherwise tautly organized construction give them a compactness of format that was only hinted at in the concertos of Mendelssohn.

The rhythmic elements are played up in Liszt's writing, and he distributes the orchestration with an adeptness which produces a crystalline and sensuous texture. The many important comments assigned to the orchestral solo players add verve and color to the extremely scintillant piano writing.

Four distinct schools of Liszt interpretation are encountered in the many available recorded editions of the concertos. These are:

1) The Bravura Approach. These performances show off the soloist's technical endowment, with much emphasis on speed, glitter, and sentimentality. The conventional way with Liszt's concertos, this approach allows the pianist much rhythmic and textual license. Although there is often undeniable glamour in these virtuoso performances, I prefer a more subtle reading.

2) The Teutonic Approach. Here the width of the music is emphasized. The tonal color is darkly robust and the expansive poetry of the writing is



Leon Fleisher

brought to the fore because of the deliberate tempos chosen. There is a prevailing seriousness and lack of ostentation.

3) The Neoclassical Approach. Tautness and symmetry are stressed here. The color scheme is brighter and the pace more animated than in Teutonic renditions. The neoclassical style is apt to be more mercurial and less introverted than the Germanic one, but the two styles share a lack of exhibitionism.

4) The Combined Approach. This unpretentiously natural performance is the synthesis of the three foregoing trends. Neither extremely slow nor fast, with average extroversion and rhetorical expanse, this kind of reading may provide, in the long run, the most sustained enjoyment.

CONCERTO NO. 1, IN E FLAT

Edith Farnadi's stereo performance with Boult has far more continuity and technical refinement than her earlier recording with Scherchen. This is the type-4 approach described above, with spontaneity, romantic color, and an enchanting freedom from stolidity. The sound is a bit overresonant, but very satisfactory. Tamas Vásáry's reading is the neoclassical one *par excellence*. The soloist gives a patrician rendition with fastidious tonal control and sharply pointed timing. His mercurial reading bears striking similarity to the old Gieseking-Sir Henry Wood 78-rpm edition. The superlatively sensitive orchestral playing and its brilliant reproduction make this DGG disc a gem.

The Teutonic approach has its present outstanding recorded exemplification in a performance by Alfred Brendel which strongly approximates Victor Schiøler's rendition on an old Victor-LHMV disc with forces led by the late Issay Dobrowen. Brendel's edition is hampered, however, by rather crude orchestral support and overresonant recorded sound. Both orchestra and sonics are far more impressive on the Andor Foldes-Leopold Ludwig entry. The solo playing here is in the same scholarly manner as that of Schiøler and Brendel,

but it is rather too objective and monochromatic for this fanciful concerto. A similar lack of color mars the otherwise excellent Philippe Entremont disc, except that Entremont's kind of brittle attack is of the French rather than the German school.

Excellent examples of the conventional bravura approach may be had from Claudio Arrau, György Cziffra, and Richard Farrell. The first plays with remarkable glitter and pianistic sheen. Farrell has the glitter, but is more staid and serious in his account. Cziffra plays with massive strength and technical felicity. His is a rhetorical, stylistically convincing account with decent, if not dazzling, orchestral support.

Julius Katchen, on the other hand, receives brilliant and interesting leadership from the late Ataúlfo Argenta. He plays with verve and delicacy, but his speed lacks *pulse*. As with many virtuosos, this pianist shows, on the evidence of this disc, a tendency to rush in the climaxes. The result is a loss of true power and momentum, combined with a trace of glibness. Kempff's reissued disc has an inert sentimentality, but is respectable value at its low price. De Groot's sturdy rendition (Epic) lacks, on rehearing, the requisite vitality, and the reproduction of this sturdy performance is overbassed below and shrill on top. Gilels' reading (Vanguard) is interesting for some individualistic tempo changes, but the engineering is really pretty dismal.

—Vásáry; Bamberg Symphony, Felix Prohaska, cond. Deutsche Grammophon LPM 18589 (LP); SLPM 138055 (SD).

—Farnadi; Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond. Westminster WST 14125 (SD).

—Arrau; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia 4665 (LP).

—Foldes; Berlin Philharmonic, Leopold Ludwig, cond. Decca DL 9888 (LP).

—Brendel; Vienna Pro Musica, Michael Gielen, cond. Vox PL 10420 (LP); STPL 510420 (SD).

—Cziffra; Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, Pierre Dervaux, cond. Angel 35436 (LP).

—Farrell; Hallé Orchestra, George Weldon, cond. Mercury MG 50126 (LP); SR 90126 (SD).

—Entremont; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia ML 5389 (LP); MS 6071 (SD).

CONCERTO NO. 2, IN A

Vásáry's reserved, objective pianism fails to capture the big line in this concerto. He plays with finesse and subtlety, but the stormy, martial character of this music sounds rather constrained in his performance. Farnadi-Boult, Foldes-Ludwig, Brendel-Gielen, and Cziffra-Vandernoot are all more successful in conveying the muscle of this work. The first two performances are, in my opinion, particularly attractive, with the Farnadi-Boult a bit more ravishing from the tonal standpoint. Cziffra's broad, virtuosic account is a shade ostentatious to my ears, while Brendel's even slower one conveys a majestic inwardness. Unfortunately, the sound is not what it should be on his disc, and the sagging imprecision of the orchestral playing clogs the poetic vein of the pianism.

I hope that some company will re-issue the incomparable old Egon Petri-Leslie Heward interpretation. Masterful

Liszt playing of this sort should *always* be obtainable, no matter the antiquity of the recorded sound.

—Farnadi; Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond. Westminster WST 14125 (SD).

—Foldes; Berlin Philharmonic, Leopold Ludwig, cond. Decca DL 9888 (LP).

—Cziffra; Philharmonia Orchestra, André Vandernoot, cond. Angel 35738 (LP); S 35738 (SD).

—Brendel; Vienna Pro Musica, Michael Gielen, cond. Vox PL 10420 (LP); STPL 510420 (SD).

—Vásáry; Bamberg Symphony, Felix Prohaska, cond. Deutsche Grammophon LPM 18589 (LP); SLP 138055 (SD).

Franck (1822-1890)

Franck's piano writing lies midway between the French Impressionist group and the Schumann-Brahms idiom. His compositions stress chordal richness and broadness of sonority fused with elements of mobile line and flowing color. He does not favor the sudden tempo changes and metric diversity of Schumann, and his harmonies tend to be more somber and sensuous than those of Brahms. Along with Gabriel Fauré, whose music has many parallel features, practically all of Franck's writing reflects his love for the organ.

I have included the *Symphonic Variations* in the present discography (and also the Rachmaninoff *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*) because of their popular acceptance as part of the romantic concerto literature. Throughout his career as a composer, Franck always showed great interest in the Variation form, and many of his initial, unpublished compositional efforts employed this mode of expression. The present work is beautifully molded and effectively projected. There is an ideal interrelation between the pianistic and orchestral elements here, and scintillant contrasts of introverted drama and carefree exuberance.

VARIATIONS SYMPHONIQUES, FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA

Gieseking and Von Karajan give this work a dreamy, ultraromantic reading. The pianist utilizes a wide coloristic palette and shapes the phrases in terms of flowing sonority. The tempo is very broad throughout, and there is much rhetorical expansion. Von Karajan partners the soloist with smoothly diffused orchestral support. He eschews crispness of attack altogether, and blends the various components of the orchestra into a plastic, seamless entity. One could wish for a more incisive orchestral definition, however.

The Fleisher-Szell handling of the Variations is truly *symphonic*. These artists favor a big, extrovert approach with robust tonal color and massive orchestral sonority. Theirs is not as deeply felt a reading as the Gieseking-Karajan, but its fine, healthy rhythmic flair and its unflagging momentum are eminently likeable. The sound on this disc is very brilliant and perhaps just a shade metallic.

Clifford Curzon stresses the delicacy of the pianism. This is a refined, classical performance with "whitish" (or perhaps "silvery" is a better term) hue. Boult gives him sturdy support, and the processing of the disc is very smooth.

Katin's disc provides a Gieseking-type reading and is beautifully recorded. There is, however, a slightly negative quality in his interpretation that puts it just below the Curzon-Gieseking-Fleisher level.

The sparkling, classical rendition by Robert Casadesus, with the Philharmonia Orchestra under George Weldon, was in many ways the finest of all, but Columbia has replaced that version with a newer—and much inferior—one in which Casadesus is partnered by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

—Gieseking; Philharmonia Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Columbia ML 4536 (LP); MJL 4885 (LP).

—Fleisher; Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. Epic LC 3330 (LP).

—Curzon; London Philharmonic, Sir Adrian Boult, cond. London CM 9029 (LP); CS 6157 (SD).

—Katin; London Symphony, Sir Eugene Goossens, cond. Everest LPBR 6036 (LP); SDBR 3036 (SD).



Walter Gieseking

Brahms (1833-1897)

Although Brahms luxuriated in expansive sonority and sweeping rhythmic motives, his compositions are completely classical in outlook. Despite the augmentation of content and expanded strength of the orchestral forces, his concertos and symphonies depart not at all from the formal model perfected by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. In both of the piano concertos, Brahms the symphonist is at work. The D minor was actually first conceived as a symphony but evolved into its present form after the composer found his writing taking on pianistic characteristics. The B flat, which came twenty years after the D minor, adopts the four-movement symphonic plan. Considerably less stormy than the first concerto, this later opus has a vein of introspective elegance.

The piano writing in both works makes formidable technical demands upon soloists, but it remains completely enmeshed in the orchestral fabric. Any attempt to turn these pieces into vehicles for virtuoso display of technique will seriously upset the musical integrity of the performance.

CONCERTO NO. 1, IN D MINOR, OP. 15

Of the performances currently available, those by Fleisher and Serkin seem to me to be the most idiomatic as regards interpretation. Both of these artists see the work in Germanic terms, with harmony, rhythmic development, and melody all welded together into an organic and continuous entity. Fortunately, George Szell, who gives admirable support to both soloists, shares this point of view. Serkin gives a fast-paced, "classical" interpretation here. He manages to hold the first and last movements together a bit more successfully than Fleisher, who plays slightly more rhapsodically and introspectively. On the other hand, it is the latter pianist who delivers the wonderful slow movement with the greater sensitivity of tonal color. (Serkin is apt to favor a monochromatic dynamic scheme—it is part and parcel of his austere approach.) Neither disc is afforded really outstanding engineering. The Serkin was made in 1952 or thereabouts, and the sound, while still adequate, is a bit shrill and constricted. In this respect, Fleisher's more recently recorded disc is an improvement, but the surfaces are rather swishy and the over-all sound lacks suavity. On the whole, however, my recommendation goes to his performance in its monophonic edition.

It takes no more than a brief sampling of Artur Schnabel's version to discover this pianist's basically anachronistic approach to the music. Rubinstein, of course, belongs to the Slavic school, and favors melodic inflection over harmony and rhythmic continuity. He is never content to follow Brahms's gradual dynamic curve; instead, he activates the music with fussy dynamic gradations and abrupt, agitated phrasing. (This is especially apparent at measure 123 in the first movement, where the restless expansion and contraction of the left-hand part impairs the necessary feeling of repose.) But Rubinstein has the breadth and stature for this concerto, and his disc is one of the important Brahms entries, interpretative quibbling aside. The reproduced sound is bright, glossy, and massively reverberant. The keyboard instrument is well to the foreground—excessively so, in my opinion.

A far more tasteful example of microphone placement may be found in the Julius Katchen-Pierre Monteux disc. Although the razor-sharp definition of orchestral fabric heard here is probably impossible to achieve in actual concert performance, I am perfectly willing to accept this instructive, X-ray type of balance so long as the over-all sound remains warm, spacious, and musically satisfying. Here, the London engineering meets these qualifications with flying colors. Katchen gives a technically fluent, tastefully expressive account of the piano part but he lacks the dynamism and magnetic personal distinction that Serkin, Fleisher, and Rubinstein all bring to the music in their own particular ways. Monteux's mastery of the orchestra and the subtle lyricism of his approach give the disc its major distinctions; since the music is highly symphonic, I, for one, am happy to settle for a *status quo* in which the conductor is the senior partner.

Of the remaining versions, Graffman-Munch (RCA Victor) is technically brilliant but musically academic. A different variety of academicism may be found on the Backhaus disc (London).

This is "traditional" Brahms with flaccidity and muddiness. To my mind, London's withdrawal of the superb Curzon-Van Beinum disc is inexplicable. —Fleisher; Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. Epic LC 3484 (LP); SC 1003 (SD). —Serkin; Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. Columbia ML 4829 (LP). —Katchen; London Symphony, Pierre Monteux, cond. London CM 9030 (LP); CS 6151 (SD). —Rubinstein; Chicago Symphony, Fritz Reiner, cond. RCA Victor LM 1831 (LP).

CONCERTO NO. 2, IN B FLAT, OP. 83

It is relatively easy to separate performances of this work into two main categories: those in which the orchestra dominates, and those which emphasize the more intimate, chamber music qualities of the work. In the former style, Emil Gilels and Vladimir Horowitz add technically brilliant, physically driving, and tremendously exciting pianism to the massive Reiner and Toscanini orchestral contexts. Both instrumentalists favor a clanging tonal fabric, and have decidedly un-Brahmsian interpretative inclinations. Toscanini's interpretation of the "Symphony for Piano and Orchestra" has never been equaled. Reiner's dynamism comes pretty close to it, however, and of course his disc has the benefit of vastly superior sound reproduction. Nevertheless, I find here a trace of bombast in the orchestral playing which is lacking in the kinetic subtlety of the NBC performance. Pressed to choose only one Brahms B flat, I would choose neither of these, although I am grateful to have them available.

Serkin and Ormandy have made a sort of specialty of their collaboration. They have played the work together countless times, and the current recording is their third of the work. The new reading has a broad, weighty quality strikingly different from the nervous briskness and mercurial classicism of the two older ones. The second of those, which dates from 1956, was a more objective, technically perfect translation of Brahms's score than the 1960 edition, but the noble serenity and personal involvement of the latter-day version may have more spiritual depth. At any rate, Serkin seems to be alone of the pianists who have recorded this piece in being able to reproduce Brahms's *poco a poco* crescendo markings without indulging in fussy dynamics. Ormandy gives satisfying support, and the Philadelphia's playing is of a very high level. Lorne Munroe's cello solo in the third movement deserves special praise.

Rubinstein has also recorded the music three times, and his latest version with Krips is by far his most successful. He offers what is basically a lyrical performance, but he rises to the climaxes with bombastic surge. Again, as in this



Vladimir Horowitz

pianist's recording of the first Brahms concerto, the dynamics are too curved and finicky-sounding for this essentially angular, Germanic writing. Krips does well by the pianists, however, and the sound, if excessively reverberant, is quite realistic. All in all, this is a performance of great interest.

The newly issued Katchen-Ferencsik is a solid, musicianly reading somewhat in the Serkin-Ormandy tradition. Fine playing from the orchestra and many sensitive details from the pianist make the disc one of the eminently recommendable ones. The performance does, however, lack the technical control and enormous phrase tensions that grace the pianism of Serkin or the conducting of Toscanini. Finely etched, but somewhat distant sound.

None of the other versions are seriously competitive to those already noted. The Richter-Leinsdorf (RCA Victor) displays some sensitive tonal gradations, but the lack of any basic tempo or other structural discipline reduces this reading to little more than a disjointed collection of pretty sounds. Ashkenazy's rendering (Angel) is very fleet, but he too breaks the work into fragments by retarding the ends of phrases. The Uninsky-Otterloo (Epic) disc is musicianly and unenlivening; this honorable interpretation needs more color and poetry.

—Serkin; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia ML 5491 (LP); MS 6156 (SD).

—Horowitz; NBC Symphony, Arturo Toscanini, cond. RCA Victor LCT 1025 (LP).

—Rubinstein; RCA Victor Symphony, Josef Krips, cond. RCA Victor LM 2296 (LP); LSC 2296 (SD).

—Katchen; London Symphony, Janos Ferencsik, cond. London CS 6195 (SD).

—Gilels; Chicago Symphony, Fritz Reiner, cond. RCA Victor LM 2219 (LP); LSC 2219 (SD).

Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Since Saint-Saëns was a virtuoso performer and a music critic, it is understandable that he was exposed to many diverse styles of writing and that he assimilated them into his own work. In fact, many of his compositions borrow idiosyncrasies from other composers, and few of them have a real profile of their own. Nevertheless, his music is characterized by a deft charm and excellent structural planning.

And Saint-Saëns did contribute a few near masterpieces to the literature. The C minor *Organ* Symphony is an imposing edifice. So too is the Fourth Piano Concerto, written in bold cyclic form. The G minor Concerto is on a lower plane of inspiration than the aforementioned works, but it is, nevertheless, much the most popular of the five concertos for piano. Melodically ingratiating, rhythmically infectious, the piece bubbles with good spirits. The piano writing makes formidable demands on the performer in terms of clarity and rhythmic precision.

CONCERTO NO. 2, IN G MINOR, OP. 22

The best version of the G minor—in fact, the only wholly satisfying one—has been deleted from the catalogue. I am referring to the Capitol disc—originally French Pathé—by Jeanne Marie Darré and the Orchestre Nationale. The veteran pianist's performance was in the traditional Gallic style, with restricted tonal color and slightly percussive articulation. There was immense technique and impeccable rhythmic control in her reading, and the orchestral work was very good.

Rubinstein plays with more richness of sonority and glowing romantic fervor. His grandly expansive account of the first movement is extremely impressive although the pianist avoids the obvious neo-Bachian characteristics in the music. Thereafter, his performance declines sharply: too many tempo changes drain the Scherzo of sparkle, while the tarantella finale is much too fast and not at all accurate from a rhythmic standpoint.

Gilels' Angel rendition is loud and enthusiastic. He storms into the music with sledge-hammer bravura, drops notes in quite a few spots, and even makes a premature entrance in the finale. On Vanguard, the pianist is less boisterous but no more subtle. This is a dull performance with dull engineering to match.

My vote goes to Rubinstein, but surely a better edition will appear before long. —Rubinstein; Symphony of the Air, Arthur Wallenstein, cond. RCA Victor LM 2234 (LP); LSC 2234 (SD).

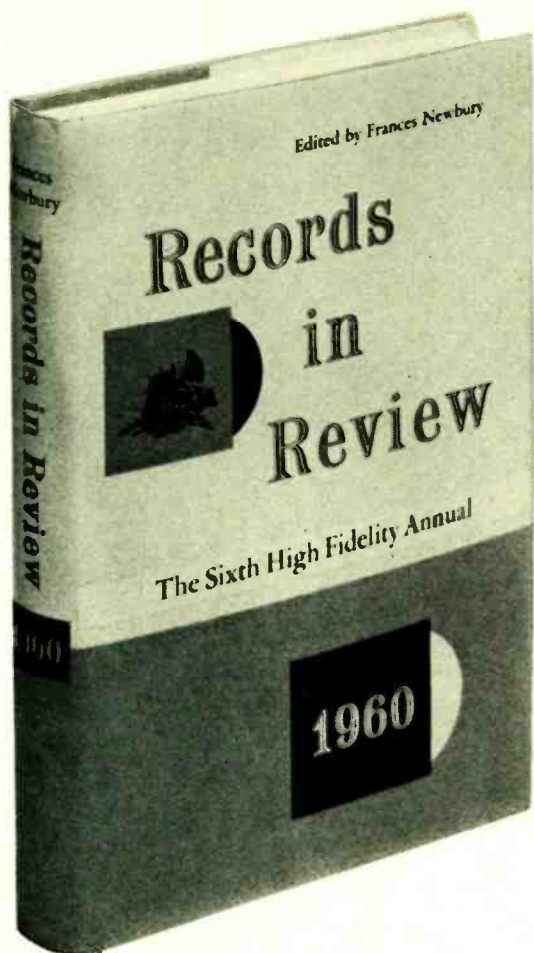
—Gilels; U.S.S.R. State Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin, cond. Vanguard VRS 6015 (LP).

—Gilels; Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, André Cluytens, cond. Angel 35132 (LP).

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

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The Lighter Side



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Vanguard VRS 9083/84, \$4.98 each (Two LP);
VSD 2087/88, \$5.95 each (Two SD).

√ “1960 Newport Folk Festival.” Elektra EKL 189, \$4.98 (LP).



The multiple-talented Bikel.

ADDED to its other difficulties—and they were legion—the Second Annual Newport Folk Festival (and possibly the last one if the aftermath of the Jazz Festival continues to cloud the vision of the city fathers) finds itself subject to a schizoid recorded memorial. Due to who-knows-what contract stipulations, Elektra recorded four of its own stellar artists while Vanguard, which did a splendid job of recording the 1959 Festival, picked up the rest of the vocal entertainers. For a good many reasons this procedure frustrates the auditor-once-removed who must depend upon the recorded document for his knowledge of the Festival. Different recording and cutting techniques result in subtly different sound, while the two-label coverage defeats

any attempt at continuity. On this score, one can only hope for a better break next year.

Nonetheless, the 1960 Folk Festival represented a long stride forward from the 1959 installment. Missing is the excitement of a debut as significant as that of Joan Baez, but the general level of performance is high, skilled, and authentic.

On Vanguard's brace of discs, the versatile veteran Pete Seeger starts things perking with a swinging rendition of *East Virginia Blues*, setting the stage for the tentative, almost shy voice of John Lee Hooker. In a jarring change of pace, the virile Canadian, Alan Mills, provides three north-of-the-border ballads, two in French: *A si mon moine voulait danser* not only offers one of the album's

most ingratiating moments but also spotlights fiddler-accompanist Jean Carignan. This accomplished scene stealer then proceeds to bring down the house with a solo of *Le réel du pendu*.

The subsequent parade of talent features Ireland's Tom Makem, who follows up a none too diverting bagpipe solo with a devastatingly bitter *Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye* and a softly limned, lovingly shaped *The Whistling Gypsy*. The inimitable Jimmie Driftwood chips in with a rollicking version of *Old Joe Clark*, and the New Lost City Ramblers contribute a noisy, infectious *Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms*.

The microphones then shift to the mellow baritone of Bob Gibson, who offers a moody, understated *Wayfaring Stranger*, and longtime balladeers Cisco Houston and Ed McCurdy. This pair appear long enough to make one keenly regret their recent absence from the listings: in fact, McCurdy's tenderly husky *Hush Little Baby* strikes me as perhaps the high spot of the entire festival. The peculiarly moving antiphonies of sweet-voiced Peggy Seeger and craggy Ewan MacColl then lead into a slam-bang finale featuring the lightning banjo of

Maestro Earl Scruggs and the flashing Bluegrass rhythms of The Foggy Mountain Boys.

On the whole, Elektra's supplementary disc offers smoother, calmer, slightly more antiseptic performances. Oscar Brand leads off with the ebullience that has, through the years, come to fall upon my ear with a certain tedium. Will Holt, one of the most underrated of today's ballad singers, follows with a sparkling trio of tunes, and the Oranim-Zabar Troupe provides an Israeli interlude spiced with a genuinely droll satire on Russian folk singers (apparently it eluded most of the audience). Elektra's entry roars into overdrive, however, with five selections by Theodore Bikel. No folk singer performing today combines Bikel's multiple talents. He is actor, singer, guitarist, scholar, and linguist, with the attributes of each of these roles coming into sharp focus upon any given song. His appearance ended the 1960 Festival on a very high point.

All of the discs are engineered with consummate skill. The monophonic versions seem to bring the soloists into sharper relief, but stereo more nearly duplicates the spacious outdoor ambiance of the original performances. O.B.B.

To the Greater Glory of the Wurlitzer

"Gus Farney at the Giant Five-Manual Wurlitzer Pipe Organ." *Gus Farney, organ.* Warner Bros. WS 1409, \$4.98 (SD).



Most of today's audiophiles probably have forgotten the hullabaloo once raised by those sensational display discs of early high-fidelity days which featured the most formidable surviving specimens of the genus Theatre Organ. That vogue was an ephemeral one, and properly so, for despite the impressiveness of some woofer-shaking 32-foot-pedal tones most of the sonic qualities were frankly ugly and were made no more palatable by the crude brashness of their exploitations.

Although a thin stream of movie-organ pops releases has continued to flow, nowadays even sonic thrill seekers are not particularly interested. But in this unpromising domain there now crops up an example that boasts not only attractive tonal qualities and deft and tasteful performances but also technical merits which would be notable in any

repertory and are certainly astonishing in this one. The present disc also reinforces the claims made for "Polymax" processing to eliminate static, reduce surface noise to an absolute minimum, and permit an immaculate crispness of transient response. The recording itself is less remarkable for the expanded frequency and dynamic ranges we have come to expect than for its distinctive purity and authenticity, the breadth and evenness of its stereo spread, and—as a unique lagniappe—a miraculous freedom from the customary pipe-organ mechanism and wind noises. (A simultaneously released tape edition—4-track, WSTC 1409—confirms one's conviction that what is to be heard on the stereo disc is indeed supremely faithful to everything captured in the "master" taping.)

The instrument itself is by far the best of its kind

I've ever encountered: originally (1930) a three-manual, 19-rank organ in the Staten Island Paramount Theatre, it was moved a few years ago to Larry Bray's organ loft in Salt Lake City and there expanded to five manuals and 24 ranks, of over 230 stops, housed in two tone chambers spaced 40 feet apart in a relatively small hall of only 200 seating capacity. Obviously both the layout and acoustics are ideally suited for stereo recording, yet credit for the over-all sonic effectiveness must be shared with the soloist for the tastefulness of his registration and the expressive grace of his playing. The pseudo-piano and percussion effects are employed only when appropriate—as in a jaunty *Dill*

Pickle Rag and the martial thunders of the *National Emblem March*. For the most part, Farney (a long-time veteran of the Paramount chain) is content to evoke the romantic nostalgia of old-time movie music making in a warmly sentimental *Peg o' My Heart*, *Auf Wiedersehen My Dear*, and the like, or the period's no less nostalgic gusto in a swinging *Sometimes I'm Happy*, delicately vivacious *Doll Dance*, etc.

Either to revive memories of a bygone age or to demonstrate the now refined powers of high-fidelity recording and the spaciousness of stereoism at its best, this Farney disc (or tape) is the finest Wurlitzerian memorial to date. R.D.D.



Ray Martin

Stereo Sound That Runs Near-Wild

"Stereo Action" Series: "Dynamica"; "It's Magic"; "Runnin' Wild." Ray Martin's *Orchestra*, Marty Gold's *Orchestra*, and Dick Schory's *Percussion and Brass Ensemble* respectively. RCA Victor LSA 2287, 2290, and 2306; Three SD: \$5.98 each.

UNTIL recently stereo-sound *motion* (as distinct from source separation and localization) was deliberately restricted to special "effects"—trains, marching bands, etc.—and was encountered in serious music only as an unavoidable defect (the sideways "drifting" of a presumably centered soloist) or in tentative attempts to suggest stage action. But the growing success with which current stereo operas are creating the illusion of normal stage movement (perhaps most successfully and subtly so far in London's *Fledermaus*) apparently has led RCA Victor to employ "stereo action" for these pops, mood music, and percussion display performances. It may be that the new technique will prove striking enough to compete with the more obvious one of electronic channel-switching popularized by Command Record's percussion series. In any case now we have an all-out effort to zoom solo instruments, or small choirs, back and forth across an otherwise stable orchestral background.

For better or for worse, the effort comes off perhaps only too well in the present prestidigitations. Where the materials call for sonic movement, the expressive as well as shock effects are admirable—as in Martin's *Flight of the Bumblebee*, where Julius Baker's flute flutters about with apiarian agility; Gold's quite literal *Dream Walking*; and the

languorously sliding trombone trio in Schory's *Lazy Bones*. Unfortunately, though, not all materials are as suitable, and the less meaningful motion tends to become tiresome or to induce a very real queasiness.

The mood music program, "It's Magic," profits least from these enhancements, although they do provide amusing atmospheric effects in *Shuffle off to Buffalo*, *The Trolley Song*, and *High on a Windy Hill*. They are more consistently appropriate and diverting in the inherently more suitable novelty arrangements in "Dynamica." I have some regrets about Schory's indulging in as many embellishments as he does here, but he still displays both the liveliest imagination and most kaleidoscopic sonics of any percussion specialist. And besides much dizzying motion, his present program is a must if only for a sheer masterpiece of uproarious tonal humor: the *Bully* take-off on all tauromachian documentaries, in which Arnold Jacobs' happy-go-lucky bull-tuba evades with elephantine grace the wildest attacks of Bill Babcock's trumpet-matador.

As if the novel "action" weren't enough in itself, the disc series boasts as handsome a format as inspired designers have yet achieved, and the superlative excellence of the stereo recording is no less evident on disc than on tape (4-track, FTP 1055, 1057, and 1063). R.D.D.

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CIRCLE 25 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

"Montmartre La Nuit." Germaine Montero; Orchestra. Philippe-Gerard, cond. Vanguard VRS 9082, \$4.98 (LP).

Germaine Montero, whose recitals of Spanish folk songs (VRS 9050 and 9067) are unequalled in the catalogue, displays another sparkling facet of her art. Born in Paris, Mlle. Montero is no stranger to the half-mocking heartbreak of the French *chanson*. Her harsh, vital voice and vivid interpretations are more redolent of the smoky *cave* than the smart salon—but then, so are the songs. *C'est à Hambourg* shows her at her bittersweet best, and, for a truly off-beat item, sample her *Complainte de Jack L'Eventreur* ("Ballad of Jack the Ripper"). Despite uneven sound, chalk up another triumph for the gifted Mlle. Montero. O.B.B.

"The Gentle Touch." Jackie Gleason and His Orchestra. Capitol SW 1519, \$5.98 (SD).

The predominance of up-tempo swing numbers, the substitution of woodwinds for the customary strings, and the use of two solo trumpets give an almost entirely new look and sound to the Gleason band. And unless I am mistaken, the boys are playing with more enthusiasm and vitality than they have for some time. Some of the inspiration for this upsurge may stem from George Williams' effective arrangements. Another source of pleasure is the exciting and skillful manipulation of the stereo sound, particularly in the exchange of conversation between the two trumpets and in the right-left speaker interplay of the two woodwind sections. J.F.I.

"Accordion à la Mode." Art Van Damme Quintet. Columbia CL 1563, \$3.98 (LP); CS 8363, \$4.98 (SD).

Like most movie organists, the majority of pops accordionists usually exhibit scant regard for either delicacy of tone color or interpretative subtlety. Van Damme is one of the notable exceptions, and his piquant playing is deftly integrated here with that of his costarred vibist and the vibrantly pulsing beat of a rhythm trio. The unaccredited arrangements too are marked by lively imagination. While these performances (a rhapsodically improvisatory *That Old Feeling*, lilting *Charmaine*, atmospheric *On Green Dolphin Street*, etc.) are scarcely jazz in the usual sense, they infuse the vital spirit of jazz into an unusually attractive mood-and-dance program. The clean, bright, and natural recording also is excellent—scarcely less effective in monophony than it is in stereo. R.D.D.

"Richard Dyer-Bennet No. Nine." Dyer-Bennet DYB 9000, \$4.98 (LP); DYBS 9000, \$5.95 (SD).

Richard Dyer-Bennet's ninth release under his own aegis equals the very high standards of its predecessors on all points. The singer's high, light tenor ranges across a broad terrain of traditional song; as usual the bulk of his repertory stems from the Anglo-American idiom, but two German entries and the delightful French *Le joli tambour* lend the piquancy of contrast. Admirers of Dyer-Bennet will note arresting differences—some subtle, some less so—between his present and earlier recorded versions of *The Laird of Cockpen*, *Gently Johnny*, *My Jingo*, and *The Two Sisters of Binnorie*. The reproduction is pellucid

with, in my opinion, the stereo version offering no improvement upon the splendid mono. O.B.B.

"Ivor Novello's Music Hall." Eric Johnson and His Orchestra. Westminster XWN 18953, \$4.98 (LP); WST 14134, \$5.98 (SD).

Ivor Novello, who died in 1951, was once described to me, rather unjustly I think, as the poor man's Noel Coward. Like Coward, Novello was a true man of the theatre—actor, director, manager, playwright, lyricist, and above all, composer. With the exception of *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, written in 1915, and *We'll Gather Lilacs*, composed in 1945, very little of his work is known in this country. His music, particularly that written between 1935 and 1949 for a series of enormously successful London musicals, is a blend of the best of Edward German and the middle-European operetta school of Lehár and Strauss. Even if some of his tunes sound slightly derivative, they are urbane, elegant, and consistently melodious. Handsomely recorded and played to perfection, this is a splendid representation of the composer's theatre music and a splendid addition to show music on discs. J.F.I.

"New Shows in Town—1961." Percussion Unlimited, Al Caiola, cond. Medallion MS 7515, \$5.98 (SD).

Caiola's arrangements may be overflamboyant, but in his performances the starred Bobby Rosengarden and Phil Kraus zestfully manipulate a piquant variety of percussive timbres and a small supporting ensemble matches their verve in a highly attractive selection of hit tunes from current Broadway shows: an expressive yet catchy *Our Language of Love (Irma la Douce)*, delectably raggy *Little Old New York (Tenderloin)*, scampering *Camelot*, rollicking *Hail the Conquering Hero*, etc. As always with this label, the Medallion recording is a model of luminous clarity and precisely differentiated stereoism. R.D.D.

"New Popular Songs from Greece." Epic LF 18009, \$3.98 (LP).

The most attractive feature of this Epic release is the inclusion of one entire side of songs by Manos Hadjidakis, composer of the international hit from the film *Never on Sunday*. Of these, *The Street Organ* and *I'll Sing Seven Songs for You* are fresh, melodic, and memorable. A half-dozen catchy folk airs round out the disc. All of the assorted Greek vocalists, particularly soprano Mary Lo, are of high caliber. Close, clean engineering adds the finishing touch to an appealing package. O.B.B.

"Connie at the Copa." Connie Francis; Orchestra, Joe Mele, cond. M-G-M E 3913, \$3.98 (LP).

If facing the tough Copa audience for the first time was any ordeal for Connie Francis, it certainly is not apparent in this recording of her debut there. From her opening number, a free swinging *O! Man Mose*, to her rousing closer *When the Saints Go Marching In*, she displays an astonishing assurance and sense of showmanship for so young an entertainer. Exciting is the word for her Jewish and Italian numbers, and affecting for ballads, which still seem to me to be her forte. She does particularly strong versions of *It All Depends on You* and

Mama, though she has a tendency to overwork the catch-in-the-voice routine. A lengthy *Al Jolson Medley* (with special lyrics) appeared to me to get a trifle sticky towards the end, but this opinion was obviously not shared by her live audience. Fairish on-the-spot sound, with the inevitable audience applause, which soon becomes tedious. J.F.I.

"Names from The War." Dave Garroway, narrator; the augmented New York Woodwind and Brass Quintets; Walter Ehret Chorale. Golden Crest CR 4026, \$4.98 (LP).

"Songs of Billy Yank and Johnny Reb." Jimmie Driftwood. RCA Victor LPM 2316, \$3.98 (LP); LSP 2316, \$4.98 (SD).

"The Blue and The Gray." George Mitchell Chorale; Lansdowne Orchestra. Decca DL 74047, \$4.98 (SD). With the Civil War Centennial barely under way, the trickle of discs dealing with the conflict already hints at impending flood. This month's entries represent three disparate approaches, only one of which rings the bell.

In "Names from The War," an undistinguished musical setting by Alec Wilder backs Bruce Catton's attempt at a lyrical rhapsody on the place names that shaped the Civil War: Shiloh, Manassas, Missionary Ridge, The Wilderness. In striving too rapidly for his effects, Catton dissipates them completely, and in addition the evocation as a whole has the air of a patchwork of semi-clichés; readers of Catton's magnificent books will have the feeling that they have encountered most of these phrases before. Dave Garroway struggles valiantly with the narration, but the engineers have sabotaged even his modest effort by overmaking him. The flip side offers a pleasant potpourri of folk songs from Carl Sandburg's *American Songbag* arranged by Wilder and conducted by Walter Ehret.

On another tack, Jimmie Driftwood—whose voice epitomizes all the good things of Arkansas—tries his hand at a dozen folklike compositions of his own. Through songs sporting such titles as *Rock of Chickamauga* and *I'm a Pore Rebel Soldier*, he attempts to reconstruct the sentiments of a century ago. Although Driftwood is always fun to listen to, even his great talent cannot surmount the one hundred years that separate him from the events and emotions he essays to describe. Excellent mono and even better stereo sound, but all in a rather profitless cause.

One must admit, with mingled embarrassment and pride, that Decca's "The Blue and The Gray" probably ranks as the best one-disc compilation yet of Civil War songs. Embarrassment derives from the fact that the arrangements and performances of this magnificent release originated in a BBC broadcast by the Lansdowne Orchestra and the George Mitchell Chorale: pride from the recognition that the songs of our great internal paroxysm so clearly possess an international impact. Here are well-known anthems such as *The Battle Cry of Freedom* and *The Bonnie Blue Flag*—along with *Stonewall Jackson's Requiem* and other more or less obscure ballads—sung with the straightforward simplicity that Americans seem to avoid at all costs. It is an ironic fact that the British forces penetrate closer to the heart of these stirring songs than any United States arranger or aggregation to date. Stereo

sound that is adequate rather than exciting and annotation that includes the excellent BBC script flesh out a recording that can be recommended without reservation. O.B.B.

"Nothing but Percussion," Vol. 1. Byron Parker and His Percussion Ensemble. Westminster WP 6130, \$4.98 (LP).

"Nothing but Percussion," Vol. 2. Bobby Christian and His Ensemble. Westminster WP 6131, \$4.98 (LP); WST 15065, \$4.98 (SD).

I regret that I have not yet heard the Vol. 1 SD, for, while Parker's arrangements cling to now familiar percussion-dominated *divertissement* patterns, the monophonic sound is so gleamingly authentic, with notably crisp transients and solid lows (well exploited by chromatic timpani), that these contagiously spirited performances of *I Got Rhythm*, *Drums in My Heart*, *Cherokee*, *Drums in the Night*, etc., must be even more magnetic in the twin-channel medium. Stereo does add marked atmospheric effectiveness to the SD edition of Vol. 2, but here the contents are far less interesting. R.D.D.

"Sellers and Sophia." Peter Sellers; Sophia Loren; Orchestra, Ron Goodwin, cond. Angel 35910, \$4.98 (LP).

A strange partnership this, and unfortunately not a very happy one. When the English comedian is riding the grooves alone, in a series of incomparable comic cameos, everything is just fine. But the level of entertainment drops appreciably when Miss Loren intrudes. In her two vocal solos, she turns out to be a most indifferent singer, and even when Sellers joins her, in four other numbers, she fails to come up with anything in any way spectacular.

Fortunately, Sellers is in fine form. His remarkable flair for impersonation is brilliantly demonstrated in *'Smith*, a portrait of a famous English stage and film star being interviewed on the purpose and significance of his current play. Sellers' portrayal is so lifelike that you will need no second guess as to who his victim may be. And *Common Entrance*, where-in Sellers plays a parent questioning a schoolmaster (also Sellers) on the regulations of the institution in which he is anxious to enroll his son, develops into a completely hilarious interlude. Only slightly less amusing are his imitations of a Cockney entertainer and a determined piccolo player working on a version of *Oh, Lady Be Good*, and his vocal refrain to *Ukulele Lady*, as it might have been heard on an acoustic recording around 1926. In sum, a feast of fun, which might have been even greater had the lady pulled her weight. J.F.I.

"London Suite and London Again." Eric Johnson and His Orchestra. Westminster XWN 18951, \$4.98 (LP); WST 14132, \$4.98 (SD).

The diverting Eric Coates scores which comprise this disc are so well served here by the bold and bright recording (in both sharply focused monophony and more expansive but unexaggerated stereo) that it's perhaps futile to warn its delighted listeners that Johnson's earnest readings lack the essential accent and bravura. The late composer's own (lamentably now mostly withdrawn) recorded performances revealed far better this music's exhilarating charms. But perhaps this attempt to bring the Coates

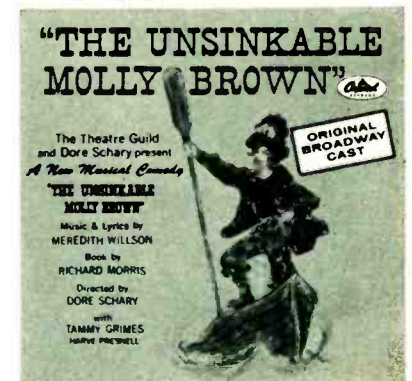
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jeu d'esprit to present-day listeners will prompt more authentically idiomatic releases by a Fiedler or Fennell. R.D.D.

"The Musical World of Rodgers and Hammerstein." Starlight Symphony Orchestra, Cyril Ornadel, cond. M-G-M 2E6, \$3.98 (Two LP).

As a tribute to the memory of Oscar Hammerstein, M-G-M has assembled this two-record set from previously issued discs. The musical portion, issued about a year ago as M-G-M 3817, contains twenty of the famous collaborators' finest songs in excellent performances by the London orchestra. Ornadel uses a heavy complement of strings in his band, and his treatment of the music is more symphonic than theatrical. Incidentally, I have rarely encountered

better sound on an M-G-M record. Of greater interest is the recorded conversation between Oscar Hammerstein and Arnold Michaelis, originally released as M-G-M 3688. Michaelis is a skillful interviewer, and thanks to his adroit way of steering the conversation and posing the questions, as well as to Hammerstein's freely expressed answers, we get a full-length portrait of a fearless and compassionate human being. J.F.I.

"From Bondage to Freedom." Theodore Bikel; Orchestra, Fred Hellerman, cond. Elektra EKL 200, \$4.98 (LP). Theodore Bikel's songs are always a joy to the ear, and this album is no exception. Knowledgeably, and with an obvious emotional commitment, he has shaped a dozen songs of rebellion into

a stirring recital. All of his varied talents come into focus on these ballads: by turns he is convincingly Spanish, Irish, Scotch, German, African, Russian, Jewish—the eternal, border-transcending rebel. In the whole program, Bikel comes a cropper only once—in *The Vision of the Bones*, a kind of recitative based upon the closing verses of the Book of Ezekiel, the whole adorned with an almost painfully pretentious musical setting by Dov Seltzer. Still, this disc may likely be the finest of the season, and no buyer will regret his act. O.B.B.

"Son of Drum Suite." Orchestra, Al Cohn, cond. RCA Victor LPM 2312, \$3.98 (LP); LSP 2312, \$4.98 (SD).

A sequel to the best-selling "Drum Suite" (LPM 1279) of several years ago, this one is composed as well as conducted by Al Cohn as a kind of concerto grosso for five drummers with a nineteen-man orchestra. It is of more than passing interest even in these days of percussion spectacles not only for its avoidance of empty decorative effects but for the fabulous intricacy of the drumming itself and for the tightly knit, richly antiphonal, over-all score, in which Cohn sometimes achieves highly original stylistic distinction. Tonally somewhat sharp-focused in monophony, the ultra-brilliant recording is far more impressive in the broadly panoramic SD. R.D.D.

"Portrait of Spain." Julio Martínez Oyanguren, guitar. Decca DL 4033, \$3.98 (LP).

In a delightful program spanning four centuries of Spanish music, Julio Martínez Oyanguren displays impeccable technique, a style that is pure and precise, and a depth of artistic insight into the music of his country. Particularly noteworthy is his handling of Tárrega's *Recuerdo de la Alhambra*, a study in tremolo that is also a lovely piece of music, and *Danza Infantil* and *Zapateado*, two simple selections performed with grace and color. O.B.B.

"The Music of Greece." Peter Kara and His Orchestra. Coral CRL 757348, \$4.98 (SD).

In a program of Greek dances, including some of his own compositions, Peter Kara manages to retain the national flavor of the music through the use of native instruments—the *houzoukkee*, the *toumbeg*, and the *oud*—but the orchestral interpretations never seem too esoteric for pleasurable listening. This disc should be a big step forward in popularizing Greek music. O.B.B.

"Love Themes from Great Operas." Frank Chacksfield and His Orchestra. Richmond B 20087, \$1.98 (LP); S 30087, \$2.98 (SD).

For those who do not object to operatic arias being transcribed for orchestra (a procedure that finds little favor with this corner), this all-Italian program offers a veritable feast of melodies from the works of Verdi, Puccini, and Mascagni. Unlike so many similar projects, these arrangements are uncluttered, retain the essential flavor and style of the original music, and keep musical embellishment to a minimum. They are expertly played by the Chacksfield orchestra, and have been recorded in splendid sound by Richmond's engineers. J.F.I.

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CIRCLE 35 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

JAZZ



✓ **Charlie Byrd Trio: "Charlie's Choice."**

Offbeat 3007, \$4.98 (LP).
Byrd's trio reaches an unusually high level of artistry. His combination of guitar, bass, and drums plays a consistently low-keyed program full of warmth, rhythm, melody, and inventiveness. This is beautifully turned jazz, developed with impeccable taste and showing a keen sense of programmatic balance. Each new Byrd disc in this Offbeat series has revealed a steady improvement over the previous one, but it is difficult to see how he can rise above the level he reaches here without moving in a completely different direction.

✓ **Al Cohn: "Son of Drum Suite."** RCA Victor LPM 2312, \$3.98 (LP); LSP 2312, \$4.98 (SD).

Several years ago Jack Lewis, then Victor's jazz a & r man, produced an LP, written and conducted by Manny Albam and Ernie Wilkins, called "Drum Suite." It was unusual in that, despite a deliberate focusing on its four drummers, it was primarily a melodic set with various drumming styles skillfully woven into the over-all fabric. After several years with other labels, Lewis has returned to Victor to produce (with Dom Cerulli) a sequel to that disc. This time the composer-conductor is Al Cohn, who has followed the same formula as before—no long drum solos but a consistent spotlighting of drumming, this time with five players. Cohn has created a superior big-band set, dotted with strong solo work by Clark Terry, Zoot Sims, Frank Rehak, and Bob Brookmeyer. Each of the six "movements" has interesting thematic development, and exploits the various ways in which drums can be used. Still, five drummers produce an awful lot of drumming; the most appreciative listeners are apt to be those who have a preconditioned interest in that direction.

✓ **Ida Cox: "The Moanin', Groanin' Blues."** Riverside 147, \$4.98 (LP).

Ida Cox was one of the major figures of the classic period of the blues in the Twenties. Her lyricism was very much like Bessie Smith's, although she lacked the latter's majesty. Instead she depended on an astute sense of phrasing; she could break any line into its most forcefully swinging rhythmic components. (There's a fine instance of this in the last line of *Fogysism*, here.) This disc is drawn from Paramount records made between 1924 and 1927, including good and occasionally remarkable songs (*Misery Blues* and *Coffin Blues* in particular) which have generally excellent accom-

paniments by Fletcher Henderson combos. The impeccable trumpet of Joe Smith, and Charlie Green's gutty trombone are heard on most of the selections, while Tommy Ladnier supports her on four. The recording, of course, is primitive, but Miss Cox and the musicians soon make you forget that.

✓ **Duke Ellington and His Orchestra: "Selections from *Peer Gynt* Suites Nos. 1 & 2, and *Suite Thursday*."** Columbia CL 1597, \$3.98 (LP); CS 8397, \$4.98 (SD).

Suite Thursday, commissioned by the Monterey Jazz Festival and introduced there last fall, is easily the most successful long work written by Ellington in recent years. It has none of that half-finished, semi-improvised feeling evident in so much of his extended writing. This Suite is developed with plenty of prime Ellington inventiveness. It is a little slow getting started, but once a lightly rocking saxophone ensemble is established, the work flows with absorbing fascination through a fast, swinging section colored by flashes of dark, minor delving by Ellington's piano, then one of Duke's lazily perky episodes, followed by a rocker of a finale decorated by Ray Nance's adroit violin work and some further Ellington piano which suggests that he has been listening more than casually to John Lewis. Ellington's treatment of selections from the two *Peer Gynt* Suites is, like his previous workout on *The Nutcracker* Suite, an inexplicable waste of his unique musical personality. *Suite Thursday* is eloquent testimony to the fact that, for the purposes of the Ellington band, no one can create better material than the Duke himself.



Ellington at his most inventive.

✓ **The Gil Evans Orchestra: "Out of the Cool."** Impulse 4, \$4.98 (LP); S-4, \$5.98 (SD).

This band is one Evans led for a couple of months last fall in New York, a brilliant eleven-piece group (expanded to thirteen for the recording) which allowed him to concentrate on group arrangements instead of the solo showcases (for Miles Davis or Cannonball Adderley) which had been the basis of much of his earlier and very impressive recording. With no such restrictions here, he has turned out a magnificent disc, a superb feast of flowing, weaving sounds, full of intriguing accents, shifting backgrounds, and aptly conceived solos, carried on a resilient rhythmic pulse. The opening selection, *Le Nevada*, is one of the most consistently absorbing and potently swinging long jazz pieces (fifteen minutes) ever recorded. Evans has a brilliant group of soloists, notably Ray Crawford on guitar, the constantly expanding Jimmy Knepper, trombone, and bassist Ron Carter. Evans is, at the moment, the most provocative arranger in the jazz field, and this disc represents the clearest, least restricted view of his work presented so far.

✓ **Pete Fountain: "Pete Fountain's French Quarter."** Coral 57359, \$3.98 (LP); 757359, \$4.98 (SD).

Fountain's velvet-textured mixture of New Orleans-rooted clarinet and the bubbling lines associated with Benny Goodman is a highly consistent product in itself. One's ultimate impression usually depends upon the surroundings in which Fountain plays. Here, as part of a quintet that includes Godfrey Hirsch on vibraphone, the Goodman small group association is inevitable. Fountain does this sort of thing unusually well, ranging from a feather-light gossamer tone to lean, lifting, whip-snapped lines, and his group lends him understanding assistance. This is a good collection of comfortable, mellow, highly polished swing.

✓ **The Bud Freeman All-Stars, featuring Shorty Baker.** Prestige/Swingville 2012, \$4.98 (LP).

Bud Freeman is playing with increasing freedom in a fresh and interesting vein these days. The once familiar whirligig attack, which eventually became a personal cliché, has largely disappeared. In its place the tenor saxophonist now uses longer lines which are an outgrowth of his earlier playing rather than an attempt to graft on the long-line style common in jazz for the past fifteen years. And he is still using his characteristic hoarse,

throbbing tone. He is warmly expressive here, particularly on an unusual, slow, and deeply lyrical version of *Something To Remember You By*. Shorty Baker's eloquent muted trumpet backs him up well, and the rhythm section—Claude Hopkins, George Duvivier, and J. C. Heard—is topnotch. The only real criticism is the choice of material, some of it excellent, some rather routine.

Stan Getz: "At Large." Verve 8393, \$9.98 (Two LP); 68393, \$11.98 (Two SD).

Getz recorded the fourteen selections in this two-disc set with an unidentified rhythm section in Copenhagen during his recent two-year residence there. I can't think of another jazz musician of Getz's stature and experience (he is thirty-four, has been playing professionally for nineteen years, and since the late Forties has been recognized as one of the outstanding tenor saxophonists in jazz) who has developed as radically and rapidly as he has in these two years. Granted his earlier abilities (which must include recognition of the fact that he was an erratic performer), the Getz emerging now is a vastly changed musician, a man who has mastered the full potential of the tenor saxophone to a greater extent than any other jazz musician. He has acquired a depth that was only fleetingly present before. His inventiveness is awesome as he plays one long solo after another, weaving his way through a fascinating variety of dynamics, playing with soaring lyricism, keeping a constant pulsation through even the most gentle ballads. He never descends to simply running the changes, but creates a succession of beautifully conceived and executed jazz structures. Blues, ballads, swingers—they are all absorbingly, compellingly performed. And there is never, throughout the sustained virtuoso playing, any sense of striving for effect—possibly the set's most remarkable feature. This is a series of almost casual little masterpieces in which Getz has the good fortune to be playing with a responsive but unobtrusive accompanying group.

Ahmad Jamal Quintet: "Listen." Argo 673, \$4.98 (LP).

The Ahmad Jamal Quintet is the Jamal Trio plus Ray Crawford, guitar, and Joe Kennedy, violin. And what a difference the addition of these two men makes to a group that was becoming increasingly bland! Crawford is a superb guitarist who was in Jamal's earlier, less successful trio (piano, guitar, bass); he adds tremendously to both the solo interest and the ensemble color here. Kennedy sounds like a slightly modernized Stephane Grappelly, occasionally provocative in his solo essays but most useful in filling out some exotic group sounds. And Jamal himself, possibly feeling less need to delve into gimmicks for variety, plays simply and much more effectively than in recent recordings. This is delightful chamber jazz, especially on Side 2.

Thomas Jefferson: "New Orleans at Midnight." Southland 229, \$4.98 (LP).

Jefferson, trumpeter and vocalist, is a subdued but accurate reflection of Louis Armstrong: that is, his playing is built on Armstrong's conceptions while his singing, similarly based, is reasonably free of Armstrong's current exaggerations. He is heard here with an unusually good New Orleans rhythm section in-

cluding, in addition to that authoritative swinging pianist, Armand Hug, a delightful guitarist, Joe Capraro, who gives Jefferson wonderfully airy accompaniment in his songs and whose solos are models of selective phrasing. The tunes are, for the most part, quite familiar—*When You're Smiling, Breeze, Some Day You'll Be Sorry, There'll Be Some Changes Made*, and so forth. (Both labels and liner copy are full of ridiculous misspellings; Southland Records really ought to get some literate New Orleanian to check these things.)

Billy Maxted and His Manhattan Jazz Band: "Swing a BILLYty." K & H 101, \$4.98 (LP).

Unadulterated, lighthearted pleasure romps through this disc. Maxted's excellent band takes a bright, fresh, crisp attitude toward some of the familiar standbys of the traditional jazz repertory (*Milenberg Joys, Tiger Rag*), a pair of old Bob Crosby favorites (*Come Back Sweet Papa, Gin Mill Blues*), a surprising entry in this company (Duke Ellington's *Satin Doll*), plus several others, and fills them with pure delight and gaiety. Part of this group's impact arises from its use of a two-trumpet team (Chuck Forsyth and Johnny Dengler), part from Maxted's exuberant piano playing, part from his rollicking arrangements, and a great deal from the versatility of Dengler, whose ability to shift from trumpet to tuba to bass saxophone puts all kinds of additional accents at the disposal of the band. A bonanza for traditional jazz fans, this disc might even interest some of those indifferent to traditional jazz.

The Modern Jazz Quartet: "European Concert." Atlantic 2603, \$9.98 (Two LP); S2603, \$11.98 (Two SD).

These concert performances, excellently recorded in Scandinavia in April 1960, stand as a summation of the development of the Modern Jazz Quartet during the first eight years of its existence. The program (on two discs) includes selections drawn from the early stages of that career—*Vendôme, La Ronde, Bluesology, Django*—along with a pair of John Lewis' film pieces (from *Odds Against Tomorrow*) and such recent material as *Pyramid* and *Festival Sketch*. The performances all glow with the mixture of lustrous polish and lean, strong expression the Quartet has recently achieved. It is, because of both the programming and the stage at which it occurs in the Quartet's career, the most essential recorded collection of one of the most brilliant groups in the history of jazz.

Gerry Mulligan: "Meets Johnny Hodges." Verve 8367, \$4.98 (LP); 68367, \$5.98 (SD).

Following his recent rewarding meeting with Ben Webster (Verve 8343), Mulligan's encounter with Hodges is almost as provocative. The six selections, all originals, are marked by perky ensemble statements and masterful ease in the solo developments. This set may not reach out and grasp the listener quite as firmly as the Mulligan-Webster collaboration, but it makes delightful relaxed listening.

New Orleans Rhythm Kings: "Tin Roof Blues." Riverside 146, \$4.98 (LP).

Along with King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band and the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, the New Orleans Rhythm Kings

is one of the three early groups whose work must be known if one is to appreciate where today's jazz came from. The NORK occupied a place midway between the raggy hokum of the Original Dixieland and the free New Orleans ensemble playing of Oliver's band. The key musician was Leon Rappolo, the brilliant clarinetist whose career was cut short when he was committed to a sanitarium in 1925. Rappolo's entire recorded output is practically summed up on this disc and on an earlier NORK reissue (Riverside 12-104). This set of 1922 and 1923 recordings serves as a reminder that jazz has never had a clarinetist quite like Rappolo since then. The sheer flowing beauty of his playing remains quite unique. Even in these acoustical recordings, which reduce most sounds to a muffled rumble, his clarinet slices through cleanly and clearly. He appears to have been an infallible soloist (he is excellent on every piece in this collection), but he reaches really superb heights on *Tiger Rag* and *Tin Roof Blues*. In other respects, the NORK was a good ensemble band but, aside from Rappolo, its occasional solo attempts are not remarkable.

Buddy Rich and His Buddies: "Playtime." Argo 676, \$4.98 (LP).

This is the first recorded appearance of Rich's brilliant young vibraharpist, Mike Mainieri. He makes a startling impression on the opening *Lulu's Back in Town*, in which a slashing, swinging solo marks him as an unusually exciting newcomer. He has virtuosity, imagination, and a sense of balance remarkable in a musician under twenty. He can also handle a slow ballad warmly and thoughtfully. Only slightly less impressive is the vigor of Sam Most's flute, when Rich sets one of his driving tempos. This normally piping instrument seems almost to roar as Most charges through these pieces. With Rich setting the pace, these are, for the most part, urgent performances carried to a high peak of satisfaction.

Sunnyland Slim: "Slim's Shout." Prestige/Bluesville 1016, \$4.98 (LP).

Of the growing number of veteran blues singers that Prestige is bringing back to the recording studios, Sunnyland Slim is one who can be most readily appreciated. He has direct, strong projection and clear diction, he plays a rocking, jabbing piano accompaniment, and, on this disc, he has a well-chosen little group behind him. His approach is a mixture of the lean, stark style of Big Bill Broonzy and the full-bodied attack of Joe Turner, a combination that creates dramatic impact with a swinging lift. And his material keeps a generally high level of interest.

Kai Winding and J. J. Johnson: "The Great Kai and J. J." Impulse 1, \$4.98 (LP); S-1, \$5.98 (SD).

There's nothing like a pair of lusty trombones for creating sonorous and (when the trombonists are Winding and Johnson) swinging sounds. The only difficulty with a program built around two trombones and a rhythm section is the sense of sameness that eventually overcomes the listener, a problem that led to the dissolution of the group these two trombonists once led. This reunion is skillfully and imaginatively carried off, but its appeal is limited by the extent of one's trombone tolerance.

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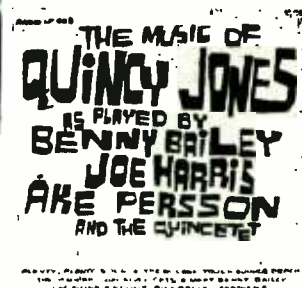
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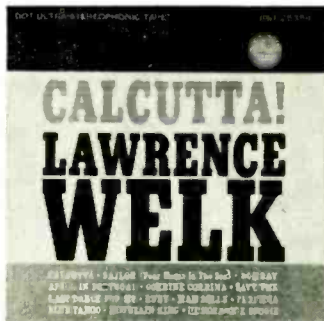


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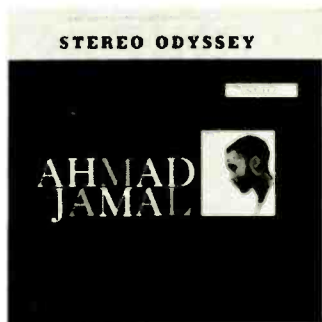
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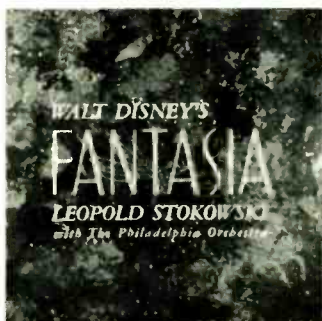
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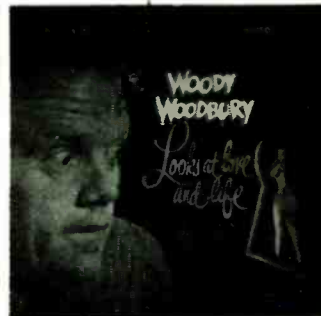
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the Tape Deck

Reviewed by R. D. DARRELL

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

ARNOLD: Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra, Op. 67

†Giuliani: *Concerto for Guitar and Strings, in A*

✓ Julius Bream, guitar; Melos Ensemble.
• • RCA VICTOR FTC 2049. 45 min. \$8.95.

Seldom are commercial conventions flouted as boldly—and successfully—as they have been here. Where guitar concertos are normally considered to be *tours de force* for virtuoso display, these unfamiliar examples are of musical rather than showpiece appeal; furthermore, although coupling works of two widely spaced eras and disparate styles is ordinarily highly unsatisfactory, early nineteenth-century Vienna and mid-twentieth-century London meet harmoniously here. Finally, in a field long dominated by a single great artist the relatively little-known Bream demonstrates that his is a name—and a musicianship—to rank with Segovia's. In short, this novel release is a surprise and delight in every respect. The exquisitely colored and plastically contoured playing of both the soloist and his deft accompanists are captured in the purest and most translucent of stereo, and the present taping completely eliminates any tendency of the solo instrument to drift over to the right channel, noted by H. G. in reviewing the stereo disc edition two months ago.

Both works are recording firsts. Indeed, that by Mauro Giuliani (c.1780–c.1840) is claimed to be the “first genuinely ‘virtuoso’ example” of its genre (as distinguished, I assume, from those like Vivaldi's, which are closer to the concerto grosso in style). At any rate, it now seems less remarkable for the virtuosity of its solo role than for the chamber music intimacy of its warmth and lyricism—qualities which make Giuliani's fame in Vienna about 1808 (where Beethoven wrote several guitar pieces especially for him) seem richly deserved. Malcolm Arnold's Concerto, which calls for a chamber orchestra rather than strings alone (and which he conducts here himself), contrasts piquantly with Giuliani's. If less elegantly aristocratic, it vividly combines some fine modal tunes with modern spiciness and humor. Perhaps the rhapsodic threnody of the slow movement (an elegy for the late Django Reinhardt) is a bit long-winded and mannered in comparison with the terser opening and closing movements, but the work as a whole is rich in invention and zest. Admirers of the celebrated Rodrigo guitar concerto should relish this one too.

BEETHOVEN: Symphonies: No. 2, in D, Op. 36; No. 4, in B flat, Op. 60

Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Ernest Ansermet, cond.

• • LONDON LCK 80057 (twin-pack). 68 min. \$11.95.

Ansermet is the first conductor I have heard since Toscanini and Beecham who captures fully the lyricism and sturdy gusto of these so-called “little,” and often sadly underestimated, symphonies. Even if these were not the only versions available in 4-track tapings, I should want to give special mention to their distinctively individual and zestful interpretations. The recorded sound is beautifully lucid, marred only by the processors' failure to eliminate the last barely perceptible residue of background noise.

BRAHMS: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in B flat, Op. 83

Sviatoslav Richter, piano; Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Erich Leinsdorf, cond.
• • RCA VICTOR FTC 2055. 47 min. \$8.95.

Now that most of the hullabaloo over Richter's American concert tour has died down, tape collectors can evaluate objectively this much publicized and debated Brahms Second. Some of them even may be objective enough to concede that almost everything written about it has a considerable measure of truth. There is indeed magisterial playing here—and also some which is obviously erratic. There is an undeniable lack of rapport between the soloist and the hastily briefed conductor substituting for the incapacitated Reiner—yet despite this, there are many thrilling moments in the over-all performance. The reverberant,



Curzon: Grieg metamorphosed.

markedly stereoistic recording does tend to enlarge and overbrighten Richter's essentially lyrical and delicately colored tone, but it still seems notably attractive as well as impressive. In short, where this Brahms Second well may be one of the most uneven of the major recorded versions, it is nevertheless one of the most fascinating. Richter's finest and most distinctively individual artistry may be glimpsed here only fitfully (perhaps best in the slow movement, where his serenely romantic expressiveness is most closely matched by the Chicagoans, and especially by their solo cellist, Robert La Marchina), but it is his multifaceted personality which endows this controversial recorded performance with its exceptional interest.

GRIEG: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 16

†Franck: *Variations symphoniques*

†Litolff: *Concerto symphonique, No. 4, Op. 102: Scherzo*

Clifford Curzon, piano; London Symphony Orchestra, Oivin Fjeldstad, cond. (in the Grieg); London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond.
• • LONDON LCL 80064. 41 min. \$7.95.

Clifford Curzon is a pianist whose sensitivity and poetic insight have been better appreciated in his native Britain than in this country. And probably most admirers of Grieg's warhorse will find his luminous version disconcertingly deliberate and lacking in bravura display. Those for whom orthodox virtuoso readings have only superficial appeal, however, will be delighted to find this a noble metamorphosis of the familiar music—or, more accurately, a glorious restoration of its original freshness and lyricism. For myself, I had never realized before the rich eloquence discovered here by Curzon and a native Norwegian conductor. The engineers have enshrined this extraordinary performance in the warmest and most air-borne of stereo sonics. The Franck Variations and Litolff Scherzo are nearly as well recorded, but Boult seems routine in comparison with Fjeldstad, and even Curzon himself less fervently communicative. No matter: the Grieg alone gives the whole reel rare distinction.

PROKOFIEV: Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67

†Saint-Saëns: *Carnaval des animaux*

Beatrice Lillie, narrator; Julius Katchen and Gary Graffman, piano (in the Saint-Saëns); London Symphony Orchestra, Skitch Henderson, cond.
• • LONDON LCL 80061, 52 min. \$7.95.

The fey notion of having “Auntie Bea”

Lillie relate—in her ripest manner—the “story” of *Peter and the Wolf* and Ogden Nash’s verses for *The Carnival of the Animals* is one which may or may not enhance the listener’s pleasure in these works. So many reviewers have found the results, in the recently released disc edition, overarch or determinedly sophisticated, that I’m almost ashamed to admit that for me Miss Lillie (flitting as elfishly from channel to channel as she used to scurry across a stage) is not only consistently and uproariously funny, but that she stimulates an entirely new relish in music which has long left me lukewarm if not bored. I don’t dare suggest that all, or most, others will share that relish, but I can objectively recommend the surprisingly vivacious and unmannered orchestral performances here (far better than any of Skitch Henderson’s “pops” records have ever prepared one to expect). The recorded sound is vivid, with narrator and orchestra excellently balanced.

PUCCINI: *Turandot*

Birgit Nilsson (s), Turandot; Renata Tebaldi (s), Liù; Anna di Stasio (s), Nelly Pucci (s), and Myriam Funari (s), Attendants of Turandot; Jussi Bjoerling (t), Calaf; Alessio DePaolis (t), Emperor Altoum; Piero de Palma (t), Pang; Tommaso Frascati (t), Pong; Mario Sereni (b), Ping; Adelio Zagonara (b), Prince of Persia; Giorgio Tozzi (bs), Timur; Leonardo Monreale (bs), A Mandarin. Chorus and Orchestra of the Rome Opera, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. ● ● RCA VICTOR FTC 8001. Two reels: approx. 32 and 82 min. \$21.95.

The demands of Puccini’s last and most ambitious opera are such that adequate performances are rare and an ideal one perhaps utterly impossible. Even on records it seems unlikely that there will ever be a match for Eva Turner’s ineffably thrilling Ice Princess. Yet the present performance at least approaches the ideal more closely than I had ever thought possible, and certainly ranks among the topmost achievements in stereo opera. Nilsson’s brilliance in the title role is electrifying; Tebaldi is emotionally and vocally a finer Liù than even her most devoted admirers could hope; and the late Jussi Bjoerling’s glittering career is crowned here with one of his finest performances. A great deal of the credit for the over-all impact of this work must be shared with Leinsdorf, who has sparked the Rome chorus and orchestra—in fact, the whole cast—into uncommon vitality. The engineers have captured the immediacy and galvanic excitement of a big opera house live performance, and have produced a tape free from any taint of technological trickery and wholly devoted to enhancing the drama itself.

STRAUSS, JOHANN II: *Die Fledermaus* (“Gala Performance”)

Hilde Gueden (s), Rosalinde; Erika Köth (s), Adele; Regina Resnik (ms), Orlofsky; Hedwig Schubert (speaker), Ida; Giuseppe Zampieri (t), Alfred; Waldemar Kmentt (t), Von Eisenstein; Peter Klein (t), Dr. Blind; Walter Berry (b), Falke; Eberhard Waechter (b), Frank; Erich Kunz (speaker), Frosch; Omar Godknow (speaker), Lord Barrymore; et al., plus guest artists; Vienna State Opera Chorus. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond.

● ● LONDON LOR 90030. Two reels: approx. 74 and 72 min. \$21.95.

Even the prodigal musical and technical splendors of this tape cannot make me forget the London *Fledermaus* of 1951, which I have cherished for a decade. But the new one is incomparable in its own right. Certainly it represents advanced stereo technique in a superlative degree, and although the music itself permits no such sensational displays of sonic power as those, for example, in *Das Rheingold* or *Aida*, London’s engineers now reveal new and more subtle resources in reproducing the fluidity and naturalness of stage motion, and in including discreet background effects, such as the offstage music and merriment in the ballroom episodes. The performance too is well-nigh ideal, with the stars hard pressed for honors by the minor role singers (whose acting is equally effective) and by Von Karajan’s sensitive yet precisely controlled conducting. Yet what gives irresistible charm to the work is, perhaps, less the sonic beauties of the singing and orchestral playing than the infectious gaiety of everyone concerned in it, each of whom unmistakably sounds as if he or she were relishing every moment.

So will every listener, even if he wants to hear no more than once the much publicized “gala performance” interlude of guest artists and interpolated songs—some forty-five minutes of reel-side 3. For myself, I found to my surprise that even these interpolations were handled as charmingly as the opera itself. Some are amusing; many of them are outstanding performances in their own right: Corena’s *Domino*, Berganza’s *Basque Lullaby*, Sutherland’s *Il bacio*, Bjoerling’s *Dein ist mein ganzes Herz*, Price’s *Summertime*, and perhaps above all the *Wien, Wien, nur du allein* which brings back Ljuba Welitsch to records after far too long a silence. With or without these added attractions, *Die Fledermaus* exudes more sheer *joie de vivre* than any other so-called “serious” recording I have heard in years!

WAGNER: *Das Rheingold* (highlights); *Die Walküre*, Act III (highlights)

George London (b); Otto Edelmann (bs), et al.; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. ● ● LONDON LOL 90028. 41 min. \$7.95.

For tape collectors who have shied away from the complete *Rheingold* the present sampling is a relatively inexpensive way to discover at first hand why so much excited praise has been lavished on this spectacular work. Ordinarily I hesitate to commend abridgments of any kind, but in this case I feel justified: much of the material eliminated would probably be relished only by devout Wagnerians, and the opera’s most compelling episodes are included here: the descent into and return from Nibelheim (with the interludes between Scenes 2 and 3, and 3 and 4), and the entire conclusion of the opera, including the sonically sensational forging of the Rainbow Bridge, the Entry of the Gods into Valhalla, and the final Rhinemaidens’ warning. In comparison with all this, the coupled *Walküre* selections (Ride of the Valkyries and Wotan’s Farewell and Magic Fire Music) are considerably less impressive—partly because the stereo recording, fine as it

may have seemed only a few years ago, now has been so far surpassed, but principally because the robust Edelmann is far less than a supremely eloquent Wotan.

WILLI BOSKOVSKY: “Philharmonic Ball”

Strauss, Johann II: *Auf der Jagd*; *Frühlingsstimmen*; *Blue Danube*; *Egyptian March*; *Perpetuum mobile*. Strauss, Josef: *Delirien*; *Ohne Sorgen*; *Transaktionen*. Strauss, Johann and Josef: *Pizzicato Polka*.

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Willi Boskovsky, cond.

● ● LONDON LCL 80062. 46 min. \$7.95.

Boskovsky’s latest holiday program, devoted once again to the Strauss family, seems better played and recorded than his earlier ones. The stereo, while luminous and airy, is immensely powerful when need be, as in the echoing gunshots of *Auf der Jagd*. I still feel that Boskovsky’s waltzes, although sweetly colored and seductively rhythmed, are somewhat bland and lacking in vivacity, but there is no lack of gusto in the glittering *Egyptian March*, the delicately grazioso *Perpetuum mobile*, and the lustily rollicking *Ohne Sorgen*.

HERBERT VON KARAJAN: *Orchestral Program*

Tchaikovsky: *Ouverture solennelle 1812*, Op. 19. Weber: *Invitation to the Dance* (orch. Berlioz). Liszt: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2* (orch. Müller-Berghaus). Sibelius: *Valse triste*, Op. 44. Berlioz: *The Damnation of Faust*: *Marche hongroise*.

Philharmonia Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond.

● ● ANGEL ZS 35614. 47 min. \$7.98.

The disc version of this program warranted the widest possible publicity, and heard again in stereo tape, it impresses me more than ever as one of the year’s best. Von Karajan rejuvenates these supposedly jaded materials with superb taste and skill, and the scintillating sonics are completely authentic. The tape is immaculately processed and enormously wide-range, and again I can hail the Berlioz March as the most exciting version I’ve ever heard (on records or off), the *1812* as the most lucid in the entire repertory (yet as dramatically powerful as any), and the other works as highly polished if less distinctive performances. No audiophile and connoisseur, regardless of how many other *1812s* and Second *Hungarian Rhapsodies* he may have, can afford to pass up this reel: its combination of interpretative performing, and technological merits is one seldom encountered in any medium.

Reviews: From 2 to 4

The latest floods of new material, in every type of repertory, which are now appearing in 4-track tapings discourage any further attempts to steal space for re-reviewing programs which first came out (in whole or in part) in 2-track re-

leases of several years ago. Yet it is good to find that some at least of the outstanding older tape triumphs are being given a new lease on life, and since recent converts to tape collecting may be unfamiliar with them, I cannot forbear at least check-listing a few of the most attractive of these re-releases, in most part together with the date of their original Tape Deck review.

COLUMBIA: the original Broadway cast *West Side Story* (March 1958), OQ 345, \$9.95; London cast *My Fair Lady* (October 1959), OQ 310, \$9.95; film sound track *Porgy and Bess* (October 1959), OQ 330, \$9.95; and "Sing Along with Mitch." CQ 329, \$6.95.

CONCERTAPES: Sorkin's Mendelssohn Octet (October 1956), 4T 3021, \$6.95, and Tchaikovsky Serenade for Strings (November 1957), 4T 3020, \$6.95.

MERCURY: the List/Hanson Gershwin *Rhapsody in Blue* (November 1958), now coupled with Hanson's performance of Gershwin's *Cuban Overture* hitherto unavailable on tape, or indeed in stereo disc form, STA 90138, \$6.95; David Carroll's "Let's Dance" (November 1959) now coupled with "Let's Dance Again" (February 1961 4-track review), STG T-1, \$9.95.

RCA VICTOR: Fiedler's Offenbach *Gaîté Parisienne* (December 1956) now coupled with the Khachaturian *Gayne Suite*, FTC 2045, \$8.95.

WESTMINSTER: Rodzinski's Prokofiev *Peter and the Wolf* (May 1958) now coupled with Scherchen's Saint-Saëns *Carnival of the Animals* (November 1957), WTC 142, \$7.95; Scherchen's Enesco-Smetana-Weinberger orchestral program (previously spread over three 2-track tapes), WTC 143, \$7.95.

"Come Dance with Me." Frank Sinatra; Orchestra. Billy May, cond. Capitol ZW 1069, 31 min., \$7.98.

This is one of the best tape explorations of the Sinatra repertory, in which the star is content to supply spirited and personality-packed vocal choruses for vivacious dance pieces by Billy May's Orchestra. The only change of pace occurs in the romantic closing torch-ballad performance of *The Last Dance*. Despite the marked channel differentiation, the soloist is firmly centered, and it's doubtful whether these recordings ever sounded as bright and open in their original disc versions of 1959.

"Ted Heath Swing Session" and "Ted Heath Swings in High Stereo"; "Pop Hits from the Classics" and "Great Film Hits." Ted Heath and His Music. London LPK 70031 and 70040 (two twin-packs), 75 and 70 min., \$11.95 each.

Both double-barreled reels exemplify this British band's vivacity and polish—and also its failure ever to escape the bonds of strict orthodoxy. The second reel (LPK 70040) is slightly superior technically in its richer and more smoothly spread stereoism, but the first is unusually good for a live-audience recording and is, moreover, considerably more interesting musically. Although its swing is never torridly hot, it has many aural attractions, especially in the percussive *Big Ben*, and in jauntily brisk renditions of *Love Me or Leave Me*, and *I Like To Recognize the Tune*.

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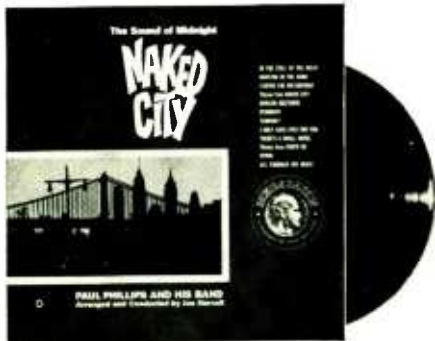
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"Invitation" and "Soft and Subtle." The Guitars, Inc. Warner Bros. WSTP 1246 (twin-pack), 71 min., \$11.95.

This tape puts to shame all the other conventional and "spectacular" guitar-dominated pops programs I know. The players (inexcusably anonymous) are content to let their guitars sound like guitars; they play with virtuosity and a sensitive awareness of tonal values and contrasts; the arrangements are ingenious and often delectably stereophonic; and the vivacious rhythm section accentuates the verve of all the performances. Among the best are *Lazy Afternoon*, *Paganini's Progress*, *El Cumbanchero*, *It Don't Mean a Thing*. The entire tape is a delight to one's ears.

"I've Got a Right To Sing the Blues."

Eileen Farrell; Orchestra. Luther Henderson, cond. Columbia CQ 343, 34 min., \$6.95. [Also in part on the 2-track GCB 99, \$6.95.]

Miss Farrell is one of the very few divas who can exercise the above-mentioned right without sounding pretentious or coy, since the greater part of her earlier career was spent in pops broadcasting, and her later triumphs have not spoiled her ability to belt out a blues or sweeten a torch ballad with the best of the short-hair vocalists. Her big voice indulges in a few self-caricatures here in unduly trumpeting fortissimos and overemotionalized vibratos, but for the most part she brings a very engaging and distinctive personality to this program of bluesy laments (*He Was Too Good for Me*, *Blues in the Night*, etc.), and charming insouciances (*On the Sunny Side of the Street*, *Glad To Be Happy*, *Ev'ry Time*, etc.). All are effectively accompanied by Luther Henderson's Orchestra, in bold, broadly reverberant stereo.

"Like Bongos." Bob Rosengarten, Phil Kraus, and Ensemble. Time ST 2025, 29 min., \$7.95.

For all their exceptional deftness, the starred bongoists are overshadowed by the versatile Phil Bodner, who again demonstrates—whether assigned a flute, piccolo, oboe, sax, or bass clarinet part—that he is one of the most skilled of contemporary woodwind players. I could do with fewer fade-out endings and a complete elimination of the electronic organ too frequently substituted for the piano here, but these are minor flaws. The program eschews overfancy arrangements and pointless percussion embellishments and concentrates on high-spirited and sensitively colored performances of such numbers as *Bongo Frailich*, *Mack the Knife*, *Yankee Doodle Bongo*. As a further merit, the stereo is gleamingly pure and effective.

"A Portrait of Duke Ellington." Dizzy Gillespie and His Orchestra. Verve VSTC 252, 41 min., \$7.95.

I'd scarcely recognize most of the Ellington and Strayhorn pieces here, but Gillespie's rhapsodic trumpeting in itself is stimulating throughout, while the somewhat lumbering playing of his present big band cannot conceal the striking originality of these extremely odd yet often moving arrangements—of *Chelsea Bridge*, *Come Sunday*, *Johnny Come Lately*, among others. A fascinating and eccentric, if seldom fully satisfactory, program. The recording is stereoisitic yet smoothly broad-spread.

"The Sound of Hollywood." Medallion Strings, Emanuel Vardi, cond. Medallion MST 47013, 32 min., \$8.95.

Ultrabright and ultrastereoisitic recordings of routinely rich, big (35-man) orchestral versions of hit tunes from the films (*A Summer Place*, *Black Orpheus*, *Sons and Lovers*, etc.). Their main distinctions are the expressive phrasing and sumptuous tonal coloring of Vardi's fine string and woodwind choirs.

"This is Darin." Bobby Darin; Orchestra, Richard Wess and Bunny Bregman, conds. Atco ATC 1402, 39 min., \$7.95.

My first encounter with the latest teenagers' idol leaves me torn between annoyance at his almost insolent assurance and admiration for his genuinely versatile talent. Some of his mannerisms are hard to take, but at his best (as in *Pete Kelly's Blues*, *The Gal That Got Away*, and *Don't Dream of Anyone But Me*) Darin can give Sinatra a run for his money. Whatever one's reactions to the singer himself, there can be nothing but praise for the piquant scoring and easy swing of Wess's accompaniments (the two Bregman backings verge on stridency) and the excellent balance of the markedly differentiated channels.

United Stereo Tapes Samplers. UST RQ 401-4: Popular, 28 min.; Classical, 28 min.; Jazz, 28 min.; Sounds, 23 min.; \$3.95 each.

These reels, at bargain prices and with varied contents, are sure to win a place in every tape collection. I am disappointed in only one: the "Sounds" Sampler which, for all its sonic brilliance, is largely confined to the more obvious types of percussion displays. The "Popular" and "Classical" Samplers are eminently satisfactory: the former for its consistently danceable selections on one side and its ingratiating vocals on the other; the latter for a variety of excerpts and movements representing Golschmann, Fistoulari, Sargent, Scherchen, Sorkin, et al. It is marred only by the inclusion of the far from classical Greeley "concerto" version of a Chopin polonaise. But the outstanding success of the series is the "Jazz" Sampler, which packs a surprising number of fine performances by Basie, Gillespie, Jo Jones, the Modern Jazz Quartet, and many others, into less than half an hour. Except for the omission of the extensive repertory on London, the whole series (happily free from commentary and sales plugs) is an effective introduction to the incalculable riches of the present UST catalogue: the jazz reel alone (RQ403) is the best buy available on tape today!

"The World's Greatest Ragtime Player." Joe "Fingers" Carr and Ensemble. Warner Bros. WSTC 1386, 28 min., \$7.95.

Carr may indeed be all that the title claims, but the proof isn't here. Neither his piano playing nor any of his selections (the best of which are a jauntily driving *Down Under*, and a showy *Twilight in Turkey*) has more than a smattering of true ragtime flavor. As cocktail hour *divertissements*, however, the present performances are jaunty and disarming. The spirited rhythm section is kept well to the fore, in a brilliant, if somewhat dry, recording.



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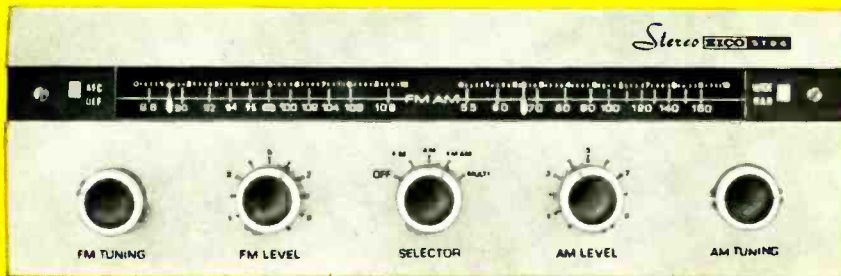
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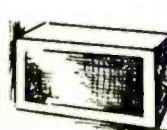
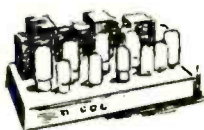
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High Fidelity Newsfronts



Compact Recorder. The trend to "compacts" in the automobile has caught on in the tape recorder field. That is to say, one firm, Viking of Minneapolis, has a new unit they call the "76 Compact." Why "compact"? A scanning of the unit's instruction manual shows its dimensions to be just a bit over a foot square. This dimension is all the more remarkable when the many functions of the 76 Compact are considered. The head complement and dual recording amplifiers permit stereo or mono taping, full-, half-, or quarter-track, sound on sound (as many as four parts; be your own quartet). With some modification of the unit, it can also be used to introduce reverberation (time delay, rate of decay, and frequency discrimination) to programs from tuner, records, or another tape player. This last use, Viking points out, demands a certain degree of technical skill. Such skills are not beyond the reach of the audio hobbyist, however, and the introduction of reverb is one way of enhancing the system that has almost everything. The 76 Compact costs \$199.50. It can, by the way, be mounted vertically (the professional studio look), horizontally (in a pull-out drawer to prevent dust accumulation), or on a bookshelf (the casual look).

Heavyweight Enclosures. Last month, we noted that loudspeaker manufacturers still sell a great number of "raw" speakers to music listeners who build their own enclosures. The manufacturers also pass along quantities of construction notes to insure optimum speaker performance for the builder. The most recent set of notes to come this way are those prepared by Wharfedale. The tiny booklet packs a lot of information in its eight pages. Sample note: "The total weight of a cabinet or enclosure gives a good indication of its solidity and probable resonance-free qualities." This may help dispel the misgivings a reader may feel on reading about sand-filled corner panels and brick-constructed bass reflex enclosures. The book is free on request to British Industries Corp., 80 Shore Rd., Port Washington, N. Y.

Pickups and Skating. Owners of the Fairchild SM-1 stereo cartridge who raised an eyebrow at a statement in our March issue that they could not replace its stylus, may now lower same. The fact is that the stylus can be replaced by anyone with a

small screwdriver and a steady hand. For SM-1 owners whose instruction booklets may not cover this operation, here's how it's done. First, remove the three screws from the front of the cartridge. Next, insert one of them into the small center hole, turning just enough to seat it firmly. Now pull gently. Off comes the plastic member holding the stylus assembly. It may seem as if you've disembodied the entire cartridge, but Fairchild assures us the procedure is perfectly okay. Finally, replace with the new stylus assembly, and go back to enjoying your records.

Many of us, by the way, had been wondering if the test record used for our report (March) on the Fairchild 500 arm and pickup was capable of showing the virtues of anti-skating. A recent pressing of Fairchild 101A, a test disc made especially for the company, has helped resolve our former skepticism. With this record under the Fairchild arm, the benefits of anti-skating became quickly apparent. Distortion in the right channel of the pickup, caused by the extremely high velocities cut into the record and accentuated by the frictional drag against the inner (or "right") wall of the groove, was measurably reduced. Without the anti-skating feature, distortion increased. Admittedly, it is an order of distortion not always encountered, and while it shows up on the scope, it may not be heard by everyone. Still, reducing it represents a new refinement, another step in clearing the channels between performer and listener.

The design of new arms from other producers may very likely begin to reflect, in one way or another, this refinement—essentially some sort of lateral force to compensate for what audio insiders have been calling "that right-channel drag."

High-Fidelity Wood. Well known for their speakers and enclosures, the Bozak people also are justly proud of a growing line of equipment cabinets, styled and

proportioned to match their speaker housings, or to be used independently. The line now includes three such cabinets, two with lift-up tops and one with swing-out doors. Styles and finishes vary. For a descriptive brochure, write to R. T. Bozak Sales Co., Box 1166, Darien, Conn.

Speaking of "high-fidelity wood," we knew that interest in equipment cabinets was high, but how high was not apparent until our March issue was out and the letters came in. One that especially struck us, said (paraphrasing): The hobbyhorse of high fidelity still rocks in our house too, but on very spindly legs and in an outmoded cabinet, so please rush those Climenson plans. (We did!)

Snapshots in Sound. Magnetic tape firms like to think of home recording as "sound snapshots." "Sound" albums—the voices of friends and relatives—are, the tape people tell us, every bit as interesting to review as the years pass as photos of the same individuals. In this context, the plan of Eastman-Kodak to produce magnetic recording tape "later this year" seems altogether logical. This is no new business to Kodak. Their French affiliate, Kodak-Pathé, has been producing and selling tape abroad for the past twelve years. And in this country, Eastman-Kodak has been striping cinema film with a magnetic track for home movie makers.

More on Lazy Listening. Last month we talked about Karg's remote control for FM tuners. Another device to tempt the lazy listener comes from Nicholas Herenchak who presides over the servicing, installation, and general tinkering that goes on at Sun Radio Service, 320 Chestnut St., Kearny, N. J. This unit is a remote control that permits the user to balance channels and adjust the volume of a stereo system from distances up to 30 feet. The device is furnished with professional type low-capacitance cable to minimize signal loss. According to Herenchak, the unit represents his desire to bring convenience, as well as "professional studio techniques" into home music systems. The device costs \$19.95 in a metal case, \$29.95 in a handsome walnut or mahogany box. It works very well, by the way. After you get tired of playing audio ping-pong from your favorite chair, you realize there is much to be said for something



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Let 'er Blow. TACO (Technical Appliance Corporation, Sherburne, N. Y.) has a new FM antenna kit that, says the firm, will not blow over despite high winds from any direction. In itself, this is not remarkable, until you consider that the new antenna stands sturdy without guy-wire support. Instead, the antenna mast is supported by what TACO calls the "bi-mount." The "bi-mount" is a pair of supporting legs that attach to a collar on the mast. The legs and mast are nailed to the roof ("special" nails that do not permit passage of rain, TACO asserts) giving three points of contact. The antenna itself is a pair of preassembled crossed dipoles—turnstile type. The user simply snaps them up. The entire kit (\$14.75) consists of dipoles, five-foot mast, "bi-mount," fifty feet of cable, plus the cable stand-offs.

Primer on Transistors. If you're curious about transistors (and who isn't these days), you might dip into a recent primer on the subject, entitled—logically enough—*Basic Transistors*. Written by Alexander Schure, this simplified and heavily illustrated "beginner's approach" covers the basic theory of transistor electronics and touches on the fundamentals of transistor applications in various types of circuits, where they are used instead of vacuum tubes. The book is published by John F. Rider Publisher, Inc., 116 W. 14 St., New York 11, N. Y., and is priced at \$3.95.

Finance and Fidelity. Insights into the aesthetics and economics of various forms of home entertainment often come from unexpected sources. Consider this statement from newspaper columnist Earl Wilson:

"TV has certainly increased the cost of living (says *Changing Times*). Twenty years ago, you could see a Western for 25 cents; today it costs you \$200—and it's the same Western, too."

Now we have nothing against TV and Westerns as such. If Westerns represent a harmless sort of mythology, and video the means for dispensing it, okay. But Wilson's statement led us to ponder on the present, and to dig a little in the past, vis-à-vis home music reproduction. For instance, twenty years ago a 78-rpm album of Beethoven's *Eroica* cost about \$9.00; today's microgroove lists at about \$5.00 in mono, or \$6.00 in stereo. And a phonograph of (then) fairly high quality might cost as high as \$1,000—obviously more than you'd pay for components today that can do a much better job—with either kind of record. Anyone for conclusions?

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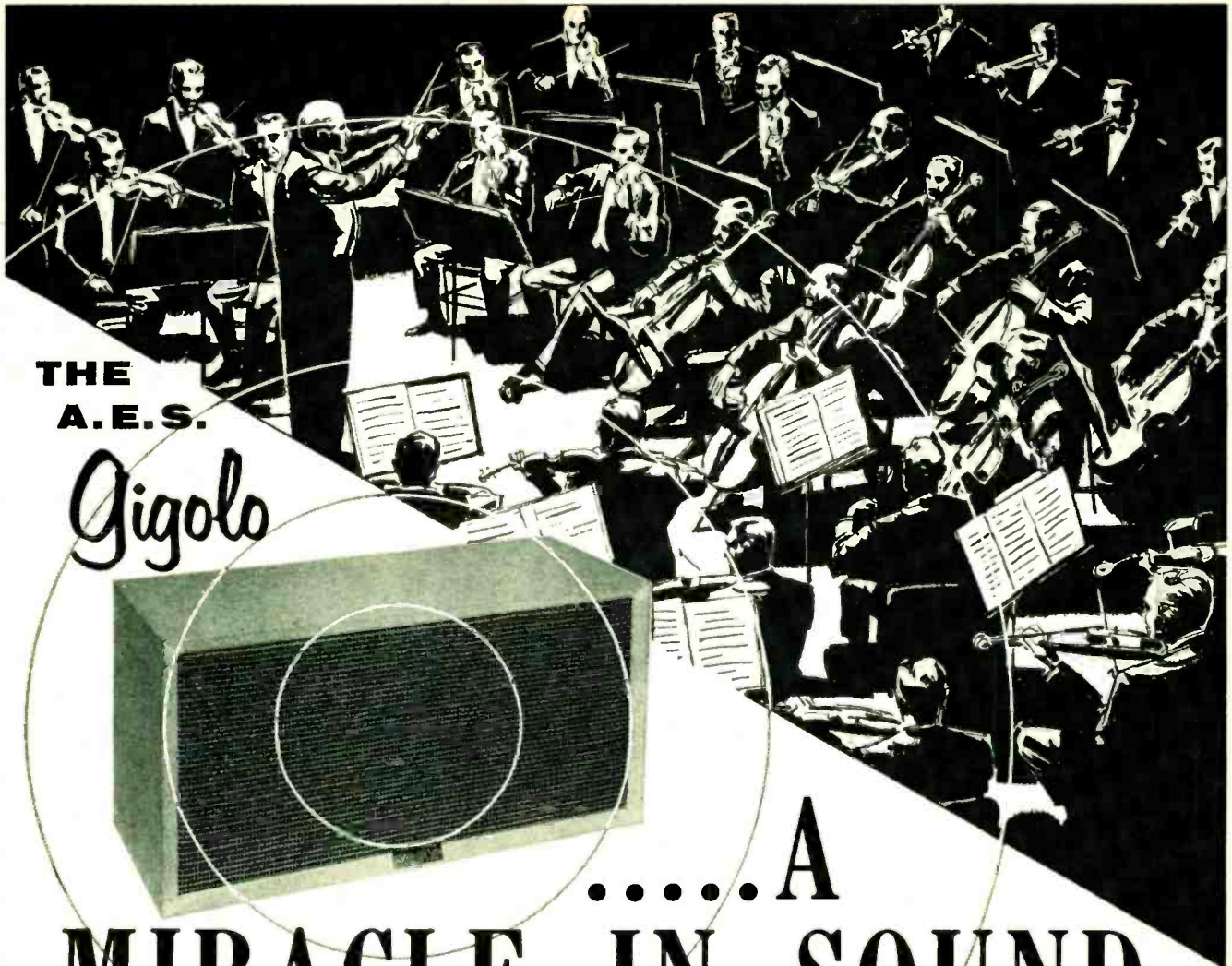
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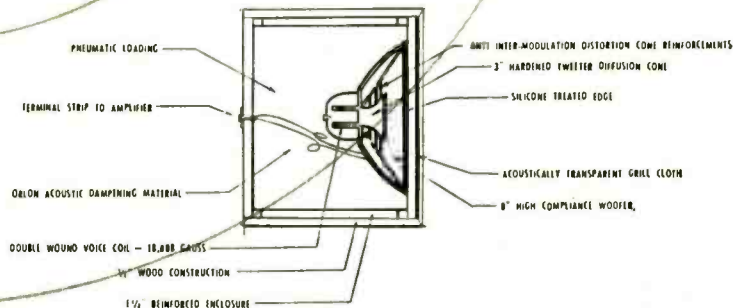
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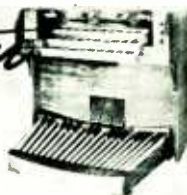
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NOISE

Continued from page 44

noise which occurs only with modulation of the tape, or when it is recorded with a signal, may be due to distortion in the bias oscillator. This condition, in turn, may hasten permanent magnetization of the heads, which then may induce thumping noises on the tape. Once such noises are on the tape, they cannot be removed without erasing the sound as well. You can, however, take steps to minimize the chance for those noises to recur. For one thing, you may be able to help matters by changing the oscillator tube. More likely, some other component is at fault and a service call will be necessary. In any event, if the heads are magnetized, they should be "cleared" by using a head demagnetizer, which costs only a few dollars.

When the bias oscillator is the push-pull type, a balance control is often included for noise reduction. If the recorder has separate record and playback heads, adjustment can be made fairly accurately by ear. Simply turn the machine on, place it in the RECORD mode, apply no modulating input signal, and monitor the output. Then adjust for minimum noise.

When making a live recording, try to get as quiet an atmosphere as possible. Stray, ambient, or air-borne noise which does not seem to offend in normal, live sound shows up astonishingly on a recording. Select a room in the quieter part of the house, and remember that anything that acts as weather insulation will probably help in sound isolation too. You may even go in for acoustical tile, draperies, or heavy rugs, but bear in mind that these isolating dodges may also lessen the brilliance of the sound reproduced.

Radio noises can be caused by atmospheric conditions such as static or by interference from home electrical appliances. Noise from either source can enter the tuner or amplifier through the antenna and its lead-in, or through the power line, or by induction.

A "low-noise" antenna installation can help solve the first of these problems. The idea simply is to place the antenna in an area where there is no serious noise problem, and then bring the signals into the tuner through a lead-in which is insensitive to noise. Such a lead-in must be coaxial cable (rather than the familiar flat twin-lead)—but its use may involve an impedance-matching problem. Most coaxial cable has an impedance of 72 ohms, and most FM tuners are designed for a 300-ohm input. You may match the two by using a TV antenna "stub transformer," available at most dealers for under \$1.00. Although most FM and TV antennas are ordinarily used with 300-ohm line, many of them actually have impedance closer to 72 ohms; consequently, while the matching stub may be needed between the tuner and the cable, another matching stub may not be needed at the antenna end.

Another way to get rid of noises leaking in through the power cable or the antenna lead-in is by using filters, also available at most dealers. For the lead-in, use a TV-type filter, which connects across the antenna terminals. For line noises, you can get the type which plugs in between the power line and the wall. Another hint: avoid inductive pickup in the power line by keeping it as short as possible. Use a commercial cord shortener, or bunch up the excess and secure it with tape or rubber bands.

If the interference is entering the set by induction, or is caused by rectification in some stage of the set, you can localize it by systematic removal of tubes. Referring to a block diagram of your amplifier or tuner, begin by removing the tube in the stage preceding the



output. This should remove the interference; if it doesn't, you will know the trouble is somewhere in the output. If it does remove the trouble, replace the tube, and go on to the next preceding stage. Continue removing and replacing tubes until you reach the point where removing the tube does not kill the noise. Then you know that the stage following is the offender. The chances are good, however, that you will work your way all the way to the front, and that the trouble is at the very input to the set.

Sometimes a tuner can be shielded against interference. You might try, for instance, enclosing it on all sides with a metal box. If this succeeds, be sure to cut enough openings for ventilation. Better yet, make an enclosure of copper window screen.

Remember too that the characteristic equalization of the FM system is designed to combat noise. In transmission, the treble end of the spectrum is deliberately accentuated to give a better signal-to-noise ratio over high-frequency noise. At the receiving end, this pre-emphasis is correspondingly rolled off. There isn't much likelihood that the de-emphasis in your tuner will go sour, but it would be immediately noticeable as greater hiss and screechy highs.

Generally, these are a few check points you might look into:

1. *Loose connections* within the set or in the antenna or ground circuits. These can often be found by close inspection, by jiggling wires (with an insulated tool) and listening to the results in the speaker.

2. *Poor insulation* often may be found by the same procedure.

3. *High-resistance ground connection.* The best external ground is a copper stake driven into the earth. Next best is a *cold-water pipe*, not a hot-water or steam line. Tie the grounding wire onto the pipe with a strap specifically designed for the purpose (available at dealers).

4. *Partly open resistors.* If resistors have been overheated, they may well cause noise. If one looks or smells "cooked," replace it.

5. *Tuning capacitors* may have such close spacing between their plates that dust between them can cause tiny sparking. Clean them occasionally with a cotton-tipped stick dipped in alcohol or cleaning fluid.

6. *Poor contact* between the power cord and the AC plug, or between the plug and receptacle. Tighten the screws in the plug, clean the prongs, and bend them slightly, if necessary, to assure a tight fit.

7. *Leaky capacitors* can cause, as well as result from, overheating. If any looks burned, or is dripping with wax, replace it.

8. *Worn volume or tone control.* If the control crackles each time it is adjusted, and a few smart twists back and forth don't clear the trouble, replacement is indicated.

9. *Loose lamps or fuses,* either in the set or elsewhere in the house. Either tighten them in their sockets or replace them, as needed.

A final hint: before calling for professional help to solve a persistent noise problem, try to isolate the source of trouble in a specific component or area of the system. This can save time for the serviceman and expense for you.

BUDAPEST QUARTET

Continued from page 34

stage of the tour. He plans his itinerary carefully to assure an afternoon nap when possible and he takes the first available plane rather than wait for the last possible flight.

Boris Kroyt, Roisman's fellow-townsmen from Odessa, often appears to be the clown of the Quartet, and his battle with the English language is the source of much of the Budapest's well-deserved reputation for humor. (Though all four speak Russian, French, and German, they generally use English, even in the privacy of rehearsal.) Kroyt is known for his passion for gadgets, ranging from electric shavers and cameras to a Lincoln Continental. His colleagues allege that his collection has reached such proportions that the Kroys have had to move into the closets, leaving the rooms for the loot. The Schneider brothers also take an avid interest in motor cars, but Kroyt, by common consent, is granted a special *expertise* in matters automotive.

Behind this mania for gadgets one

finds a serious musician with a knowledgeable feeling for all the arts. Unlike Roisman, Kroyt remained in Berlin after his student days and took part in its stimulating musical life during the Twenties. He recalls that the Expressionist artist Käthe Kollwitz lived for a time in the same apartment building, and he played both violin and viola in avant-garde concerts featuring music by Schoenberg and his group. In fact, until he joined the Budapest in 1936, Kroyt played both instruments regularly; once he appeared with the Berlin Philharmonic performing the violin solo in the Brahms Concerto and the viola solo in Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* on the same program.

The Budapest Quartet is blessed by the tremendous vitality of its inner voices—Kroyt's Deconet viola and Alexander Schneider's Strad. Sascha has been first violinist in his own quartet and a concert soloist in his own right. He delights in holding forth on the sins of conductors and of managers, whom he considers to be no better than parasites at their best and prostitutes at their worst. In this, Sascha qualifies as an expert, as he is a part-time conductor and an impresario himself.

The years between 1945 and 1954, when Sascha was "on his own," gave him a chance to prove himself away from the Quartet—as soloist in concertos and unaccompanied Bach; in recital with pianist Eugene Istomin and harpsichordist Ralph Kirkpatrick; as a chamber musician in the Albeneri Trio and New York Piano Quartet; as conductor in New York, Prades, Puerto Rico, and Dumbarton Oaks. Record collectors will particularly remember the nearly complete Haydn cycle he made with his own quartet for the Haydn Society.

Sascha also functioned as arranger for many of the activities in which he participated. Employing no regular manager, he made business arrangements himself, through a secretary listed on his letterhead as "Patricia Taylor." It was not long before his friends discovered that the nonexistent secretary was one of Sascha's typical inventions: her first name was a feminization of Ralph Kirkpatrick's surname; the second was a translation of his own name (German "Schneider" equals English "tailor").

Sascha is an ardent supporter of causes. Both he and Mischa suffered in their youth from Russian and Polish persecution of the Jews in their native Vilna, and one of their sisters died at Dachau in World War II. When, in 1949, Mercury Records was recording as much as it could of Frankie Laine in anticipation of one of Petrillo's recording bans, Sascha worked long hours in the studio band to earn quick money for a Spanish orphanage in France supported by Casals.

At about that time, I recall spending an evening in Sascha's New York apartment, while he talked of preliminary plans for the Casals festivals in France. On this same occasion, Alexander Calder dropped in to adjust a mobile hanging over Schneider's piano. The mobile was rattling sympathetically with certain

Continued on next page



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BUDAPEST QUARTET

Continued from preceding page

notes on the piano, and Calder was fascinated with this new artistic challenge. While Sascha struck the offending notes on the piano, Calder mounted a stepladder, with pliers and tinsnippers in hand, to "tune" the mobile.

Though Sascha had to give up a number of his projects when he rejoined the Quartet in 1954, he still does a formidable amount of extra work. He organizes the Casals festival in Puerto Rico, conducts chamber orchestra concerts at New York's New School, and spends much of his summer vacation at Rudolf Serkin's school at Marlboro, Vermont. In the fall of 1959, at one of Schneider's New School concerts, Peter Serkin, Rudolf's young son, made his New York concert debut as piano soloist under Sascha's direction.

Now fifty-seven years old, four years senior to Sascha, Mischa Schneider is a



smaller, less flamboyant version of his brother. On stage he is grave, his thinning hair almost white. When he travels he is most likely to spend his spare time in museums and in bookshops, or shopping for presents for his wife and his two young sons, at home near Washington. He has been married three times and has grandchildren by both his daughters—one in Florida, and the other in Copenhagen. He is a devoted paterfamilias, speaking with affectionate enthusiasm of his children and grandchildren.

Mischa is perhaps the most complex and worldly-wise personality among the Quartet, in which he plays the part of a delicately adjusted balance wheel. He has strong bonds of affection with each of his colleagues, and they in turn are deeply devoted to him. Though Roisman is senior in terms of service, and Kroyt at sixty-five is oldest of the Quartet, Mischa is the elder statesman of the group. The Budapest has been managed by the Friedberg office for thirty years, but Mischa has the responsibility for most of its business details. He is also the Quartet's chronicler, keeping detailed records of all performances, recordings, and financial matters.

One evening when Mischa was in New York for recording sessions, he joined me for dinner at his favorite restaurant in Chinatown. Like that of countless other evenings in the past two decades, this evening's conversation was memorable for the range of Mischa's interests and his compassionate understanding. He ordered the meal—itself a work of art, for Mischa is a connoisseur of food—and we savored it leisurely while we talked of a variety of things: our respective children; the Beethoven Quartets and

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the hazards of recording; national and international politics; the inevitable personal and musical gossip that are the small talk of musicians and managers. We had an early dinner because Mischa had still to call on the widow of a close friend who had recently died.

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The Quartet's repertory is well represented on records, with one notable exception. Though not specializing in modern music as do the Kolisch or Juilliard Quartets, the Budapest's concert repertory includes practically all the major scores of this century, among them many American works. Unfortunately, the only contemporary scores it has recorded—the Hindemith E flat Quartet, the Bartók Second, and the Milhaud Octet—are no longer available.

To hear the Budapest's extraordinary precision of attack and release, its uncanny unanimity of vibrato and rubato, is to know technique far beyond the limits of mere virtuosity. The texture is warm and rich, vital without sacrificing clarity or taste; the musicianship is impeccable, yet individual and probing; there is power and sweep without violating either the composer's intent or the traditions of style. But these are merely external manifestations, and end results, of an intense and intent combination of four vibrant individuals dedicated to their art in a manner which fulfills Artur Schnabel's dictum that greatness is achieved only by following "the line of most resistance."



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one of the three moving and heartfelt tributes (the other two are a *Lamento* for voice and piano, and an overture on Bellini themes) paid by an artist who was unusually generous in his opinion of his contemporaries and an indefatigable propagandist for their works.

We in our time have a strong, and not unnatural, tendency to consider that because we are living in the twentieth century we automatically know more about everything than those who lived in the nineteenth century. Sometimes this self-assurance is justified. I think that we have developed a more intelligent view of *Don Giovanni*, for example, than that taken by audiences of the 1860s who, while they admired the opera to distraction, obviously admired it for the wrong reasons. In the case of Donizetti, however, we were subjected to decades of ceaseless brainwashing until we were persuaded that his operas had no merit whatever because they could not be compared with Wagner's. Only now have we begun to see that although our forefathers may have admired Mozart for the wrong reasons they certainly admired Donizetti for the right ones.

In spite of what academicians would have us believe, Donizetti's operas are not merely technical exercises to tickle the palates of those whom the *London Times* denounces from a great height as "canary fanciers." The coloratura soprano has been parodied and ridiculed for two centuries and more, and few coloratura parts have inspired more extravagant parody or harsher ridicule than Lucia; but the choice of a coloratura soprano for his heroine was in practice a masterly stroke on Donizetti's part. In the Mad Scene a coloratura soprano is entirely in character, introducing an air of reckless fantasy and lightheadedness which is dramatically right. Furthermore, the quality of a coloratura voice, when it is singing "straight" and not a highly decorated passage, has a peculiar pathos of its own.

Donizetti made, in fact, extremely effective professional use of the technical proficiency of the singers of his time, and from the very beginning was unusually well served by them. The great Maria Malibran, who was one of the first to sing Mary Stuart, was not the sort to sail through a part, content to sing the notes and collect the applause

at the end. Her first sight of the score of *Maria Stuarda* impressed her so much that she made a special point of learning more about the young Scots queen whom Donizetti had drawn so convincingly and sympathetically, reading Schiller's play on which the opera was based and as many history books as she could lay hands on. Malibran, Pasta, Grisi, Lilli Lehmann—all of them regarded Donizetti's leading roles as great acting parts, and with every justification, as Maria Callas has demonstrated in our own day. Once again it is the all-round performance, not the voice alone, which is revealing the true quality of Donizetti's music, showing us, for instance, the full greatness of the fine elegiac finales of *Anna Bolena* and *Maria Stuarda*, with their subtle but distinct differences in characterization: Anne Boleyn facing death with the fury and resentment of one who is the victim of injustice, Mary Queen of Scots seeing her fate as a "santa prova"—a holy trial sent by God.

In his way, too, Donizetti was much more of an innovator than he is usually given credit for. The importance of the great sextet in *Lucia di Lammermoor* as a model for the superb ensembles of Verdi is rarely underrated, of course; but what is sometimes forgotten is Donizetti's role as the pioneer of operatic realism. In *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833) he translated into music Victor Hugo's thoroughly realistic original play and



so opened a path to be followed ten years later by Verdi in his setting of *Ernani*, another Hugo play—a path which eventually led on to the *verismo* of Mascagni, Leoncavallo, and Puccini.

To most people, however, Donizetti's historical significance is of little concern. More important is that his operas are being heard again and so are adding to the enjoyment and variety of the great Italian *risorgimento* in opera, which—to my taste at least—is making the modern operatic repertoire an even richer world to explore than ever before.

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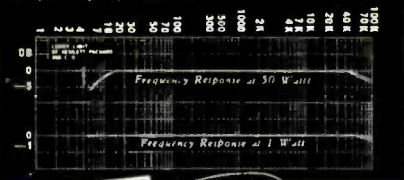
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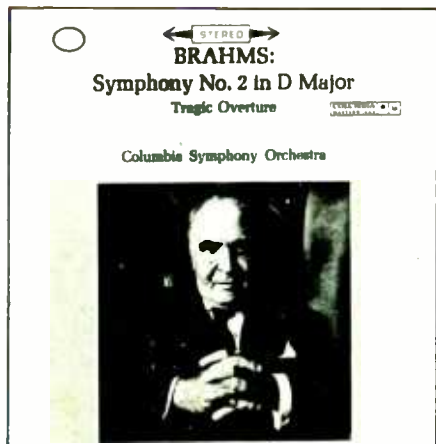
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CIRCLE 44 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

ADVERTISING INDEX

Key No.		Page	Key No.		Page
1	A.E.S., Inc.	89	44	Lafayette Radio	4, 96
2	Acoustic Research, Inc.	27	45	Leslie Creations	95
3	Airex Radio Corp.	94	46	London Records	57
4	Allied Radio	88	47	Marantz Co.	88
5	Archive Records	74	50	McIntosh Laboratory, Inc.	28
6	Argo Records	79	48	Medallion Records	84
7	Arrow Electronics	95	49	Mercury Records	62
8	Audio Devices	11	51	Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co.	26
9	Audio Dynamics	15	52	Monarch International, Inc.	14
11	Audio Exchange	8, 95	53	Music Guild, Inc.	63
12	Audio Fidelity	50	54	Myer's Emco	95
13	Audio Unlimited	95	56	Opera Magazine	92
14	Audio World	95	57	Pickering & Co.	2
15	Audion	95	58	Pilot Radio	21
16	Bel Canto	80		Professional Directory	95
17	Berkshire Playhouse	91	59	Publishers Central Bureau	84
18	Book-of-The-Month Club	5, 7	60	RCA Victor Corp. Inside Front Cover	
19	British Industries Corp.	59	61	Rabsons—57 St., Inc.	90
20	Capitol Records	75	76	Revere Camera Co. Records in Review	6 70
21	Carston Studios, Inc.	95	62	Sargent-Rayment Co. Back Cover	
22	Columbia Records Inside Back Cover		63	Scott, H.H., Inc.	23
23	Commissioned Electronics	95	64	Sherwood Electronic Labs	16
24	Decca DGG Records	56	65	Sony Corp.	61
25	Dexter Chemical	74	66	Sound Reproduction	95
27	Dixie Hi-Fi	95	67	Stereo-Parti	95
26	Dressner	95	68	Stromberg-Carlson	20
28	Dupont "Mylar"	17	69	Tandberg	58
29	Dynaco, Inc.	10, 12	70	Terminal-Hudson	95
10	Dyna-Empire, Inc.	1	71	Thorens	22
30	EICO	86		Trader's Marketplace	93
31	Electronic Organ Arts	90	72	Transis-Tronics	9
32	Fisher Radio Corp.	18, 19	73	United Artists	83
33	Florman & Babb	95	74	Vanguard Recording Society, Inc.	60
35	Grado Laboratories, Inc.	76	75	Viking of Minneapolis	85
36	Gramophone	83	19	Wharfedale	59
37	Hallicrafters	88			
38	Harman-Kardon, Inc.	13			
39	Heath Co.	24, 25			
40	HiFi	95			
41	Hi-Fidelity Center	94			
42	Kersting Mfg. Co.	95			
43	Key Electronics	95			

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