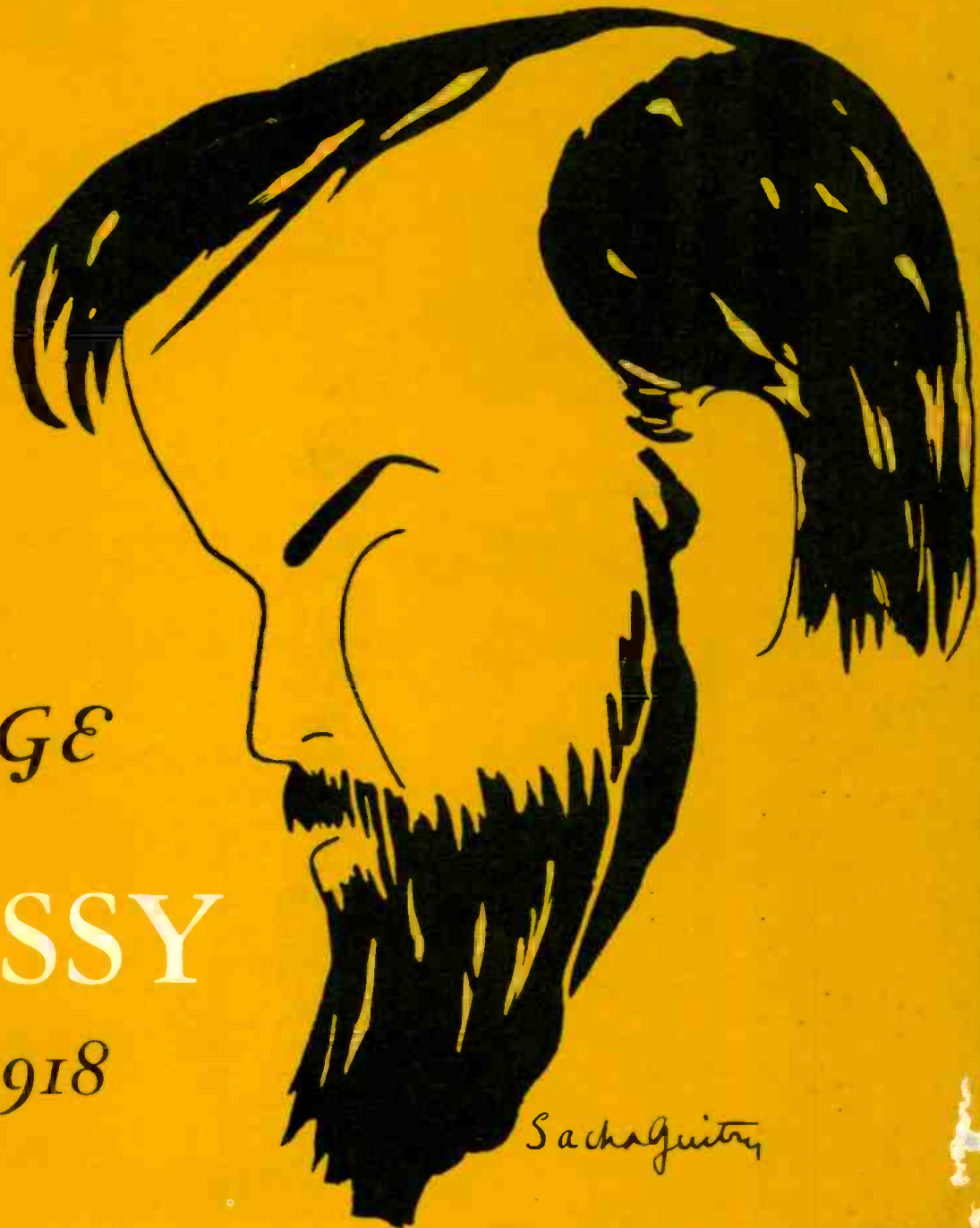


A PREVIEW OF NEW STEREO EQUIPMENT

60 cents

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SEPTEMBER THE MAGAZINE FOR MUSIC LISTENERS



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OF
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1862-1918

Sacha Guitry

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CIRCLE 68 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

**We interrupt
this magazine
for an important
announcement:**

**The new Fisher
stereo components
for 1963 are now
at your dealer!**

The new Fisher R-200

The most advanced AM-FM-Multiplex
stereo tuner ever designed.



The Fisher engineering team that created the world's most sophisticated FM Stereo Multiplex designs has come up with another paragon for the perfectionist. Here is a tuner that combines the latest Fisher ideas on FM Stereo with an AM section of the highest attainable fidelity. For those who require superb AM reception in addition to the ultimate in FM-Mono and FM-Stereo, the R-200 is the tuner – regardless of price.

The FM front end is the Fisher Golden Synchrode design, an entirely new development that permits the greatest possible overload margin and rejection of unwanted signals, as well as amazingly simple and reliable circuitry. Five wide-band IF stages, four limiters and an extremely linear wide-band ratio detector complete the basic FM section. The Multiplex section utilizes the time-division system – found superior to all others in extensive field tests. The exclusive Fisher STEREO BEACON instantly lights a signal when a Multiplex broadcast is received and automatically switches the tuner to FM Stereo operation. The AM section incorporates a tuned RF amplifier, followed by a converter and two IF amplifiers; other AM features include a three-position bandwidth switch and a 10-kc whistle filter.

Performance? The FM sensitivity of the R-200 is 1.6 microvolts (IHFM Standard); the capture ratio is 1.8 db. Even Fisher engineers find these figures difficult to believe – but test instruments don't lie. The AM sensitivity is 5 microvolts for 2 volts output; the AM bandwidth extends to 7 kc (in the "Wide" position). After this the price comes as an agreeable surprise: **\$299.50.***

The new Fisher X-101-C

A high-performance stereo control-amplifier
with the new 'basic' look.



(open)

Even without the dramatically new arrangement of controls, this would still be by far the most advanced single-chassis integrated stereo control-amplifier in its power class. That much is assured by its performance. Its Hinged Control-Cover, however, makes it the first genuine all-family amplifier in high fidelity history.

For the audiophiles in the family, the X-101-C incorporates comprehensive controls of the utmost versatility. But for immediate enjoyment of stereo by even the least technically-inclined members of the family, only the 'must' controls (Program Selector, Stereo/Mono Switch and Volume Control) are in view. The other controls – those that are not absolutely essential for instant use of the amplifier – are concealed behind an attractive, hinged cover. The result is the most uncluttered appearance and the most functional operation ever achieved in a stereo component – as well as the end of all uncertainty on the part of the non-technical music lover.

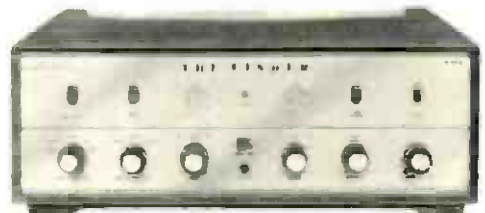
The X-101-C is rated at 60 watts IHFM Music Power (30 watts per channel) and features several important innovations in addition to its Hinged Control-Cover. The exclusive Fisher Tape-Play



(closed)

System, for example, permits full use of all controls during tape playback and yet retains the convenience of monitoring while recording. A front-panel jack is available for the connection of headphones, and a special switch can silence the main speakers while the headphones are in use. A revolutionary new circuit development permits direct connection of a center-channel speaker without using an additional amplifier!

See and hear the new Fisher X-101-C at your nearest dealer. Even the briefest demonstration will convince you of its superb engineering logic and brilliant performance. Price: \$199.50.*



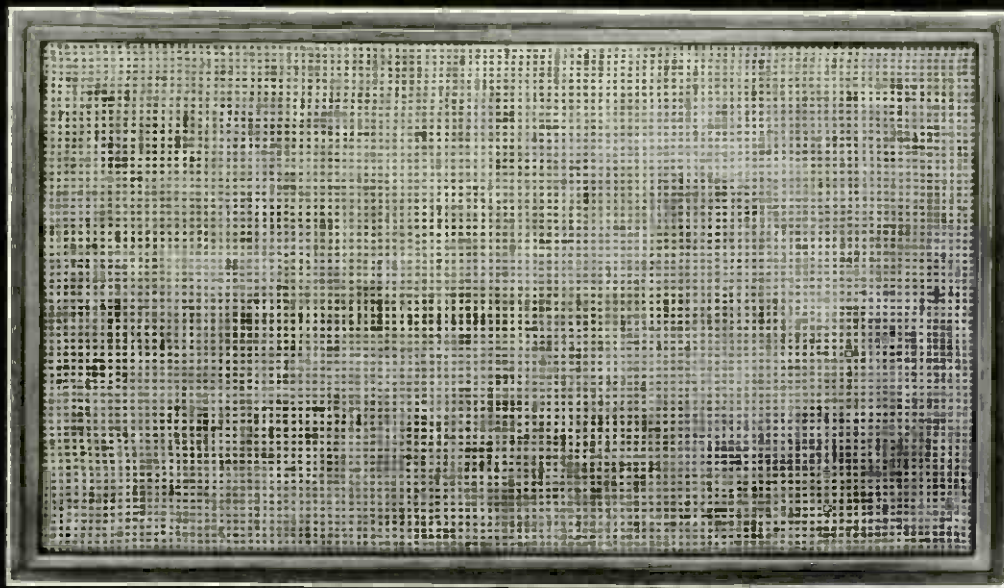
New! The Fisher X-100-B.

New, even more powerful version of the famous X-100, a leader for many years among moderately priced, high-quality stereo control-amplifiers. The IHFM Standard Music Power rating has been increased to 50 watts—25 watts per channel. Price: \$169.50.*

* WALNUT OR MAHOGANY CABINET, \$24.95. METAL CABINET, \$15.95. PRICES SLIGHTLY HIGHER IN THE FAR WEST.

The new Fisher XP-4A loudspeaker system

An entirely new order of clarity
in bass reproduction.



The big news here is about the bass – but that should in no way detract from the mid-range and the treble. These retain the superbly natural quality first heard in the original Fisher XP-4 – since the two AcoustiGlas-packed 5-inch mid-range drivers and the 2-inch hemispherical tweeter have been left unchanged. But the 12-inch woofer now incorporates a totally new concept: a 2-inch voice coil wound on pure **electrolytic copper**. This specially procured copper is so highly conductive that unusually high eddy currents are generated in opposition to the voice coil movement. These eddy currents are linear over the entire frequency range and provide **linear damping at all frequencies** reproduced by the woofer. The result is a degree of bass definition and detail that will startle you on first hearing and delight you forever after.

This unique new Fisher development is a further refinement of the original XP-4 design – the first loudspeaker system with a 'basketless' woofer. The XP-4A continues, of course, to feature this entirely novel construction technique – the woofer has no metal frame, being supported by the massive walls of the speaker enclosure itself. Thus there is nothing left to cause undesirable reflections from the back of the woofer cone; all rearward radiation is absorbed by AcoustiGlas packing **directly** behind the cone, eliminating the last trace of bass coloration.

Hear the new Fisher XP-4A at your nearest Fisher dealer. Whether or not you fully understand all of its engineering features, you will instantly appreciate its superior sound. Price: **\$199.50.***

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The integrated stereo receiver that outsells all other high fidelity components.



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2. Ultrasophisticated wide-band FM Multiplex circuitry, with 0.7 microvolts sensitivity for 20 db quieting at 72 ohms (2.2 microvolts IHFM Standard), four IF stages, absolute stability.
3. Exclusive STEREO BEAM indicator, the ingenious Fisher invention that shows instantly whether or not an FM station is broadcasting in stereo.
4. High undistorted audio power: 65 watts IHFM Standard at less than 0.8% distortion.
5. Master control-preamplifier section of grand-organ versatility.
6. Magnificent styling, with brass-finish control panel and walnut or mahogany cabinet.*
7. The Fisher name. (No comment necessary.)

Price, \$359.50.* The Fisher 800-B, virtually identical but also including a high-sensitivity AM tuner, \$429.50.*

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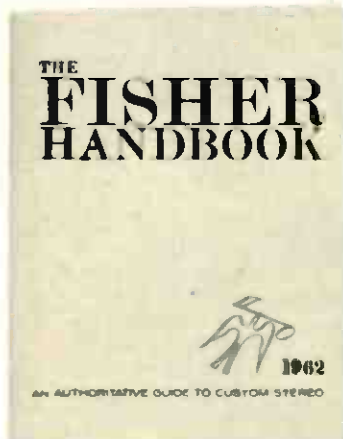
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{ Lower dynamic mass and higher compliance than any other cartridge made... eliminates distortion and makes possible a lighter stylus, better frequency response, greater channel separation, and the remarkable new standard for... }

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TRACKING FORCE — AS LOW AS 1/4 GRAM

At such low tracking force, the Empire 880P not only eliminates record wear, but also eliminates distortion. To achieve the benefits of low force tracking with the 880P cartridge, a tone arm capable of tracking at such low levels must be used. We track every cartridge with the Empire 980 arm at less than a half gram before releasing it.

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{ This is well beyond the range of human hearing }

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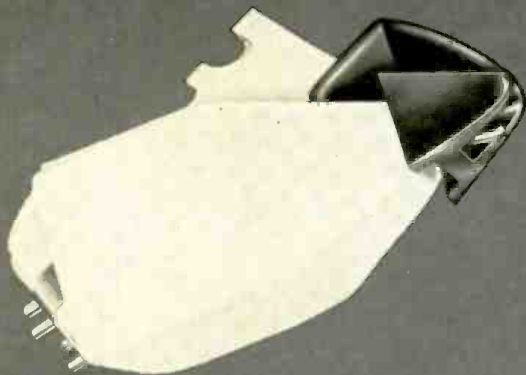
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GARRARD MODEL A

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... AND ANY OTHER AUTOMATIC
TURNTABLE EVER TO BE MADE!

The Pickering Model U38/AT is a cartridge designed especially for the new generation of automatic turntables. A true STANTON Stereo Fluxvalve, it combines excellent hum shielding with high output for unequalled signal-to-noise ratio.

High compliance is provided for the special turntable features while preserving the ruggedness demanded by automatic operation. Improved frequency response and lower inductance make the new Pickering U38/AT a truly universal cartridge to match the universal features of the automatic turntable.

TECHNICANA: PICKERING Model U38/AT is a STANTON Stereo Fluxvalve with a white body and black V-GUARD stylus assembly. Weight is 14 grams; Mounting centers: 7/16" to 1/2". Supplied with universal mounting hardware. \$46.50 AUDIOPHILE NET

RESPONSE: ± 2 db from 20 to 20,000 cycles.

CHANNEL SEPARATION: 35 db

OUTPUT: 10 mv each channel

TRACKING FORCE: 2 to 5 grams

IMPEDANCE: 47,000 to 100,000 ohms

SHIELDING: Complete mu-metal



" FOR THOSE WHO CAN HEAR THE DIFFERENCE "

PICKERING & COMPANY, INC., Plainview, N. Y.

The hermetically sealed STANTON Stereo Fluxvalve is warranted for a lifetime and is covered under the following patents: U.S. Patent No. 2,917,590; Great Britain No. 783,372; Commonwealth of Canada No. 605,673; Japan No. 261,203; and other patents are pending throughout the world.

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high fidelity

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Prima!

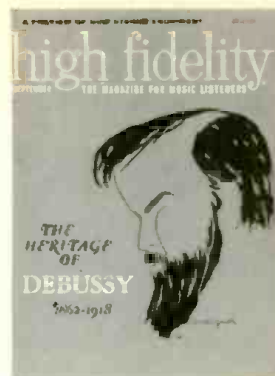
That's Italian for top-rated. And all over the world the Dual-1006 CUSTOM is not only top-rated but owned, used and loved by thousands of discerning audiophiles. Why? Most likely because it's the best combination automatic turntable and record changer available. Over 11 leading consumer and technical publications in this country alone have given it top-rated reviews (some even twice). But if you—like so many of us—don't just take anyone's word for things (even experts) you'll take a look at the CUSTOM for yourself. You'll watch it perform, hear it play, inspect all its features, read the fine print in the literature. Then you'll examine all other machines—regardless of brand name. Having done that, you'll never have to either blame yourself or go back to anybody to ask: "Why didn't you tell me about the top-rated Dual-1006 CUSTOM?"

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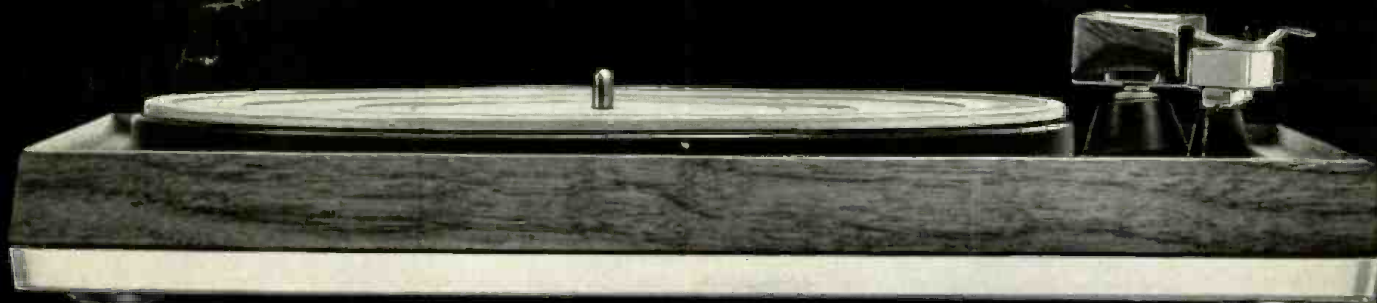
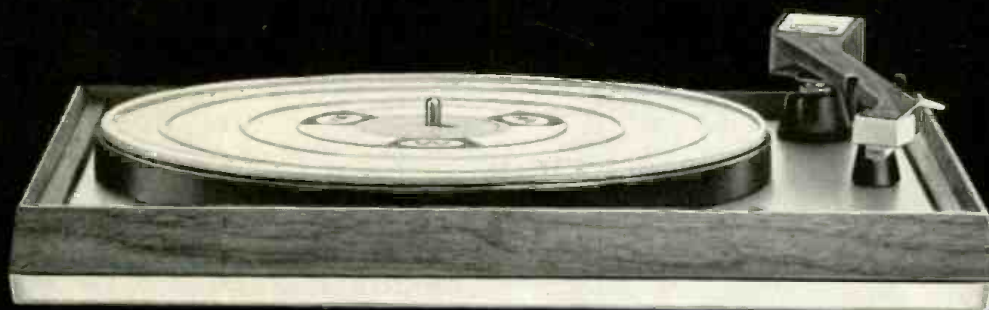
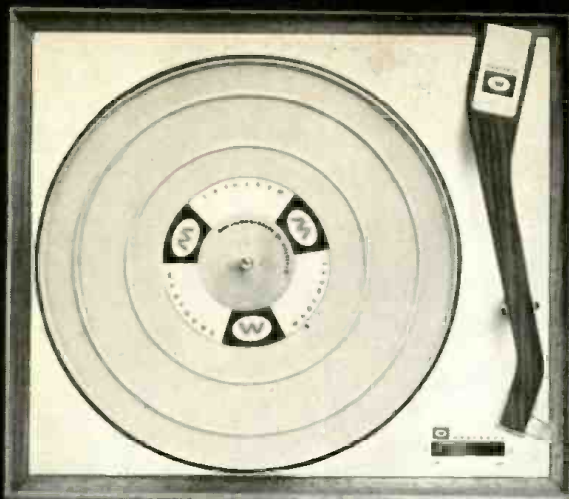
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The new Weathers "66" weighs 96 ounces ...and every ounce is pure performance!

The Weathers "66" is the finest achievement in uncompromising design and performance. The low mass of the Weathers "66" makes it the proper turntable for today's high compliance stereo cartridges and tonearms. In appearance alone, the "66" is radically different. It is 16" long, 14" deep, but only 2" high, including the integrated base. It is the closest approach to rotating a record on air. It achieves this ideal through unique engineering design and precision manufacturing.

The Weathers "66" uses two precision hysteresis synchronous motors mounted on opposite sides of the deck. Virtually vibration-free, they directly drive two soft rubber lathe-turned wheels which in turn drive against the inside rim of the platter. This is the quietest, most accurate and dependable drive system yet designed. Its -60 db. rumble is the lowest of all turntables.

Eliminates Feedback Problem—Because the new high compliance cartridges and tonearms track at extremely light pressures, they can pick up floor vibrations which are transmitted into the music as audible distortion. The "battleship" type of turntable more easily picks up room vibrations and transmits them with greater amplitude. When a high compliance pickup system is used with the heavier turntable, acoustic feedback is apt to occur. And there is no practical, effective way to acoustically isolate these heavier units.

The Weathers "66" is suspended on 5 neoprene mounts which produce an isolation from floor vibrations of more than 500 to 1. Paul Weathers calls this system a "seismic platform" (implying that only a violent earthquake could cause any vibrations or feedback).

On Pitch—The speed constancy of the Weathers "66" is so accurate that a special test record had to be made to measure its 0.04% wow and flutter content. It reaches 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm immediately, and will be accurate within one revolution in 60 minutes. Most heavy turntables will usually deviate 4 or more revolutions in 60 minutes—a painfully obvious inaccuracy to anyone with perfect pitch. You hear only the music—no rumble, no wow, no flutter, no feedback, no noise of any kind.

The "66" is a strikingly beautiful turntable that you can use anywhere, without installation. And you need not buy a base—it's an integral part of the turntable! ■ Turntable—\$75.00 net. With viscous-damped arm—\$99.50 net. Turntable and Arm with new Weathers LDM Pick-up—\$129.50 net. See it at your high fidelity dealer, or write:

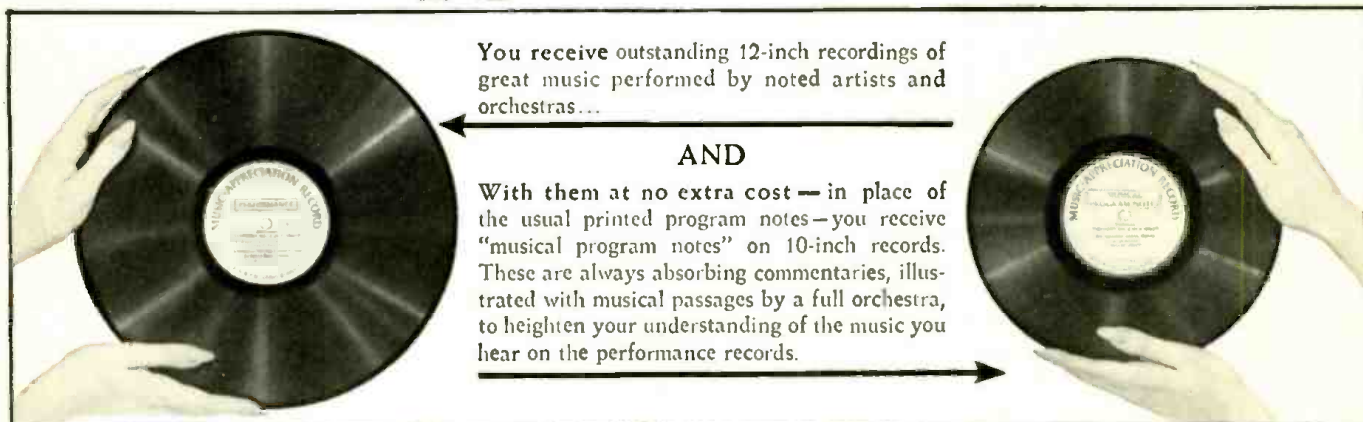
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CIRCLE 98 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

We think it particularly appropriate that this special commemorative issue honoring the hundredth anniversary of Debussy's birth should lead off with an article that places the composer not only in his own time and in our time but in the whole history of music (see "The Heritage of Debussy," p. 52); and we feel ourselves particularly fortunate that it is **Frederick Goldbeck** who gives us this all-embracing vision. M. Goldbeck (Dutch-born, incidentally) is, of course, the well-known critic who during several decades' residence in Paris has contributed so much to the French musical scene: *vide* his articles in the *Revue Musicale* and many other publications and his editorship of the journal *Contrepoints*. M. Goldbeck's book *The Perfect Conductor* was brought out in this country some years ago, and we hope his appearances in *HIGH FIDELITY* will serve to introduce him further to American readers.

Ernest Ansermet's audience is, without question, a world-wide one, and it remains for this column only to mention his latest plans. To general rejoicing, he will cross the ocean this fall to conduct the American premiere of Falla's *Atlántida*, in a concert version, during the opening week of Lincoln Center, and later on in the season will preside over a new production of *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Metropolitan. The conversations with M. Ansermet on the art of Debussy which appear here this month ("An Inner Unity," p. 56) formed the substance of an interview arranged by *HIGH FIDELITY* between the conductor and Peter Heyworth, chief music critic for the *London Observer*.

Regular readers of this publication are already acquainted with **Alfred Frankenstein's** views on Debussy and Debussy recordings. They may not realize, however, that our long-time reviewer's special interests and *expertise* qualify him as an authority on the visual arts. Music critic Frankenstein of the *San Francisco Chronicle* is also art critic for that paper, lecturer in American art at the University of California and other institutions, and author of various books and monographs on painting. Further, Mr. Frankenstein holds the distinction of being the man who discovered the pictures, by Victor Hartmann, on which Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* is based. For his account of the relationship between Debussy's music and the other arts, turn to "The Imagery from Without," p. 59.

Roy McMullen, whose "The Respectable Claude, the Irreverent Achille" appears on p. 63, is *HIGH FIDELITY's* correspondent in Paris, from which he dispatches "Notes from Abroad" to us at regular intervals. His more stringent duties involve the European Edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*, for which he edits the editorial page and runs the copy desk. Not regarded by Mr. McMullen as duties at all are indulging in the French cuisine and going to the opera.

"Debussy on Microgroove," Part I, p. 66, is the work of discographer **Harris Goldsmith**, whose initials may be seen every month in the columns of "Records in Review." Mr. Goldsmith is a teacher of piano and recitalist.

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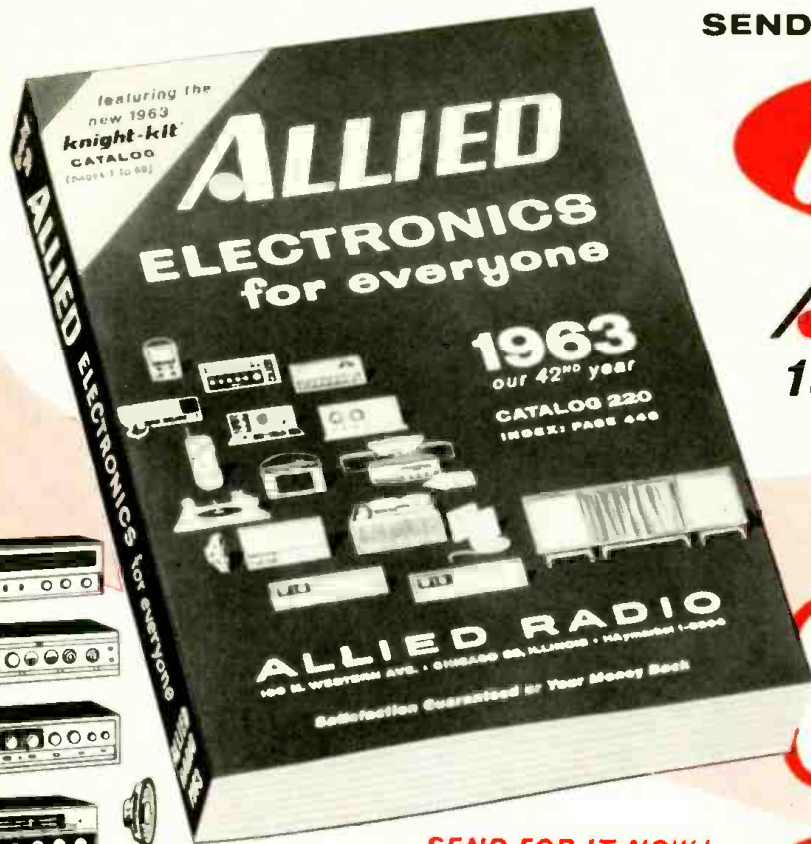
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(BROADCAST VERSION MODEL 607: 19"x14" in size; special plug-in transformers! Availability, January, 1963.)

(Model 605 availability, October, 1962. See it at the New York Hi Fi show.)
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CIRCLE 4 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Letters

Can You Tell a "Morning Glory"?

SIR:

Richard A. Koch ["Can High Fidelity Be Measured?" *HIGH FIDELITY*, July 1962] states that measurements cannot be used to predict accurately the musical performance of a speaker. He writes: "The [measurements] data thus obtained is a useful tool to aid the designer in finding defects, and to suggest directions in which he might work to improve performance. Such data, however, is of relatively minor importance in evaluating a finished product for use in a reproducing system."

If measurements do not reveal speaker fidelity, what in the world could the designer be testing for? Mr. Koch says that quantitative data cannot predict how a particular speaker will sound. The logical and inescapable conclusion of such a statement is that speaker measurements are *entirely* useless. Any designer who bases his work on measurement data which do not represent the degree of reproducing fidelity does not understand the meaning of high fidelity.

Music and painting, or the tone of a Stradivari violin, cannot be evaluated by scientific instruments, but the fidelity of a color reproduction, or of reproduced sound, can. To consider the objective reproducing characteristics of a mechanical device as unknowable (rather than unknown) is mysticism, and alien to the scientific attitude. Improvements in measurement techniques in all fields can be expected, but acoustical science has already made available effective speaker measuring techniques. If this were not so it would be impossible to improve loudspeakers, and a preference for a "morning glory" horn would have to be treated as perfectly valid. You cannot introduce rational design changes in a speaker if you are unable to test the results of those changes.

It is true that the techniques of speaker measurement are more involved than in other fields, particularly when it comes to determining what kind of measurements get to the heart of the matter of reproducing fidelity. Personal taste plays a large part in determining preferences

Continued on page 24

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

*where
high fidelity
means
musical
accuracy*



Musicians and production personnel are listening to a tape master they have just recorded for Connoisseur Society. The record will be Flute Concertos of 18th Century Paris, CS 362.

Hi-fi gimmickry has no place in this listening session. The closest possible facsimile of the live performance is needed, and professional equipment is used for playback. (If the AR-3 loudspeakers look scarred, that is because they have served as recording monitors on many other occasions.)

Although AR speakers are often employed in professional applications, they are designed primarily for natural reproduction of music in the home. Their prices range from \$89 for an unfinished AR-2 to \$225 for an AR-3 in walnut, cherry, or teak. A five-year guarantee covers parts, labor, and reimbursement of any freight to and from the factory.

Catalog and a list of AR dealers in your area on request.

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NEW..

333 AM FM Multiplex Tuner

Enjoy stereo two ways! The new 333 gives you a choice between new FM stereo and AM/FM simulcasts. You can enjoy monophonic AM or FM broadcasts, too. A combination of two outstanding Scott designs, the 333 offers the FM Multiplex circuits of the Scott 350B together with the Wide Range AM design of the famous 330 AM/FM stereo tuner. AM sound is so clean it is almost indistinguishable from FM. \$259.95†



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3 Superb Wide-Band Multiplex Tuners all with amazing Sonic Monitor*!

Push the Switch . . . Tune to the Tone . . . the exclusive Scott Sonic Monitor Audibly Signals When Stereo Is On The Air!

All three superb Scott Stereo instruments shown to the left feature the unique Sonic Monitor which, unlike other stereo indicators, cannot be triggered by spurious signals — it operates only when a station is broadcasting in multiplex. All you do is flick the switch, tune across the dial, and the monitor tone signals you when stereo is on the air.

Radio stations from coast to coast use Scott FM Multiplex Tuners to monitor their own signals — proof of Scott superiority. Despite attempts to imitate Scott's proven Time Switching multiplex circuitry, Scott units set "a high standard to which other equipment can be compared." (High Fidelity Magazine, January, 1962, page 56).

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1. Wide-Band detector and IF's assure freedom from drift, and full-range reception of weak multiplex signals.
2. Silver plated RF Cascode front end results in maximum sensitivity with virtual elimination of cross modulation.
3. Time-Switching multiplex circuitry, pioneered by Scott, assures excellent stereo separation with low distortion throughout the entire audio range.
4. Sonic Monitor completely eliminates guesswork when locating and tuning a stereo station.
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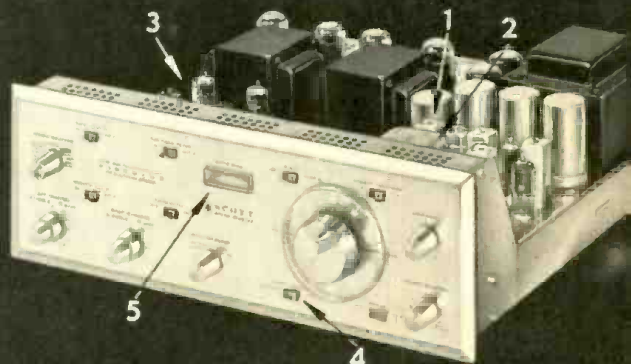


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CIRCLE 85 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Continued from page 20



to make professional quality stereo tape recordings your recorder must have three heads

All professional tape recorders have three separate heads—one erase, one record, one playback. Record heads and playback heads have different gap widths. A wide gap record head is a must to record all the sound on the tape. A narrow gap playback head is a must to reproduce all the sound from the tape. Professional quality sound on sound recordings can be made only on a recorder with three heads.

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The 880 includes two professional dynamic microphones in a compact unit perfect for use as a portable stereo recording and playback system—ideal as a permanent part of your hi-fidelity music system.

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CONCORD ELECTRONICS CORPORATION

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in speakers than in other components merely because speakers are such imperfect reproducers, and allow greater latitude to a listener in deciding which reproducing deficiencies he would rather live with. One person may be willing to tolerate the harmonic distortion of speaker *A* if he can avoid the screechiness of speaker *B*, or he may prefer the limited frequency range of *C* to the raggedness of *D*. But when comparing speakers *A* and *B* for harmonic distortion in a given frequency range, the results may be stated objectively and surely, and the musical effects predicted accurately. The distortion readings may tell the investigator something that he may have taken hours to learn from uncontrolled listening.

This principle is followed with regard to all components other than loudspeakers, and it seems strange to have to argue the point. Sooner or later the idea that a familiar specification, like distortion, becomes mysterious and elusive when applied to speakers, will have to be laid to rest.

There is one kind of test that is the final arbiter of speaker quality, in the sense that it validates all other test techniques, subjective or objective. This is the live vs. recorded concert, in which the sound of the original live instruments is compared directly with the reproduced sound. Acoustic Research (my company) and Dynakit are staging a series of such concerts at the coming Chicago World's Fair of Music and Sound. AR also uses this basic technique as a development test method, both for direct speaker evaluation and for validation of other quantitative test techniques. The live vs. recorded system can be used in a controlled way, with acoustical white noise substituting for the live musicians.

If we accept the premise that loudspeakers should not be creators of new and exciting sounds but merely reproducers of the sounds of our musical heritage, then it is necessary to test their reproducing accuracy objectively.

Edgar Villechur
Acoustic Research, Inc.
Cambridge, Mass.

In an ultimate sense, and assuming unlimited time and resources, one can perhaps develop quantitative data on a loudspeaker, which data might indicate a predictable listening result. This predictability, of course, depends on many variables, such as signal injection to the speaker under test; equipment and techniques used in detecting, measuring, and interpreting the speaker's output; acoustical environment; and, finally, an elusive dependency—almost a hope and a prayer—that what the instruments show can be directly related to what the human ear perceives. (Without this final concordance, all that such tests "prove" is the speaker's ability to reproduce signal-generator tones.)

In any case, assuming that such a pro-

Continued on page 28

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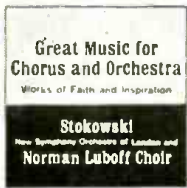
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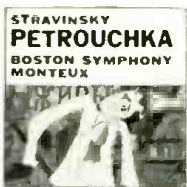
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SEPTEMBER 1962

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LETTERS

Continued from page 24

gram—carried out rigorously—could produce this data, it could do so accurately only over a relatively long period of time, such as the time taken by a manufacturer to develop and produce a new speaker. Even then, all that the data could do—at best—would simply be to document what we can ascertain in much shorter time by our present evaluation program. On the other hand, such a program, if carried out incorrectly or incompletely—as often is the case—can become pseudoscientific, misleading, and meaningless. In a word, "measurements" really are not needed to tell one that a modern high fidelity speaker sounds better than a "morning glory" horn.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Villchur's final reliance on listening as the arbiter of speaker performance, from the consumer's standpoint, really agrees with our own approach to speaker evaluation. Our program utilizes, in part, signal generators and "white noise" as well as more subjective criteria such as high-quality program sources, a variety of comparison speakers (rather than one arbitrary "reference speaker"), different listening rooms, and varied panels of several listeners. As for the "live vs. recorded concert" idea, we are in complete accord with Mr. Villchur, as our June editorial will attest.

Adequate Rebuttal

SIR:

The point that reader John B. Shoemaker misses ["Letters," June 1962] is not whether critical or controversial articles should be published, but rather whether they should receive adequate rebuttal. When HIGH FIDELITY prints an article ["A Pox on Manfredini," June 1961] by an editor (note that H.C.R.L. is European Editor), the content becomes editorial policy for the publication—especially when no public debate is permitted within the pages of the magazine.

Members of the New York-based Barococo Society are well aware that such a rebuttal to the Robbins Landon "Pox" article was written and submitted to HIGH FIDELITY by De Koven. However, this article was turned down. . . .
Wallace Chinitz, Ph.D.
Kew Gardens, N.Y.

The rebuttal by De Koven (a New York classical disc jockey who abjures the use of a first name) was rejected, not for reasons of policy or barococo-phobia, but simply because the article struck the editors as unsuitable—in point of style, length, and general cogency—for publication in HIGH FIDELITY. Many letters in rebuttal to the Robbins Landon article have been published in these pages—chief among them a long and well-reasoned letter by Max Goberman, whose claim to speak in defense of the "barococo" repertoire is surely as valid as that of Mr. De Koven. In view of all the correspondence apropos "A Pox on

Continued on page 30

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LETTERS

Continued from page 28

Manfredini" that has been published by HIGH FIDELITY, it seems odd to find Reader Chinitz asserting that "no public debate is permitted within the pages of the magazine." But the assertion is typical of the hyperbolic enthusiasm that seems to have seized some "barococo" devotees.

Skeletons Let Out

SIR:

Credit where credit is due.

In closing his review of Moura Lympany's album of Chopin Nocturnes in your July issue, Mr. Harris Goldsmith referred to the "excellent accounts" of "Caro nome," "Sempre libera," and other Verdi arias on Side 3 of his review set. These Italianate interpolations into Polish piano literature were, of course, the result of the wrong stamper on the right press or vice versa. We now know that our vigilance to keep this skeleton in our own closet was not completely effective.

The anonymous soprano whose work Mr. Goldsmith admired was Anna Moffo, and her performance of these and other selections may be found in her album of coloratura arias, Angel 35861, without piano accompaniment.

John Coveney
Angel Records
New York, N.Y.

More Johann Christian

SIR:

Further to Mr. Charles Cudworth's article on Johann Christian Bach ["Mr. Bach of London," June 1962], your readers who have access to imports may be interested to know of another recording of his music published by Oiseau-Lyre. Under the title "Mr. Bach at Vauxhall Gardens" (monophonic only, OL 50132), the selections comprise the second clavier concerto of Opus 7 (played in this instance on the organ), the six canzonettes of Opus 4, and five Vauxhall songs. The artists are Elsie Morison, Jennifer Vyvyan, Thurston Dart, and the Boyd Neel Orchestra.

Derek Lewis
Decca Record Co., Ltd.
London, England

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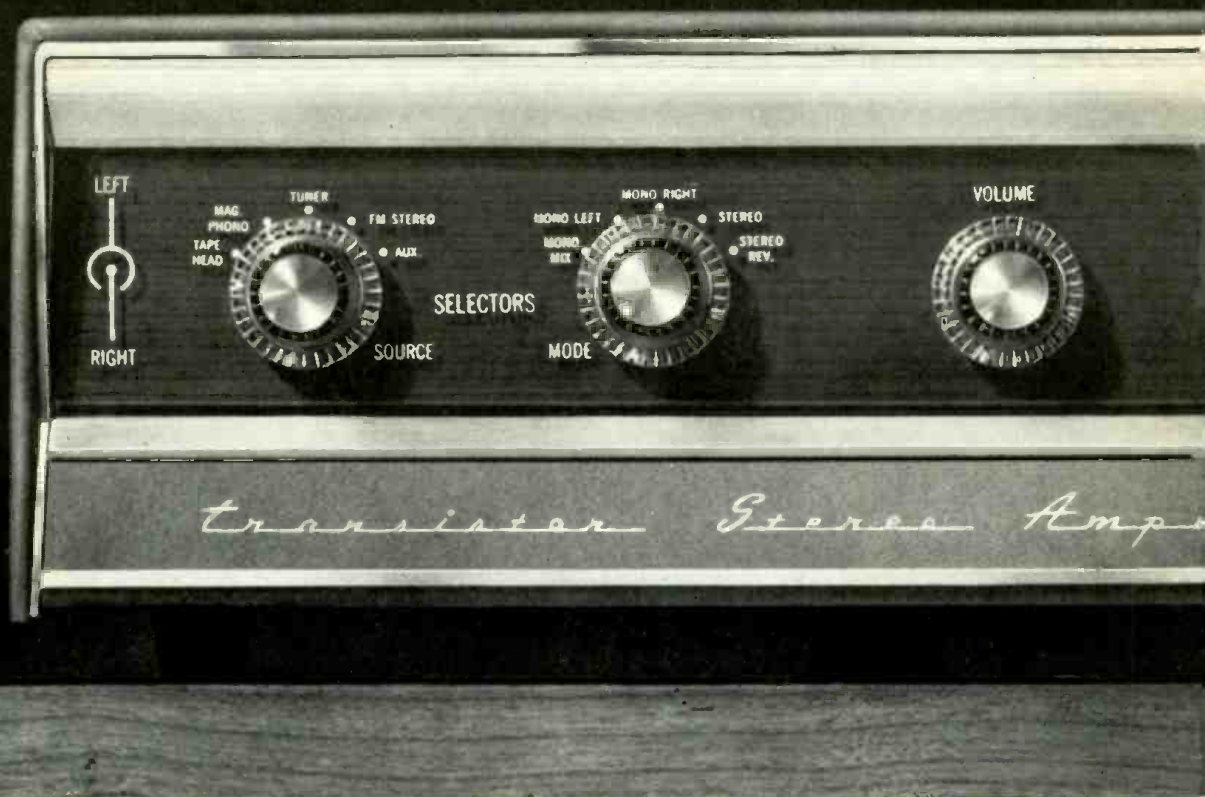
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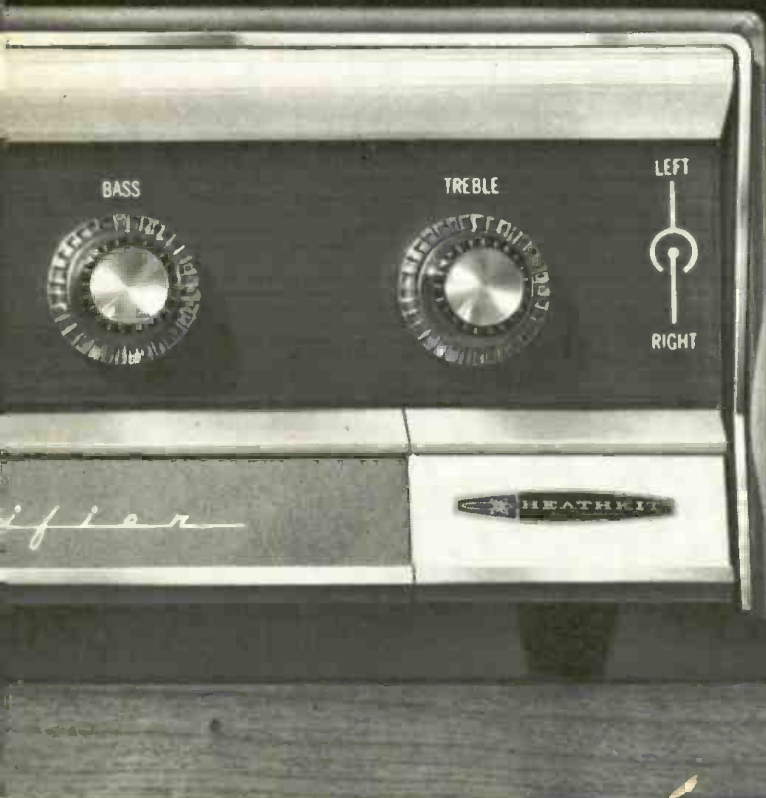
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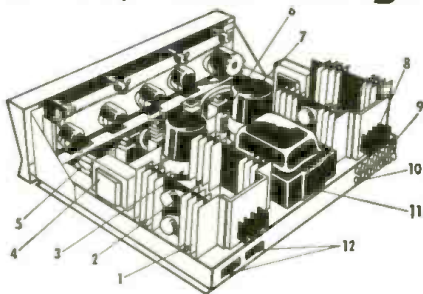
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Duo-Pianists Gold and Fizdale

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I WOULD BE WILLING to wager that there is scarcely a duo piano team in existence which is not confronted periodically by some skeptic who wants to know, with no beating about the bush, just what two pianos can do that one can't. When this curve was thrown to Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale (somewhat ungraciously, I feared, but it had to be done), they were gentlemen enough not even to wince. The truth of the matter is, they are flourishing so hardily as a team and are so obviously enjoying themselves in their rather special calling that they have no susceptibility to musical inferiority complexes; and after sitting between them for an hour's conversation which was as nimble as the Stravinsky polka on their latest record, I began to wonder why I had asked the question in the first place.

"Oh, a single piano is the most wonderful sound in the world," said Gold serenely. (He is the blond member of the team, and perhaps the more effervescent of this generally exuberant pair.) Having made this concession to the solitary mode of music making, Mr. Gold went on to the pleasure of dual-pianism.

"Every work, when we come to it, is new to us. When a solo pianist gives a recital, for instance, almost anyone who plays can name the program ahead of time and hum every tune in it, because most pianists have studied the same things since childhood. But practically nobody can hum anything from the duo literature."

And practically nobody, as Gold and Fizdale tell it, officially approved of the literature or of the two young students devoting themselves to it when they met at Juilliard and first wanted to team up. "We used to play together, as all the students do," said Fizdale, "but when we decided to form a professional duo everyone objected. I was studying with Ernest Hutcheson, the head of the School, and Arthur studied with the Lhevinnes. At first they all insisted that we wait until we finished our scholarships before starting to work together. But we finally persuaded them to let us do it, and they became very interested. We took lessons from all three in rotation, and they used to be quite jealous

of one another—Mme. Lhevinne would always say, 'Now what did Josef tell you?'"

If Gold and Fizdale's early decision to play together was itself rather unorthodox, their first New York performance (at the New School) was even more so: they played a program of John Cage's music with six pianos on stage, each "prepared" differently and requiring several hours for proper rigging before the concert. ("I'll never forget," Gold recalled, "the first time we played a piece for John, after he'd put in the nuts and bolts and rubber bands and tacks—he just lay on the floor and started to giggle. I thought we'd made some absurd mistake, but all he could say was 'it's wonderful, just keep playing, keep playing.'")

THE Cage affair evidently whetted the team's appetite for contemporary music, and their quest for two-piano pieces has led them to commission works (about twenty, to date) from many of today's foremost composers, including at least half of "Les Six" (Poulenc, Auric, Milhaud). Their relationship with all of them, I judged, has been more than amicable. ("You just pay your money, sit back, and wait.")

"We've often told composers what we want," said Fizdale. "Sometimes they pay absolutely no attention, and sometimes they like to be told. Milhaud, for instance, tends to score heavily for the orchestra, so we told him we wanted the pianos to have passages alone, with lots of brilliance to show us off. He was delighted, and did just what we asked."

"It's interesting, by the way, that the best piano music written by Stravinsky is all for two pianos or piano four-hands. He told us that he needs twenty fingers to work with. And not one finger duplicates another. We've had some fantastic sessions with him—he has tremendous intensity, and when you play for him he simply devours every note. I remember once when George Balanchine brought him out to our place on Long Island and we played the Sonata for Two Pianos for him. He kept saying 'faster,

faster, faster!' What a performance! Metronome markings meant nothing. I think he must have wanted to finish and get to lunch."

Mr. Gold observed at this point that the presence of humor in Stravinsky's music created a particular challenge for performers. "Humor among artists is a very 'in-group' kind of thing. So much of it is between the lines. Do you remember Proust's Duchesse de Guermantes—how her humor was always parenthetical? That's what I'm reminded of. Now, when Stravinsky puts in a banal tune (and he says you must have one banal tune in every piece) you have to play it so that the listener understands that the composer *knows* it's banal. The ice cream wagon tune in the *Eight Easy Pieces* is an example."

Although, as is apparent from their conversation, both Gold and Fizdale are intensely interested in contemporary music, they have no intention of neglecting the older repertoire. The fine balance of their attitude was evident when they were asked which composer, living or dead, they would most like to commission at the moment: the names of Mozart and Stravinsky collided in mid-air. This healthy dichotomy is reflected in the team's recording activities for Columbia Records: the Schubert *Grand Duo* was followed by the Stravinsky disc, which in turn will be followed by a recording with Ormandy of a little-known double concerto by Mendelssohn composed when he was fifteen—"a wonderful work." And for this month's opening festivities at New York's Philharmonic Hall, their program will range from Mozart through Debussy (*Six Epigraphes antiques*) to Bartók (Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion).

There is, so far, no end of repertoire in sight for Gold and Fizdale. They have no need of special arrangements and make a point of never using them. "The only change we *do* make," said Gold, "is to play ordinary duets—piano four-hands, that is—on two pianos, just to avoid looking like two little boys at a birthday party." It would be quite a birthday party, should these gentlemen ever decide to change their minds.

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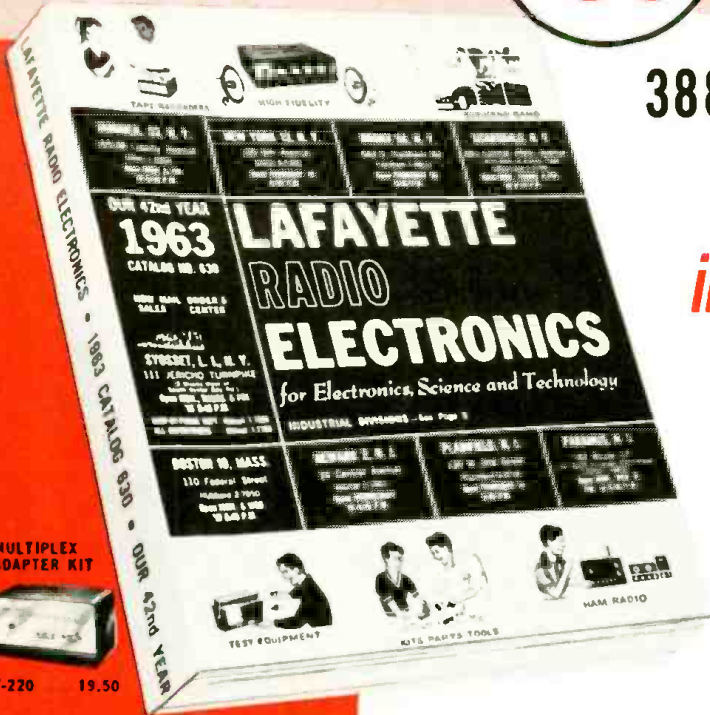
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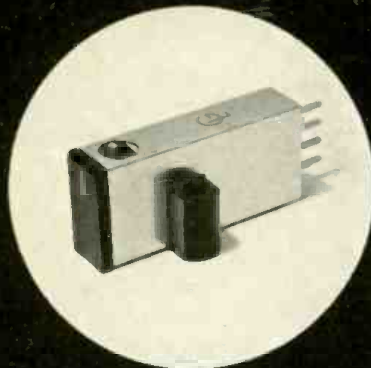
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NOTES FROM ABROAD

PARIS

Debussy had misgivings about anything mechanical, the phonograph included. In 1904, however, the Gramophone Company (His Master's Voice) persuaded him to accompany Mary Garden on the piano for a recording of "My long hair descends" from the third act of *Pelléas et Mélisande* and of Verlaine's *Green*, from the *Ariettes* the composer had set to music in the late 1880s—and which he had recently republished with a dedication to "Miss Garden, unforgettable *Mélisande*." The disc was reissued in 1937 for the International Record Collectors' Club. Then it was forgotten in the confusion of war and phonographic progress.

Now it has turned up again. The matrix was discovered a few months ago in EMI's London collection, where it had apparently been sent when the German army moved into Paris. The sound has been cleaned up a bit by Pathé-Marconi engineers, and a tape can be heard at the Bibliothèque Nationale's Debussy exposition (open until October 1).

This exposition—the result of a year's patient labor on the part of music librarian François Lesure—is worth visiting for dozens of other reasons. On view are some three hundred pieces of Debussyana: letters, photographs, scores, notebooks, programs, posters, model stage sets, the composer's worktable and personal fetishes (he admitted being as superstitious "as an old crow"). The net effect is to make the spectator feel that he knows Debussy better than any of the composer's friends ever knew him.

Among the amusing items are a rare photograph of Debussy's mistress, Gaby "of the green eyes," in a quaintly seductive pose, and his answers to a parlor-game questionnaire in 1889. On this last piece of paper one learns that his favorite writers, painters, and musicians were Flaubert, Poe, Baudelaire, Botticelli, Moreau, Palestrina, Bach, and Wagner; that he would have liked to have been a sailor if he had not been a musician; and that the faults he was most apt to forgive were faults in harmony.

But I do not want to imply that the show is just an entertainment for the idly curious. Here those interested can

see what definite pains Debussy took to achieve his apparently spontaneous effects. There are sketches for compositions, revisions of sketches, revisions of completed works, revisions of proofs, revisions of revisions. The catalogue of the exposition, like all Bibliothèque Nationale catalogues, is a contribution to scholarship, and worth having even if one cannot see the show. And an important by-product of Lesure's work will be an edition of some fifteen hundred of Debussy's letters—with censored passages back in place.

New *Mélisande*. Although the chronic crisis at the Paris Opéra has postponed for an indefinite period the super-production of *Pelléas et Mélisande* scheduled for last June, and although a sharp controversy is still audible over the question of sets, at least one ray of hope has appeared—in the person of Denise Duval. She sang *Mélisande* for the first time last spring in Venice, and did so with such poetic conviction that she is certain to get the part when Paris gets around to its own production. The rumor when these notes were written was that the Opéra-Comique, using its old sets, would attempt a half-new version.

Munch Returns. Most of the musical homage being paid to Debussy is low-pressure and informal, which is perhaps as it should be. One can hear his work at a lunch hour concert on the Left Bank, during a chamber music evening at the Conservatoire or at the Petit Palais, or on the radio two or three times a day. He is part of the French atmosphere this summer.

The only gala affair so far has been an Orchestre National concert conducted by Charles Munch, retiring this year from his Boston post. When he finished his habitually brilliant rendering of *La Mer*, the applause was not only for Debussy, but also for the prodigal who had come home at last from America. And the critics the next morning noted sadly that his return had coincided with the announcement that Georges Prêtre was leaving Paris for the London Philharmonic. The feeling is growing here that there is something wrong about the organization of musical activities in France.

Continued on page 42

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE



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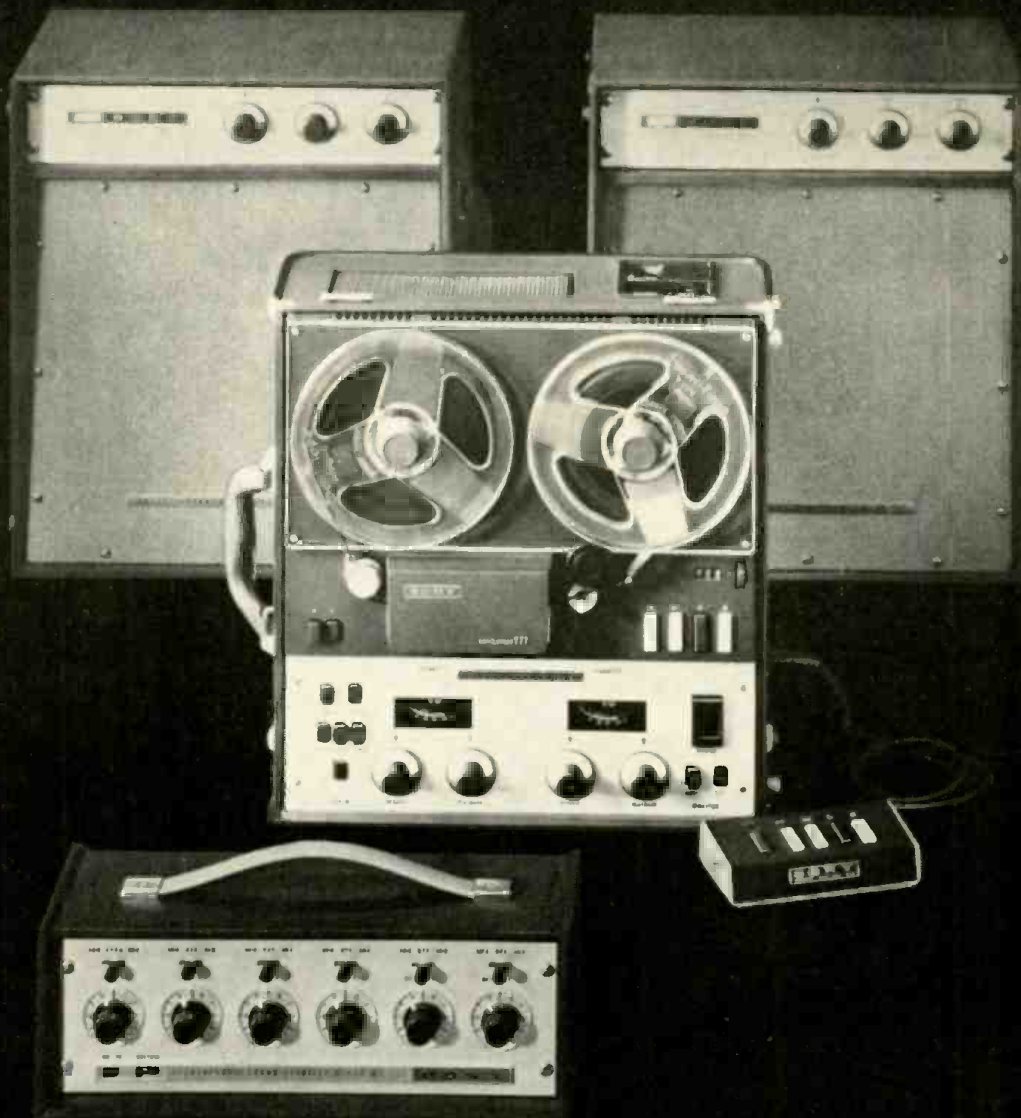
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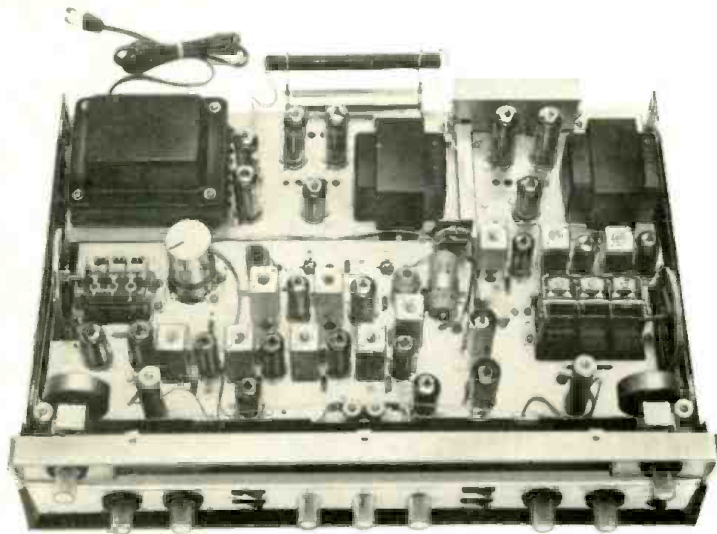
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NOTES FROM ABROAD

Continued from page 38

Center for Study. At Saint-Germain, Paris suburb where Debussy was born, the centenary has been marked by the opening of a department in the local museum which will be devoted permanently and exclusively to the composer. Here researchers—and the general public—will find a library of critical and musicological studies, all the scores, and eventually, it is hoped, all the Debussy recordings ever made (you can listen to Mary Garden here as well as at the BN).

At the moment the collections, although sizable, are just getting under way, and the playback equipment does not yet provide for stereo, but the project is already an impressive reality. The curator, Mlle. Jeanne Fischer, has asked **HIGH FIDELITY** to tell its readers (including record manufacturers) that she is anxious to learn of any material she ought to start budgeting for. Suggestions can be sent to her at the Musée Municipal, Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

ROY MCMULLEN

LONDON

With every year, month, and minute, that prince among prodigies, Pierre Monteux, becomes a spark more prodigious. On the eve of his eighty-seventh birthday, his doctors told him his blood pressure was that of a young forty-year-old. Mme. Monteux has been heard to say that her husband hasn't lost a tooth yet.

Monteux was here during the summer to give some concerts and to record, for Westminster, Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. With him for the recording sessions were the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, the Bach Choir, and, as soloists in one work or the other (or both), Regina Resnik, Elisabeth Söderström, Jon Vickers, André Turp, and David Ward. Having done nine sessions, he broke away for a week-end flip to Paris with the orchestra but was back after a two-day breather to record a *Swan Lake* (two long-play sides) for Philips.

As in the concert hall so in the studio, he conducted on his feet at all sessions. Somebody asked whether he wouldn't like a chair on the podium. Sweeping a genial hand over the orchestra, he asked, "How can I expect the boys to concentrate if I loll back?" His plans stretch far ahead. He is booked to conduct an anniversary performance of *Le Sacre du printemps* at the Albert Hall here on May 29, 1963, fifty years to the day after he conducted the riotous premiere of that score at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. If LSO plans work out, this anniversary observance will in itself be something of a European milestone. Stravinsky has been invited to compose something—anything (a two-

Continued on page 44

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NOTES FROM ABROAD

Continued from page 42

stave fanfare would be better than nothing)—for the occasion and come over to conduct it.

Monteux has never made any secret of the fact that *Le Sacre*, although his name will be linked with it forever, is not his own cup of nectar. In accepting the LSO's gala invitation he said, "I shall conduct *Le Sacre* twice more—once on its fiftieth anniversary and once on my hundredth birthday. I am too old for those rhythms. *Je suis tué par ce rythme là.*" Beethoven's Ninth is a different matter entirely; mere mention of it turns his face into a sunburst. He says, "I have to be eighty-seven before they'll let me record the Ninth. The Ninth means more to me than all the French music I'm made to conduct put together—with the exception of *Roméo* and *La Damnation de Faust.*"

Isn't this judgment unkind to Debussy? Perhaps. He makes amends by speaking highly of *Ibéria*, *Jeux*, and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. He considers these the Debussy cream.

Merveilleux! Monteux's routine in his London hotel was roughly as follows. He and Mme. Monteux, who are their own alarm clocks, awakened every morning at 9:30 sharp. After they had opened the morning's mail and gone through a stiff series of setting-up exercises. Madame massaged Monsieur's shoulders and arms. This ritual completed, they both then knelt and prayed before the altar which Mme. Monteux sets up wherever they stay—in this case a console of inlaid rosewood, part of the bedroom furniture, covered with a strip of brocade to serve as an altar cloth. On this Mme. Monteux had arranged a picture of the Holy Shroud of Turin, an antique carved-wood crucifix, and a framed Italian medallion of the Miraculous Virgin. The whole was flanked by carnations and lilies in black Wedgwood vases. In front lay a French missal open at the Proper for the day.

After prayers Monteux took a shower, breakfasted sparsely, and started rustling through six English national dailies, the *New York Times*, and *Figaro*. Then, towards noon, out to the recording hall on the edge of London for a couple of three-hour sessions, with a two-hour rest between. He was back at the hotel usually around eleven for a meal super-

vised by the watchful Mme. Monteux. What does this exemplar of perennial youth eat? A great deal of fruit and vegetables "and steak once in a while." Before lights out (as late as 1 a.m.), there was more newspaper reading and another massage.

The LSO—Well and Busy. For Mercury, the London Symphony Orchestra was scheduled for forty-three summer sessions at Wembley and Watford town halls under conductors Dorati and Skrowaczewski, with the usual Mercury recording team in charge—Wilma Cozart, Bob Fine, Harold Lawrence, and Red Eberenz. It looks as though by the end of the year, the LSO will have a grand total of 161 sessions in 1962, netting fees of £80,000.

In 1964, they take off on a world tour which, as at present planned, will take in six American weeks of five or six concerts a week. There are veterans who remember the orchestra's one and only previous tour of the United States. That was in 1912. For three weeks the men lived in eight Pullman cars and put on frock coats and black trilbies for a call at the White House, where, in grilling heat, President Taft shook each player by the hand.

Bearded Busoni-ite. Another 1964 visitor to your shores will be our 26-year-old pianist John Ogdon, whose Busoni-Liszt recital (HMV) was the springboard for a career that has since included a joint first prize (his co-winner being Vladimir Ashkenazy) at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. At this writing Ogdon doesn't know exactly when and where he will be playing in America. It is likely that, if feasible, his trip will be geared in with that of the LSO, but to begin with, neither party knew the other was U.S.-bound.

Ogdon is a stout, beaming young man with an uncamouflaged North-of-England accent and a black beard (recently trimmed to a goatee) which his wife urged him to grow "for a lark." At a Kremlin reception in honor of the prize winners, Khrushchev threw up his arms on meeting Ogdon and exclaimed, "Ah, my young friend, how glad I am to see you. I love you. I should like to pull your beard to see whether it is real, but this would be an international incident, because English beards must on no account be pulled by Russian politicians."

More important than the beard are Ogdon's thunderous, minute, refined, dazzling techniques—and the taste which underlies them for out-of-the-way scores, especially those of Busoni. At Liverpool a season or two ago, he gave a performance of Busoni's enormous Piano Concerto which became one of the foundation stones of what is rather a current Busoni discovery than a Busoni revival. In four years his fee has risen from five guineas to a hundred guineas a concert. On his return from a tour of Russia this summer, he was told by a quizzing impresario that a hundred guineas wasn't enough. CHARLES REID



Monteux: eight daily papers are a lot.

Continued on page 48

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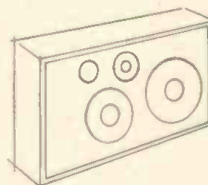
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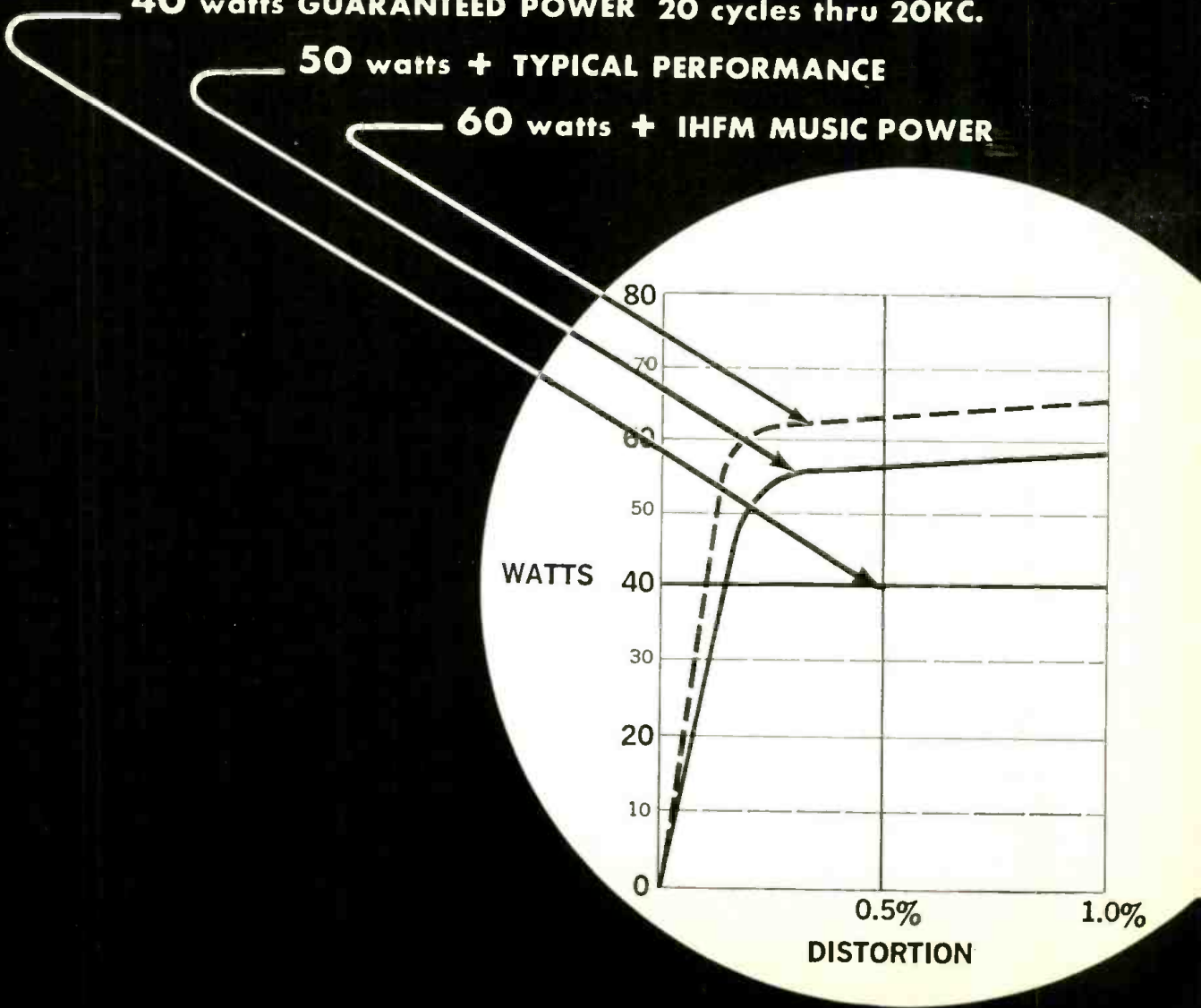
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Continued from page 44

BAMBERG

"Why Bamberg?" I wondered, when I heard that Electrola was planning to record a complete opera there. Students of medieval art are, of course, familiar with Bamberg's treasures, and visitors to Bayreuth hardly ever fail to make the short trip, some sixty kilometers to the west, to admire the old town's Gothic cathedral. But as a locale for a record company's opera project? Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* perhaps—on the romantic grounds that Hoffmann himself had spent some years in Bamberg, between 1808 and 1813, as conductor of the local orchestra and stage designer for the local theatre which now bears his name. Yet the recording scene was not to be the theatre, and the music was not Offenbach's score for the German poet's tales, but *The Bartered Bride*, by the Czech patriot Bedřich Smetana.

The reason for Electrola's seemingly whimsical choice was emphatically stated almost as soon as I arrived for the sessions at Bamberg's "Kulturraum," an old Dominican church now used for concert performances. Conductor Rudolf Kempe quickly cleared up the mystery. "If you want to record Smetana's opera this side of the Iron Curtain," Kempe said, "there is only one place in the world you can choose: Bamberg." This unequivocal pronouncement from the orchestra's conductor made sense when I began to think of the ensemble which now calls Bamberg its home. The Bamberger Symphoniker is comprised mainly of former members of the Prague "German Philharmonic Orchestra" who fled Czechoslovakia in 1945 for West Germany. They were forced to leave their instruments behind, but they carried with them something far more valuable: an intimate knowledge of the music of their homeland and a feeling for its authentic rendering.

The overture indeed sounded genuinely Czech as I listened to the first take in the control room; and Pilar Lorengar as Marie and the tenor Fritz Wunderlich did much to quiet my doubts as to the appropriateness of a libretto sung in German. Certainly Peter E. Andry, of EMI International, who had come over from London for the occasion, seemed to be pretty sure that music lovers in the English-speaking world would accept *Die verkaufte Braut* instead of *Prodaná nevěsta*, provided the music itself was rendered idiomatically.

The new *Bartered Bride* (to be released on the Angel label in the United States, incidentally) will take full advantage of stereo opportunities. The appearance of the comedians in the third act, for instance, suggests the use of all sorts of acoustical tricks to create the gay atmosphere of a Czech village. The laughter of children, the creaking wheels of a cart, and the barking of a dog seemingly running across the road will all be heard.

KURT BLAUKOPF

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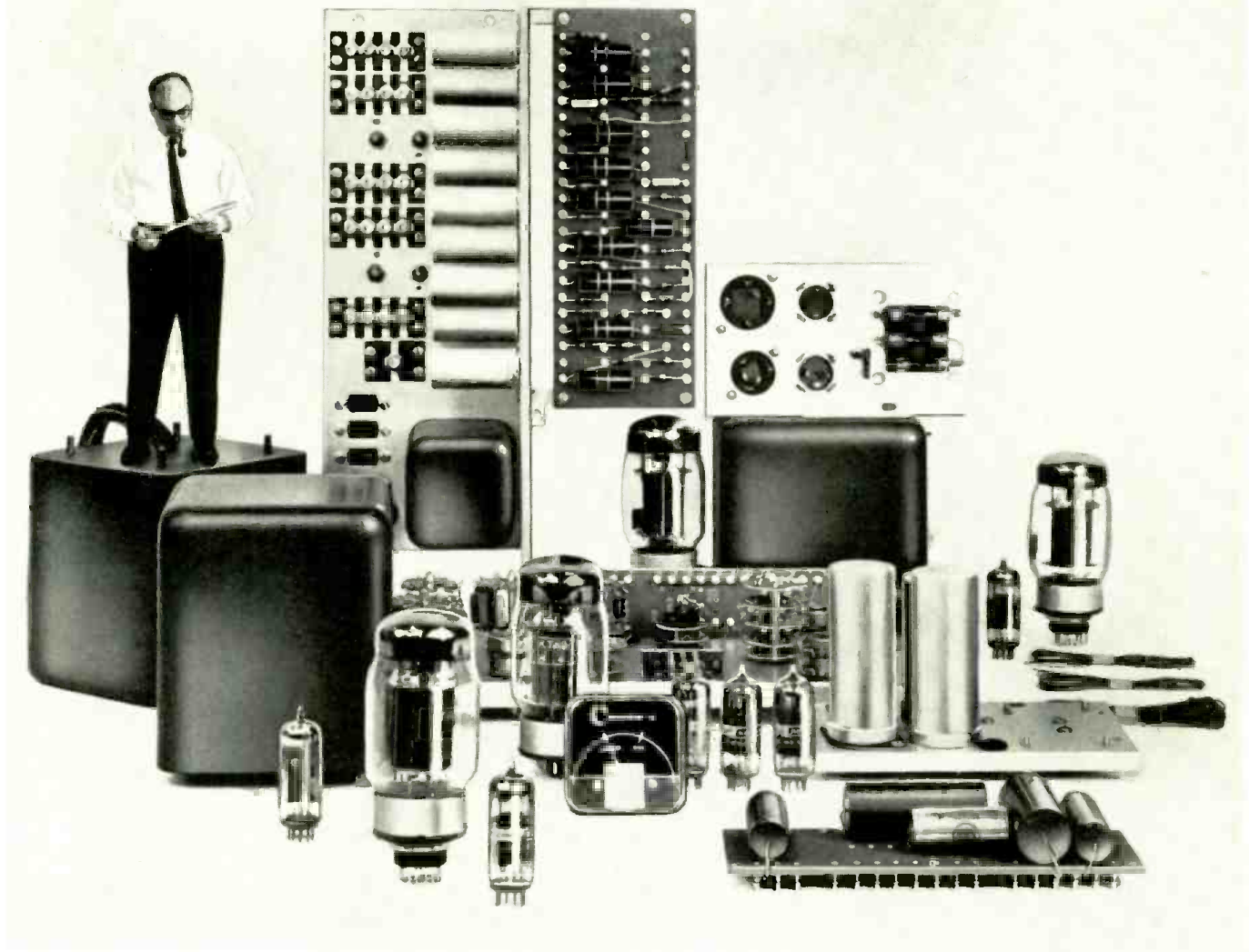
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Notes on an Anniversary

THIS YEAR we celebrate the eightieth birthday of Igor Stravinsky and honor the hundredth anniversary of Claude Debussy. Chronologically the two composers are closer to each other than were Haydn and Mozart, and yet to us Stravinsky and Debussy seem almost to inhabit different worlds. It comes as something of a shock to realize that if Debussy had lived to be eighty, we would have celebrated his birthday in the midst of World War II—which hardly seems so very long ago. Indeed, should he have managed to get out of occupied France, Debussy might even have composed a Biblical cantata on commission from the Columbia Broadcasting System as part of the celebration. But, alas, the composer of *La Mer* died at the age of fifty-five in 1918, and we tend as a result to relegate him farther into past history than he deserves and to forget that he is perhaps the most modern and radical of all the twentieth-century masters.

At the moment, and despite the anniversary, Debussy is distinctly out of fashion. Concertgoers no longer flock to all-Debussy recitals (perhaps because there is no Gieseking around to attract them) and operagoers no longer fall over themselves to attend performances of *Pelléas* (perhaps because there is no Mary Garden in the cast). But if Debussy's stock has temporarily tumbled in the marketplace of music, it is sharply in the ascendant among the young generation of composers and writers. "The deeper implications of Debussy's music and its historical significance were not brought to light," writes André Hodeir, "until the end of the last war. Only then did 'Claude de France,' the 'soft-focus painter,' the 'impressionist,' the 'pointillist' give way to the real Debussy, the composer who destroyed rhetoric, invented the contemporary approach to form, and reinstated the power of pure sound, sound *per se*." Within the ranks of the avant-garde, Debussy is now enthroned more securely than any

of his contemporaries or near-contemporaries, and it will be very surprising if this reevaluation does not eventually lead to a widespread Debussy revival.

The present issue of HIGH FIDELITY has thus been conceived not as an honorific tribute to a past master but rather as an examination and reappraisal of an artist whose influence on the culture of our time is far from spent. The Paris critic Frederick Goldbeck contributes a penetrating analysis of Debussy's importance in the grand evolution of music. (Parenthetically, we might add that M. Goldbeck's elegant and witty English prose style is a stimulating delight unto itself.) Ernest Ansermet, the most eminent living interpreter of Debussy's music, attempts to define—in conversation with Peter Heyworth, chief music critic of the London *Observer*—those organic musical elements that set Debussy apart from his lesser French contemporaries. Alfred Frankenstein takes a fresh look at the parallels between the music of Debussy and the visual arts. And Roy McMullen garners a bouquet of Debussy's pungently revealing remarks on his fellow composers. Finally, in hopes that this centenary reappraisal will renew interest in Debussy's familiar and unfamiliar works, we are publishing this month Part I of a planned complete critical discography of Debussy on microgroove.

The attentive reader will not fail to notice certain contradictory points of view in the ensuing pages. Messrs. Ansermet and Goldbeck hold opposite opinions with regard to Debussy's influence on the school of French serial composers headed by Pierre Boulez, while the Messrs. Frankenstein and Ansermet differ markedly on the relationship between the art of Debussy and the art of Cézanne. But such contradictions merely show that the subject of Debussy and his music is far from closed. In matters of taste, nothing is quite so deadly as a complete and noncorrosive meeting of minds.

ROLAND GELATT

AS high fidelity SEES IT





By Frederick Goldbeck

THE HERITAGE OF
DEBUSSY

It is not for impressionism or exotic harmonies that we celebrate Debussy but for his radical reforms. Like Monteverdi and Beethoven, he turned a leaf in the book of music and opened a new chapter.

LABELS pinned to the hats of famous composers have a bad reputation, deserve it, and are generally banned from the discourse, written or spoken, of even moderately fastidious commentators on music. But, though easy to shelve, labels are difficult to beat. They take to an insidious subterranean action, lingering tenaciously in the minds of those who so carefully avoid mentioning them. Who will boast of never thinking of Bach, Haydn, or Chopin in terms of "architect of polyphonic cathedrals," "father of the symphony," "poet of the keyboard"? Better, therefore, not to ignore labels, and to take their influence into account.

Definitions by labels are always—that is the case against them—superficial and incomplete. Yet some of the tritest are quite harmless: Haydn and Chopin, after all, and whatever their other achievements, are primarily and essentially the father and the poet their labels identify them as. But in other cases such definitions are incomplete to the point of being utterly misleading. And thus current opinion has been, and still is, devastatingly misled about the three greatest French composers. Rameau is "the father of modern harmony"—true as far as it goes; but very few know about Rameau the dramatist, whose stature approached Monteverdi's. Berlioz is indeed "the first and most original of modern orchestrators," but this unexceptionable statement has consistently obscured the fact that the famous "*Tuba mirum*" is the least essential passage in his Requiem. And if you want to assign to Debussy the wrong place in the history of music, and on the actual musical scene, it will suffice to take him for granted as "the great impressionist composer."

Again, it would be absurd to underrate the importance and quality of Debussy's impressionist works. The *Nocturnes* are great music, and grand impressionism: *Nuages* out-Turners Turner, *Fêtes* is the amazing equivalent in sound of a Renoir. After half a century Monet's *Nymphéas* have faded; not so *Reflets dans l'eau*. Nevertheless, the domain of impressionism is no more the whole Debussy than the domain of fairies and goblins the whole Shakespeare. But if no interpreter of Shakespeare has ever been tempted to produce *Richard III* in the style of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Debussy interpreters of accepted authority have, for example, produced the complete set of the Preludes for Piano in the style that suits *La Cathédrale engloutie* and *Le Vent dans la plaine* but does not at all suit *La Sérénade interrompue* or *Danseuses de Delphes*. In fact, nine out of ten readings of Debussy's music are, for impressionism's sake, plunged into continuous haziness and lack of rhythm and dyed an anemic gray; and Debussy is made to look like a forerunner of his most

superficial imitators (a fate, by the way, not unlike Mozart's before the great Mozart revival of our time: his label said "rococo," and on the pianos of our Mozart-loving aunts he used to sound like a forerunner of Mendelssohn).

THIS is, of course, the most damaging result of the preconception the label stands for—because it affects Debussy's music as it comes to life in performance and goes on living in the memory of listeners. But a secondary result of the same error turns out to be hardly less hurtful in the long run—because it affects the image of Debussy in the tradition of Western music, or, less pompously, his place in every musician's musical household. To see Debussy only as the episodic master of musical impression means to deprive him of his rank among the three or four musicians who, without being necessarily the greatest of all, have in the course of the last three or four centuries turned a leaf in the book of music and opened a new chapter. Bach and Mozart, it is generally agreed, never did so, nor (although they claimed such merits) did Wagner and Schoenberg. But Monteverdi and Beethoven and Debussy turned the leaves so abruptly, and wrote the next page in so strange a writing, that their successors were too much irritated by the rustle of the turning to approach the deciphering of the page with the necessary patience and equanimity. Thus, after a few wild guesses, they made haste to replace the unmanageable text by an oversimplified summary. This summary reads roughly as follows:

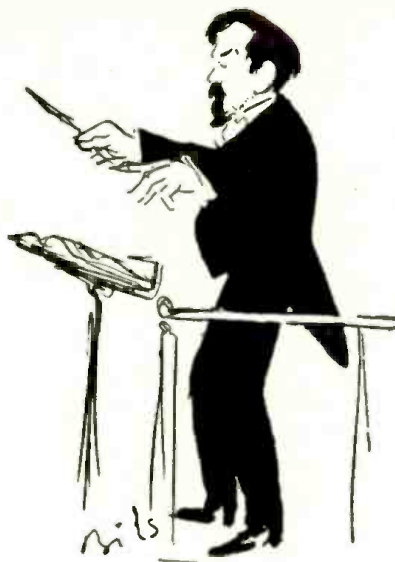
"With Monteverdi early hieratic polyphony is dethroned and classicism (i.e., proper balance between traditional form and personal expression, and between traditional rule and personal innovation) is going to reign up to Beethoven's Second Symphony.

"With Beethoven's *Eroica* romanticism sets in, and is going to reign up to *Tristan* (with *Salome* and Mahler on the fringe): personal expression stands out and shapes dissonance into its symbol. The breaking of rules becomes the rule. Romantic psychology (and revolt), embodied in dramatic symphony and symphonic drama, is rampant.

"Then comes an interlude: impressionism. Mainly French: Debussy and Ravel, and their followers, with a few forerunners (Russian and Nordic) and a few sympathizers (such as Delius and Reger) on the fringe. Mainly decorative, thanks to folklore and exoticism, and psychologically ill-defined (as suits the general vagueness of impressionist style).

"And then, with Schoenberg and with Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, music resumes its previous manner of advancing: extreme individualism of style,

THE HERITAGE OF DEBUSSY



provocative dissonance, overturning of the oldest rule, tonality itself; a revolutionary turmoil, a final corrosion of the very substance of music—which leads up to a 'dialectical' somersault into a new impersonal, rule-ridden style . . . the scattered fragments of music reassembled with wire and glue . . . all-out 'structuralism,' electronics, etc."

Such a summing up has perhaps the merit of looking like a workable formula for a very complex situation. But it has the fault of being the wrong formula, the wrong hypothesis, since it disregards essential elements. And it distorts not only the doctrine of music, but has also a most regrettable bearing on its practice: it divides the musical scene into camps of irreconcilable partisans, reproaching one another with being hopeless organizers of inhuman noises or hopeless champions of the outmoded—a debate which, after Debussy's reform, happens to be in itself outdated and pointless.

"Debussy's reform" . . . that sounds like a paradox, almost like a wrong note, for Debussy had nothing of the doctrinaire, nothing of the legislator. Yet if others—Gluck and Wagner, for example—claimed to be reformers (and in fact reformed nothing), Debussy, obeying nothing but the pleasure of his ear, "listening to nothing but to the wind that passes and tells us the story of the world," worked, or rather embodied, a most radical reform: he came, and the role of the composer appeared to have changed.

Never before had any composer had to deal with any music but that of his own time and of his immediate predecessors. Every one had a master to obey or disobey, an example to follow and surpass. In late romanticism this following and surpassing of examples (generally Beethoven's) had become an obsession, a treadmill—look at Wagner's efforts in *Götterdämmerung* to surpass the *Eroica*, to super-minorize the hero's funeral march. Debussy was the first to get away from this obsession with the immediate past, the first to have his modernism con-

sistently blended with, and not rarely represented by, an element of archaism. Debussy harks back to Rameau, to Renaissance polyphony, to Gregorian and Greek modes. And when he takes to exotic scales and an exotic manner of scoring, he is in quest not of the picturesque, but again of things far away, in space if not in time. Always there is the aristocratic "spirit of distance" commended by Nietzsche—a dominant, indeed, of Debussy's approach to art, and even to technique. Folklore melody has belonged to many a symphonist's stock in trade; but take *La Sérénade interrompue*, or *Gigues*, or *Rondes de printemps*—with Debussy, for the first time, the setting of such melody always means to emphasize, not without irony and sadness, the unbridgeable distance that stretches

between a modern professional composer's sophistication and the naïveté of a traditional song. "The feel of not to feel it/Was never said in Rhyme"—but Debussy says it in music, again and again.

For a hundred years music has luxuriated in increasing chromaticism and the rhetoric of involved "development"; Debussy's music is prevalently diatonic, aphoristical, and unrhetorical to the point of being soliloquizing: unrelated common chords juxtaposed as though in frozen solitude. Furtwängler remarked that when Debussy, during the last years of his life, wrote his sonatas—a form his anti-romanticism had for a long time avoided—he took care to make them look as little as he could like "real" sonatas. A very just remark. But who will wonder? Always, with Debussy, between the emotional content of his music—a world full of ghosts, mystery, and anguish—and its expression a distance is left open for an understatement, an irony, a solid deprecatory pair of inverted commas. And let us not forget one of the most lovable variations of this theme of distance: the spirit of childhood, Debussy's Lewis-Carrollish side. Not only the Doll in *La Boîte à joujoux* remains a charming little girl even on the day of her silver wedding, but Mélisande too is an Alice who dies because Golaud's castle is not enough like wonderland, and Golaud himself too much like the King of Spades.

DEBUSSY, the impressionist, has been a dangerous master of dangerous disciples. It proved to be too easy to write, in parallel fifths and ninths and in the whole-tone scale, one watery prelude after the other. And the triviality of the result even threatened to trivialize the models, or at least to obscure their quality. It was the countless Debussyists' fault if, about 1925, musicians who should have known better came to consider Debussy as "perfect but passé" and his works to be relegated, with other late Vic-

torian or Edwardian objects, to the same lumber room of sentimental souvenirs as the Proustian Odette's boudoir and winter garden. But in reality the only dated thing about Debussy has been this underrating of his music, and his influence has been farther reaching than even many of his admirers would admit.

It is to Debussy that, from 1900 onwards, musicians and listeners owe a fantastic widening of their musical horizon. Debussy's static and modal manner taught them to think and to hear in other terms than those of "development" and sonata form. And it is no paradox to say that many of us have found even Rameau and Monteverdi, Purcell and Thomas Tallis in Debussy's heritage. For no amount of listening to nineteenth-century music—with the exception, perhaps, of Mussorgsky's—would prepare any listener to be in sympathy with Rameau's cool colors, with the strangeness of *King Arthur*, with the Byzantine splendor of Monteverdi's *Vesperae*. But we had heard and loved *Danseuses de Delphes* and *Le Martyre de Saint-Sébastien*, and Debussy's modern archaism had pulled the curtain away and changed the objects of musicologists' curiosity into live music again. Proximity of far-away music regained . . . an unexpected result of Debussy's spirit of distance.

André Gide once said that there was always something amiss in the novels of those among modern French novelists who did not know their Balzac by heart. Likewise, though for very different reasons, there is always something wrong with the music of modern composers—and not a few quite successful composers among them—who write as if Debussy had never existed. (It is probably not by mere coincidence that they are generally the same who write as if they had never heard Beethoven's last quartets.) They may be quite eloquent—but not without a slight provincial accent; there is nearly always a sort of blundering naïveté about their most brilliant scores; and their musical vocabulary sounds strangely unreal. And no wonder. Unaware of Debussy, they have failed to notice that Debussy's irony has changed, forever, the meaning of most of the words.

It stands to reason that Debussy's aristocratic sense of distance is not a technical device that can be placed at every composer's disposal. But on the other hand a good deal of democratic horse sense has been at work—certainly without Debussy's knowing—in Debussy's reform. Since the aspect and principle of our concerts have altogether changed, and twentieth-century programs cover five or six centuries of music, it is no more than reasonable that the style of new works, written to be heard in this context, should be in keeping with this unprecedented situation, that they refer to, evoke, and stylize the music of the past, near or remote. This is not a matter of "new wine into old vessels," but new variations on the theme of both the old vessels and the old wine—often intoxicating because the

wine has developed into a strange, strong alcohol, and fascinating because the vessels are ready to be distorted, Picasso-fashion, into all sorts of pleasant, or fantastic, or even disquieting shapes. In this sense Ravel and Stravinsky have been Debussy's disciples: not for a few (or even many) impressionist formulas and mannerisms in their early scores but for their compulsion to change their style from work to work—to evoke, stylize, and distort Rimsky, Schubert, Johann Strauss, Mozart, Liszt, *flamenco*, Bach, Guillaume de Machaut, Italian opera from the Renaissance to Verdi, Webern, and Gesualdo.

At the turn of the century, hardly any composer outside France—Busoni and Charles Ives excepted, who therefore should be named (and performed) with gratitude—dreamed of looking for musical ancestry other than Beethoven, Chopin, or Wagner; and (with the exception of Russia) national schools lay dormant. Debussy came and broke this spell; and English, Italian, and Spanish musicians started choosing Purcell and the Elizabethans, Monteverdi and Vivaldi, and the old *Vihuelists* for their ancestors and intercessors. And Bartók and Janáček, who had chosen the heritage of gypsy kings and rustic fiddlers, became other, and greater, composers after the experience of meeting with Debussy's music. True, premonitory signs of an impending change can be traced in late Verdi, in Berlioz, even as far back as late Beethoven. Yet Debussy and no one else has been the Copernicus of the new astronomy of music.

Only one school has consistently ignored, and even been candidly ignorant of, Debussy's reform. Schoenberg, in his quest for extreme modernism, would stick to the romanticists' aims and methods. He would surpass yesterday's masters—Wagner and Strauss—by means of more impressive and expressive dissonance. And he always despised archaism; rather would a modern Postmaster General think of homing pigeons for carrying his letters than Schoenberg think of modal melody or hieratic common chords as fit to convey his musical messages. In consequence, most of the atonal and twelve-tone composers, in spite of their exciting discoveries in the matter of melodic and harmonic disruption, have remained conservative in their aesthetics—uncompromising antitraditionalists indeed, but opposing tradition in the time-honored manner. And we had to wait for Pierre Boulez and his followers to watch a tentative going back—that is, a tentative going forward—to Debussy. The exclusive interest in harmony, *viz.* dissonance, as a vehicle of progress displayed by all the romanticists of the last 150 years, gives way to a complementary interest in timbre and rhythm. Moreover, the spirit of distance reappears; at least, the music of Bali haunts—even a bit over-conspicuously—the style of *Le Marteau sans maître*.

But this, we may hope, is only a beginning; and tomorrow Debussy's Cello Sonata (for example) will not improbably be found on the coming "structuralist" composer's shelf of textbooks, ready to hand, next to Webern's Pieces for *Continued on page 127*

"The difference between Debussy and all those French composers who came before him or about the same time was that he introduced into French music the inner unity that harmonic movement gives to music."

"An Inner Unity"

Peter Heyworth. Did you know Debussy? What was he like as a man?

Ernest Ansermet. He was a very simple man, reserved, very sensitive. He hated any sort of social formality and he did not go out in society. He had a reputation in Paris for being very fierce, very *rude*, and caustic. He had a few intimate friends and that was all. I had a chance to meet him because he was an old friend of my friend Robert Godet and of Francisco de Lacerda, the man who taught me to conduct, and both gave me an introduction. Our first meeting was in 1910, after a concert at which he had conducted the first performance of *Rondes de printemps*. Later on, in 1917 after the first performance of Satie's *Parade* with the Russian Ballet in Paris, he invited me to his home and I had an afternoon with him, studying his scores and talking about all sorts of questions relating to music, especially the music of the moment. In this way I was able to learn his ideas about tempos and other matters. He also gave me his opinion of Stravinsky. Debussy was an admirer of Stravinsky, but he made certain reservations about the direction he had taken in *The Rite of Spring*—the excess of rhythm as a primordial element. But Debussy immensely admired *Pétrouchka*.

P.H. Of course he was very ill when you saw him.

E.A. Not in 1910, but in 1917 he was very ill and suffered enormously.

P.H. What do you think are the main influences in his style, which seems so individual and unlike anyone else's?

E.A. Well, I think he was influenced first by Wagner—by *Tristan*. What he didn't like about Beethoven and the classical composers and Franck, for instance (Franck was his teacher at one time), was thematicism, symphonic rhetoric, or any sort of predetermined form in which music had to be molded. He dreamed of a much freer music, a free language; and he found in Wagner's music the lyricism which was in his own nature, and especially the continuity of *harmonic* flow. On the other hand, he found the *melodic* quality of his lyricism in Mussorgsky—especially in his songs. He was one of the first in France to know *Boris Godunov*, and Mussorgsky was probably the composer who had the greatest influence on him. But on the other hand, from Wagner, Schumann, and Chopin, Debussy assimilated the special harmonic feeling which is dominant in German music and which provides the basis of the inner unity as well as the form of German music; and that quality he pursued right to its source, in Bach—the *Bass-führung* of Bach. He often used to invite to his house the English pianist Walter Rummel, who was a Bach specialist and who played the Bach Chorales for him. Debussy was a great admirer of this music, and it provided an essential basis of his own work. The difference between Debussy and all those French composers who came before him or about the same time was that he introduced into French music the inner unity that harmonic movement gives to music.

P.H. What about Ravel? Do you think that he had much influence on Debussy's piano music?

E.A. Well, both Debussy and Ravel were working with the same musical patterns, namely the same kind



Hans Wild

Conversations with Ernest Ansermet on the art of Debussy

of harmonies which were in the air at that time. But Ravel did not take the inner quality of Debussy's music. He returned to the Saint-Saëns manner with its square periods, which is the special disease of the French composer: four bars plus four bars, etc. You cannot find this in the great German composers, and it was the weakness of French music.

P.H. But to return to the original question. . . . Some people claim that Ravel in fact influenced Debussy's piano music. *Jeux d'eau*. . . .

E.A. Debussy didn't need the example of *Jeux d'eau* to write similar pieces of piano virtuosity. Some people said also that Erik Satie had an influence on Debussy because he was the first to play parallel ninths when he was playing for the Sar Péladan and the Rosicrucians, but I think this is of no importance. Even if it is true that Debussy occasionally took something that Satie had invented, that is not what made the music of Debussy. What makes that is the entire style and not the details.

P.H. What about Eastern music? Do you think that had much attraction for him?

E.A. Eastern music was very close to Debussy because he admired a music in which feeling for nature plays a great role. He was himself a contemplative artist—and the static quality of Eastern music appealed to him. He felt at home in the *gamelan* music of the Orient; and it was there that he found, for instance, the pentatonic scale which plays such a large role in his own melodic writing—not without reason, because the pentatonic scale is the original source of melody.

P.H. What do you think were the influences on Debussy's orchestration?

E.A. His orchestration was entirely original. Ravel was not a great admirer of Debussy's orchestration, and told me one day after a performance of *Rondes de printemps* that it was always very hard to play because it was "so badly scored." But that is not true at all. The point is that there are two kinds of orchestrators. There are the people who think in terms of instruments, like Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky, and Ravel; if you play the note, it sounds. Then there are the people who think in terms of music, and they have to incorporate, to incarnate, this music in instruments. Of course, then we must help. That is the case with Beethoven, as it is with Debussy. We must try to understand how their music must be played, because the music does not sound for itself. But if you listen to *Pelléas*, for instance, it is marvelous how you can hear every word of the text.

P.H. Do you think that it is correct to call Debussy an impressionist?

E.A. It is possible to understand that at the first approach of his music he was called "impressionist," but we should recognize today how inadequate this label is to describe the totality of his art.

Music is an expression of our feeling, but our feeling in turn always derives from an object or a situation in the world. In expressing it for itself, in consequence, the music seems to abstract our feeling from its relation to the world. And such is the nature of Debussy that he could not separate his feeling from the object which inspired it. You can see

this not only by the fact that his music is generally related to something concrete—*Nuages, Sirènes, La Mer, Jeux de vagues, Reflets dans l'eau*, and so on—but in the structure itself of his music, where you can observe the double autonomy of the melodic motives and of the harmonic movement which generates the form. The motive of the *Faune*, for instance, remains the same but appears successively on different harmonic cadences. In classical and romantic music the harmony is always that of the melody. In Debussy the motive is a melodic “image” relatively independent of the harmonic flow. Now, these motives are effectively the result of a momentary “impression” received and crystallized in a melodic line or in a harmonic form, but to reduce Debussy’s art to this aspect is to disregard the fact that in his music, as in classical music, it is the harmonic movement—indicated by the bass line—which gives a sense to the train of motives and to the melodic development. So Debussy signifies in his music, simultaneously and distinctly, the *object* of his feeling (the melodic motive) and the feeling which moves him in the presence of this object (the harmonic flow). His art is not impressionism but lyricism and he is an *objective* lyricist in this sense that he objectifies in his melos the object of his feeling.

P.H. What about the relationship of Debussy’s music to the other arts—literature for instance?

E.A. I don’t think that they had an influence on him. Debussy appreciated the other arts, he liked painting and also sculpture. He was a good friend of many painters and sculptors and writers. And of course the writers were often close in style to him: for instance, if he set to music *Les Chansons de Bilitis* of Pierre Louÿs, it was because he found an affinity between the poetry and his music. But it had no *influence* on him. I am absolutely sure that all that makes the substance of Debussy’s music derives from his own nature.

P.H. He used to describe himself as “*musicien français*.” Do you think that description is the whole truth?

E.A. He was without question a French musician, because for him music was, before all else, a melodic language, even an “*image sensible*,” not something coming from inside or a harmonic feeling expressed melodically. But he was precisely the French composer who introduced the inner harmonic movement of German music into the French style. He felt very close to Rameau, though we must realize that there is an enormous difference between the music of Rameau and the music of Debussy.

P.H. The influence of Bach would be stronger?

E.A. Yes, it would, and there are Chopin and Schumann as well. But he was essentially a French mu-

sician and was trying to see the way in which French music could develop. He realized a kind of synthesis of the German musicality (which is essentially harmonic) and the French musicality (which is essentially melodic) and this is what gives to his work its historical significance. But this aspect of his art seems not to have been understood in France. The special quality of his music, the organic unity which comes from the harmonic movement, was not recognized by the young composers who arrived after the First World War. They admired Satie. Debussy was not yet dead when Cocteau attacked him.

P.H. Do you think that Stravinsky took much from Debussy?

E.A. Yes, of course, and that is even the point. All that Debussy introduced in the way of new structures—parallel fifths and ninths, the chains of seconds, tonal movements that do not follow any rules, melos which is not major or minor but quite free—all these things influenced every composer who came after him, but the real fruits of his creative activity may be seen in Stravinsky, in Bartók and Kodály, in Pizzetti and Malipiero. Even in Reger’s *Romantic Suite* you find things that became possible only after Debussy.

P.H. And what about Schoenberg? It is sometimes said that Schoenberg’s orchestration. . . .

E.A. No, no, no. I don’t think Schoenberg was influenced by Debussy. He is completely different—he comes from Brahms and Wagner.

P.H. Even in his orchestration?

E.A. Even in his orchestration. Schoenberg’s orchestration is more like Wagner’s.

P.H. What about Schoenberg’s pupils? Webern?

E.A. No, not Webern. But once when I was with Berg at a performance of *Wozzeck* I told him that I thought the interludes had the same function as the interludes in *Pelléas*. He said to me, “Of course. *Pelléas* was my model when I wrote *Wozzeck*.” And it is true.

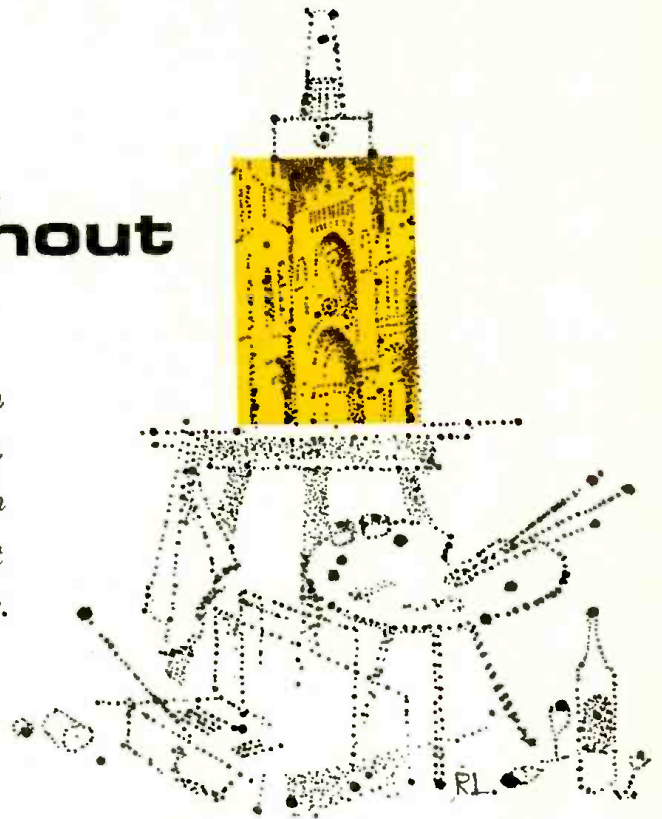
P.H. There is one question I would particularly like to ask you. People often say that Debussy has no form, and when you listen to a work like *La Mer* it is certainly very difficult to say precisely where the form lies, in the way that you can say quite clearly where it lies in Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. Nonetheless, the piece has a compelling coherence. Where does the source of that coherence lie?

E.A. Well, what so disturbed most of the critics at the beginning of Debussy’s career was that he did not observe the schematic forms which were in use before him: rondo form, *Continued on page 131*

BY ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN

The Imagery from Without

Debussy himself derided the notion of parallels between music and painting, but in his work such parallels are powerfully present — from the time of his contemporary Claude Monet to that of our own Mark Tobey.



CLAUDE Debussy was a musical impressionist. Everybody knows that, and every definition of impressionism in music invokes Debussy's name. But if one tries to go deeper, to define impressionism as a whole and determine Debussy's relationship to it, one runs into all manner of mysteries and unresolved dilemmas.

"Impressionism" is a painter's term which, strangely enough (or perhaps characteristically), is nowhere defined in the best book on the subject, John Rewald's *History of Impressionism* (second edition, 1961). Debussy's name is not mentioned in that book, either, although it contains several references to Wagner, whom the impressionist painters loved and whose influence Debussy, the impressionist composer, did his best to destroy. But this is a paradox we shall return to later.

A good working definition of impressionism may be garnered from the *Dictionary of Painting*, published under the general editorship of Bernard S. Myers in 1955:

The term impressionism describes a kind of painting which is flecked and somewhat formless, as opposed to that which is linear and clearly silhouetted. . . . In composition, the impressionists stressed the transitory, the instantaneous relation of parts and brushstrokes as though echoing the meaningless bustle of urban life. . . . The heroes of the drama be-

came light and atmosphere, revealing themselves in color sensation as recorded by the artist in pigments. These artists revealed a pseudoscientific interest in light and color phenomena paralleling but not exploiting the contemporary researches of Helmholtz and others. Their attitude was more empirical and lyrical than theoretical. The impressionists popularized the habit of painting out of doors. . . . The play of light so dissolved the forms that frequently reflections (which they liked) seemed as authentic as the objects reflected, or the canvas seemed as convincing when inverted. . . . Colors were chosen in a revolutionary new way, used purely, brightly, and in separate strokes. The result was that the modeling effect of the Old Masters disappeared in a general brightness of rainbow palette. . . . The major artists associated in the Impressionist movement were Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, Sisley, Bazille, and Morisot. Manet and Degas worked with the group. . . .

Let us turn now from this volume on painting to a musical reference work of equal authority and see if any parallels can be drawn between impressionism in the art that gave birth to the term and impressionism in an art that has taken it over. The fifth edition of *Grove's Dictionary* is almost grumpy about this matter:

In painting, the chief aim of impressionism is to capture a momentary glimpse of a sub-

ject under certain temporary conditions rather than its permanent qualities. There can be no real analogy with this in music, and indeed Debussy objected to being called a musical impressionist; but the term at least loosely conveys what is meant by its use, and it serves well enough to describe music of a particular kind.

Willi Apel's *Harvard Dictionary of Music* is much more specific:

Impressionism, as most new movements, was rooted in antagonism. Debussy instinctively disliked the dramatic dynamism of Beethoven, the heated atmosphere and pathetic exhibitionism of Wagner, the introspective emotionalism of the Romantic composers in general. The paintings of the French impressionists, Monet, Manet, Renoir, and the refined poetry of Verlaine, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, suggested to him a new type of music, eminently French in character, a music which seemed to hint rather than to state; in which successions of colors take the place of dramatic development and "atmospheric" sensations supersede heroic pathos; a music which is vague and intangible as the changing lights of the sun, the subtle noises of the wind and the rain. The realization of these ideas led to a complete abandonment of such typically "German" achievements as sonata, symphony, thematic material, development technique, and resulted in the introduction of various novel devices which are antithetic to the principal features of classic and romantic harmony. Prominent terms of the Impressionist vocabulary are: unresolved dissonances, mostly triads with added seconds, fourths, sixths, sevenths; the use of chords, con-

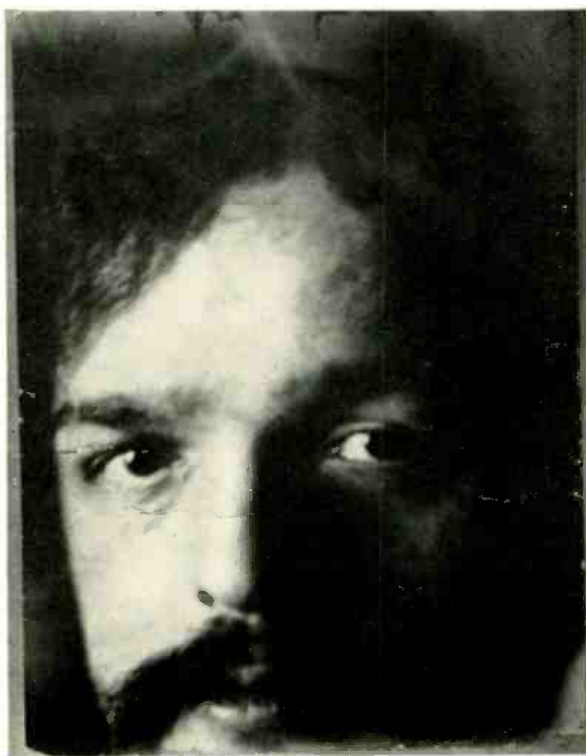
sonant as well as dissonant, in parallel motion; parallel chords or gliding chords; the whole-tone scale in melodic as well as chordal combinations; frequent use of the tritone; modality, particularly avoidance of the leading-tone; avoidance of "direction" in the melodic contour (preference of vague "zigzag" design); irregular and fragmentary construction of phrases.

Impressionism in painting as defined by Myers and impressionism in music as defined by Apel obviously have several things in common: vagueness, heavy emphasis on color, atmosphere, nature imagery. But these parallels are themselves somewhat vague and "impressionistic," and one would be hard put to find the painterly equivalent to the whole-tone scale, chords in parallel motion, frequent use of the tritone, or the employment of medieval modes. Perhaps Apel's "zigzag design" and "fragmentary construction of phrases" can be seen in impressionist painting, but even that takes a little doing.

There is ample evidence to back up Apel's statement that Debussy's aesthetics were influenced by Verlaine, Baudelaire, and Mallarmé: Debussy set many poems of Verlaine and Baudelaire to music, frequented Mallarmé's salon, and composed a certain orchestral prelude to a certain *Après-midi d'un faune*. But there is no evidence whatsoever to sustain Apel's contention that Debussy found inspiration in the paintings of Monet, Manet, and Renoir. Nowhere in his voluminous writings is there any evidence to show that Debussy was aware that these men existed. In the whole of his collected criticism as published under the title *Monsieur Croche* there is only one reference to the visual arts, and Léon Vallas, who studied all of Debussy's criticism, collected and uncollected, and published a book about it entitled *The Theories of Claude Debussy*, adduces no other reference of the same sort. Debussy's only critical reference to the visual arts occurs in an unflattering essay on Berlioz wherein he points out that the music of the older composer had been interpreted by Fantin-Latour "in lithographic dreams." "Incidentally," Debussy continues, "the work of Berlioz, through his preoccupation with color and anecdote, became at once a subject for painters: one might even say without irony that Berlioz has always been the favorite musician of those who do not know much about music." Debussy, it would seem, regards Berlioz's use of color only as a weakness, as a trap for the unmusical.

Debussy, then, makes no verbal statement exhibiting any sympathy with or even any knowledge of the French impressionist painting to which his own music is most frequently compared, and he derides the notion of parallels between music and the visual arts. But parallels between music and painting are none the less powerfully suggested in many of Debussy's works, particularly the *Nocturnes*, *La Mer*, and the music for piano solo.

Writing to Eugene Ysaÿe about the *Nocturnes* in the fall of 1894, Debussy called these pieces "an



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Taken by Pierre Louys, with magnesium flash, 1894.



The Japanese painting that inspired *Poissons d'or*.

experiment in the different combinations that can be achieved with one color—what a study in gray would be in painting.” Later, in the famous explanatory “program” for the *Nocturnes*—incidentally, and be it very well noted, the only thing of its kind he ever wrote—Debussy emphasized the same idea:

Nuages renders the immutable aspect of the sky and the slow, solemn motion of the clouds, fading away in gray tones lightly tinged with white. *Fêtes* gives us the vibrating, dancing rhythm of the atmosphere, with sudden flashes of light. There is also the episode of the procession (a dazzling fantastic vision) which passes through the festive scene and becomes merged with it. But the background remains persistently the same—the festival with its blending of music and luminous dust participating in the cosmic rhythm. *Sirènes* depicts the sea and its countless rhythms, and presently, among the waves silvered by the moonlight, is heard the mysterious song of the sirens as they laugh and pass on.

There is something very Whistlerian about all this—the study in gray, the “fading gray tones lightly tinged with white,” the “waves silvered by the moonlight,” the “luminous dust,” recalling the showers of gold spangles that fall through so many of Whistler’s studies of water and night. The very title, *Nocturnes*, seems here to return to music from the canvases of the Anglo-American artist. In this connection, is there any conclusion to be drawn from the fact that Whistler is the only painter mentioned by Vallas in his biography of Debussy as having been one of the composer’s friends? And is any conclusion to be

drawn from the fact that Debussy, much like Whistler and totally unlike Monet or Manet, was greatly excited by the arts of the Far East, spent many hours listening to the Oriental orchestras at the Exposition Universelle held in Paris in 1889, and, from the start of his career, collected art objects from Japan and China? On the cover of the first edition of *La Mer* he reproduced Katsushika Hokusai’s famous block print *The Wave*.

Be all that as it may, in title, theme, or evocation the piano pieces often take us close to Monet, Pissarro, and French landscape impressionism in general: *Jardins sous la pluie*, *Reflets dans l’eau*, *Cloches à travers les feuilles*, *Les Collines d’Anacapri*, *Ce qu’a vu le vent d’ouest*, *Feux d’artifice*—the list could go on and on. *Brouillards* (Fogs), the title of the first prelude in Debussy’s second book, was a favorite conjuring word of Monet’s, and Debussy, one suspects, would have approved of the painter’s use of *brouillard* as “an enveloping mantle within which architectural masses became weightless phantoms in the refracted sulphur, blue, or reddish light from the muffled sun.” In these lines William C. Seitz is describing Monet’s London pictures, but he might just as well be describing Debussy’s *Cathédrale engloutie*; and the resemblance between *La Cathédrale engloutie* and Monet’s paintings of the cathedral at Rouen is very marked. In his book on Debussy’s piano music, E. Robert Schmitz goes so far as to provide diagrams for the six forms of Gothic arch to be found in *La Cathédrale engloutie*, and most if not all of them can be found in the Monets as well.

One must conclude, then, that although Debussy may not have known much about French impressionist painting, he reacted to the world with a sensibility not unlike that of its creators. The explanation can only be attributed to the indirect and somewhat mysterious influence of the *Zeitgeist*. The impressionist painters were all a generation older than Debussy. The first impressionist exhibition was held in 1874, when Debussy was twelve years old, and Rewald ends his chronology of impressionism as a movement in 1886, before Debussy hardly began to compose. This time lag is important. It helps, among other things, to explain why the French impressionists loved Wagner. They were of the generation of César Franck and other Parisian composers, now forgotten, to whom Wagner appeared as an inspiring revolutionary spirit; by Debussy’s time the spell of Wagner had begun to wear off and had been replaced, in a few minds, by the spell of the impressionists themselves. The visual arts usually lead in the exploitation of new sensibilities and music usually follows a generation later; but Debussy himself seems to have given the cue to some of our own contemporaries, as witness the striking parallel that can be drawn between, say, his second nocturne, *Fêtes*, and the dancing, glistening abstract visual nocturnes of Mark Tobey.

Yet areas of feeling and expression totally foreign to the painterly impressionists are also stressed in

Debussy's music, in the piano pieces as well as in works for other media. I have already mentioned his Orientalism. He likewise took a pronounced delight in classic antiquity viewed in a highly sensual manner; this may well have been awakened in him by his friend Pierre Louÿs, three of whose *Chansons de Bilitis* he set to music. This vein is continued in works like *Danseuses de Delphes*, the *Six épigraphes antiques*, and the *Danse sacrée* and *Danse profane* for harp and strings. Greek dancing girls are very far from the world of Claude Monet, but they are most powerfully evoked by Claude Debussy—and with the very same unresolved dissonances, parallel chords, whole-tone scales, avoidance of the leading tone, and irregular or fragmentarily constructed phrases that he uses for his pictures of gardens in the rain, engulfed cathedrals, reflections in the water, or the fragrance of the night in a Spain he never saw. Music, as Debussy knew very well, is the most complacent art of all when it comes to accepting imagery imposed from without; and we should all do well to remember that the titles of the piano preludes appear *after* the music rather than before it. . . .

Finally, so far as this matter of Debussy and impressionism is concerned, we return for a moment to Myers who, in the article on impressionist painting previously cited, says, "These starving artists, confident of the validity of the material world, gave poetic form to the Good Life and the Leisure Hour." There is a powerful sense of well-being—sometimes relaxing, sometimes effervescent—in the work of the impressionists, which, I am convinced, accounts for their enormous popularity. This luxury of being is not merely a matter of subject with the impressionists but is essential to the substance of their art as well, and the same applies to Debussy. At heart he is the most restful and reassuring of all great composers.

It would be difficult to build a bridge between Debussy and the post-impressionist artists with whom he was more strictly contemporary than with the impressionists themselves. He had little in common, temperamentally or in any other way, with the flaming, intoxicated art of Van Gogh or with the austere, architectonic art of Cézanne. The exoticism and sensuality of Gauguin might have appealed to the composer if he had known anything about him, but Gauguin's reputation, like the reputations of Van Gogh and Cézanne, developed slowly, and Debussy's era did not accord these artists anything like the stature they possess today.

As for Matisse and his followers, they were known as the *fauves*—wild beasts—and an admiration for wildness and bestiality has little to do with the Debussyan aesthetic. Similarly, the neoprimitivism of Picasso, which finds a striking parallel in Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, left Debussy untouched. Picasso's analytical cubism has a classic look nowadays, but it seemed anything but classic in its own time; in any case, Debussy's classicism, as exemplified in the three sonatas written at the end of his career, comes entirely from musical sources. It is actually more a result of nationalism than of classi-

cism. Because of the war, the French became aware, as never before, of their Rameaus, Couperins, and Lullys, and Debussy began calling himself "*musicien français*." The sonatas are his homage to French music of the seventeenth century. They were published with a title page designed in imitation of a copper-plate engraving of the 1600s, and this title page reads "*Six sonates pour instruments divers*," even though no more than three sonatas were written. But in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of course, sonatas always appeared in litters of half a dozen.

I have dwelt at length on Debussy and the visual arts. His relationship to the literary movement known as symbolism also demands attention. "Verlaine, Mallarmé, and Laforgue used to provide us with new sounds and sonorities," wrote Paul Dukas. "They cast a light on words such as never had been seen before. . . . they made their verbal material yield subtle and powerful effects hitherto undreamed of. Above all, they conceived their poetry or prose like musicians, they tended it with the care of musicians, and, also like musicians, they sought to express their ideas in corresponding sound values. It was the writers, not the musicians, who exercised the strongest influence on Debussy."

Debussy's statement regarding the fluid, mysterious imagery he demanded of an opera libretto is as famous as Mallarmé's observation on poetry as a "network of allusion"; deep down, both statements are identical in meaning. Debussy's relationship to literature, however, goes considerably beyond a concern with semantic meanings. Emile Vuillermoz puts the case brilliantly:

Under the double influence of the Italian and the German lyric theatre, French composers had grown accustomed to drawing out and inflating words when setting them to music. Debussy was wise enough to understand that the French language does not possess those vigorous tonic accents or that complaisant melodiousness which justify the lyrical grandiloquence of neighboring races. The graph of the rise and fall of the voice in French speech is confined to narrow limits. It can be represented by an almost imperceptible wave-line, whereas the graph of Italian or German declamation resembles the temperature-curve of a feverish invalid. By causing logic and good taste to triumph in this domain, Debussy has permitted modern composers to translate more intelligently and more respectfully the subtle rhythms of our poets, whose verses formerly were cruelly dismembered.

It is in this area of declamation and the musicality of words that Debussy's example seems particularly fruitful to the composers of the present day. It is not merely that he killed the grand operatic gesture; in stressing as he did the nonsemantic values of words he opened the door to a great deal of contemporary experiment, like that of Karlheinz Stockhausen in his *Gesang der Jünglinge* or of Luciano Berio in his *Circles*. A hundred years after his birth, Claude Debussy is still a modern composer.

THE RESPECTABLE CLAUDE



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the Irreverent Achille

by Roy McMullen

Debussy ranks as one of the very few composers whose pronouncements on music are genuinely and durably witty.

IN July 1881, Achille Debussy joined the family of Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky's benefactress, in Moscow. He had a Byzantine haircut, a second prize from the Conservatoire, and the body "of a young locomotive" (his own estimate). But what struck people was his humor. "A real *gamin* of Paris," wrote Mme. von Meck, "witty like no one else. . . . He imitates Gounod and Ambroise Thomas to perfection; you are ready to die laughing." Her son Nicholas agreed: "He is . . . a mocker, and gives funny names to everybody. In return we have nicknamed him 'the boiling Achilles.'"

During the frequently somber years which followed that bright summer, Debussy changed greatly. He decided that Claude, his second Christian name, was more dignified than Achille. The "young locomotive" eventually became plump and feline, and

the hairdo bourgeois enough to support a bowler. The music went from reminiscences of Massenet to anticipations of Boulez. But the essential Achille survived his dechristening and even the bowler hat. His mockery—shrewd, often funny, usually unfair, sometimes irritatingly modish—continued, almost up to the last hour, to serve Claude as a sort of combined shillelagh, shield, and adjustment-to-life device.

It seems only just, therefore, to remember Nadezhda's "*gamin*" during the present centenary celebrations, and to recall some of the sallies which he scattered through Debussy's letters, criticism, and table talk (there have been few composers who've had so many Boswells).

One cannot recall many of these quips without noticing that the two *personae* did not always agree. The Debussy we can label Claude—the straight man,



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that is—was willing to grant, for example, that César Franck was “one of the greatest.” But the personality we can label Achille dismissed “that old Belgian angel” as a mere “modulation-machine.” Claude’s view of Wagner was much more favorable than is generally supposed, but it’s Achille’s adverse opinion that is well known: “Ah, *mylord* [sic], how insufferable these people in helmets and animal skins become on the fourth night. . . . Consider: they never appear without their damned leitmotiv, and there are even some who sing it. It all resembles the mild insanity of someone who, on handing you his visiting card, would declaim in song its contents.”

For Claude, Bach was “the great grandsire” and “the benevolent god to whom musicians, to save themselves from mediocrity, ought to pray before starting to work.” But Achille carped a bit: “When the old Saxon cantor has no ideas, he takes off with never mind what, and he is truly merciless. In short, he is endurable only when he is admirable. That is indeed something, you will say. Still, if he had had a friend, perhaps a publisher [Debussy was writing to his own publisher], to advise him gently not to compose one day a week, that would have spared us some hundreds of pages where we have to march between hedges of measures without joy, without pity, with always the same little rascals of a subject and a countersubject.”

On the majority of occasions, of course, the two did agree. We can probably assume that both Achille and Claude, although the latter might not have said so, thought that Massenet had “the habits of a flirt”; that Leoncavallo had “the temperament of a pork butcher”; that Berlioz “found it bittersweet to stroll with his nostalgia through a shop of artificial flowers”; that Weingartner was “a meticulous gardener” who gave you “trees curled with a hot iron” in Beethoven’s *Pastoral* Symphony; that Cortot conducted like “a *banderillero* teasing a bull”; that *Samson et Dalila* was a “stuffed crocodile”; that *Louise* was “so stupid it becomes touching”; that the Paris Opéra was a “railway station” outside and a “Turkish bath” inside; that romantic pre-1914 Vienna was in fact just “an old city with a painted face where one overindulges in Brahms and Puccini,

a city of officers with women’s bosoms and of women with officers’ bosoms.”

Then the voices separate again. Claude, although he admitted that he knew next to nothing about ballet, admired “the spontaneity, natural or acquired,” of “the incomparable Nijinsky.” But after the first night of *Jeux* the old Achille took over. Nijinsky, he felt, had simply been engaged for most of the evening in some sort of “special mathematics”: “This fellow adds up the thirty-second notes with his feet, checks the answers with his arms, and then, suddenly stricken with hemiplegia, he watches, with an evil eye, the music going by. . . . It’s nasty. . . . It seems that this is called the stylization of gesture.”

Sometimes the voices come through together in a half-malicious, half-affectionate counterpoint. Claude was very fond, for example, of Stravinsky, both as a person and as a composer. Achille found the impetuous young Russian and his music an irresistible target. So we get observations of this order: “The *Rite of Spring* is extraordinarily wild. . . . It’s music in its savage state, with all the modern conveniences. . . . I have seen Stravinsky recently. He says ‘my’ *Fire Bird*, ‘my’ *Rite*, the way a child says ‘my’ spinning-top, ‘my’ hoop. And that’s it exactly: a spoiled child who, occasionally, puts his fingers into music’s nose. He is also a young savage who wears tumultuous neckties and kisses women’s hands while stepping on their toes. Old, he will be insufferable . . . but for the moment he is terrific.”

I HAVE QUOTED none of the above statements, incidentally, as an indictment of Debussy’s inconsistency. He was no more inconsistent than most sensitive and honest people are. He was simply a lot more articulate. In fact, it would be easy to demonstrate that throughout his career his critical theory was coherent and remarkably stable, and that when he chose to pronounce a considered judgment he did so in a manner that left no doubt about his convictions. But he seldom chose to do so. Detesting the systematic and the pontifical, and horrified when he found them in combination, he preferred the glinting half-truth that sheds an evanescent light.

Thus, the apparent inconsistencies—and thus the perhaps deliberate preservation of Achille as a spokesman. Debussy was pretty serious about being funny; he worked hard at it, often too visibly. His wit tended towards artistic autonomy. The most famous example of this tendency, of course, is Monsieur Croche, the “antidilettante” imagined by the composer when, in 1901, he began writing music criticism for the *Revue Blanche*. Monsieur Croche was dropped almost immediately, but he was fun while he lasted: “. . . sometimes he underlined his conversation with a mute smile that began near his nose and wrinkled his whole face like calm water into which a pebble has been tossed. It was long and intolerable. Right away he aroused my curiosity with a particular vision of music. He spoke

of an orchestral score as if it were a painting. . . .” This was Nadezhda’s *gamin* at the age of thirty-nine, just before the production of *Pelléas et Mélisande*.

In other words, Achille had become a deliberate, disciplined style. He was partly, to be sure, a period style. There are traces in him of the Impressionist devotion to the momentary, of the Symbolist attempt to name the unnamable, of the old Parnassian School’s chilly polish, and of the newer, more sensual hankering for Greek—Alexandrian Greek, that is—paganism. He was an anti-Dreyfusite and anti-republican snob: “If indeed it is just to furnish spectacles for the people. . . . the best thing perhaps would be to revive the ancient games of the Roman emperors.” He believed in the craft of phrase making in a way which is no longer possible, and some of his *bons mots* are as tedious today as Oscar Wilde’s. On the other hand, his affectations and his verbal lavender can be touching in a way he never intended. When he observes that the Paris Opéra boxes are “the last salons where people talk” (he liked that one so well he used it at least twice), or that “nothing dries up a conversation like an affirmation,” we are back among the Japanese-print collectors and the Art Nouveau subway entrances. When he found a Russian place name impossible to pronounce, he substituted “*J’aime-le-caviar*.”

The mature Debussy cultivated a manner appropriate to his wit. Léon Daudet recalled having seen him *Chez Weber*, a restaurant in the Rue Royale frequented by artists and dandies in the early 1900s. He “smoked a little Oriental cigarette, blew the smoke through his nose, made one or two pointed, epigrammatic remarks, then went off under the stars. . . .” Dr. Pasteur Vallery-Radot adds: “The gestures were all in curves. He spoke in a low voice, with no trace of something prepared in advance, slowly, looking for the exact word which would create the image. Sometimes he would stop in the middle of a sentence, like a horse hesitating in front of an obstacle. . . .”

But the style, as it emerges in the letters and criticism, is not merely a period phenomenon. It is also deeply personal, and even *Debussyste*. You can find, without too extravagant an exercise of ingenuity, some familiar pedal effects in it, along with a characteristic kind of multiple awareness of overtones and the habit of ducking into and out of visual and aural metaphors. An early version of *Jardins sous la pluie*, intended for orchestra, bears this note: “Here the harps imitate, to the life, peacocks spreading out their tails, or the peacocks imitate the harps, as you wish, and the sky becomes compassionate again, in a cloudless dress.” Concerning his *Etude pour les sixtes*, he remarked: “For a very long time the continuous employment of sixths made me think of pretentious maidens, sitting in a drawing room and sullenly weaving while they envied the scandalous laughter of the mad ninths. . . .” After living with the *Pelléas* score and seeing the opera in his imagination for nearly ten years, he worried on the first night about what would happen

“when the birds of the forest nest in the woods [*bois*] of the orchestra.”

As these last observations suggest, Achille was apt to take over in Claude’s private as well as his public life. Debussy is often represented as having been, so far as practical matters affected him at all, a Bohemian child during the first part of his career and a middle-class child during the second part, after his divorce and remarriage. What truth there is in this image should be tempered by the recollection that he had an adult wit and no self-pity.

When, for example, one day in 1897, his mistress Gabrielle Dupont discovered he had been unfaithful, he wrote to his friend Pierre Louÿs: “Gaby of the eyes of steel has found a letter in my pocket. . . . Promptly, tragedy, tears, a real revolver, and the *Petit Journal* for a historian. Ah, my old wolf, I needed you to help me to recognize myself in this cheap literature. . . . What a pretty invention an eraser of adultery would be. . . . Perhaps you are thinking that it is all my fault, but there you are—I am sometimes as sentimental as a modiste who would have liked to have been the mistress of Chopin.”

Procrastination was perhaps his worst habit, and Achille was able to handle even that. In 1903 Debussy accepted a commission from a Boston woman for what eventually became the *Rhapsody for Saxophone and Orchestra*, but of course he did not set to work right away. A letter to Louÿs dated 1904 says: “Granted that this *Fantaisie* has been commissioned, paid for, and eaten for more than a year, it seems that I am late. . . . The saxophone is a reed instrument whose habits are unfamiliar to me. Does it like the romantic sweetness of the clarinets?” Then comes a letter to André Messager: “The tenacity of Americans is proverbial. The saxophone lady disembarked, eight or ten days ago, at Paris and No. 58 Rue Cardinet, and asked for news about her piece. Naturally, I swore that, with the exception of Ramses II, there was nothing about which I thought more often. Even so, I have had to get started; so here I am, looking desperately for the mixtures the most unknown, the most apt to set off this aquatic instrument. . . .”

The defensive overtones were particularly audible whenever he ran out of money, as he frequently did: “Why didn’t I learn to polish lenses, like Spinoza? I should never have expected to earn my daily bread with music. . . .” When some arrangements in London fell through in 1913, he wrote to the conductor André Caplet: “There’s five thousand francs fallen forever into the Channel. . . . Well, it’s better than being named President of the Republic.” When his admirers wondered how he had happened to compose some ballet music, he explained: “Because indeed one has to have lunch, and because one day I had lunch with Sergei Diaghilev, a terrible and charming man who could make stones dance.”

The wit was also at *Continued on page 127*



Part I

Debussy on Microgroove

BY HARRIS GOLDSMITH

EDITOR'S NOTE: In planning this the following discography, Debussy's music was divided into four main categories—piano, orchestral, chamber, and vocal—of which the first two are presented below. Chamber and vocal music (the former treated by Mr. Goldsmith, the latter by Conrad L. Osborne) will appear in a forthcoming issue. Within each classification the works are discussed in chronological order. Recordings of individual pieces from complete

sets (for example, of *Clair de lune* from the *Suite Bergamasque*) were arbitrarily excluded for reasons of space. The discographers do not confine their scrutiny to those discs currently listed in Schwann, inasmuch as many significant Debussy performances are in the "deleted" or "import" category. Listings at the end of each work are not intended to be exhaustive; only the preferred microgroove versions are noted.

PIANO MUSIC

Petite Suite (1889)

One of Debussy's salon scores, this is an urbane and gracious work consisting of four movements, the first of which, *En bateau*, has become extremely popular with recitalists as an encore piece. There is only one currently available edition of the work in its original form for piano, four hands. The experienced Robert and Gaby Casadesus specialize in precisely this sort of literature, and they offer here an elegant reading full of stylish details and delicate phrasing. Although both of the predecessor versions—by Norwood and Hancock (Lyricord) and Bartlett and Robertson (M-G-M)—also preserved the essential intimacy of the music without either prettifying it or imposing an extroverted brilliance on its mercurial phrases, the Casa-

desus entry should amply fill the void left by the deletion of those editions.

This, sadly, is not the case with regard to the orchestral setting by Henri Büsser. The beautiful Reiner edition is nowhere approached by any of the surviving entries. Paray leads a chilly, hard-bitten performance, efficiently and unlovingly executed by his ensemble and similarly reproduced by Mercury's engineers. Ansermet's (London) is less cold-blooded, perhaps, but inexplicably wilted and dyspeptic. With all its faults, I find the Paray preferable. Fournet's version (Epic) is coarsely played, clumsily interpreted, and overamplified in sound.

In contrast, the Reiner fully captured the airy humor and delicate subtlety of the masterful orchestration, and was handsomely abetted by wonderfully precise yet robust playing from the NBC Symphony. The

Carnegie Hall sound too was admirably resonant and full-blooded, combining warmth and brilliance. —Robert and Gaby Casadesus, piano. Columbia ML 5723, LP; MS 6323, SD.

—NBC Symphony. Fritz Reiner, cond. RCA Victor LM 1724, LP (Deleted).

Suite Bergamasque (1890)

The gestation period for this composition extended from 1890 until 1905. Originally, the suite was to have contained many more movements than its ultimate four, *Masques* and *L'Isle joyeuse* being just two of those rejected. As a whole, this is minor Debussy, innocuous and derivative in style; the best movement by far is *Clair de lune*, which is also the most popular. I feel that the composer was right in excluding *Masques* and *L'Isle joyeuse*. The

Those potent and original works would have dwarfed the other movements.

Gieseeking preserves the formalistic nature of the suite, but at the same time infuses it with poetry. His playing has exquisite nuance and shimmer. The Columbia disc is a reissue of the pianist's celebrated shellac recording, while the Angel issue dates from 1953. The newer recording has a more tangible realism (whether desirable or not being a moot question). To my ears, the earlier version is a shade more flexible and magical.

Richter's performance is rather special in that it was taken from a live recital (in Carnegie Hall, October 25, 1960). There is some audience noise, and a few moments of uneasy fingerwork. Moreover, the pianist approaches the work as if it were thoroughly impressionistic Debussy. Many listeners will find this rhetorical, loosely knit reading grossly distended, disorganized, and possibly even offensive. But while fully aware of its shortcomings, I find Richter's communicative powers so persuasive and his tonal resources so rich and varied that I would place this edition second only to Gieseeking's.

Ericourt's romantic tendencies are happily held in check by a penetrating, alert mind, and a beautifully composed digital articulation. His work here has clarity, freedom, and logic.

Fleisher's reading is brilliantly defined in texture. The ostinato bass in the *Passepied* is admirably resilient. The pianist commendably strives to subdue his powerful attack and intense temperament to meet the *salon* stylistic demands of the music. He does, however, sound a trifle overbearing and uncomfortable with the idiom. Demus' performance is rather prissy and unimaginative.

—Walter Gieseeking, piano. Columbia ML 4539, LP.

—Walter Gieseeking, piano. Angel 35067, LP.

—Sviatoslav Richter, piano. Columbia M2L 274, Two LP.

—Daniel Ericourt, piano. Kapp KC 9065, LP; KC 9065 S, SD.

—Leon Fleisher, piano. Epic LC 3554, LP.

—Joerg Demus, piano. Deutsche Grammophon LPM 18663, LP; SLPM 138663, SD.

Pour le piano (1901)

Although this fine composition was intended to be a latter-day counterpart of the baroque suite, it is the most unabashedly romantic of all of Debussy's piano pieces. The patterns are spare and crisp, the emphasis on bravura—especially in the

Prelude, which is almost Rachmaninoff-like in its extroverted rhetoric. This opening section, incidentally, has a most interesting touch at the end where Debussy hews an effective final cadence from a long series of technically unresolved arpeggiated chords.

Gieseeking strives for a lucid objectivity. He deliberately scales down contrasts in the Prelude and Toccata, and adopts a quicker than usual pace for the Sarabande, thus avoiding the gravely poignant quality there which one finds in the Ericourt edition. The latter's account of the work is dryly etched and exposed in texture. He brings a headlong excitement to the Prelude and his account of the Toccata sounds forth with crisper, more bravura fingerwork. This is an exceptionally moving, intensely personal, and finely wrought performance. It also has better sound than the Gieseeking edition, which is a trifle wooden and constricted in tone.

—Daniel Ericourt, piano. Kapp KC 9067, LP; KC 9067 S, SD.

—Walter Gieseeking, piano. Angel 35063, LP.

Estampes (1903)

Estampes (or "engravings") are examples of Debussy's tone painting at its finest. The three portions of the works are *Pagodes*, *Soirée dans Grenade*, and *Jardins sous la pluie*. The first of these pieces is built around a pentatonic, or five-note, scale and makes its effect almost solely by exotic sequences of seconds and fourths—ascending and descending. It is virtually without melody. An insistent habanera rhythm permeates the *Soirée dans Grenade*, although that work also contains bits of plastic, sensuous material clearly evoking the popular songs of the time. The final *Estampe* is an étudielike composition conveying the growing intensity of a summer thunder-shower. The poignant harmonies here are miraculously successful in suggesting the eerie flashes of light and shade created by the interaction of sunlight and rain.

Gieseeking's Columbia disc (a reissue of the pianist's prewar recording) has an obtrusive background roar. The newer Angel, while a bit muzzy on top, is infinitely preferable. Gieseeking is outstandingly effective in this music. This is a deft, fluent account, finely tempered by a mellow tonal hue and rhythmic spaciousness which gives to *Soirée dans Grenade* a rhetorical, swaying seductiveness and to *Jardins sous la pluie* a rainbow iridescence.

Gieseeking's gifted young pupil Werner Haas follows his mentor insofar as stressing the lucid classicism of the music instead of the more

subjective qualities which are also an important part of the work. He delivers the pieces in a more streamlined fashion than his teacher, however. His rhythmic *élan* is most effective, and even exhilarating, especially in *Jardins sous la pluie*; but on close comparison with the more mature versions of Gieseeking and Ericourt, Haas tends to sound a trifle brash. Epic's piano tone is much more realistic than Angel's, but slightly pingy and overbrilliant.

The moody, subjective approach is beautifully set forth by Ericourt. His playing here is tonally supple, rhythmically diverse, and technically flawless. He employs a great deal of sculptured rubato in *Soirée dans Grenade*, which he also takes unusually slowly and languorously; he is very supple and a bit melancholy in *Pagodes*; and he presents *Jardins sous la pluie* with a hurricanelike violence that is as impressive as it is unusual. Very warm, singing piano tone here, but also retentive of clarity.

Casadesus, like Haas, stresses toccatalike brilliance in his performance, but seems disinclined to project anything more than virtuoso finger-dexterity and resilient rhythmic bite. His readings are interpretatively brittle and tonally white, although very authoritative.

—Walter Gieseeking, piano. Angel 35065, LP.

—Daniel Ericourt, piano. Kapp KDC 9061, LP; KDC 9061 S, SD.

—Werner Haas, piano. Epic LC 3733, LP; BC 1100, SD.

—Robert Casadesus, piano. Columbia ML 4979, LP.

Images pour piano (1905-07)

Images is pure impressionism, and reveals Debussy at his most imaginative and original. Each of the two books of which the work is composed contains three pieces: *Reflets dans l'eau*, *Hommage à Rameau*, *Mouvement*, and *Cloches à travers les feuilles*, *Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut*, and *Poissons d'or* respectively.

Gieseeking, Ericourt, and Casadesus have recorded the complete series of *Images*, while Richter and Demus are heard in the first book only. There is also a recording of the two books by Noël Lee on the French Valois label. Comparisons are especially instructive here. Gieseeking's finely wrought, delicately objective style is particularly apt in *Reflets dans l'eau* and *Poissons d'or*. He evokes the cool transparency of water in the first, and suggests that goldfish are thoroughly domestic creatures rather than man-eating sharks. On the other hand, Gieseeking is somewhat disappoint-

ing in bravura pieces such as *Mouvement*, where his intimate kind of playing is far too pallid and small-scaled to thrash out the essential rhythmic energy. The Columbia edition is a reissue of the pianist's prewar version, while the Angel disc dates from 1953. Both performances have the same characteristics, and the Columbia transfer compares favorably in sound with the newer recording.

Ericourt is far more subjective than Gieseking, offering an intense and highly emotional interpretation. His reading, however, is finely tempered by lucid fingerwork and a classically oriented pianistic technique. He is notably successful in precisely the areas where I find Gieseking most wanting. His *Mouvement*, for instance, is fraught with suppressed nervous energy, and he is ideally successful in capturing the brooding melancholy inherent in *Hommage à Rameau*. The subtle rhythmic innovations and shifts of tonal hue are exceptionally well captured by Kapp's recording. Yet Ericourt's playing too has negative factors: *Poissons d'or* is transformed into a bravura piece and sounds absolutely ferocious, and *Reflets dans l'eau* lacks Gieseking's lucid symmetry. Ericourt's body of water is clearly a tropical pool which breeds malarial mosquitoes.

Casadesus's account of *Reflets dans l'eau* is so clear in outline and sharp in texture that the reflections seem more like those in a mirror. This artist's rendition of the entire series, in fact, features a glasslike clarity of fingerwork, firm, precise rhythmic contours, and plenty of dramatic emphasis. This is the most collected and classical performance on discs, and in its aloof virtuoso way also one of the finest. Columbia's sound is very faithful, with a deep, ringing solidity in the bass and shimmering clarity on top.

Lee's playing is delicately colored and thoroughly musicianly, but it lacks the insight of the three versions already mentioned. He too is given fine sound.

Richter's rendition of Book One, taken from his Carnegie Hall recital of October 25, 1960, is very sensuous and resourceful, employing a wide dynamic range and a varied tonal palette. This is big, expansive playing, somewhat loose and rhapsodic. The sound is a bit blurred, but thoroughly adequate. Demus, who also plays Book One only (Deutsche Grammophon LPM 18663 or SLPM 138663) offers a commendable enough account, but his reading lacks the focus and intensity of the others.

—Daniel Ericourt, piano. Kapp KC 9061, LP; KC 9061 S, SD.

—Robert Casadesus, piano. Columbia ML 4979, LP.

—Walter Gieseking, piano. Angel 35065, LP.

—Walter Gieseking, piano. Columbia ML 4773, LP.

—Sviatoslav Richter, piano. Columbia M2L 274, Two LP (Book One only).

Children's Corner Suite (1908)

Dedicated to the composer's daughter, this work received its first performance from the British pianist Harold Bauer. Its six movements are entitled *Dr. Gradus ad Parnassum* (a jibe at Clementi's book of technical exercises of that name), *Jimbo's Lullaby* (Jimbo being a diminutive name for Jumbo, the toy elephant), *Serenade for the Doll*, *The Snow Is Dancing*, *The Little Shepherd*, and *Golliwog's Cakewalk*. Among the composer's most popular works, this music shows us Debussy at his most charming.

Cortot's famous interpretation of *Children's Corner* is preserved on a ten-inch HMV import. Perhaps the late artist's 78-rpm version was even more finely controlled, but even on this remake (which dates from the early Fifties) he achieved an altogether delectable combination of fantasy and strength. His very stylized rendition—utilizing a subtly exaggerated rubato and accentuating certain inner voices—has just the right mixture of vitality and poetic warmth, and I prefer it to any other recorded interpretation. This item should be given priority by Angel for release in its "Great Recordings" series.

Of the domestic editions, I like best those by Ericourt and Zak, both of whom give penetrating, sensitive readings. By taking an unusually slow tempo for *Jimbo's Lullaby*, Zak gives that piece an appropriate *gaucherie*. Ericourt is especially witty in *Dr. Gradus*, which he plays in a clipped, detached manner. Both pianists excel in *The Snow Is Dancing* and *The Little Shepherd* by stressing a dryly etched, slightly frosty tonal quality, and bring contour and bite to *Golliwog's Cakewalk*.

Gieseking's pianism is beautifully refined, but his approach is a bit prim and strait-laced for these humorous miniatures. The Columbia edition is a transfer of the pianist's 78-rpm version, the Angel dates from 1953. The earlier disc has slightly more ruminative tempos, and its sound compares favorably to the later release. I find it preferable. Casadesus's playing is bigger and more robust than Gieseking's, but aside from an impressively virtuosic *Golliwog's Cakewalk* his tastefully objective account lacks Gieseking's nuance and is less flexible than the

performances of Ericourt, Zak, and Cortot. Demus is dainty and precise—resembling Gieseking rather than the others—but is also a trifle perfunctory.

An excellent version by Firkusny for Capitol has been deleted, as have all the recordings of the Caplet orchestration.

—Alfred Cortot, piano. HMV QBLP 5062, LP, (Import).

—Daniel Ericourt, piano. Kapp KC 9065, LP; KC 9065 S, SD.

—Yakov Zak, piano. Monitor MC 2039, LP.

—Walter Gieseking, piano. Columbia ML 4539, LP.

—Walter Gieseking, piano. Angel 35067, LP.

—Joerg Demus, piano. Deutsche Grammophon LPM 18663, LP; SLPM 138663, SD.

—Robert Casadesus, piano. Columbia ML 4978, LP.

Preludes (1910–13)

The two books of *Preludes*, along with *Estampes* and the two sets of *Images*, are the high points of Debussy's piano music. These pieces can, with justification, be called the composer's "Hommage à Chopin." Debussy's admiration for the works of the Polish genius prompted him to edit a complete edition of Chopin Piano Works, and it is only natural that he should have been inspired to write two dozen *Preludes*—in emulation of his illustrious predecessor. Temperamentally, the *Preludes* of Debussy have much in common with those of Chopin. Both extend the vocabulary of piano technique, and both encompass an amazingly diverse and precise lexicon of poetic abstraction. Harmonically, of course, these two most original creators went their own ways.

While Chopin chose to leave his miniatures unlabeled (appellations such as "Raindrop" are the creations of romantically inclined editors or commercially inclined publishers), Debussy bestowed specific titles upon his. Nevertheless, these pieces were not designed as "program music"—and in fact, Debussy inserted his titles at the bottom of each piece, parenthetically, as if to suggest that they should be taken as afterthoughts. Most of these selections evoke impressions of natural phenomena (*Le Vent dans la plaine*, *Les Collines d'Anacapri*, and *Feuilles mortes*), although a few conjure up fantastic imagery (*La Cathédrale engloutie*) and one or two are satirical barbs directed at prominent personages (*Hommage à Samuel Pickwick, Esq., P.P.M.P.C.* is as much a parody of Dickens as it is a musical portrait of his literary hero).

The comments which follow refer to Book I of the Preludes. Giese-king, as is so often the case in the Debussy literature on records, is represented twice. The Columbia set is superseded by the newer Angel issue. The latter, to be sure, is not outstanding from the standpoint of reproduction; it is, in fact, rather drab for its time (1953). Nevertheless, the newer disc does allow more of Giese-king's delicate tone painting to come through. The performances (virtually identical on the two records) are a marvel in two ways: first of all, they are a model of self-effacement; second, they prove that this subordination of the re-creator to the creator need not be a crippling limitation to the imaginative interpreter. When an artist is able to give us performances which are correct *and* sensitive to the astonishing degree that Giese-king's are here, we have something truly extraordinary. The only instance where Giese-king's interpretative instinct seems to run counter to Debussy's marking is at the point where the Iberian rhythm is interceded by the conflicting fast tempo in *La Sérénade interrompue*: Giese-king's conception of "Modéré" is very rapid, and virtually the same tempo as the opposing "Rageur." But even here, the pianist could, with justification, claim that "moderate" means "not too slow."

Ericourt, in contrast to Giese-king, has no fear of introducing a personal accent here and there. In fact, he is frequently wildly at odds with the printed page. But Ericourt is a magnificently resourceful artist, and one blessed by a dynamic rhythmic sense and splendid technical equipment. His performances capture a torrid tropicality and a fiery intoxication that gain effectiveness because the artist states them with seeming aloofness and objectivity. His grimly somber tonal clarity and intense moodiness clearly suggest that M. Ericourt is a sort of French Rachmaninoff. These very unusual interpretations will not be to everyone's taste; but they are marvelous, make no mistake.

Casadesus plays all the notes. Moreover, he plays them with logic and clarity. He is a most experienced stylist in the French impressionist literature, but here he completely fails to move me. His interpretations are admirably sculptured, but heartlessly literal. The cold, jade-like piano tone he cultivates is fine for the cold, jadelike music of Ravel, but it just will not do for the Debussy Preludes. I prefer Ericourt's excessive liberties to Casadesus's extreme austerity. Furthermore, the initial side of Casadesus's disc suffers not only from low-level sound but also from annoying préechoes and constant

surface swish—presumably the result of the engineers' having crammed most of the Preludes onto that side (Side 2 being left mainly for the *Épigraphes antiques* and *En blanc et noir*).

Jean Casadesus has also recorded the first book of Preludes. His RCA Victor disc boasts excellent sound (the best on any available domestic issue of these pieces), but his interpretations have the same perfunctory quality as those of his illustrious father, without the latter's technical and stylistic authority. This young pianist's uninspired playing is, however, infinitely preferable to the inept pianism—slovenly as to metrics, inaccurate in execution—of Guiomar Novaes in this literature (Vox). I will forbear documenting her musical transgressions, but superior artists should have superior standards, and by any standards this record should not have been passed.

The remarks made about the recordings of Book I apply also to the same artists' versions of Book II, with two exceptions: Giese-king's Angel record sounds just fine (whereas the Giese-king-Columbia is sonically worse than the corresponding re-issue of Book I), and Casadesus (also getting more engineering assistance this time) finds the more cryptic music of the later Preludes more congenial to his interpretative style. But my general evaluation remains: it is still Giese-king first, Ericourt second, and Casadesus third.

—Walter Giese-king, piano. Book I, Angel 35066. LP; Book II, Angel 35249. LP.

—Daniel Ericourt, piano. Book I and II, Kapp KDX 6501. Two LP; KDX 6501 S, Two SD.

—Robert Casadesus, piano. Book I, Columbia ML 4977. LP; Book II, Columbia ML 4978, LP.

Études (1915)

These twelve compositions, six in each book, were written during the summer of 1915 when Debussy was already gravely ill; and although they do not reflect the composer's wracked physical state, they abound with a dryly cryptic, bitterly ironic humor which has proven to be a source of interpretative difficulty for many performers. Never as popular as the Preludes and *Images*, these pieces make rigorous, at times even frightening, demands upon a player's technical skill (at no time more so than in the final study which demands that the executant plunge hazardingly into full chords at both ends of the keyboard and then back again, in a macabre sort of *moto perpetuo*), but the difficulties are more veiled than those in the Chopin *Études*.

If the music itself is somewhat

enigmatic, Giese-king's performance of it is downright perplexing. Taken as an entity, his performances sound curiously tentative, and in a few études even labored. Yet a comparative study, étude by étude, with the two rival editions shows Giese-king's technical ability to be on a par with his two competitors, and his tonal and interpretative resources often more sensitive and diverse. I think that the basic problem here lies in Giese-king's tendency to treat these bittersweet miniatures in the same manner as the Preludes—as impressionistic tone poems, poetic and completely nontechnical in emphasis. For one or two études, this approach works fine, but soon one desperately misses a bold accent here and a brilliant touch there to alleviate and accentuate the pale, mystic shadows. The ghostly coloration so successful in the repeated note study, for example, is completely nonappropriate in the final chordal étude, which is here played in a lethargic four-square manner.

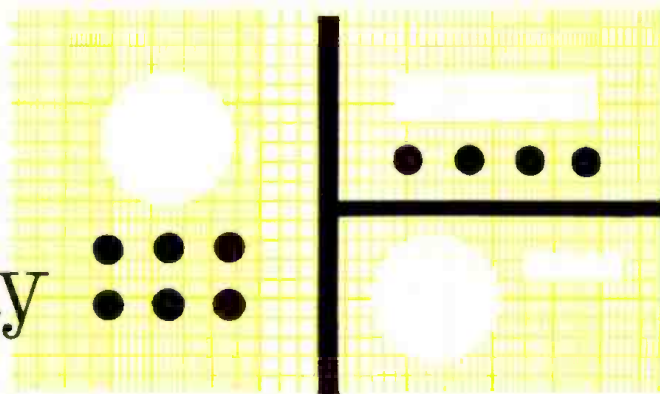
Ericourt is a brilliantly resourceful interpreter, but it seems to me that he goes too far with his subjectivity here. The final "chord" étude, to cite just one example, is mauled and agitated by breathless ritenutos and accelerations. I also find the pianist's style too tight and intense in the opening five-finger étude, which, in the hands of both Giese-king and Rosen, has a gently, nostalgic quality vaguely reminiscent of *The Snow Is Dancing* from *Children's Corner*—a point which is thoroughly lost in Ericourt's much faster rendering. Many of the pieces emerge in a most exciting fashion, however, and at no time is Ericourt anything less than an inspired, experienced interpreter and a formidable virtuoso (his sharp, penetrating tone and motoric wrist action are typical of the French school of pianism). But the basic approach seems wrong to me. After all, despite their resourcefulness, these are technical studies, *not* program pieces.

Rosen is the most objective of the three pianists represented here. His tempos are generally more in accord with Giese-king's than with Ericourt's except in the final étude—which is faster than either, and a virtual "run-away" for Rosen. Occasionally, Rosen bears down a bit too heavily on some of the more delicate pieces, but his playing is, for the most part, superbly pointed, structurally lucid, and tonally limpid. His supremely logical exposition is my choice of three most distinguished editions. The sound is excellent on all three discs, and Angel's is the best-sounding of any Giese-king-Debussy recording.

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



EQUIPMENT REPORTS

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The DMS-900 is a stereo cartridge of the variable reluctance type that may be used either in a record changer, such as the Dual-1006, or in a separate tone arm and turntable assembly. Price is \$34.50.

Both the DMS-900 and the Dual-1006 are made in Western Germany and distributed here by United Audio Products, Inc., 12 West 18th St., New York 11, N. Y.

IN DETAIL: The Dual-1006 employs a 10½-inch, 3.2-pound platter that is rim-driven by a rubber idler wheel. The motor is a 4-pole induction type that may be run on either 117 volts or 220 volts AC. For each of the four operating speeds, there is a two-step aluminum and rubber pulley. The rubber portion of the pulley engages the motor shaft, and the aluminum portion engages the idler wheel. When the speed selector knob is set at the desired speed, the proper pulley is brought into

position between the motor shaft and the idler wheel.

The record-changing mechanism is driven by the rotation of the platter, but during the changing cycle a special rubber pulley moves into position between the motor shaft and the idler wheel assembly to power the platter when the changing process is going on. Thus, the changing speed is independent of the record-playing speed. During the change cycle, a muting switch shorts out the signal leads so that no mechanical noises are transmitted through the system.

The changer's one-piece plastic tone arm contains a plastic carriage onto which the cartridge is mounted, and then inserted into the head of the arm where it is held in place by a lock-tab. For the changing mechanism to function properly, the cartridge must be mounted with its stylus exactly 29/32" below the top of the mounting carriage. Since all cartridges have different dimensions, a large assortment of screws, washers, and spacers is provided for mounting the cartridge. Additionally, a special 29/32" gauge is supplied as well as complete instructions for many of today's popular cartridges.

Proper indexing of the arm during the changing cycle

REPORT POLICY

Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and listening tests. Data for the reports, on equipment other than loudspeakers, is obtained by the United States Testing Company, Inc., of Hoboken, New Jersey, a completely independent organization which, since 1880, has been a leader in product evaluation. Speaker reports are based on controlled listening tests. Occasionally, a supplementary agency may be invited to contribute to the testing program. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. No report, or portion thereof, may be reproduced for any purpose or in any form without written permission of the publisher.

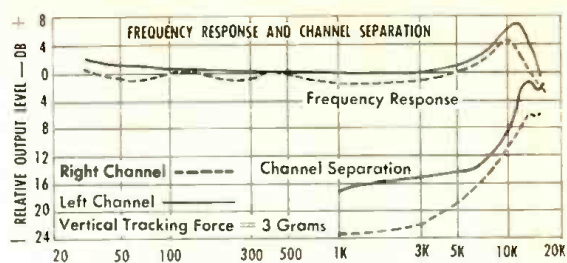
is accomplished uniquely. When the changer's START button is depressed, special roller-feeler wheels at the end of the tone arm descend below the tip of the stylus, and the arm rises and moves toward the center of the turntable and descends onto the record. The outer feeler wheel, which is toed-in slightly, pulls the tone arm to the outer rim of the record and drops off the edge of the record, leaving the tone arm riding on the inner roller wheel. The arm then rises, shifts outward slightly, and lowers itself onto the record again with the stylus over the lead-in groove of the record, except that this time the wheels are retracted into the arm. The arm is then disengaged from the changing mechanism, and playing is started. The whole operation takes about thirteen seconds, but seems to operate very well with one record on the turntable. However, with many records on the turntable (up to ten records can be stacked on the spindle), the records tend to slide over each other when the feeler wheel drops off the edge of the top record and catches its edge. In USTC's view this sliding action can lead to record wear if the records are not as clean as they should be. (Of course, records should always be kept as clean as possible in any case, if long life and "clean" sound are expected from them.)

While playing a record, the tone arm is completely disengaged from the changing mechanism; in one sample, however, as the free-floating arm approached the center of the platter, an additional force tended to pull the arm away from the center of the platter. It is suspected that this force was created by the wires that lead up to the cartridge-mounting carriage. In any case, it is an undesirable drag, and the prospective buyer should check this point in *any* changer before buying it. Bearing friction in the tone arm was relatively low in the vertical direction, but rather high in the lateral direction.

A spring-type stylus force gauge is built into the changer base. Stylus force is set by adjusting the tension on a spring used to exert a force on the rear of the arm, thereby equalizing the weight in the front part of the arm. The gram gauge indicated 2 grams at an actual stylus force of 2.1 grams, and 4 grams at an actual stylus force of 4.5 grams. The variation in tracking force of the stylus between playing the first record on a stack and the tenth record on a stack was approximately 1 gram.

The changer can be operated as a manual turntable, if desired. In this service, it can be started by pressing the START button, in which case the tone arm will locate itself on the record automatically. It also can be started by lifting the tone arm off its rest, placing it on the record at the desired spot, and pressing the "manual start" switch to start the platter rotating. This second method allows cuing of the record to be done very easily, and when the manual start switch is pressed the platter comes up to operating speed almost at once.

Turntable rumble was very low (-48 db, referenced to 1.4 cm/sec peak velocity at 100 cps), as were wow and flutter (0.1% and 0.05% rms respectively). As with other automatics it has tested recently, USTC found that over-all speed accuracy was variable. The usual line voltages (105, 117, and 129 volts AC) were used. With only one record on the turntable it ran in excess of 1% fast at all speeds. However, when loaded with a stack of ten 12-inch records, the 33-rpm speed was fast by only 0.39%, which is satisfactory. To the remarks made in previous reports on this subject, USTC would add that the purchaser of a record player can easily check its speed by using a paper strobe disc, available for a few pennies at most electronic supply stores. The standard strobe disc for 33 rpm has a total of 216 dots or lines, arranged in a circle. These markings will appear to stand still when viewed under a fluorescent or neon lamp when the disc rotates at exactly 33 1/3 rpm. If the turntable is off speed, the speed error can be determined very easily by counting the number of dots that pass by a certain point in one minute and dividing this number



by 70. Thus, if 21 dots pass by in one minute, the turntable is off speed by 0.3%. If the dots move in a clockwise direction, the speed is fast; if counterclockwise, the speed is slow.

In sum, USTC points out that the Dual-1006 is apparently well built, and is most exemplary as an automatic, rather than a manual, player. It offers a wide variety of modes of operation, including the intermixing of various-sized records. Its speed accuracy—at least on a sample that may not have been "run in" long enough—and the occasional drag noted in the arm remain in the "iffy" class of question. Considering its cost, however, it will serve fairly well in many less-exacting applications in the home, for which service USTC recommends that a tracking force of at least three grams be used for optimum stylus tracking.

The DMS-900 cartridge has a rated compliance of 4×10^{-6} cm/dyne horizontally, and 3×10^{-6} cm/dyne vertically. It is suited for tracking (stereo and mono records) at stylus forces between 1.5 and 5 grams. The stylus assembly is replaceable by hand, without the need for any tools, thus making it an easy matter to change from a microgroove stylus to one for 78-rpm records. The model tested by USTC was fitted with a 0.7-mil diamond stylus (Model DN-95).

The cartridge is almost entirely enclosed in a shield to limit hum pickup, and the hum level was found to be adequately low. Needle-talk, on the other hand, was found to be moderately high, though not of such a magnitude as to be objectionable.

USTC's measurements indicated that the cartridge's performance was adequate but not outstanding. The response of both channels was within +2 db and -0 db from 40 cps to 6 kc. Above 6 kc, the response of each channel rose sharply to a peak of +6.9 db at 11 kc on the left channel, and +6.1 db at 10 kc on the right channel. These peaks were somewhat greater in amplitude than observed on most previous cartridges. Above these peaks, both channels dropped off fairly rapidly, and were back down to the zero-db level at 15 kc.

Channel balance varied somewhat throughout the frequency band, but was maintained within 2 db over most of the band. The output of the left channel was 5 mv at a velocity of 5 cm/sec.

Channel separation above 1 kc was fair. At 1,000 cps, the separation from left to right channel was 23.6 db, while the separation from right to left channel was only 16.4 db. The separation decreased as frequency increased, with a low of 6.2 db measured at 15 kc from left to right, and 1.4 db at 15 kc from right to left.

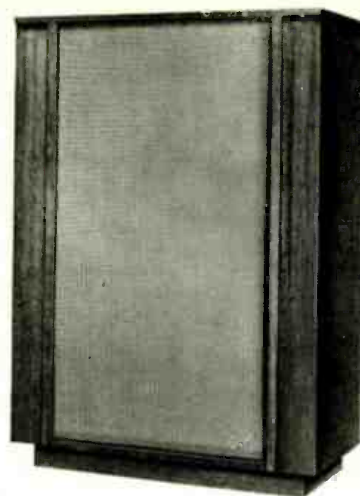
In observing the output waveform of the cartridge on an oscilloscope, USTC detected some degree of distortion in the upper mid-frequencies (around 5 kc).

In general, listening tests produced mixed reactions. Some listeners felt that stringed instruments did not sound "sweet enough." The peak that had been measured in the response characteristic was held accountable for what a few listeners called a "canned" quality. Other listeners found themselves perfectly satisfied with what they heard. There was disagreement over the audible channel separation on stereo. Thus, with the DMS-900, as with other transducers, the prospective buyer would do best to hear the unit and decide for himself.

Bozak Model B-310A Speaker System

AT A GLANCE: The Model B-310A is the largest and most complex speaker system offered by Bozak. It is essentially a three-way system, with an array of eight cone tweeters made of new "metallicized plastic," a pair of 8-inch midrange cone speakers, and a battery of four 12-inch woofers. These fourteen speakers, together with a frequency dividing network, are housed in a massive infinite-baffle enclosure of rock-solid construction and beautiful finish. Dimensions are 53 inches high, 36 inches wide, and 19 inches deep. Price is \$770. The same speaker system, mounted on an unfinished panel for installing in one's own cabinet or in a wall, is available as Model P-310AP for \$550. Nominal impedance of either version is 8 ohms. Efficiency is relatively low, and for optimum performance the suggested amplifier power is 60 watts or higher. The response of this system is truly impressive, marking it easily as one of the top-ranking speakers presently available. Manufacturer: The R. T. Bozak Manufacturing Co., 587 Connecticut Ave., South Norwalk, Conn.

IN DETAIL: The Bozak Model B-310A demonstrates that one of the oldest, most basic and direct approaches to sound reproduction—if carried out rigorously and conscientiously—can produce acoustic results of the highest caliber. Basically, this sweet-sounding behemoth is a box filled with cone loudspeakers. A problem with a cone speaker, particularly in the bass region, is the radiation from the rear of the cone. That energy is, of course, out of phase with the frontal energy. What's more, bass notes have a way of flopping about; the rear and front waves can merge readily, causing signal cancellation and distortion. The problem of how to handle the bass has stimulated speaker designers for decades, and has been met by countless enclosure designs. The simplest of these designs is a baffle, or mounting board, of infinite dimensions—a theoretical ideal but one which would, by definition, completely suppress the back wave. In practice, such "infinite baffling" is accomplished by a room wall, or by a large, sealed, braced, and padded enclosure that "neutralizes" a speaker's bass response by permitting it to respond cleanly down its natural resonant frequency. Such a system implies the use of a very high-quality woofer that has a very low resonant frequency. Also, by "closely coupling" more than one woofer (that is, using two or more woofers together), the bass can be further strengthened and effectively lowered below the resonant point of any one woofer. Thus it is possible—as in the case of the B-310A—by using four woofers, each of which has a free-air resonance of about 40 cps, to get their combined response to go below 30 cps. In any case, such a system has an inherently low efficiency. In doing its job of suppressing the speaker's back wave, the infinite baffle actually permits only half of the speaker's total acoustic output to be radiated into the listening area; for this reason, the use of high-powered amplifiers is indicated. All told, the approach—which involves heavy speakers, huge enclosures, and high-powered amplifiers—has been characterized as one of "brute force," inasmuch as its end result is simply to move as much air as possible in an attempt to effect a direct transfer of sound energy from the speaker diaphragm to the vastly larger



area represented by a room, but without the aid of horn-loading or ported-reflex action.

In the B-310A (as well as in smaller Bozak systems), the woofer used is a specialized driver with useful response up to 4,500 cps. The ratio of woofer to bass response is quite simple—the more speakers used, the deeper the bass. Thus, the smallest of such Bozak systems, the B-300, employs one woofer, and has a rated response down to 40 cps. The B-305 and the B-4000, both of which use two woofers, are rated down to 35 cps. The B-310A, which has four woofers, reaches to below 30 cps. These woofers, which have been on the high fidelity scene for some time, have been long-time favorites among many audiophiles. As noted earlier, in any such system, the cabinet or enclosure itself also must be first-rate, with no vibrations or resonances of its own, and indeed the Bozak cabinet is one of the sturdiest made. Incidentally, the cabinet division of Bozak is now headed by Manuel Mundschenk, a talented man with whom this journal has had occasion to comment on in the past, and whom we regard as one of the best cabinetmakers in the business.

It should be pointed out, in passing, that the deeper bass encountered as one goes "up the line" in Bozak speaker systems is knowingly balanced in each case with added midrange and treble speakers as required, so that each succeeding model represents that much closer an approach to the designer's ideal of musical realism. The B-310A, presently Bozak's "ultimate," is quite large, and a pair in one room for stereo easily can become the most dominant furnishing. Yet because of the system's fine balance, the reproduced sound need not become "larger than life" itself. On monophonic material, two of these systems provide an acoustic frame, with the sound pleasantly centered between them. On stereo, there is an enormous sense of space and depth. These impressions, by the way, are of a pair of B-310A's spaced (from vertical centers) nine feet apart, and radiating directly into a room down its length from the short wall.

The system easily makes its claimed range of response from below 30 cps to beyond audibility, and with virtually no detectable irregularity. The bass is solid and well defined, and begins rolling off gently just above 30 cps. The midrange is very smooth. The highs, dispersed by the new tweeters, are quite "airy" and "open." The whole effect is one of natural, clean, honest, uncompromised sound. The speaker's characteristic sound on white noise is very smooth and subdued, indicating a minimum of coloration effects. The treble frequency directional pattern is extremely broad, as might be expected from the double row of eight tweeters that are arranged in bow-like fashion behind the grille. Particular attention, in the listening tests, was spent on the critical

crossover points (400 cps and 2,500 cps), but no harshness or ringing was evident in these frequency regions.

On a wide variety of program material, the B-310A demonstrated a complete neutrality and impartiality. It did not favor one type of music or one type of instrument over another. The human voice sounded—human; strings ranged from silky to gutty accordingly; brass sometimes had an impressive “glint” in it, such as you might perceive in a concert hall.

It has been stated, of course, that the B-310A is an inefficient system in that it takes an awful lot of amplifier power to move, and control, those fourteen speakers. But we must emphasize that “clean” power—particularly in the bass region—is as important here as “high” power, and even in normal home listening situations the B-310A should be used with the highest-quality amplifiers available, such as those that exhibit good

damping and very little phase-shift in the bass. Of course, the system can be driven with “medium”-powered amplifiers too. While the resultant sound can be quite acceptable, there may be a sense of a need for a little more “sock” and “bite” in the deepest bass region. The manufacturer does suggest an amplifier of 60 watts or greater, and for those who want optimum performance from the Bozak B-310A, this suggestion—verified in our own tests—should be taken seriously. For that matter, the Bozak almost demands being used with the best available associated equipment, since it is a re-producer that will not mask such factors as tone arm resonance or imperfections in amplifier response. On the other hand, it will respond graciously to high-quality program sources, pickups, and amplifiers. With such equipment behind it, the B-310A will provide performance that should interest the most critical listener.

Ampex Model 1260 Tape Recorder



AT A GLANCE: The new Ampex 1200 series of four-track tape recorders are all built around the same basic deck but offer different features. The Model 1250 is an unmounted chassis for custom installation; the Model 1260 is identical except that it comes fitted in a portable carrying case; the Model 1270 has its own built-in monitoring power amplifiers and speakers. The unit tested for this report by United States Testing Co., Inc., was the Model 1260, priced at \$545. Measurements and listening tests generally confirm Ampex's own specifications for the unit; in a few instances, they surpass them. Manufacturer: Ampex Corporation, 1020 Kifer Road, Sunnyvale, Calif.

IN DETAIL: Although it superficially resembles Ampex's former 900 series, the new 1200 deck has been thoroughly reengineered to provide better tape handling and smoother mechanical operation. The tape heads have been redesigned to furnish improved quarter-track performance. The deck itself is neatly arranged, with all control facilities and indicators logically grouped and affording positive action.

The 1260 offers facilities for recording and playback of 4-track stereo and ¼-track monophonic tapes at either 7½ ips or 3¾ ips. For optimum performance with 2-track tapes, a conversion kit (Ampex Model 105) is available as an accessory. Essentially, this kit provides for shifting the quarter-track head assembly so that it can “line up” accurately with half-track widths of tape.

The 1260 has inputs on each channel for microphone and high-level signals, with an individual level control for each input. A single VU-type meter can be switched to either the left or right channel when recording, or can be used to indicate the combined level of both channels.

Three tape heads are used, permitting simultaneous recording and playback, sound-on-sound recordings, and special echo effects, if desired. The 1260's record button interlock—which requires two hands to initiate recording—is very effective in preventing accidental recording and

erasure of a tape. Speed changing is accomplished by means of an easily operated front panel push-pull control. An automatic “stop” deactivates the tape transport at the end of the tape. In conjunction with this device, Ampex has introduced an unusual convenience feature: if the recorder's main power switch is turned off while the equipment is recording or playing a tape, the apparatus will remain operating until the end of the tape is reached, at which time it will shut itself off automatically and completely. Any other equipment plugged into the recorder's AC convenience outlet will also be turned off in this manner.

In USTC's judgment, the Ampex Model 1260 is built very well, both electronically and mechanically. The transport is driven through belts by a single induction motor. Each playback channel contains a 12AX7 two-stage preamplifier and a ½-12AU7 cathode follower output, and each record channel contains a 12AX7 two-stage microphone preamplifier and a 12AT7 recording amplifier. An additional 12AX7 tube is used as a record-level meter amplifier, and a 12AU7 is used for the 100-ke bias oscillator. The recorder has a 6X4 power rectifier, making a total of ten tubes.

The transport itself provides smooth tape handling at constant speed. The actual tape speed was clocked at 1.1% fast at 3¾ ips, and 1.2% fast at 7½ ips. Wow and flutter at 3¾ ips were 0.22% and 0.1% respectively. At 7½ ips, the wow and flutter were 0.06% and 0.08% respectively, both figures being very good and actually surpassing Ampex's own specifications. The rewind and fast forward speeds are not as rapid as with some machines, but average out to 80 seconds for a 1,200-foot reel of tape. The recorder provided an output voltage of 0.84 volts on the left channel and 1.16 volts on the right channel, when playing a tape recorded at a level of 0 VU. The playback response of the recorder on a test tape was fairly uniform on each channel, and showed a slight rise in output above 10 kc. The playback response of the left channel was uniform within -0.3 and

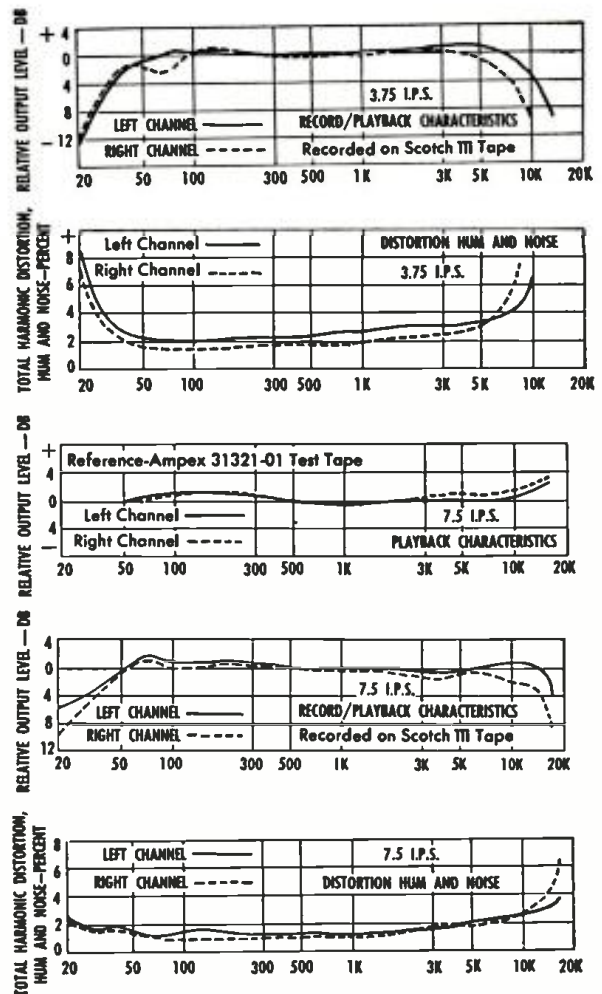
+2.6 db from 50 cps to 15 kc; the right channel rose to +3.2 db at 15 kc.

USTC also checked the 1260's record/playback response, using standard Scotch No. 111 tape, recording at a level of -10 VU. As shown on the accompanying graph, at 7½ ips speed, response on the left channel was uniform within plus or minus 2 db from 40 cps to 16.5 kc. The right channel response was generally similar except for a greater roll-off at the very high end.

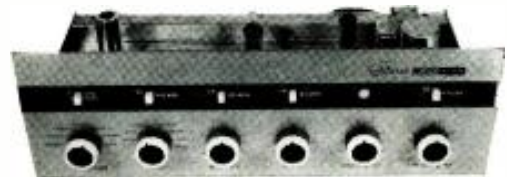
As might be expected, the slower speed of 3¾ ips produced less favorable high-frequency response, although for that speed it might be considered rather good and did closely conform to Ampex's specifications. The left channel, at 3¾-ips speed, was uniform within +1, -2 db from 37 cps to 8.6 kc, rolling off to -4 db at 10 kc. The right channel was generally uniform within less than +1, -2 db from 36 cps to 6 kc, sloping off to -9 db at 10 kc.

Distortion, hum, and noise figures all were quite satisfactory, with less than 2% distortion from 25 cps to 4 kc at 7½ ips, and less than 3% distortion up to 11 kc. At 3¾ ips, the distortion, hum, and noise was less than 4% of the total output from 27 cps to over 6 kc. The signal-to-noise level of the recorder, referenced to zero VU, was quite good, being 52 db on the left channel and 57 db on the right channel. There is also a considerable safety margin built into the recorder as far as recording level goes, so that high level music transients (to +6 VU) will not overload the recorder. The THD at +6 VU is only 3% on the right channel and is slightly greater on the left channel. The IM distortion at 0 VU is relatively low, measuring only 1.9% with signals of 60 and 7,000 cps at a 1:1 ratio. The IM distortion dropped to 1.4% at -10 VU.

All told, the new Ampex Model 1260 appears to be a first-rate piece of equipment within its price range. It is carefully engineered, sturdily built, and conservatively rated. Listening and use tests of the 1260 confirmed the laboratory measurements. The unit was a pleasure to operate and a delight to hear.



EICO Model ST-84 Stereo Preampifier



AT A GLANCE: The new EICO ST-84 is an attractive, versatile, easy-to-use dual-channel preamplifier and audio control unit that can be mated with any basic amplifier and can accept all standard program sources. It is available factory-built at \$89.95, or in kit form for \$59.95. Performance of the kit-built version, assembled and tested at United States Testing Company, Inc., was found to be generally excellent with effectively no distortion, though some discrepancies were measured in the unit's tape head equalization characteristic. Manufacturer: Electronic Instrument Co., Inc. (EICO), 33-00 Northern Blvd., Long Island City 1, N.Y.

IN DETAIL: The appearance of the ST-84 is characteristic of the "new look" that has been designed for EICO components, being at once handsome and functional, with the front panel controls arranged for maximum convenience. At the extreme left is a 7-position input selector with positions for three pairs of high-level inputs and four pairs of low-level inputs (tape head, two magnetic phono cartridges, and microphone). To the

right of this control is a 7-position mode selector providing the usual variety of monophonic and stereo operating conditions. Then come the balance and volume controls, with concentric bass and concentric treble controls at the right end of the panel. Above these control knobs are slide switches for tape head equalization (positions are provided for both the 3¾-ips and 7½-ips tape speeds), a tape monitor function, loudness contour, rumble filter, and scratch filter. On the rear of the preamplifier there are seven pairs of input jacks and two pairs of output jacks (to amplifier and tape recorder), as well as one switched and one unswitched AC convenience outlet.

USTC found the performance of the ST-84 to be excellent in several respects. Its frequency response is flat within plus or minus 0.5 db from 20 cps to 20 kc. It rolls off to minus 3 db at 44 kc on the high end and extends to below 5 cps on the low end. The preamplifier introduces no measurable harmonic distortion with signals of up to 3 volts output. IM distortion, at 1-volt output, also was nonmeasurable. In fact, the only dis-

tortion measured at all was a negligible 0.1% IM at 3 volts output.

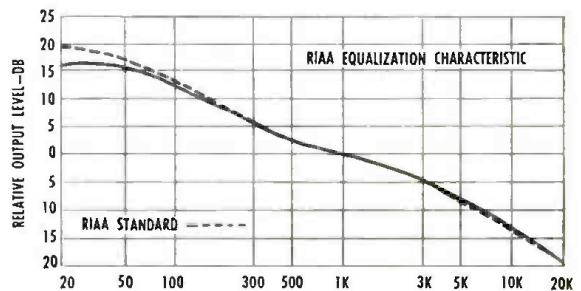
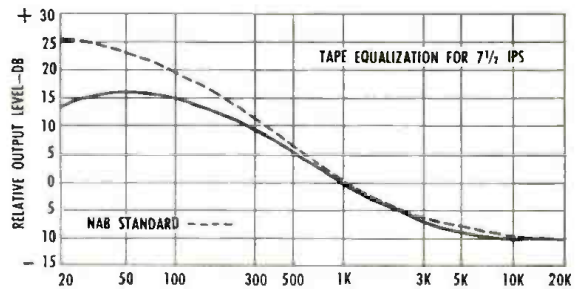
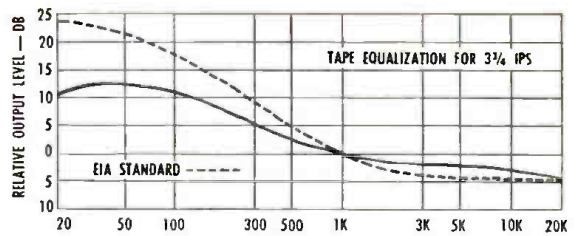
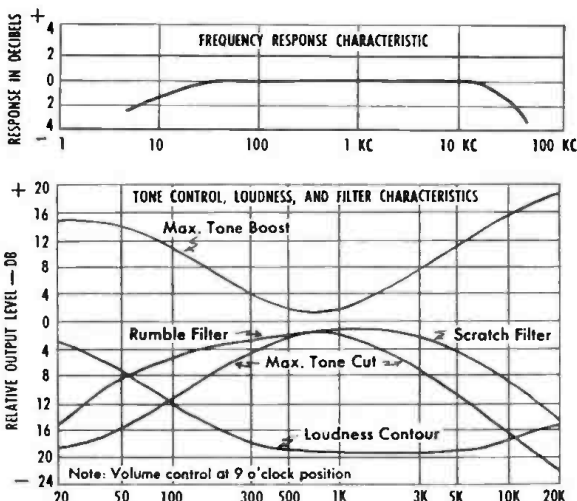
The preamplifier's sensitivity for 1-volt output is 0.168 volts on auxiliary, 1.57 mv on phono, 2.58 mv on microphone, and 0.84 mv on tape head. The signal-to-noise ratio of the preamplifier is 74 db in the auxiliary position, 53 db in the phono position, 57 db in the microphone position, and 47 db in the tape head position. The "noise" that remained was predominantly hum, but the signal-to-noise ratio is good enough so that the hum would be inaudible at normal listening levels.

The phono equalization characteristic (RIAA) was excellent above 100 cps and remained good down to 30 cps where the error was only 2 db. Tape equalization (for signals direct from a tape head—that is to say, a tape playback deck that lacked its own preamplifier) was not as good, although the equalization for the 7½-ips tape speed was generally excellent above 400 cps. At 100 cps, the equalization had a 4.5-db drop, and at 40 cps the error increased to 8 db in comparison to the NAB standard. The equalization for the 3¾-ips tape speed remained fairly close to the EIA standard for this speed above 400 cps, but fell off below this frequency to minus 9 db at 40 cps.

The tone controls provided 11 db of bass boost and cut at 100 cps and approximately 16 db of treble boost and cut at 10 kc. The rumble filter characteristic was considered relatively poor, in that it attenuated a large portion of the bass response in the musical program. With the rumble filter on, the 100-cps response is cut 5 db, the 50-cps response is cut 8.5 db, and the 30-cps response is cut 11.8 db. The scratch filter also might have a more desirable shape; it attenuates signals at the approximate rate of 5 db per octave above 3 kc. Thus, while these filters will remove noise in program material, they also may attenuate a fair amount of the program itself. In any case, noise filters—even on costlier units—rarely are completely satisfactory and with good program material really should be left off.

The loudness contour in the ST-84 is effective, but operates in a somewhat unusual way. Instead of providing a boost to the low frequencies, as is generally done, it attenuates the mid- and high-frequencies (about 20 db at 1 kc). Thus, to obtain the desired end result of using a loudness contour (reasonably full response at low listening levels), the level control should be re-adjusted by the listener.

Aside from the unit's questionable tape equalization characteristic (which, of course, would be of concern only to those who would use it with a preamplifier-less tape deck), the EICO ST-84 is a generally first-rate control unit going at a relatively low price.



How It Went Together

Construction of the ST-84 was somewhat impeded by the change in position of certain components shown in one drawing from their orientation in a previous drawing. This orientation meant that the leads cut in previous steps now were too short and required extension; where instruction indicated a lead length that turned out to be excessively long, the leads had to be stripped and tinned a second time after the first cutting to size. Too, the multi-operation steps called for at one point caused some small amount of confusion after getting into the swing of single-operation steps; this was solved by checking-off each operation within the steps. In addition, the color-code indicated for a given resistance value erred, requiring cross-check with the circuit diagram.

Three missing components—a phono jack insulator and two resistors—were quickly obtained from the manufacturer upon request. Two other parts—a 0.025-nfd disc capacitor, and 12AX7 tube—showed up as faulty after the kit had been built and put into operation. These were replaced and the unit performed correctly. But USTC feels that these problems, while they could be solved by an experienced kit builder or technician, could cause consternation and delay to the beginner.

This unit was well packaged for shipping purposes. Individual components were grouped in cartons or envelopes. Assembly time was about twenty-eight hours.

REPORTS IN PROGRESS

Leak "Sandwich" Speaker
Thorens TD-135 Turntable and Arm
Fisher Model KX-200 Amplifier Kit

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AFLP 1968/AFSD 5968



GREAT MOVIE THEMES, Johnny Puleo & his Harmonica Gang—Moon River, La Dolce Vita, Maria, Never On Sunday, Ruby, Col. Bogie March, Song from Limelight, others.
AFLP 1969/AFSD 5969



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CIRCLE 13 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

reviewed by

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Records in Review



by Conrad L. Osborne

Don Carlo in Five Acts— A Chance for Appraisal



Giuseppe Verdi

OF ALL Verdi's creations that date from the period between *La Traviata* and *Aida* none is more fascinating nor more problematic than *Don Carlo*. It shares with *La Forza del destino*, *Simon Boccanegra*, and (to a lesser degree) *Un Ballo in maschera* a certain unwieldiness, coupled with undeniable unevenness in the scoring. Also like *Forza* and *Boccanegra*, it was the subject of revision by the composer, in league with a new librettist; but, whereas the revisions of *Forza* and *Boccanegra* resulted in universally accepted improvements, that of *Don Carlo* merely started a still unresolved argument as to which version, or which compromise between versions, is best suited to staging.

The original setting of *Don Carlo* was written for production by the Paris Opéra. Commissions from the Paris Opéra to nineteenth-century composers seem to have had, almost without exception, the most doleful imaginable artistic effect on the honored recipients. Straightaway, composers whose notions of dance were elephantine commenced to write lengthy ballets; in all cases, sheer quantity—that is, length—seems to have become an important end. Perhaps the chief culprit was Giacomo Meyerbeer, whose hold on the Parisian public was such that neither the Opéra's management nor the composers themselves felt that any work could be allowed on the stage of the house that did not pose

a direct challenge to such favorites as *Les Huguenots*, *Le Prophète*, *L'Etoile du Nord*, *L'Africaine*, and *Robert le Diable*. Only one composer comes to mind who managed to turn the demands of the French grand opera tradition to positive advantage. This was, of course, Richard Wagner, whose revision of *Tannhäuser* for Paris constitutes a genuine improvement over the earlier Dresden edition of the opera.

In any event, it is clear that Verdi felt impelled to meet Meyerbeer on his own terms with *Don Carlo*, as he had attempted to do earlier with *I Vespri Siciliani*. For his libretto, he turned to a drama by Schiller about political and amorous intrigue in the court of Philip II of Spain; and for the adaptation, he relied on Méry and Du Locle, experienced and successful craftsmen. Schiller's play is a crowded one in every sense. It is filled with incident. The number of characters is staggering. Motivations are complex and, in some cases, subtle. Méry and Du Locle came away from their difficult task with a sprawling five-act grand opera, complete with ballet. They eliminated a host of characters and much of the background of political conflict, and they telescoped incidents and motivations in an eye-popping manner. For all this Méry and Du Locle may be pardoned; *Don Carlos* is not an easy play to condense. But what is difficult to forgive is the need-

less and embarrassing conclusion tacked onto the opera by the librettists, purely for the sake of a few Meyerbeerian chills. In this meretricious finale, Carlo is yanked off stage into the depths of the Cloister of St. Just by a friar whom everyone recognizes as an apparition of Charles V, Carlo's grandfather. One would not object to the device as such if it proceeded from the action of the drama in any meaningful sense—but it does not. Although Méry and Du Locle may be said to have "prepared" for it by the earlier appearance of the friar and Carlo's almost casual comment to the effect that he resembles Charles V, this is hardly sufficient.

The big drawback of *Don Carlo* as Verdi finally set it is its ungainliness. Verdi faced the same sort of challenge he faced in *Forza* and *Boccanegra* (and would have faced in *Ballo*, had not the censors wrought such miraculous changes in the outline of the libretto)—that of setting the personal dramas of noble and more or less complex figures against a massive and detailed historical canvas. One of the inevitable results is tremendous length, and one of the inevitable results of tremendous length is a determination on the part of producers and conductors to help out with some good-sized cuts. One can hardly blame them, but the curious fact is that the cuts

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Otto Klemperer

by Nathan Broder

A New *St. Matthew Passion* With the Thunder Emphasized

IN EACH OF THE TEN previous recordings of the *St. Matthew Passion* with which I am acquainted there were moments when something like justice was done to this glorious music. Sometimes it was a single singer who lifted a performance from dreary mediocrity, as Kathleen Ferrier did in the alto solos of the Richmond set. Again, there might have been several elements in the performance that stood out above the others. Such, for example, was the singing of Willy van Hese of the tenor parts and Carel Wilink of the bass in the Concert Hall set; the magnificent sound of the final movement in the Oiseau-Lyre album; the splendid singing by Ernst Häfliger, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and Irmgard Seefried in the Archive; that of Hilde Rössl-Majdan, as well as the fine recorded sound, in the Vanguard stereo version; the impressive performance by Helmut Krebs and Franz Kelch and the general stylishness in the Westminster set conducted by Fritz Werner. But none of these versions, it seemed to me, had so many meritorious qualities as the older Westminster set, directed by Hermann Scherchen. Inferior to the stereo recordings in sound and uneven in its effectiveness as it was, it revealed so much sensitivity and imagination, as well as first-class singing by Hugues Cuénod and Heinz Rehfuss, that it towered over its competitors.

Now, however, the Scherchen recording will, in my opinion, have to move down from its lonely peak and take second place. For Angel has provided an overwhelming performance, with practically no weak spots, in a marvelously engineered recording. Klemperer's approach is quite different from Scherchen's. While Scherchen seemed to attack each movement, and sometimes each section of a movement, as a different piece, giving it its own special character, Klemperer fits every portion into an over-all view. It is the profound seriousness of the sacred drama, the sublimity of its devotional character—whether it is dealing with events or expressing reflection, contemplation, or compassion—that informs every measure of this performance. One way Klemperer achieves this is by the consistent use of broader tempos than most other conductors employ (hence ten sides, as against the usual eight). Yet one never feels that

the music is being held back, or dragged out; there is constant, if deliberate, motion. One example may suffice to illustrate this point: the *Vivace* of No. 33, beginning "*Sind Blitze, sind Donner*," is often taken in a bouncy, dancelike style. There is no trace of that style with Klemperer: he emphasizes the thunder rather than the lightning, and the result is curiously impressive.

The outbursts of the chorus have dramatic power, and the final movement is tremendous in its impact. While the chorus seems large, it is marvelously well balanced. The entrance of the altos in the first number stands out against the other voices, as it should and seldom does. The clarity with which the inner voices are heard makes the chorales sound unusually rich, yet at the same

time transparent. Technically too, there seems to be no fault in the singing of the chorus. The tone is round and lovely, and remains so even in the highest reaches of the soprano and tenor parts.

The all-star cast of soloists lives up to its reputation without exception. Peter Pears, the Evangelist, is in his best form, attacking high notes without apparent strain and modulating the color of his voice and the speed of his singing in accordance with the character of the events he is describing. The use of a baritone for the role of Jesus is rare on records, but Fischer-Dieskau justifies it completely. Added justification is given to this departure from tradition when, as in Nos. 27 and 28, Jesus is followed by a bass recitative: the shift from baritone to bass here is very effective. Berry too is in excellent form throughout. As for the tenor arias, I have seldom heard them sung as well as they are by Gedda here; he spins out his long phrases in tones that remain rich and warm even above the staff. Equally impressive are the ladies. Miss Schwarzkopf's singing is on the intimate side but accurate and appealing; in "*Blute nur*" she displays a real trill, and she does "*Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben*" beautifully. Miss Ludwig is consistently first-class, achieving a peak of feeling in "*Erbarme dich*" and of intensity in "*Erbarme es Gott*" and "*Können Tränen meiner Wangen*." Even the minor roles are well sung.

There are one or two matters one could cavil at. Klemperer regards the fermatas in the chorales as holds, instead of breathing places. Although an organ is listed in the performing forces, it is mostly inaudible, and a harpsichord is employed as the keyboard continuo instrument in the recitatives and arias; frequently it too can scarcely be heard. Otherwise, this seems to me to be far and away the best all-around *St. Matthew* ever recorded, and its sound in stereo is magnificent.

BACH: *Matthäus-Passion*, S. 244

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano; Christa Ludwig, contralto; Peter Pears, tenor; Nicolai Gedda, tenor; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Walter Berry, bass; Philharmonia Choir and Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond.

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BACH: *Concertos: for Flute, Violin, Harpsichord, and Strings, in A minor, S. 1044; for Harpsichord and Strings: No. 4, in A, S. 1055; No. 5, in F minor, S. 1056*

Ralph Kirkpatrick, harpsichord; Aurèle Nicolet, flute; Rudolf Baumgartner, violin; Festival Strings Lucerne, Rudolf Baumgartner, cond.

- ARCHIVE ARC 3176. LP. \$5.98.
- ARCHIVE ARC 73176. SD. \$6.98.

Baumgartner and his expert soloists play the fast movements with a verve that is not common in recorded performances of these works. One result is a kind of dramatic power these compositions seldom have, and another is that the slow movements become true oases of relaxation and contemplation. The triple concerto, which Bach constructed out of a prelude and fugue for harpsichord and the slow movement from one of his organ sonatas, is a fine example of his genius at reworking old material into even more satisfying shape. The orchestral sound in the solo concertos is rather heavy in relation to the harpsichord, but problems of balance also beset the available competing recordings that employ a harpsichord rather than a piano. Otherwise the sound here is very good both in mono and in stereo. N.B.

BACH: *Mass in B minor, S. 232*

Lois Marshall, soprano; Eunice Alberts, contralto; John McCollum, tenor; Kenneth Smith, bass; Bach Choir of Bethlehem; Bach Festival Orchestra, Ifor Jones, cond.

- CLASSICS RECORD LIBRARY RL 3623. Three LP. \$11.75.
- CLASSICS RECORD LIBRARY SRL 3623. Three SD. \$13.75.

The famous Bach Choir of Bethlehem gave the first complete performance of the B minor Mass in America in 1900, and for almost a generation now, has made it an annual event that brings crowds of listeners to the Pennsylvania steel-manufacturing town. It is good to have this well-recorded document (issued by a division of the Book-of-the-Month Club, 345 Hudson St., New York 14, N. Y.) of a tradition that stretches all the way back to the Moravians who settled in Bethlehem in Colonial times. (A souvenir of the old tradition is the chorale played by trombones that introduces the Mass here.) As J. Fred Wille, the founder of the Choir, used to do, Ifor Jones stresses the drama and spirituality in Bach's music. The result is a reading that is sometimes very stirring, as in the "*Dona nobis pacem*," which builds up with thrilling effect. In some of the other movements one feels the need of a firmer rhythmic backbone.

The chorus is large—190 singers are listed in the booklet—and though it threads its way carefully through the dense textures of movements in more than four parts, the contrapuntal web is not always as clear as it could be. Aside from some trouble with high A's, the sopranos are excellent, and do not dominate when they shouldn't. The tenors come forth clearly when they have im-

portant material, but this is not always true of the altos and basses. All of the vocal soloists perform their tasks ably, with Miss Alberts and Mr. Smith doing especially attractive work. The players too, who seem to have been drawn largely from the Philadelphia Orchestra, are first-rate, including the high trumpet; the violins sound especially lovely in the Agnus Dei. The recording in general is lifelike in both versions; and in the stereo there is effective separation of the two choirs in the "*Osanna*." All in all, a worthy memento of a justly celebrated American institution. N.B.

BACH: *Matthaeus-Passion, S. 244*

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano; Christa Ludwig, contralto; Peter Pears, tenor; Nicolai Gedda, tenor; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Walter Berry, bass; Philharmonia Choir and Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond.

- ANGEL 3599E/L. Five LP. \$24.98.
- ANGEL S 3599/L. Five SD. \$29.98.

For a feature review of this recording, see page 78.

BACH: *The Wise Virgins: Ballet Suite* (trans. Walton)

†Scarlatti, Domenico: *The Good-Humored Ladies: Ballet Suite* (trans. Tommasini)

Concert Arts Orchestra, Robert Irving, cond.

- CAPITOL P 8583. LP. \$4.98.
- CAPITOL SP 8583. SD. \$5.98.

Both of these charming ballet suites have for some time been missing from the catalogue. It is good to have them back in circulation, and in their first stereo appearance.

Neither Léonide Massine's ballet *Les Femmes de bonne humeur* (1917) nor Sir Frederick Ashton's *Wise Virgins* (1940) has earned a place in the permanent ballet repertoire, but the fault is certainly not that of the music. Vincenzo Tommasini selected a group of harpsichord sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti—five appear on this recording—and transferred them to the orchestra in a manner that preserved their lacy transparency; in his transcription of a Bach chorale-prelude and excerpts from five cantatas, Sir William Walton chose to treat the music as Bach himself might have done. This sensitivity to the intentions of the composers Robert Irving has caught admirably in the present reading, and the performances are further enhanced by highly polished playing. The recorded sound does the music full justice; the stereo edition pointing up most felicitously the intricate interplay of voices. P.A.

BALASZ: *Two Dances for Flute and Orchestra*

†Mourant: *Valley of the Moon; Air and Scherzo: Sleepy Hollow*

Paul Pázmány, flute; Philharmonica Hungarica, Frederic Balasz, cond. (in the Balasz). Camerata and His Orchestra (in the Mourant).

- COMPOSERS RECORDINGS CRI 157. LP. \$5.95.

Frederic Balasz is a forty-two-year-old Hungarian and graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest who now conducts the symphony orchestra in

Tucson, Arizona. He has also conducted numerous other orchestras, both in Europe and America, and has an extensive list of compositions to his credit. The one recorded here is given three different titles: it is called *Two Dances for Flute and Orchestra* on the sleeve, *Two Poems for Flute and Orchestra* on the label, and *Two Dances for David* in the notes. This last seems the best name for the piece, since it is full of exotic, antique-sounding, somewhat Hebraic effects; it is a milder, less highly charged, less polychromatic *Schelomo*, but it is a work of great charm and some stature in its own right. Here it is superbly played—Pázmány is a true virtuoso—and beautifully recorded.

Walter Mourant is a New Yorker who writes commercial music for television and films. One would like to say that writing for television and films does not necessarily mean writing bad music, but it would be very difficult to maintain that argument on the basis of the evidence offered here. A.F.

BARTOK: *Divertimento for Strings*
—See Stravinsky: *Concerto for Strings, in D.*

BETHOVEN: *Fidelio*

Ingeborg Hallstein (s), Marzelline; Christa Ludwig (ms), Leonore; Jon Vickers (t), Florestan; Gerhard Unger (t), Jaquino; Kurt Wehofschitz (t), First Prisoner; Walter Berry (b), Pizarro; Raymond Wolansky (b), Second Prisoner; Gottlob Frick (bs), Rocco; Franz Crass (bs), Don Fernando. Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond.

- ANGEL 3625 C/L. Three LP. \$14.94.
- ANGEL S 3625 C/L. Three SD. \$17.94.

By all standards that one can reasonably apply, this is an extraordinarily good *Fidelio* (stereo version No. 2, hot on the heels of Westminster's stereo version No. 1). Yet it is sometimes said that the best performance is one which makes the listener exclaim, "What a wonderful work!" and I must admit that I have never been more conscious of *Fidelio's* weaknesses than I was while listening to this recording. Perhaps the answer is that the best performance is really that which illuminates the work most honestly, extenuating nothing. Or perhaps it is merely that the oftener one sees and/or hears *Fidelio*—particularly at close intervals—the more impatient one grows with all the Jaquino/Marzelline/Rocco business.

My music-loving friends (particularly my European music-loving friends) tell me I am lunkish to be so severe about it, but I can't help it; Marzelline's aria, charming in concept, still strikes me as much too long and formally developed for its sentiment; the duet between Jaquino and Marzelline utterly useless (I notice that a prominent motion picture director contends it is impossible for an audience to be bored during the first five minutes of a performance: he's wrong); Rocco's song both overlong, overdeveloped, and useless. Some say that relief is needed from the intensity of the main drama, but I don't see why. Another explanation has it that we need this lovingly sketched folk

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Purcell/Telemann/Handel/Heroic Music for Organ, Brass and Percussion—E. Power Biggs, organist; The New England Brass Ensemble. A collection of rousing fanfares, voluntaries and airs with the focus on marching stereo.



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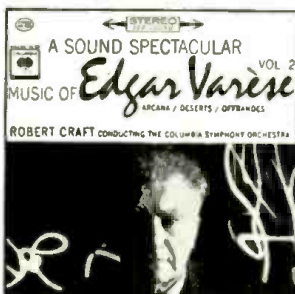
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background as a setting for the drama; but again, there seems no good reason. I can certainly see its importance in *Der Freischütz*, whose drama is compounded of folk custom and legend, and in which the soubrette, Annchen, plays an important role in counterpoint, so to speak, to the serious action. But why in *Fidelio*, except that it must have seemed a necessary bow to tradition, which neither librettist nor composer was quite tough-minded enough to shake off? Well, at least these problematic people and situations do give us the quartet, "Mir ist so wunderbar"—one of the sublime moments in all opera—and no doubt that's enough.

In any event, here is the long-awaited Klemperer *Fidelio*. The conductor's work is just what one would expect—that is, at almost every turn an enlightening exposition of the score. The overture has clarity and lightness—it is almost closer to a Klemperer reading of a Mozart symphony than to the average "Beethovenian" performance. The air of lightness is carried over into the opening scene, which is probably for the best, and indeed the reading throughout has more than the usual amount of air and buoyancy. There are times when one might wish for just a shade more steadiness—"O namenlose Freude," for instance, is not quite as well defined as it might be—but, in general, the performance is fully worthy of the conductor's reputation.

The casting holds a major surprise—mezzo-soprano Christa Ludwig as Leonore. This raises an interesting question as to just what a mezzo-soprano is; Ludwig's voice surely sounds brighter than those of many dramatic sopranos, and her handling of the higher tones would put more than one soprano to shame, including a couple who have recorded this role. One critic recently defined a mezzo as just what the name implies—a half a soprano, with the extension at the lower end of the range. But this seems to me to ignore the key matter of the voice's basic coloring or timbre—this, I think, really decides the question. Battistini, for instance, sang with great ease and effect at an altitude uncomfortable for many dramatic tenors, and had an uncommonly weak low range; yet he was emphatically a baritone, because his voice was baritone in its predominant coloring. Is a tenor twice a baritone, with the extension at the top?

Miss Ludwig is a mezzo, and a very good one, though she is not a "dark" mezzo, and has no fear of a top C. Her Leonore is musically and lushly vocalized. It will undoubtedly improve when and if she assumes the role a number of times on the stage. At present, it lacks the complete comprehension of how to handle phrases that so distinguished Flagstad's, or the very personal emotional accent that marks Jurinac's or Zadek's. The equipment is all there, however, and from the purely vocal point of view, she actually outsings her recorded competition quite handily. Ingeborg Hallstein sings her lines very prettily in a well-focused *Hochsopran* that presently suffers, though not grievously, from a slight but continuous tremolo.

As Jon Vickers often does, he leaves me here with a feeling of puzzlement. His voice is potentially a great one—large, ringing, and possessed of quite a bit of variety. Further, the tenor is not a bawler—he pays great attention to dynamic variation and to correct in-

tonation—matters that many of his colleagues just don't bother much with. What is absent is a consistency of sound. Mr. Vickers is not a "line" singer; he is constantly adjusting and readjusting things as he changes pitch or volume level. We are likely to hear a highly impressive moment, followed by a terribly strained passage in which one almost feels that a prodigiously gifted amateur is singing. "Come now, you can certainly manage better than that," is the feeling I have toward some of his graceless execution in the duet. And he surmounts the fiendish close of the aria much less successfully than Ralf or even Pearce—the latter a tenor close to twice Vickers' age, whose voice would not seem as well suited to this role as Vickers'. We hear about half of a very fine Florestan, and simply wonder whether the other half is going to come within earshot soon now.

Berry seemed to me a strange choice for Pizarro, but he more than justifies it, building a really scary figure out of intelligent coloring and inflection—he sounds as if he really means it. Frick repeats his Rocco from the Decca set, and it is excellent—if anything, he is handling the upper voice even more easily now, and characterizing more keenly. His contribution is a solid plus. Franz Crass is really imposing as Fernando—a first-class voice and presence—and Unger is a top-rate Jaquino.

Staging effects are kept to a pleasant minimum—there is not even a sound of knocking during the Jaquino/Marzelline scene. I do wish that Ludwig had not been made to launch "Abscheulich-er!" from a far-back position, though. The sound is full and wide—some of the best I've heard from Angel; my only complaint is that the level of the dialogue is sometimes too low in relation to the surrounding music. There you have it. Most will probably prefer this to the recent Knappertsbusch set, though that should be listened to and seriously considered. Many will rank it first among all recorded *Fidelios*, unless certain individual achievements, such as Toscanini's, are the determining factors. I feel I must put in a word for the Vox set, under Böhm, inadequate in sound, but so right in terms of spirit, and so superior in its casting of Seefried, Ralf, and Schoeffler.

Just why this admirable Angel performance made me so aware of a dislike for the opening scenes and for the long, badly placed, and musically weak trio after the prisoners' chorus is anyone's guess. Possibly, for all the brilliance of singing and playing, there is missing just the final spark of personal involvement that would leave us remembering only the opera's ennobling spirit. C.L.O.

BEETHOVEN: *Quartet for Strings, No. 14, in C sharp minor, Op. 131*

Juilliard Quartet.
• RCA VICTOR LM 2626. LP. \$4.98.
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When, in August 1826, Beethoven sent this quartet to his publisher, Bernhard Schotts Söhne, in Mainz, he described it as "a bit of patchwork"—only to find that the joke was misunderstood and the poor publisher needed reassurance that it was "really brand-new." Even that is something of a miracle of understatement. Brand-new, indeed! There never

Continued on page 84

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Symphony No. 3 in E Flat "Eroica" 35328
Symphony No. 3 in E Flat "Eroica" (S) 35853
Symphony No. 4 in B Flat: Overture, "Consecration of the House" (S) 35661
Symphony No. 5 in C minor: Overture "Consecration of the House" 35329
Symphony No. 5 in C minor: Overture "King Stephen" (S) 35843
Symphony No. 6 in F, "Pastorale" (S) 35711
Symphony No. 7 in A 35330
Symphony No. 7 in A (S) 35945
Symphony No. 8 in F; Symphony No. 1 in C (S) 35657
Symphony No. 9 in D minor "Choral"; Incidental Music to Egmont (2 discs) (S) 3577 B
The Complete Nine Symphonies (8 discs) (S) 3619 H

Fidelio (3 discs) (S) 3625 C/L†
Overtures: "Fidelio," "Leonore No. 1," "Leonore No. 2," "Leonore No. 3" 35258

BRAHMS:

Symphony No. 1 in C minor (S) 35481
Symphony No. 2 in D; Overture, "Tragic" (S) 35532
Symphony No. 3 in F; Overture, "Academic Festival" (S) 35545
Symphony No. 4 in E minor (S) 35546

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HAYDN:

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MAHLER:

Symphony No. 4 in G (Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano) (S) 35829†

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A Midsummer Night's Dream, Incidental Music (with soloists and chorus) (S) 35881

MOZART: Symphonies No. 29 in A; No. 41 in C "Jupiter" 35209

Symphonies Nos. 25 and 40 in G minor (S) 35407

Symphonies No. 38 in D "Prague"; No. 39 in E Flat 35408

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SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 9 in C "The Great" (S) 35946

RICHARD STRAUSS: Till Eulenspiegel, Dance of the Seven Veils from "Salome," Don Juan (S) 35737†

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† August Release ‡ September Release

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Purcell: *ACIS AND GALATEA*

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Verdi: *RIGOLETTO*

with Cornell MacNeil, Renato Cioni, Cesare Siepi and other soloists—Chorus and Orchestra of L'Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome—Nino Sanzogno

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CIRCLE 61 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

had been anything to equal it, and there never has been since. If I were to name the greatest work of music ever written, it would be my choice.

Recalling the Schnabel dictum that great music is always better than it ever can be played, one finds it not surprising that recordings of this quartet invariably fall short in one manner or another. This one has at least an unusual flaw, a missing (but important!) B natural for the second violin at bar five of the third movement. The result, I assume, of careless tape editing. Yet this should not deter you from buying the record, which is so well filled with wonders as to survive a good many passing blemishes. I refer you to bars 243-53 of the fourth movement, where few quartets grasp a firm, over-all rhythm and the texture usually unravels. Nothing of the sort happens here, and the lesser pitfalls of the work are managed with equal skill.

The disadvantage of this performance, for me, is that the sound is often needlessly lean, with the result that the version by the Fine Arts Quartet, although technically less polished, gains in attractions because of its greater warmth. On the other hand, the Juilliard offers a welcome chance to observe the clean articulation of the four instrumental parts, a process particularly well served by the stereo version. R.C.M.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonatas for Piano: No. 14, in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight"); No. 17, in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2 ("Tempest"); No. 26, in E flat, Op. 81a ("Les Adieux")*

Guiomar Novaes, piano.

• Vox PL 11290. LP. \$4.98.

A reissue of recordings made in the early Fifties, this disc reminds us that Mme. Novaes could command the grand virtuoso manner in a way few women have been able to equal or surpass. The Op. 27 and Op. 81 sonatas demonstrate this particularly well, although her *Tempest* deserves attention now that the tendency is to exaggerate the drama of this work. Although the sound here is not up to present-day standards, this collection should properly be regarded as a document from an artist who has given us some of our most exquisitely formulated statements of romantic keyboard music. R.C.M.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5, in C minor, Op. 67*

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, cond.

• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON LPM 18831. LP. \$5.98.

• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON SLPM 138831. SD. \$6.98.

This is the nearest thing we have to a great Beethoven Fifth in stereo, at least if you take as your standard the Furtwängler and Klemperer versions of the immediate postwar period. The sound is excellent, with the full, warm ensemble quality this music needs, and on the whole the performance is excellent as well. But there is a fatal flaw: in much of the first movement the breadth of phrase, the nobility of spirit are phenomenal, but the pulse, the forward thrust of the theme, is far too weak. Not until the coda of the first movement does the hero return from the land of

death-dreams and finally get into action!

All recording sessions are races against time, and in this case I assume Fricsay had to approve a performance in which material from different days (and different states of mind) had been synthesized. It would have made good sense to let him go back and do the first movement over, thus producing an artistically more consistent version of the score.

If you will allow for the warm-up period, this is the Beethoven Fifth to have, especially if your favorite passages all follow the famed oboe cadenza. Certainly, this is one of the finest recordings of the third movement we have ever had (although the 1947 Furtwängler is better, stereo or no stereo). But if you want the old V-for-Victory theme made the most of, go elsewhere. R.C.M.

BIZET: *Les Pêcheurs de perles*

Janine Micheau (s), Leila; Nicolai Gedda (t), Nadir; Ernest Blanc (b), Zurga; Jacques Mars (bs). Nourabad. Chorus and Orchestra of the Opéra-Comique, Pierre Dervaux, cond.

• ANGEL 3603. Two LP. \$9.96.

• • ANGEL S 3603. Two SD. \$11.96.

Considering the fact that *Les Pêcheurs de perles* is seldom performed outside France, record companies have been surprisingly eager to market multiple editions of the work. Both Renaissance and Epic have long had sets in the catalogue, and this represents Angel's second production of the opera. For me, at least, it does not hold up too well, despite some very lovely moments. Upon first discovering it, one is surprised that it is as vital and appealing a work as it is; hearing it for the tenth or fifteenth time, one becomes aware that only an unusual production of it merits repetition.

Much of the music is beautiful, indeed. The fine duet "*Au fond du temple saint*" and Nadir's exquisite aria "*Je crois entendre encore*" are justifiably popular. Also on a high level are Leila's "*Comme autrefois*," the duet "*Ton cœur n'a pas compris le mien*," and Zurga's fine cavatina "*O Nadir, tendre ami de mon jeune âge*." The chorus to Brahma has a certain simple theatrical effectiveness, and the concluding trio almost, but not quite, takes the curse off the rather impossibly sentimental situation. On the other hand, the opening chorus, heard several times in the first act, is an empty piece of exotic "color," as is Leila's first aria. The resolutions are nearly always the most obvious possible ones, and most of the attempts at dramatic underscoring heavy-handed. Still, it is a pleasant, listenable opera, and it is nice to have it so generously represented on records.

I am a little disappointed in the new version, Janine Micheau, a solid singer who has left some excellent recordings, is, to go directly to the point, too old (vocally, at least) for the role of the tempting young virgin priestess. Her top tones are frequently frayed, her coloratura sluggish and not very precise. She has admirable moments, particularly in the second-act duet, but by and large her contribution must be placed on the deficit side. By way of balance is the imposing Zurga of Ernest Blanc. His dark, round voice rings out with ease and authority and brings his music to virile life. Nicolai Gedda sings intelligently and well, and gives small ground for specific criticism; the trouble is, it's just not very interesting. His voice is so

persistently pointed and lean that it seems lacking in sensual attraction. There is bite, but little blandishment or warmth. For some reason he elects to sing the famous romance in a white, slightly flat tone; it is his worst singing on the set, whereas he has the capability to do it stunningly. Jacques Mars is a competent, ordinary-sounding Nourabad.

The sound seems a bit deficient in bass and not deficient enough in the matter of echo, and the surfaces of my stereo copy are marred by some hiss, especially near the end of one or two of the sides. This, combined with an approach by Dervaux that is very crisp and incisive but a bit hard, gives the whole production an air of harshness that does it no good. I am not very happy with the chorus, either, especially the tremulous women.

In all, not a bad set, but by no means clearly superior to any of the other versions, all of which balance out on specific assets and defects. Perhaps the choice, on balance, is the older Angel set under Cluytens, but the Epic version has very good work from Pierrette Alarie and Léopold Simoneau, and even the Renaissance set should not be passed over by those who are interested in lively conducting (Leibowitz's), a fine Zurga (Jean Borthayre), and a fresh-sounding Leila (Mattiwilda Dobbs, in one of her earliest efforts). The present set is a distinct choice only if stereo is a deciding factor. C.L.O.

BOISMORTIER: Concertos for Five Flutes, Op. 15: No. 1, in G; No. 2, in A minor; No. 3, in D
 †Corrette: *Concerto comiques, Op. 8: No. 3, in C minor; No. 4, in A; No. 6, in G*

Jean-Pierre Rampal, Samuel Baron, Harold Bennett, Lois Schaefer, Paula Robison, flutes; Robert Veyron-Lacroix, harpsichord; David Soyer, cello.
 •• CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 362. 12-in. 45-rpm SD. \$6.98.

This disc, ensconced in a handsome album, bears the title "Flute Concertos of Eighteenth-Century Paris." Its producers have plainly taken great pains with every aspect of it: they have sought out interesting material, most of which has not been previously recorded; they have rounded up a group of star performers; and they have employed several new technical processes to achieve a high quality of sound. The result is an unusual record of considerable distinction.

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (1691-1755) was an extremely prolific composer, whose vast output includes many works for flute. Those heard here (three of the six "concertos" comprising Op. 15, published in 1727) are attractive pieces, skillfully exploiting the possibilities of the unusual combination of instruments. The pieces by Michel Corrette (1709-95) date from about 1732 and are billed on their own title page as an "amusing and very diverting work." They are for three flutes (or other treble instruments) with continuo. The fast movements are tuneful and sometimes strongly rhythmic, and despite the title, there are a couple of short but quite serious slow sections. All of these compositions are played with fine tone, precision, and, in the more difficult passages, with striking virtuosity.

Continued on page 88

4:35*

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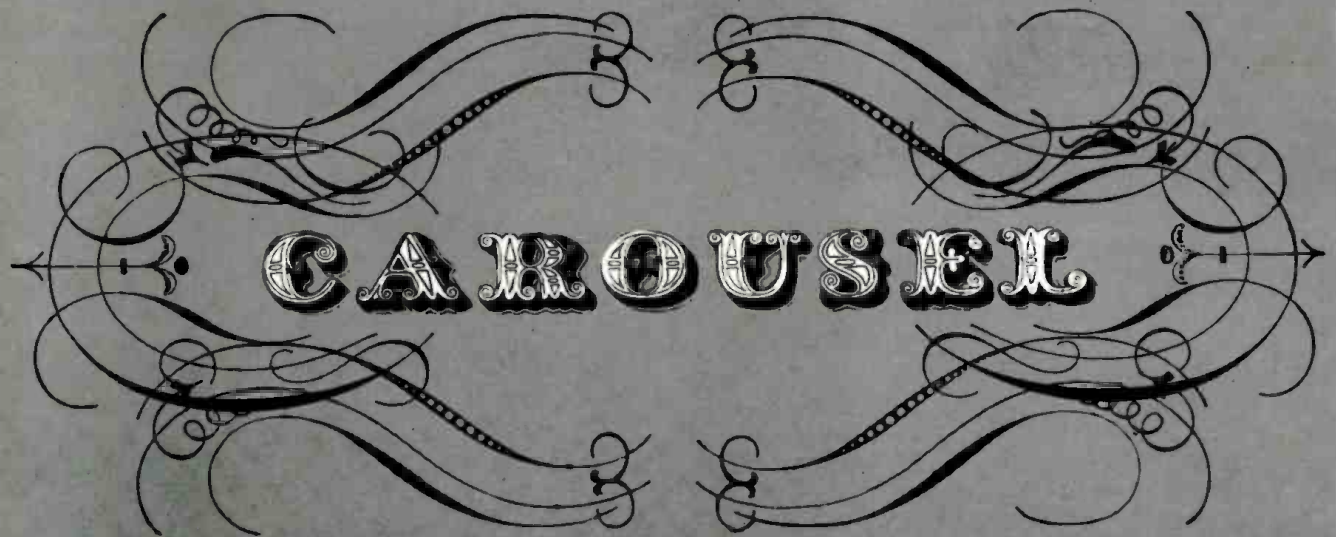
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☆ Produced by the brilliantly imaginative pioneer whose consistently successful advances in sound recording have revolutionized the entire concept of recorded sound — Enoch Light.

☆ Sung by an unparalleled cast in which each song is recorded by its greatest contemporary interpreter — Alfred Drake, Roberta Peters, Claramae Turner, Lee Venora, Norman Treigle and Jon Crain.

☆ Recorded in miraculous **Stereo 35 MM**, the technique that — in the hands of the Command engineers who perfected it — produces the richest, most fulfilling musical experience that has ever been put on a record.

AN EXCITING CHALLENGE

The glittering excitement of an opening night at the theatre becomes a really blood-tingling occasion when an audience realizes that it is hearing a magnificent creation being presented for the first time. To capture the source of this special excitement with complete, full-bodied realism was a fitting challenge for the remarkable recording techniques that Enoch Light has devised — techniques that he first revealed on *Persuasive Percussion* and that he later advanced with **Stereo 35 MM**.

CIRCLE 27 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Carousel was chosen the vehicle because, like many others, Light considers it the greatest of all American musicals. When it opened in New York in April, 1945, John Chapman of the *Daily News* called it "one of the finest musical plays I have ever seen and I shall remember it always."

Richard Rodgers himself has consistently chosen it as his favorite among his own musicals.

"It tries to say the most," Rodgers once remarked, "and it says it best."

In the past, recorded productions of musical shows have usually been produced under restrictions that severely limited the possibility of creating a performance that drew the full value from the score. Most recordings of Broadway musicals are "original cast" albums designed to tie in with the presence of the show on Broadway. Because this means that the album must be rushed out as quickly as possible, the recording is done hurriedly in a single day (usually on the first Sunday after the Broadway opening). The cast customarily has been chosen for its stage values (where a stage "name" may be more important than a voice) and without consideration for recording values. Under the rushed circumstances of these recordings, staging and performance must necessarily depend on stage patterns rather than recording requirements. On the rare occasions when a musical has been produced specifically for a recording, casting has usually been limited by budgetary considerations.

But Enoch Light does not produce records this way.

An almost fanatic disdain for either "rush" or "budget" has been among the important factors in the unparalleled success of Light's Command Records. Light spent all of six months making his first Command disc instead of the customary day or two. He insisted on re-recording one tune 39 times before he was satisfied with it, making this one of the most expensive single selections ever issued.

"A GIANT MUSICAL"

Light has brought this singular but highly successful approach to his Command recording of *Carousel*. Because, as he said, "it's the giant American musical," he felt it should have "a giant cast." So each role was meticulously matched with the finest possible performer. It was a cast that no Broadway production could possibly afford because these were the very top singers in every aspect of their profession.

Moreover, because of their exceptional stature, these were singers who could not readily be brought together in one place. They were booked far into the future and their engagements took them to every distant corner of the world. When one was within flying distance of Command's New York stu-

dios, another was off on a tour of Europe.

But Enoch Light was willing to wait. It took him eight long months of planning before he was able to bring his cast together for a two-week period in the summer of 1962. The recording was done then in four work-packed sessions spread out over the two-week period so that changes and improvements could be made after every performance had been studied carefully.

Conducting the singers and the forty-piece orchestra was the acknowledged dean of Broadway's musical directors, Jay Blackton, whose baton has guided *Oklahoma*, *Call Me Madam*, *Annie Get Your Gun* and many other memorable shows. In actuality, two conductors were used on this production — Blackton, in the studio with the musicians, and Light, working in the control booth where he could follow the sound as it was being picked up by the microphones. The mixture of Blackton's masterful knowledge of show conducting and Light's uniquely specialized experience as a conductor for extremely advanced sound reproduction was an important element contributing to the exciting vitality of these performances.

PERFECTIONIST STANDARDS

Working under the perfectionist, time-consuming standards that have become commonplace on Light's Command Record sessions was a new and stimulating experience to both Blackton and the singers. They had never encountered anything like this before in a recording studio. They responded by throwing themselves into their work with such enthusiasm that when it came time to record the exuberant *This Was a Real Nice Clambake*, all the principals joined together as a choral ensemble to sing the part usually done by a vocal chorus — probably the most expensive choral group ever recorded.

Singers and musicians worked over minute details time and time again to achieve the subtleties and nuances that are made strikingly evident by the translucent clarity of Stereo 35 MM recording. Before the actual recording began, the musicians spent more time working with pencils, marking changes in their scores, than with their instruments as Blackton and Light and the singers noticed possibilities for improvements. When the recording light glowed red in the studio, Light was in the control booth, following the conductor's score, listening carefully to the reproduced sound.

"That's a pretty good take," he would say when it was completed. "But—"

So there would be another take. And another. And still another until every possible aspect of the performance had been brought together to Light's de-

CIRCLE 27 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

manding satisfaction. To produce the very shortest selection in the album, *The Highest Judge*, which lasts barely 90 seconds, Alfred Drake recorded almost continuously for 30 minutes.

This sort of creative perfectionism is completely in character with the entire history of the development of *Carousel*. When the idea of doing a musical based on Ferenc Molnar's *Liliom* was first proposed to Rodgers and Hammerstein in the early Forties after their initial success with *Oklahoma!*, Hammerstein rejected it because, with the Second World War going on, he did not think it would be practical to do a musical with a Hungarian setting. Later, New Orleans was suggested as a background but, after reading up on the city, Hammerstein again turned it aside because he did not feel capable of handling the vernacular properly. It was Rodgers who finally sparked *Carousel* into life when he offered the familiar shoreline of New England as a setting.

And again it was Rodgers who suggested the crowning touch for one of the most brilliant lyrics ever written for the American musical theatre — *Soliloquy* — when, after hearing Hammerstein's first lyric which dealt only with Billy Bigelow's thoughts about a prospective son, he pointed out that Billy might realize that the baby could also be a girl.

Because of the scope of Rodgers' score for *Carousel*, in which he stretched out musically as he had never done in his earlier shows, he insisted on having an orchestra twice the size of those normally used in a Broadway theatre when it opened in New York. That same sense of adventurous expansion is inherent in this album as, with the remarkable recording skills developed by Command, with Enoch Light's unmatched experience in using these skills, with the most brilliant cast that could be assembled, *Carousel* reaches a new peak in a magnificent, spine-tingling performance that has the overpowering emotional immediacy that is rarely experienced in even the most glitteringly memorable evening in the theatre.

It makes you want to stand up and cheer.

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The music was recorded with a new wide-track tape process, at a tape speed of 30 ips; the master disc was cut directly from the edited master tape at 45 rpm, and the disc must consequently be played at that speed. The sound is extremely clear, lifelike, and transparent; it is evenly spread between the speakers with no holes between; and there is no distortion anywhere. One hears some breath taking, but the players do not seem to be too far forward. Only one of the claims made for this process—the virtual elimination of tape hiss—seems not to be entirely justified, although the hiss is audible only in the Boismortier pieces and then one must listen carefully and close to the speakers. A small suggestion: it would be helpful if in future releases—of which I hope there will be many—the titles or tempo markings of the individual movements were given somewhere. N.B.

BOYCE: *Overtures (6)*

Orchestre des Concerts Lamoureux,
Anthony Lewis, cond.
• OISEAU-LYRE OL 50210. LP. \$4.98.
• • OISEAU-LYRE SOL 60041. SD. \$5.98.

These works are taken from a group of eighteen overtures by Boyce published for the first time in 1957. Most of them were written to introduce New Year and Birthday Odes, which it was Boyce's duty to write as Master of the King's Musick. The earliest of the six presented here was composed in the 1730s, the latest in 1775. All of them are in a late baroque style and frequently reminiscent of Handel. It was Boyce who once said: "Whenever I feel my back begin to open and shut I always conclude that the music is of a most excellent kind." I cannot say that I felt my back open and shut often when playing this record, but the generally cheerful character and solid workmanship of these pieces make them pleasant listening indeed. Each of them has at least one or two movements that seem to me well worth repeated hearings.

They are performed with spirit and sensitivity under Lewis' knowing direction, and the sound is excellent except in the two works with trumpets and drums—the Overtures to His Majesty's Birthday Ode, 1775, and New Year's Ode, 1758—where the violins seem too thin and are sometimes drowned out by the brasses and percussion. N.B.

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

†Schumann: *Overture, Scherzo, and Finale, Op. 52*

Rosina Lhevinne, piano (in the Chopin):
Members of the Alumni of the National
Orchestral Association, John Barnett,
cond.

• VANGUARD VRS 1085. LP. \$4.98.
• • VANGUARD VSD 2111. SD. \$5.95.

Mme. Lhevinne gives a most stylish and flexible account of the Chopin solo part. It is also remarkably cleanly executed, the only indication of the pianist's advanced years being a slight loss of power in the bravura sections of the third movement; elsewhere her interpretation is youthful ardor itself. Lyrical passages sing with ingratiating spontaneity and beautiful tone, while the rubato is notably more conservative (and better

judged) than it was in the same artist's concert performance of this work at Hunter College last spring. The orchestral support is competent, but here again the familiar and reprehensible cut in the first movement's orchestral exposition is made. The cream of the Chopin E minor crop remain the versions by Rubinstein with Skrowaczewski (RCA Victor), Pollini with Kletzki (EMI-Capitol), and Askenase with Van Otterloo (DGG).

The Schumann work is one of that composer's finest nonsymphonic orchestral works. The present reading is clear in texture and rhythmically resilient, conducted with taut control and jewel-like balance, and played with clarity and poise. One could, however, desire a more songful approach to this music, and a more romantic tonal hue.

The reproduction is excellent in both editions, with the piano in just relation to the tutti rather than menacingly to the fore. H.G.

CORRETTE: *Concerto comiques, Op. 8: No. 3, in C minor; No. 4, in A; No. 6, in G—See Boismortier: Concertos for Five Flutes.*

GRIFFES: *Sonata for Piano; Roman Sketches, Op. 7*

Leonid Hambro, piano.
• LYRICHORD LL 105. LP. \$4.98.

The Griffes Piano Sonata, written in 1917, is a terse, austere work composed in a compellingly dissonant idiom. As such, it contrasts rather dramatically with the *Roman Sketches* written only two years earlier. (The latter group, incidentally, contains *The White Peacock*, Griffes' most popular piano piece.) In their gentler quasi-impressionistic way, however, the *Roman Sketches* are no less original and communicative than is the Sonata. Both works, in fact, illustrate the severe loss American music suffered when Griffes died, at the early age of thirty-six.

With so many casualties among record releases these days, it is pleasant to see a worthy issue such as this granted a new lease on life. These renditions were previously available on a Walden disc, and in the new mastering the excellent piano sound is even more apparent than formerly, thanks to the much improved surfaces. Hambro's performances are excellent. Indeed, his scrupulously proportioned, technically and architecturally impeccable playing can well serve as a model in matters such as these. H.G.

HAYDN: *Symphonies: No. 7, in C ("Le Midi"); No. 8, in G ("Le Soir")*

Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Max Gieberman, cond.

• OF • • LIBRARY OF RECORDED MASTER-PIECES HS 3. LP or SD. \$8.50 on subscription; \$10 nonsubscription.

HAYDN: *Symphonies: No. 14, in A; No. 60, in C ("Il Distratto")*

Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Max Gieberman, cond.

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CIRCLE 6 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

morning, noon, and night cycle on HS 2 (reviewed in these pages in August) and HS 3, but anyone entranced by the baroque would find it difficult to make a wiser investment in discovery. The cycle is, for me at least, more appealing than Vivaldi's *Seasons* (of which Schwann presently offers no fewer than seventeen editions). Moreover, these performances are extraordinarily fine, reflecting the fact that Goberman came to orchestral work with a thorough grounding in chamber music and continues to work in that medium whenever he can. The ensemble always seems to be illuminated from the inside.

This quality is best heard in the passages in which the division between symphonic and chamber music is minimal, such as the exceptional *recitativo* movement of No. 7, but you hear it as well in the balance of the tutti passages of the tempest that closes No. 8.

The Symphony No. 14 is here presented in its debut recording. A work of great charm, its second movement is a reworking of one of Haydn's most successful early themes. It's a light symphony, gay and high-spirited, and very much worth getting to know.

The Symphony No. 60 was available for a time in a rather good recording by Gui and the Glyndebourne Festival Orchestra, but this new Goberman is even better. For one thing it's funnier, and *Il Distratto* is, by intention, a very amusing score. There's a big surprise in the first movement, and early in the second the horns just don't seem to be able to wait for their cue, and more fun results. The biggest laughs, however, are reserved for the finale, where Haydn brings off one of the greatest fiddle jokes in music. It's beautifully managed, splendidly recorded, and an uncommon joy to hear. R.C.M.

HUSA: *Fantasies for Orchestra* †Palmer: *Memorial Music*

Orchestre des Solistes de Paris, Karel Husa, cond.
● CORNELL UNIVERSITY RECORDS N80P-5536. \$4.95. (Available from Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York.)

Karel Husa is a Parisian-trained Czech composer who has taught at Cornell for some years. His *Fantasies*, of which there are three, were written for the Cornell student orchestra, but they do not sound as if the limitations of student players had been kept in mind. On the contrary, this is one of the most brilliant, exhilarating, expressive, and tonic works since Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*, after which it seems to have been patterned and for which it would make a most effective substitute. Part of this effect is due, no doubt, to the magnificent performance by a first-class orchestra in Paris and the equally magnificent recording thereof.

Robert Palmer, who also teaches at Cornell, is represented with a two-movement symphonic work about Memorial Day, the first movement having to do with the solemnities of the holiday and the second with its jollifications. The "program," as Palmer himself points out, is eminently Ivesian, but the music makes no effort to follow Ives and exploits no familiar tunes. The entire score is pungently colorful, harmonically and instrumentally, and has a big line and grand impact. This work too is superbly performed and recorded. A.F.

MARTIN: *Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments, Timpani, Percussion, and String Orchestra; Etudes for String Orchestra*

Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond.
● LONDON CM 9310. LP. \$4.98.
● LONDON CS 6241. SD. \$5.98.

The absence of any marked quiddity of style has prevented Frank Martin from attracting the kind of attention that clusters about a Stravinsky or a Bartók, but as time goes on his music grows in stature, and it is not surprising that more and more of it is being recorded. The *Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments, Timpani, Percussion, and String Orchestra* is by far his most important orchestral work to reach American discs. It dates from 1949 and so does not represent his latest manner, but it shows him drawing upon the healthy, vigorous European Common Market in musical ideas that also sustains, or did sustain, such diverse composers as Roussel and Hindemith. The work, in other words, is freely tonal, marvelously adroit in the coloristic handling of its instrumentation, full of rhythmic life and contrapuntal vivacity, and generally masterful in its gesture and atmosphere. It also receives a masterly performance from a conductor and an orchestra long associated with Martin's music, and this performance has been superbly recorded.

The *Etudes for String Orchestra* on the other side have less punch than the *Concerto* but more elegance, and they display tremendous sensitivity to string sonorities on the parts of all concerned, from composer to recording engineer. A.F.

MOURANT: *Valley of the Moon; Air and Scherzo; Sleepy Hollow*— See Balasz: *Two Dances for Flute and Orchestra*.

MOZART: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in C minor, K. 491*— See Schoenberg: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 42*.

MOZART: "A Mozart Matinee at the Salzburg Festival"

Rita Streich, soprano; Camerata Academica, Bernhard Paumgartner, cond.
● DEUTSCHE Grammophon LPM 18695. LP. \$5.98.
● DEUTSCHE Grammophon SLP 138695. SD. \$6.98.

The program for this "matinee" consists of two early symphonies: No. 26, in E flat, K. 184, and No. 30, in D, K. 202; two arias: "Aer tranquillo," from *Il Re pastore*, and *Non so d'onde viene*, K. 294; and the *Divertimento* in D, K. 136. To hear these works on a Sunday morning at the Mozarteum, seated a couple of blocks from the building in which most of them were written and across the river from the house in which their composer was born, is one thing. To listen to them three thousand miles away in less bemusing surroundings is another. Judged purely on their own merits, the performances here are middle-grade, and the quality of the sound is somewhat lower than Deutsche Grammophon's high standard. The most substantial music offered is the concert aria, in which Mozart deliberately aimed to create a different set-

ting for a text for which Johann Christian Bach had already provided music, and K. 202, which is considerably richer in ideas than K. 184. Miss Streich does not seem to be at her best. Her high tones (the concert aria goes up to E flat above high C) are not on pitch, and in general the voice is not as velvety or as firm as in other recordings. The orchestra plays with excellent precision but only fair tone. N.B.

MOZART: *Serenade for Thirteen Wind Instruments, No. 10, in B flat, K. 361*

†**Schubert:** *Deutsche Tänze (orch. Webern)*

Columbia Symphony Orchestra. Robert Craft, cond.

- COLUMBIA ML 5744. LP. \$4.98.
- • COLUMBIA MS 6344. SD. \$5.98.

This is just about perfect music for late summer, and it's played exactly right. Craft, undoubtedly as a result of his experience with advanced contemporary music, knows the importance of metrical accuracy and rhythmic contrasts, and it is in this area of strength that he scores over his rivals. In the Mozart there is a zest and bite to the performance which sets all the tunes ticking—and the tunes are good ones. The performance of the Schubert too is most pleasing. Webern's arrangement of Schubert doesn't sound quite like Schubert, but neither does it sound in any way like Webern (although you know at once that the orchestration is by a master).

The engineering conveys a bright, clear image of a first-class wind band, and in both stereo and mono the sense of presence is particularly good. R.C.M.

PALMER: *Memorial Music*—See Husa: *Fantasies for Orchestra*.

POULENC: *Trois pièces; Mélancolie; Suite française; Presto in B flat*

†**Roussel:** *Trois pièces, Op. 49; Sonatine, Op. 16*

André Previn, piano.

- COLUMBIA ML 5746. LP. \$4.98.
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Here is a piano record that can be wholeheartedly praised on every count: some of the finest contemporary piano music; a performance by Previn of zestful vitality, engaging flexibility, and brilliant technical finesse; and sound of spectacular brilliance and realism. Mr. Previn's crisply controlled rhythmic flair and *sec*, detached fingerwork draw sparks out of his instrument in the Poulenc Toccata, while the contrasting moods of the *Mélancolie* and buoyant *Suite* are ideally delineated. The more sophisticated impressionism of the Roussel works is given a poised symmetry and classical restraint that provide interesting contrast to the jazzlike quality inherent in the Poulenc works. The wit, humor, and real elegance of this very "French" pianism is really communicated here. Most emphatically recommended. H.G.

ROUSSEL: *Trois pièces, Op. 49; Sonatine, Op. 16*—See Poulenc: *Trois pièces; Mélancolie; Suite française; Presto in B flat*.


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BRAHMS: DOUBLE CONCERTO IN A MINOR, Op. 102. Wolfgang Schneiderhan, Violin; Janos Starker, Cello; Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, Conductor. LPM 18 753 stereo: SLPM 138 753

MOZART: REQUIEM, K. 626. Wilma Lipp, soprano; Hilde Rössl-Majdan, contralto; Walter Berry, bass; Anton Dermota, tenor; Vienna Singverein; Berlin Philharmonic, Herbert von Karajan, Conductor. LPM 18 767 stereo: SLPM 138 767

BEETHOVEN: PIANO SONATAS. No. 15 in D major, Op. 28, "Pastoral;" No. 17 in D minor, Op. 31, #2, "Tempest;" No. 26 in E flat, Op. 81a, "Les Adieux;" Andor Foldes, Piano. LPM 18 784 stereo: SLPM 138 784

BEETHOVEN: SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN C MINOR, Op. 67. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Ferenc Fricsay, Conductor. LPM 18 813 stereo: SLPM 138 813

BACH/HANDEL/HAYDN/MENDELSSOHN: ORATORIO ARIAS. Maria Stader, Soprano; Munich Bach Orchestra, Karl Richter, Conductor. LPem 19 261 stereo: SLPEM 136 261

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Write: Classical Division, MGM RECORDS, 550 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. 36, N. Y.

CIRCLE 31 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

SCARLATTI, DOMENICO: *The Good-Humored Ladies: Ballet Suite* (trans. Tommasini)—See Bach: *The Wise Virgins: Ballet Suite* (trans. Walton).

SCHOENBERG: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 42*

†Mozart: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in C minor, K. 491*

Glenn Gould, piano: CBC Symphony Orchestra, Walter Susskind, cond. (in the Mozart). Robert Craft, cond. (in the Schoenberg).

- COLUMBIA ML 5739. LP. \$4.98.
- COLUMBIA MS 6339. SD. \$5.98.

In my opinion the best thing about this set is the sleeve, with brilliant notes

by Gould himself on the one side and some marvelous cover art on the other. Gould begins by saying that the two concertos on the record represent terminal points in the history of the concerto form, and the cover art subtly carries out this idea with an eighteenth-century colored engraving of a Gothic church, full of surface detail and deep perspective, on the left, and Lyonel Feininger's *Church of the Minorites*, wherein Gothic architecture is reduced to flat-pattern cubism, on the right.

Most of Gould's comment on the Mozart is devoted to telling us what a poor thing it is; one gathers that Gould likes only its finale unreservedly. Perhaps a less sophisticated, less carefully reasoned or analyzed approach is what the composition needs, for what comes through in Gould's playing on the ex-

cellent recording is mainly his patronizing attitude towards the music, even in the finale. For my ear, at least, the whole performance is eminently respectable but cold.

The Schoenberg concerto is a product of the composer's later years and a full-blown example of his 12-tone system in its most highly elaborated form. Gould has a marvelous time in the jacket notes unraveling some of the 12-tone complexities of the work, but for me its appeal to the ear is slight. In fact, I find this piece an unmitigated bore. Perhaps this is being unduly subjective; but it is difficult to recommend to one's readers a disc from which one has one's self derived so little. A.F.

SCHUBERT: *Deutsche Tänze* (orch. Webern)—See Mozart: *Serenade for Thirteen Wind Instruments, No. 10, in B flat, K. 361*.

SCHUBERT: *Songs*

Der Wanderer; Auf der Brück; Nacht und Träume; An Sylvia; Die Forelle; Der Zwerg; Erbkönig; Heidenröslein; Dithyrambe; Die Liebe hat gelogen; Der Doppelgänger; Frühlingsglaube; Der Schiffer; Wanders Nachtlied.

Gerard Souzay, baritone; Dalton Baldwin, piano.

- PHILIPS PHM 900007. LP. \$4.98.
- PHILIPS PHS 900007. SD. \$5.98.

This is not a program that breaks any new ground, but that can hardly matter when every song is a masterpiece, and when all are sung and played as close to perfectly as they are here. There is really little to be said in description of the record, except that it seems to me far and away the best Souzay has ever made. It goes without saying that the lyric songs are beautifully expressed—*An Sylvia, Die Forelle*, etc. could not be better. But even the "big" songs—*Auf der Brück, Doppelgänger, Erbkönig, Der Zwerg*—some of which tend to fall flat in live recital because of the very small frame within which the singer works, are gratifyingly realized. The recital is topped off by a beautifully sustained version of *Wanders Nachtlied*—a sort of benediction to a program that excited and moved me from beginning to end, and sent me back to relisten.

Baldwin is an enormous help—listen to the wonderful ripple of *Die Forelle*, the splendid pointing of the piano commentary in *Der Zwerg*. Singer and pianist take *Doppelgänger* even slower than usual; yet it never sags. The sound (I have heard the stereo version only) is crystal-clear and nicely balanced; texts and translations, plus some notes, are provided. A very auspicious beginning to Philips' domestic vocal releases, and a "must" record. C.L.O.

SCHUMANN: *Overture, Scherzo, and Finale, Op. 52*—See Chopin: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in E minor, Op. 11*.

STRAUSS, JOHANN II: "*Tales from the Vienna Woods*"

Die Fledermaus: Overture. Polkas: Annen, Op. 117; Eljen a Magyar, Op. 332; Tritsch-Tratsch, Op. 214. Waltzes: Blue Danube, Op. 314; Emperor, Op. 437; Tales from the Vienna Woods, Op. 325.



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Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, cond.

• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON LPM 16238. LP. \$5.98.

• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON SLPM 136238. SD. \$6.98.

Versatile as Fricsay's many earlier recordings have proved him to be, little in the relatively few I have heard had prepared me to expect the close Straussian affinities he reveals here. Unlike many virtuoso conductors, he has learned the secret of achieving interpretative relaxation without any loss of executant control; moreover, perhaps thanks to his Hungarian upbringing, he has just the right "feel" for both the lilting rhythmic and romantically songful elements in the present works. He may linger a bit too lovingly on the lyrical passages of some of the waltzes, but how graciously warm and freshly glowing they are made to sound! And in unexaggerated contrast, what graceful zest he brings to the prancing march (Johann Senior's *Radetzky*, generously included on the disc), the overture, and the bouncing polkas—especially the fleet *Eljen a Magyar!*

In DGG's transparent, seamlessly spread stereoism, the Berlin Radio Symphony is heard at its very best: the golden, floating horn playing and (in the title piece) the vibrant zither solos are completely seductive. Perhaps Fricsay never quite matches Henry Krips's bolder eloquence (in Angel's "Irresistible Mr. Strauss" program), and I should have welcomed at least one more adventurous repertory choice. But these are negligible reservations to make in hailing one of the too few recorded Viennese programs to achieve true magic. R.D.D.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28*

†Tchaikovsky: *Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy Overture*

Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond.

• RCA Victor LM 2565. LP. \$4.98.

• RCA Victor LSC 2565. SD. \$5.98.

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

Radio Frankfurt Symphony, Otto Ackermann, cond.

• QUARANTE-CINQ 45003. 12-in. 45-rpm SD. \$5.98. (Available on special order only, from 333 Sixth Ave., New York 14, N. Y.)

Since Otto Ackermann died in March of 1960, this performance can be of no more recent date than the late Fifties. It sounds even earlier. The bass is tubby, the top coarse, and the over-all ensemble effect that of a second-class orchestra in an echo-ridden hall. There is a slack quality, rather as if Ackermann had confused Strauss, Richard with Straus, Oscar. The man deserves a better memorial than this, the most likely candidates being his Viennese operettas for Angel.

Munch is no better served by the disc versions of his performance. The discs are dull and dreary-sounding and the advantages of the stereo edition over the mono version are slight. The tape version, however—FTC 2098—has both brilliance and impact, and actually both these excellent performances are among the best-engineered recordings to come from Boston in recent months. The bal-

ance between the ensemble and the hall is good, and the bite of the clean attacks registers forcefully.

Sensing the common tendency to overdo these works, Munch provides a welcome lesson in the value of occasional understatement. The Tchaikovsky is tender but not sloppy. Taste triumphs, and the drama of the work dominates the approach. Much the same applies to the Strauss, which is filled with dry wit rather than slapstick. This performance is especially welcome, since it gives us, at last, adequate documentation of Munch's gifts as a Strauss conductor. R.C.M.

STRAVINSKY: *Concerto for Strings, in D; Concerto for Sixteen Instruments, in E flat ("Dumbarton Oaks")*

†Bartók: *Divertimento for Strings*

Winds of the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra (in the Stravinsky); Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Edmond de Stoutz, cond.

• VANGUARD VRS 1086. LP. \$4.98.

• VANGUARD VSD 2113. SD. \$5.98.

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English Chamber Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond.

• OISEAU-LYRL 50219. LP. \$4.98.

• OISEAU-LYRE 60050. SD. \$5.98.

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Continued on page 96

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**THE WORKS OF
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J. S. BACH: *FOUR TOCCATAS*. G minor, BWV 915; D major, BWV 912; F sharp minor, BWV 910; C minor, BWV 911. Ralph Kirkpatrick, Harpsichord. ARC 3184; stereo 73184

J. S. BACH: *SUITES FOR SOLO CELLO*. No. 1 in G major, BWV 1007;

No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1008. Pierre Fournier, Cello. ARC 3186; stereo 73186

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A Bouquet of Four Charming Works

TELEMANN: *WATER MUSIC (Overture in C major)*, "Hamburg's Tides." Concert Ensemble of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Conductor: August Wenzinger. *SUITE NO. 6 IN D MINOR* for oboe, violin and continuo; *CONCERTO NO. 3 IN A MAJOR* for German flute, harpsichord, continuo; *TRIO SONATA IN E FLAT MAJOR* for oboe, harpsichord, continuo. Soloists and Ensemble of the Nürnberg Chamber Music Circle. ARC 3198; stereo 73198

From Research Period VII:
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FOUR SACRED VOCAL WORKS.
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CIRCLE 41 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

VERDI: DON CARLO

Continued from page 77

do not seem to reduce the impression of length at all, and they even add to its complexity, since characters are sometimes left without justification for existence, and happenings important to plot clarity are omitted and referred to at second hand only. In the case of *Don Carlo*, the longest cut was made by Verdi himself when, in collaboration with the librettist Ghislanzoni, he set about revising the work. Aside from strengthening the scoring in a number of places, the chief effect of the revision was to eliminate the first act. Since this left Carlo without any aria at all, his romance "Io la vidi" was transferred, in an altered form, to what was now the opening scene, set in the Cloister. The ballet was dropped entirely. It is this streamlined, four-act version that is almost always performed nowadays. It is the one which has been in the Metropolitan repertory since the 1950 revival and which provided the text of both previous (monophonic only) recordings of the opera.

The new stereo Deutsche Grammophon edition is the first to make use of what we might call the five-act revision. In this, the first act is restored, but Verdi's alterations in the other scenes are left intact, and the ballet remains deleted. The first act—with which most listeners will probably be unacquainted—takes place in the forest of Fontainebleau. Elisabetta, betrothed to Don Carlo of Spain though she has never seen him, passes by with her escort, Tebaldo. They are part of a hunting party, and as the cries of the hunters fade into the distance Elisabetta follows them. Don Carlo, hidden in the woods, has seen his intended bride. He comes forward and sings his romance. Soon Elisabetta and Tebaldo return through the darkened woods—they have lost their way to Fontainebleau. Carlo introduces himself as a Spanish nobleman and offers to escort Elisabetta; she, remarking that she is surely safe with this noble stranger, sends Tebaldo off as the lights of Fontainebleau appear in the background. Carlo tells Elisabetta that peace is to be signed that night. She tells him of her fears: she is to leave her native France and all those dear to her. Will her intended husband love her and protect her? Carlo answers that he will, and shows her a portrait of the prince. Joyfully, Elisabetta recognizes the nobleman before her as Carlo himself—who has disobeyed his father's orders and come to France to see his bride. A happy love duet follows, at the conclusion of which Tebaldo returns. Saluting Elisabetta as Queen of Spain, he tells her that it has been decided that she will marry Philip, the King. Carlo's father. She replies that she cannot, being engaged to his son; but under pressure from Tebaldo and the crowd that has assembled she consents, realizing that the marriage is vital to the peace settlement. In an ensemble, she and Carlo express their distress, while the people salute

Elisabetta as savior of the peace. All exit except Don Carlo, who is left to brood over this reversal of fortune as the curtain falls.

Clearly, this is important material dramatically. It makes specific the relationship of Carlo and Elisabetta prior to her marriage to Philip, and clarifies the "reasons of State" for which she consents to the marriage. It also tells us how Elisabetta comes to possess the portrait that later is to prove of such significance. In view of the opera's length, one can see why Verdi and Ghislanzoni decided to omit the scene (which has no direct parallel in the play) when making the revision, as it is the one scene that does not include a crowd-pleasing aria, duet, or ensemble. Yet from a musical standpoint it is very fine. The opening lines for the hunters' chorus and the concluding ensemble are conventional, though effective enough. But between these passages comes the excellent scene between Carlo and Elisabetta. The opening colloquy, light and conversational in tone, is ingeniously set, and the melody with which Elisabetta launches the love duet ("*Di qual amor, di quant' ardor*") is one of the finest in the whole opera.

The scene's very quality serves to underline another problem in the performance of this opera. Neither here nor elsewhere in the opera is Elisabetta or Carlo given any knock-'em-dead music to sing; yet each is characterized most interestingly and carries an important dramatic burden. Their scenes convey a fascinating air of what-might-have-been, of a relationship full of passion that never is given a chance to fulfill itself. Musically, these scenes are extremely intense, yet restrained (except for brief moments in the first and last scenes). They call for singers with plenty of voice, and with highly developed interpretative abilities as well. There's the rub, for sopranos and tenors (especially the latter) usually aren't prepared for this sort of thing. I believe I have seen every Elisabeth and Carlo the Metropolitan has had since 1950, and while I've heard some excellent singing, I have never seen these scenes satisfactorily realized. The Elisabeth-Carlo relationship tends to disappear entirely, leaving one with an opera in which everyone except the soprano and tenor leads has stupendous music to sing, and in which the theatrical vitality and weight of the magnificent Auto-da-fé scene and the even more magnificent scene in Philip's chambers overbalance the relationship that provides the main-spring for all the action. We come away with vivid memories of the Auto-da-fé, of Philip's "*Ella giammai m'amò*," of the crushing dialogue between Philip and the Inquisitor, of Rodrigo's splendid death scene, of Eboli's "*O don fatale*," and even of the wonderfully atmospheric music for the friar and the off-stage chorus. But of Elisabeth we remember only that she sings love duets that aren't love duets, a longish aria to a dismissed attendant that holds up the action in a rather awkward way, and an even more longish aria at the beginning of the last act. Of Carlo we are aware

that he sings a pretty romance, after which he starts to do things but never finishes any of them, and is always looking on helplessly while his girl marries someone else, another girl hatches plots against him, and his best friend is killed while visiting him in prison. And finally, of course, that friar. . . .

The answer to these problems is, I think, that *Don Carlo* should not be allowed to become a repertory opera. It should be staged only under festival conditions, or at least only when an unusual group of singing actors, plus a highly intelligent producer and a judicious conductor, can be assembled. And the five-act version should be used. True, it is very long and makes unusual demands on the leading singers; but I think we must accept the fact that some operas are imperfect, that they should be staged anyway for the glories of their best moments (which in the case of *Don Carlo* attain genuine greatness), and that they can be improved only by better performance and not by shearing.

Deutsche Grammophon has assembled a cast of front-rank singers. In some cases they fall short of the score's heavy requirements, but they do well enough to convey something of the work's grandeur and to constitute a cast of somewhat better quality than that of previous recordings. A really outstanding performance is given by Bastianini, owner of what is now perhaps the world's richest baritone voice. The role of Rodrigo does not require the subtlety or the vocal variety of, say, Rigoletto, and the baritone is free to pour out his colorful tone in a very exciting vocal display. One could wish for a defter touch in the death scene, and Gobbi's intelligent handling of the music in the EMI-Capitol recording is gratefully remembered; but for sheer vocal accomplishment, Bastianini is easily the choice among current singers for this role. Labo is a trifle disappointing to one who has found him among the most interesting of today's tenors in the opera house. Here, his voice sounds a bit heavy and occasionally even bleaty on top. The over-all sound, though, is still pleasing, as is his stylish treatment of the music. He is assuredly better than his predecessors, Filippeschi and Picchi.

Stella and Christoff both figured in the EMI-Capitol production. Mme. Stella, alas, shows no improvement at all, and is in vastly worse vocal condition than in the recent DGG *Ballo*. The high notes are frequently precarious, the low notes totally detached from the rest of her voice, and her approach to the music remains conventional. She still produces beautiful tone in passages where she can preset her voice, so to speak; but in general, her work here can only make one hope that her lavish gift is not already deteriorating. Christoff, on the other hand, has strengthened his Philip. I still do not care for the peculiar resonance of his voice in Italian music, nor for the thickness of his vowel formations. But he is very impressive in the declamatory passages of the Auto-da-fé and in his well-judged reading of the aria, wherein he does some beautiful piano work. I prefer, basically, the qual-

ity brought to the role by Siepi, or even by Rossi-Lemeni (who recorded it for Cetra); but those who do not find the timbre of Christoff's voice wrong will have few complaints about his Philip.

The Eboli is Fiorenza Cossotto, an attractive and intelligent-sounding artist, whose voice hasn't enough of a dramatic overtone for this role. Eboli is a cruel assignment, for sections of the role are written in a tessitura that would tax a dramatic soprano (it goes to B natural, and takes in more than one A natural) and the "Song of the Veil" demands a grace and flexibility not usually found in heavy voices, yet only a real dramatic mezzo can rise to "*O don fatale*" and the trio at the end of the Garden Scene. Miss Cossotto sings well—but a Stignani is called for. (Though well past her prime on the complete Cetra recording, that artist still towers over her competition.) Ivo Vinco, the Inquisitor, is not more than adequate, barely sketching the character and thus placing too great a reliance on a voice that is not black enough or tough enough to carry the music. Santini's reading is conscientious, and he draws good playing and singing from orchestra and chorus, but his leadership has not the fire and incisiveness that would raise it above the routine.

Deutsche Grammophon has made the grave error of placing the soloists much too close to the microphone—overcompensation for the London approach—and the balances that emerge are quite wretched. Labo, Christoff, and Bastianini all seem to be shouting unpleasantly in one's ear, and fatigue sets in early. If one adjusts the volume to listenable level for the soloists, the orchestra takes the night off at anything less than *forte*. The Auto-da-fé scene is a big chance muffed; the sound here has little depth or "air," and Christoff is considerably louder than the assembled chorus and orchestra of La Scala. I found that taking healthy cuts on both treble and bass settings relieved this situation, but did not solve it; and one should not have to make such radical adjustments, in any case.

Undoubtedly, the happiest news is that this *Don Carlo* offers us a chance to appraise the five-act edition of the opera, complete except for minor cuts in the first and third acts. If the general quality of the performance and recording is not up to the highest standards, it is at least thoroughly competitive with that of other recordings.

VERDI: *Don Carlo*

Antonietta Stella (s), Elisabetta; Giuliana Matteini (s). Una voce del cielo; Fiorenza Cossotto (ms), Eboli; Aurora Cattalani (ms). Tebaldo; Flaviano Labo (t). Don Carlo; Piero de Palma (t), Un Araldo; Ettore Bastianini (b). Rodrigo; Boris Christoff (bs), Philip; Ivo Vinco (bs). Grand Inquisitor; Alessandro Maddalena (bs). Un Frate. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Gabriele Santini, cond.

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ments of his "neoclassical" period. The *Dumbarton Oaks* Concerto (named after the estate of Robert Woods Bliss, near Washington, D. C., where the work was written in 1938) is the most rigorously "neoclassical" of the three and perhaps the best. It is scored for strings, woodwind, and brass, is vigorously polyphonic and soloistic in its textures, and almost mockingly invites comparison with Him by building much of its first movement around a motif strongly reminiscent of the Third *Brandenburg* Concerto. The work as a whole is one of the most joyous, brilliant, and transparently perfect in Stravinsky's entire output, and it affords a fascinating contrast to the Concerto in D of 1946, which is much more dramatic, dynamic, impassioned, and lyrical in expression. Although it uses only the string orchestra.

Both these concertos appear on both the records under consideration. The comparison is overwhelmingly in favor of De Stoutz, whose hand is lighter, whose tempos are more vivid and effervescent, and who makes a firmer contrast in style between the two pieces. Both De Stoutz and Davis benefit from excellent recording, and there is one extremely important argument in favor of the Davis disc: it is the only one now listed in American catalogues to contain the *sec*, bubbling, endlessly entertaining *Danses concertantes*.

The performance of the well-known Bartók *Divertimento* by De Stoutz and his Zurichers is as fine as their performances of Stravinsky. This is one of Bartók's most completely affirmative scores, and here it is given one of its most distinguished interpretations. A.F.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy Overture*—See Strauss, Richard: *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28.*

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 5, in E minor, Op. 64*

London Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond.

- MERCURY MG 50255. LP. \$4.98.
- • MERCURY SR 90255. SD. \$5.98.

It was with considerable dismay that I listened to the introduction to the first movement here, which plods along in a downright funereal fashion. Had the conductor established the proper tempo relationship between the introduction and the ensuing *Allegro con anima*, the latter would have been very slow-footed too. Fortunately, however, he didn't: the remainder of the movement is full of animation, as is the third movement. The slow movement is handled most expressively, and the symphony concludes in an exciting splash of color.

Throughout the work, the playing is very clean, and every phrase receives conscientious but not fussy attention. As is customary with Mercury, the tonal and volume range is extensive, and the stereo distribution naturalistic. If only the opening weren't so slow. . . . P.A.

VERDI: *Don Carlo*

Antonietta Stella (s), Elisabetta; Giuliana Matteini (s), Una voce del cielo; Fiorenza Cossotto (ms), Eboli; Aurora Cattelan (ms), Tebaldo; Flaviano Labo (t), Don Carlo; Piero de Palma (t), Un Araldo; Ettore Bastianini (b), Rodrigo; Boris Christoff (bs), Philip; Ivo Vinco (bs), Grand Inquisitor; Alessandro Maddalena (bs), Un Frate. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Gabriele Santini, cond.

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For a feature review of this recording, see page 77.

WALTON: *Belshazzar's Feast*

John Cameron, baritone; Roger Wagner Chorus; Royal Philharmonica Orchestra, Roger Wagner, cond.

- CAPITOL P 8577. LP. \$4.98.
- • CAPITOL SP 8577. SD. \$5.98.

This one comes with its own review built in. A yellow ticket on the front of the jacket tells us it is "An orgy in sound! One of the most exciting Sound Spectaculars ever recorded! This supercharged musical description of the orgies of pagan Babylon features two choruses, a large symphony orchestra, exotic extra percussion, two additional brass ensembles, and a baritone soloist. This sensational recording does Walton's great modern masterpiece justice—at last."

The answer to all that is "Amen." Certainly there never was a lush, richer, more brilliant orchestral and choral sound on records, yet the part written for the chorus and the English enunciation of the soloist come through with perfect clarity. If vicarious orgies are what you want from your music system, *Belshazzar's Feast* is precisely what you need. A.F.

Continued on page 98

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THE IMPORTS

MUSICIANS who have the intelligence and sensitivity not to make every piece they perform a vehicle for the display of personal flair and virtuosity are far from common. Such an artist was the German violinist Georg Kulenkampff, who died in 1948, a victim of spinal polio at fifty-two. A number of Kulenkampff's pre-war recordings are now being reissued by Telefunken in Germany. The first to arrive here (HT 5) couples Schumann's Concerto in D minor and Mozart's Concerto No. 5 in A, K. 219. It is a fortunate choice, for Kulenkampff was the first to play and record the Schumann after it was finally published in 1937, and his affectionate handling of the solo part has not been equaled since. This rambling work (one of the last Schumann was able to complete) has not become popular, and there is no recording of it in the domestic catalogue; but it contains some beautiful melodies, and the present performance, with the violin clear and sweet and the orchestra (the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt) only slightly muffled in sound, certainly fills an unaccountable gap. With the Mozart on the overside, Kulenkampff runs into solid competition, and whereas he provides fine moments here and there he lacks the continued energy and bright sound which the work requires.

The same concerto is the major item of another reissue, this time by Pathé (FJ 5015) of recordings made in the Thirties by Jacques Thibaud. It disappoints, especially since Thibaud's exquisite account of the Mozart Third Concerto in G was a staple of his repertory. But the Fifth is a more extroverted work, and Thibaud's intimate style sounds tentative and finicky here; nor does the conducting of Charles Munch live things up. On the overside Thibaud plays the Mozart-Kreisler Rondo from the *Haffner* Serenade and Schubert's Sonatina No. 3 in D (D. 408) with Tasso Janopoulos as pianist. While the Schubert is still the best on records, the Mozart must take second place to Kreisler's own recording. The sound is rather distant, and all-in-all the reissue can hardly qualify as more than a souvenir.

ALTHOUGH Handel's *Il Pastor Fido*, newly recorded on two Cetra records (LPC 1265), ranks as one of the composer's lesser scores, it is nonetheless good to have the opera on microgroove. The work is familiar to most of us through Beecham's arrangement of its instrumental sections for his suites *The Faithful Shepherd* and *The Great Elopement*, and it turns out that Sir Thomas wisely chose the best parts of the opera. The magnificent opening *sinfonia* takes up almost a complete side in itself and is ideally performed by a Milanese or-



Violinist Georg Kulenkampff.

chestra conducted by Ennio Gerelli, with the spirited participation of the Quartetto di Milano and harpsichordist Christiane Jaccotte. The singers, however, are pedestrian, with the exception of Cecilia Fusco, who takes the major role of the nymph Amaryllis. The vocalists all suffer from the microphoning, being too far back of both the orchestra and the harpsichord, which luckily sound very good. The packaging includes illustrated notes and a libretto—the latter given in Italian only.

THE Vienna-based firm Amadeo has finally established United States distribution of its large catalogue, and the flow of repertory ranging from Renaissance to contemporary Swiss music should be rich and regular. Included among the initial releases are two stereo records (AVRS 6179 and AVRS 6180) with the over-all title "*Salzburger Hofmusik*," containing music of a decidedly light kind by the child Mozart, Michael Haydn, Leopold Mozart, Georg Moffat, and Heinrich Biber. Only Mozart's Harpsichord Concerto No. 1, K. 107, has been recorded before. The rest of the material has been researched (the notes are in German only) and in some cases arranged by Bernhard Paumgartner, who conducts the Camerata Academica de Salzburg in performances that are accurate and lively but not always as graceful or mischievous as some pieces require. Notwithstanding this limitation—and the fact that one or two important composers of the period have been omitted—the freshness of the music and its apt arrangement on the records in the order of a complete entertainment make this a superior project and

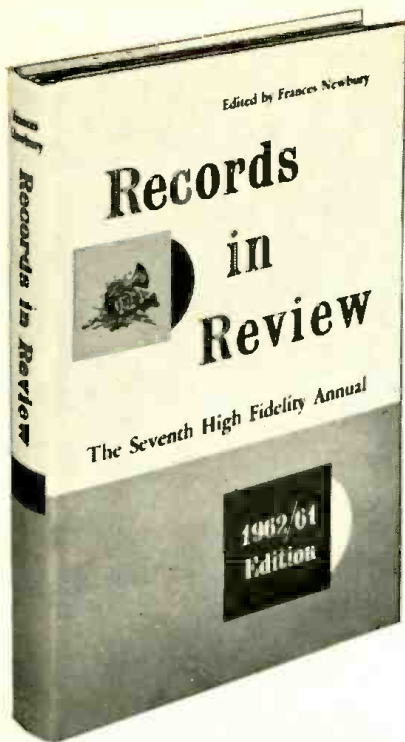
merit its having won a 1962 Grand Prix du Disque.

Biber's Sonata No. 1 for Strings and Moffat's Suite for Strings and Continuo demonstrate the late seventeenth-century progression from the archaic timbres and noble expressiveness of the church sonata to the dance forms of "table-music" for a *galant* court. Leopold Mozart moves forward a generation, and his *Schlittenfahrt*, a nonsense suite describing a wild sleighride, is replete with the broad, student humor of his native Augsburg. (This piece, by the way, contains much the same material but should not be confused with another *Schlittenfahrt* by Leopold, recorded by Archive.) Moving ahead, we come to the *Galimathias musicum*, K. 32, by ten-year-old Wolfgang—a *quodlibet* of incongruous themes obviously influenced by the Augsburgian strain but more subtle, more of a musical joke because of its satirical touches. The same young composer's concerto, also written at age ten, is based on material from sonatas by Johann Christian Bach. Mozart used it for concertizing and later added two cadenzas. Played by Isolde Ahlgrim, it is clearly delineated but not quite up to the competition provided by Ruggero Gerlin and Robert Veyron-Lacroix on other labels. Finally, there are a pleasant *Turkish March* and a *Divertimento* in G by Michael Haydn, and a Trumpet Concerto in D which suffers in performance from the tenuous intonation and rather grating sound of the high clarino played by Adolf Scherbaum. Over-all, the delicate balance of the instrumental forces and the sensible stereo, which brings out detail rather than emphasizes depth, contribute to making this set most enjoyable.

REVIEWS OF THE RECENT domestic Columbia recording of Mozart's Duos for Violin and Viola, K. 423 and K. 424, by Joseph and Lillian Fuchs have been almost unanimous in glowing approval. In such a light it might seem that another new disc of the same material, played by two unknown artists, would be merely superfluous. After listening to Ulrich Grehling and Ulrich Koch on Harmonia Mundi 30615, however, I find their version superior to that of the better-known pair. The German duo not only show greater understanding of the music but have greater technical virtuosity, and they have been recorded in sound that is lifelike and full.

GENE BRUCK

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Victoria de los Angeles, soprano; Ars Musica Orchestra, José M. Lamana, cond.
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• • ANGEL S 35888. SD. \$5.98.

About five years ago, RCA Victor released a record entitled "Five Centuries of Spanish Song," on which Victoria de los Angeles gave us impeccable performances of pieces that represented a sort of capsule history of Spanish vocal music. On this new Angel release, she concentrates on one of the periods covered—the Spanish Renaissance (specifically, 1440–1600).

She is still singing such music impeccably, and she has chosen a fascinating group of selections, filled with mournfulness, naughtiness, loneliness. My favorites are two captivating Sephardic songs, *Una hija tiene el rey* and *Una matica de ruda*, but all of them are intriguing in text, rhythm, progression of intervals, and, not least, in the ingeniously affecting accompaniments. Instrumental playing is perfect, ditto the sound. The accompanying booklet is handsome and informative, including a dissertation on instruments of the day. Go to the piggy bank for this one, if need be. C.L.O.

HERBERT VON KARAJAN: *Overtures*

Weber: *Der Freischütz: Overture.* Wagner: *Der fliegende Holländer: Overture; Lohengrin: Prelude to Act I.* Nicolai: *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor: Overture.* Mendelssohn: *The Hebrides, Overture, Op. 26.*

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond.
• ANGEL 35950. LP. \$4.98.
• • ANGEL S 35950. SD. \$5.98.

Performances of these well-known works, all marked by breadth and dignity, are spoiled by the acoustics of the hall in which they were recorded. There is so much reverberational overhang that the sharp edge of every tone and every attack and release is blurred, and everything sounds smeary. The generally high quality of Karajan's interpretations here deserves better treatment. P.A.

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HAYDN

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CIRCLE 9 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

SEPTEMBER 1962

St. John's Russian Orthodox Choir,
Lawrence Havriliak, cond.
• Cook 1096. LP. \$4.98.

The music of the Russian Orthodox Church is among the most colorful of any sacred music. This might not be immediately apparent to anyone hearing that music for the first time via this disc, however. The selections from the Russian Easter midnight service, which includes the ringing of church bells and the occasional chanting of the priest, might have been chosen with an ear towards greater variety. Also, though the St. John's Choir (St. John's where?) sings with power and rounded tone, there is all too little shading and nuance in its performances. The recording sounds as if it might have been made in the church itself; it is marked by both reverberation and closeness, and the over-all volume level is rather too high, causing some blasting in the heavier passages. Cook's standards are usually higher. P.A.

SHANTUNG MUSIC SOCIETY: "Music of Confucius' Homeland"

Shantung Music Society, Liang Tsai-Ping, cond.

• LYRICHORD LL 112. LP. \$4.98.

With this release we are given a delightful anthology of classical Chinese music, revealing that profound and subtle art in some of its most profound and subtle aspects. This is not, be it well noted, the raucous modern Cantonese music of the tourist's "Chinese opera"; it is, rather, drawn from an age-old repertoire as distinguished for its delicacy and lyricism as is the ancient Chinese painting and poetry it resembles so closely in spirit. There is a modern touch, however, in the symphonic poem in Western style played on the cheng (the Chinese prototype of the more familiar Japanese koto) by Professor Liang. The various flutes, oboes, fiddles, plectrum and percussion instruments employed are recorded with such fidelity as to be almost scary. The Shantung Music Society is a group of savants in Taiwan, and they do their ancient culture great honor. A.F.

CESARE SIEPI: Song Recital

De Curtis: *Voce 'e notte; Tu, ca' nun chiagne*. Cesarini: *Firenze sogna*. Tagliaferri: *Nun me scetà*. Orvelto: *Visione Veneziana*. Denza: *Funiculi, Funicula*. Marini: *La più bella del mondo*. Russo: *I te vurria vasà!* Costa: *Luna nova*. Tosti: *Malià*. Napax: *'Nu quarto 'e luna*. Anonymous: *Tiritomba*.

Cesare Siepi, bass; Chorus and Orchestra, Dino di Stefano, cond.

• LONDON 5671. LP. \$4.98.

• • LONDON OS 25305. SD. \$5.98.

Siepi lets his rich voice flow easily over these popular Neapolitan numbers, bringing a touch of good taste to even the most hackneyed phrases. In a few of the numbers, he is sabotaged in dastardly fashion by a sappy little chorus, unwelcome under any circumstances, but doubly so in view of the mawkish nature of the arrangements. Too bad, but fortunately Siepi is left to his own pleasant devices about two-thirds of the time. The sound is good. A useful social occasion record; most of the music is danceable. C.L.O.

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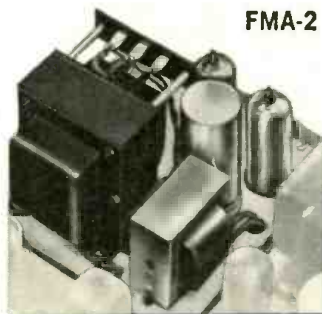
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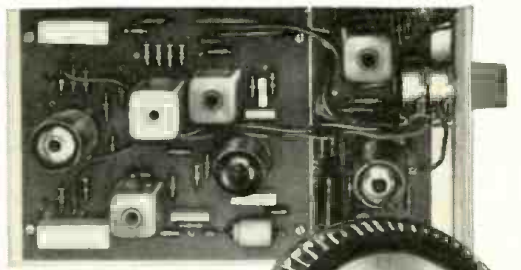
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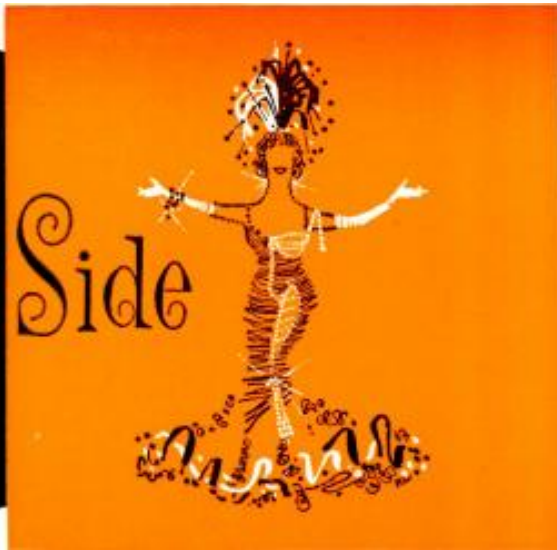
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The Lighter Side



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Folk Song Albums

Full of Quicksilver Glitters



Jean Redpath

“Jean Redpath’s Scottish Ballad Book.” *Elektra EKL 214, \$4.98 (LP).*

“Ira Hayes’ and Other Ballads.” *Peter LaFarge. Columbia CS 8595, \$4.98 (SD).*

“Ian and Sylvia.” *Ian Tyson and Sylvia Fricker. Vanguard VRS 9109, \$4.98 (LP); VSD 2113, \$5.95 (SD).*



Ian and Sylvia

WITH THE FOLK SONG revival still cresting in coffee shops and record departments throughout the English-speaking world, it sometimes seems as though every able-voiced individual—and a number not so able-voiced—who can borrow a banjo are making a vinylite debut. But the monthly flood of dross only accentuates the quicksilver glitters of genuine artistry that continue to appear with gratifying regularity. Among the brightest of the new entrants is Jean Redpath, a young Scottish soprano whose style

harks back to the distant past when ballads were the literature of the unlettered. Steeped in tradition and herself a former student of the great Scots folklorist Hamish Hamilton, Miss Redpath possesses a clear, supple voice that she inflects with the subtlety of a gifted actress. Just as most great art culminates in simplicity, her talents combine toward straightforward interpretations that, plumbing the heart of a ballad, distill its poignance or gaiety into vocal gold. The ballads she has chosen for this collection—

among them *Inverey*, *The Twa Corbies*, *Sir Patrick Spens*—are rooted deep in the Anglo-Saxon past, probably draw upon authentic incidents, and furnish dramatic proof of the durability of long-ago emotions crystallized in song. Her singing of *Barbary Allan*, set to an old and hauntingly lovely Scottish variant of the familiar melody, ranks in my opinion as the most moving version of this ballad now in the record catalogues.

Another talented newcomer—but one solidly rooted in the present—is Peter LaFarge, son of writer Oliver LaFarge. Here is a new and impelling voice out of the west, a voice influenced by Josh White, Cisco Houston, and Woody Guthrie. In his first album, LaFarge runs the gamut from exuberance (listen to *Rodeo Hand*) through lyricism (*I Gave My Love a Cherry*) to earthiness (*Sod Shanty*). While he sings *John Brown's Body* with fiery indignation and *St. James Infirmary* in the best blues tradition, LaFarge scales the pinnacle of his art in a searing composition of his own, *Ira Hayes*. Written to memorialize the Pima Indian who helped raise the flag of victory on Iwo Jima's Mt. Suribachi, whose mammoth marble image still implants a flag at the Marine Corps Memorial in Washington, and who died—a hopeless alcoholic—in a ditch back on the Reserva-

tion, this ballad reveals LaFarge as a master of understated bitterness:

Call him drunken Ira Hayes,
He won't answer any more,
Not the whisky-drinking Indian,
Nor the Marine that went to war.

This, and what follows, is strong medicine—the strongest offered to American audiences since the heyday of Woody Guthrie. No one will listen to it without wincing.

Two young Canadian folk singers, Ian Tyson and Sylvia Fricken, also make an auspicious bow under the Vanguard banner. Specializing in a tight-knit interplay of harmony and counterpoint, the duo shapes an exciting and unique vocal frame for each of their selections. Stylistically, they exemplify the furious cross-pollination prevalent among present day balladeers. Among lesser lights, this unceasing interchange has resulted merely in making everybody sound like everybody else. Ian and Sylvia, however, have assimilated their various influences—from Big Bill Broonzy to Peggy Seeger—into a new and shining whole. Their quiet, introspective *Un Canadien errant* and the vividly visceral rhythm of *Rock and Gravel* illustrate both the range of their abilities and the sure appeal of their interpretations. O.B.B.



Stanley Black and engineer Tony D'Amato.

Now Come Twenty Channels

"Phase 4 Plus I.M. 20 C.R." (Series). Various Artists. London SP 44013/21, Nine SD, \$5.98 each. (Also 4-track tapes LPL 74013/21, \$7.95 each.)

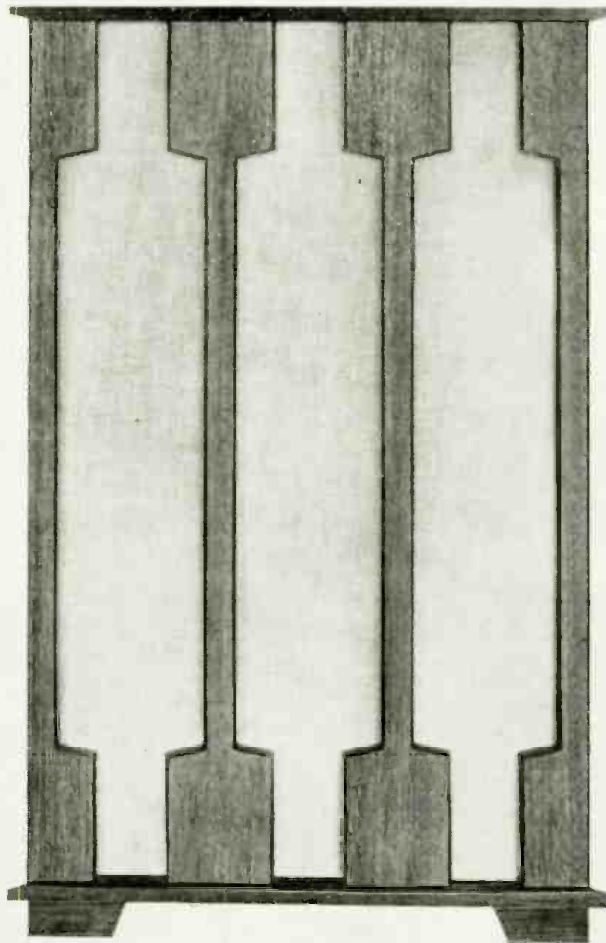
THE CRYPTIC "Plus" now added to the scarcely year-old "Phase-4" technique is "individually monitored 20-channel recording"—via one of the most elaborate console-mixers ever designed for sonic manipulations. How any ten-fingered engineer can handle this monstrous keyboard is incomprehensible: I suspect that a group of midgets has been schooled in the collaborative digital dexterity required!

At any rate, the technique is exploited with a more significant "plus" than any mere electromechanical gadgetry—a subservience of sonic ingenuity to musical intelligence. The listener is less conscious of gimmickry than of genuinely dramatic enhancements of nonsynthetic tonal qualities. In particular, since all tracks are recorded simultaneously (via multiple mikes fed as variously as desired into a 4-channel master tape), the new series is distinguished by a

far more natural acoustical ambience than the initial Phase-4 recordings, in which some tracks were dubbed separately.

If there is yet no rival to the memorable "Pass in Review" (a superspectacular "Victory in Review" is still in the making), this series is elsewhere notably richer than the first one in sheerly musical appeal, with top honors going to the Spanish program by Stanley Black's eighty-man orchestra ("Spain," 44016). As recorded with such vivid authenticity, this ensemble proves itself a match for any symphony in the world in quite straight yet superbly incandescent performances of the *Ritual Fire Dance* and a *Carmen Fantasy*; as well as in full-blooded, more frankly pops arrangements of *Ay Ay Ay*, *Estrellita*, *Malagueña*, *Valencia*, *Granada*, etc. And for effective contrast, there are smaller-scaled, idiomatic versions

FOR THE GRANDEUR OF GREAT MUSIC



The majesty of a full symphony, the grandeur of a large chorus or the vibrant throbs of a mighty organ—these give the thrill and stir in a live performance. They produce big enveloping sounds. Just as their origin is in a large body, so their re-creation must come from a large body. As a miniature orchestra can never equal a full symphony in bigness of sound, so a small loud-speaker can never compare in fullness with that of a large one.

Bozak, pioneer exponent of big multiple unit speaker systems, offers the B-4000, also known as Symphony No. 1, for those who seek the grandeur of big, full sound but whose space does not permit the celebrated B-310A Concert Grand.

Used in matched pairs, the B-4000 has no peer for stereophonic re-creation of musical performances. Through a unique configuration of Bozak speakers, two B-4000 systems spread the music throughout the listening room with true perspective, not only in width but also in depth. Instruments sound in their proper places, not just left, right and center, but closer or farther from the listener—as in the living performance. No truer re-creation of live sound has ever been achieved. The proof is in the hearing.

The speaker complement in each consists of two 16-ohm Bozak B-199A 12-inch woofers, one 8-ohm Bozak B-800 8-inch speaker used as a mid-range, four Bozak B-200Y dual tweeters in a vertical column array, and an N-105 LC crossover network with 6 db./octave crossover. Woofer roll-off is at 400 cycles, mid-range tweeter crossover at 1500 cycles. These are housed in a distinctly styled infinite type baffle of 8 cubic foot volume.

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Useful frequency response: 35 to 20,000 cycles
Impedance: 8 ohms
Suggested amplifier power: 30-watts or greater
Dimensions: 44" high x 27 $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide x 16" deep

(with flamenco vocals) of *Bulerias* and *Sevillanas*.

Imaginative scorings and spiritedly precise playing, as well as scintillant yet always natural sonics, also distinguish the best releases to date by the always reliable Ros and Heath orchestras: the former in a characteristically lighthearted variety of merengues, sambas, rumbas, cha-chas, etc. ("Dance Again," 44015); the latter in bouncy, atmospheric big-band arrangements of *Cherokee*, *I Don't Know Why*, *Harlem Nocturne*, etc. ("Big Band Bash," 44017). And scarcely less effective, in quite different veins, are the International All Stars' opulently colored foreign film hit themes ("Hit Themes from Foreign Films," 44020), and Maurice Larcange's Parisian program ("Avec moi à Paris," 44013) featuring subtly differentiated timbres of bal-musette, concert, and electronic accordions.

Less distinctive musically are Roger Laredo's nondescript Italian pop tunes ("Italy," 44014), John Keating's schmaltzily elaborate chorus-and-orchestra

program ("Temptation," 44019) though *Love for Sale* and *Chloe* are scored with piquant ingenuity, Werner Müller's symphonic inflations of Hawaiian clichés ("Hawaiian Swing," 44021), and—worst of all—Aldrich's tasteless two-piano and rhythm section travesties on Debussy's *Rêverie* and *Clair de lune*, the *Liebesträume*, and various pop songs derived from the classics. Yet even here the sonic qualities are wondrously rich and authentic, and the stereo effects are employed with restraint and generally to some legitimate musical point.

All nine programs are simultaneously released in 4-track editions, and in most cases it's possible to switch back and forth from one medium to the other without audible differences in technical qualities even at the extreme high frequency end. In the most attractive programs, fortunately, the tapes are just as well processed as the discs; it is only in those by Müller and Aldrich that I caught any spill-over intrusions. R.D.D.

"A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum." Original Cast Recording. Capitol WAO 1717, \$5.98 (LP); SWAO 1717, \$6.98 (SD).

Broad musical farce, which has been absent from the Broadway scene since the days of the Bert Lahr and Bobby Clark musicals, is back with a resounding bang in the boisterous, bawdy musical extravaganza *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Though the authors of this hilarious tale call it original, they also acknowledge their indebtedness to the classic Roman comedies of Plautus, who was also, indirectly, responsible for the book of an earlier Broadway hit. For it was from the *Menaechmi* of Plautus that Shakespeare derived *A Comedy of Errors*, which in turn was the source of George Abbott's book for the 1938 Rodgers and Hart musical *The Boys from Syracuse*.

The love interest in this story of chicanery and double crossing in early Rome is almost negligible, for the authors have exploited the comic aspects of the situations the better to display the talents of that superb buffoon Zero Mostel. Mr. Mostel never lets them down, in a performance that is ripe, leering, wide-eyed, and tremendously funny. He is backed up by two other zany comics, David Burns and Jack Gilford, with the latter particularly amusing in one of Stephen Sondheim's better songs, *I'm Calm*. Sondheim, who wrote both lyrics and music, has been more successful with the former; his lines are often deft and amusing. He is particularly telling in *Everybody Ought To Have a Maid*, as roguish a hymn of suggestiveness as has been heard in a musical in years, and again in *Pretty Little Picture*, which has a rather catchy little melody and some cute lyrics.

The very limited romantic aspects of the story place a heavy handicap on the composer, confining him to only two numbers for the young lovers. One of these, *Love, I Hear*, is dull, but *Lovely* has a lilting melody, which is not lost even when it is reprised and satirized later in the show by Mostel and Gilford. Neither of the two young leads has much voice, though Presley Marker has other natural attributes to compensate for this. The best vocalism comes from Ronald

Holgate, who belts out a Sigmund Rombergish number, *Bring Me My Bride*, with considerable power and éclat. The orchestrations of Irwin Kostal and Sid Ramin (who did what?) struck me as particularly fine, but I wish that Capitol had given their stereo edition a more substantial bass. The monophonic version sounded fine. J.F.I.



"Russian Songs and Choruses." Don Cossack Choir, Serge Jaroff, cond. Deutsche Grammophon SLPM 136235, \$6.98 (SD).

Never in their long career have the veteran exiles from the banks of the Don been better served by recording engineers. Against a background of absolutely silent surfaces, their *a cappella* arrangements of Russian traditional songs soar and swell and fade with every nuance intact. Serge Jaroff, wisely forsaking the mannered approach that has marred some recent albums, allows his chorus to carry the load purely on their vocal merits. As a result, he has fashioned probably the finest Don Cossack recording extant. For a stunning sample of Russian choral music at its best, audition *Marching Song*. Recommended. O.B.B.

"The Music Man." Original Sound Track Recording. Warner Bros. B 1459, \$4.98 (LP); BS 1459, \$5.98 (SD). Meredith Willson's *Music Man*, the most skillful mixture of homespun philosophy

and honest corn to be poured into an American musical since the days of George M. Cohan, has been made into a film, the original sound track recording of which is, in many respects, fully the equal of the original cast recording. (Capitol, incidentally, has just issued a duophonic version of the latter.) Certainly, with Robert Preston on hand here to re-create his swaggering portrait of the con man, belting out that lusty paean of praise to parades *Seventy-Six Trombones*, delivering a rapid fire *Ya Got Trouble*, and reiterating his sly, amused version of *The Sadder but Wiser Girl*, everything is just dandy. And it is equally satisfying to have those sterling Barber Shoppers, The Buffalo Bills, raising their collective voices in *Lida Rose* and the slightly bathetic *Sincere*.

From then on we part company with the New York cast, and find Shirley Jones taking over the part so admirably sung by Barbara Cook. Miss Jones is one of Hollywood's younger and better singers, but I am afraid she never quite manages to suggest the poignance or the wonder that Barbara Cook found in the role. Vocally, she does well with two of Willson's ballads, *Good Night My Someone* and *Till There Was You*. Put down Buddy Hackett's account of *Shi-poo-pi* as being better than that of his New York predecessor, but Ronnie Howard brings to his part neither the little-boy charm nor that fascinating lisp which made Eddie Hodges' *Gary, Indiana* so endearing. The ensemble singing is especially good throughout, and special mention might be made of the *a cappella* work in *Rock Island*, one of Willson's really inspired numbers. I have heard only the stereo version, on which the sound does wonders for the score. J.F.I.

"For the Nero-Minded." Peter Nero, piano. Orchestra, Marty Gold, cond. RCA Victor LPM 2536, \$3.98 (LP); LSP 2536, \$4.98 (SD).

With its dazzling pianism, imaginative arrangements, and superb sound, this is quite the best Peter Nero record to reach us since his initial LP. It could be argued that Nero's piano settings show signs of becoming stereotyped: he falls back on such familiar ploys as in-

“Brings
out sound
from records
that more
expensive
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do not”

Preston McGraw
United Press
International Hi-Fi
equipment reviewer

the incomparable new

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Stereo Dynamic®

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NOT HOW MUCH? BUT HOW GOOD?

According to United Press' Preston McGraw, the Shure series M33 cartridges are "so good that a hard-shelled listener might suspect Shure engineers of not knowing what they had when they hung a price tag on them."

We knew, all right, Mr. McGraw. It's just that we don't believe the best sounding cartridge need be the most expensive. The new Series M33, after all, was developed by the same team of engineers who developed the redoubtable Shure M3D series... the world's first truly high fidelity stereo cartridge. Numerically, Shure has made more highest-quality stereo cartridges than any other manufacturer—and they're used by more critics and independent hi-fi authorities than any other. Chronologically, Shure had a two year head start on the others. In short, Shure has learned how to make these critical components in the kind of quantities that result in lower prices.

THE SOUND OF SPECIFICATIONS

Again quoting Mr. McGraw: "Professional engineers are largely impressed by specifications, and the specifications of the M33 (except for compliance) are not unprecedented. But the way it sounds is something else again. The M33 puts flesh and bones on specifications. It brings out sound from records that more expensive cartridges do not."

He's right. To begin with, Shure specifications (as published) are not theoretical laboratory figures, or mere claims... they are actual production standards. 20 to 20,000 cps. response may appear average. But what the bare specifications don't show is that the M33 series goes right through the audible spectrum without a hint of the break-up prevalent in most other cartridges. Also, it is remarkably free from disconcerting peaking at this frequency or that. Result: absolutely smooth, transparent, natural sound re-creation. (Incidentally, where would you find a record that goes from 20 to 20,000 cps. with genuine music on it?)

Separation is over 22.5 db. at 1000 cps. Much more than necessary, really. Again, the separation figure doesn't show that the M33's separation is excellent throughout the audible spectrum. No cross-talk between channels. Even when an oboe plays.

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Now there's a specification! According to Mr. McGraw, the Shure stylus feels like a "loose tooth." And so it should. The incredible compliance of the M33-5 gives it the ability to respond instantly to the manifold and hyper-complex undulations of the record groove.

Superior sound is one outcome of the superb compliance. Another is the ability to track the record at low force. The M33-5 will track at forces as low as any other cartridge on the market today.

SPECIFICATIONS

	M33-5	M33-7
Channel Separation (at 1000 cps)	Over 22.5 db	Over 22.5 db
Frequency Response	20 to 20,000 cps	20 to 20,000 cps
Output Voltage (per channel, at 1000 cps)	6 mv	6 mv
Recommended Load Impedance (per channel)	47,000 ohms	47,000 ohms
Compliance; Vertical & Lateral	22.0×10^{-6} cent. per dyne	20.0×10^{-6} cent. per dyne
Tracking Force	$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1.5 grams	1.5 to 3 grams
Inductance	600 millihenrys	600 millihenrys
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THE ULTIMATE TEST

Give a listen. In fact, compare the Shure M33 series with any other cartridge, regardless of price, in A-B tests (we do it all the time). If you are not impressed with the distinct difference and greater naturalness of the Shure, don't buy it. That's punishment enough for us.

PRICES:

Why spend more than you must? M33-5 and M33-7 net for \$36.50 The M77 is only \$27.50

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tegrating classical themes into pop songs and indulging in long contrapuntal developments (occasionally throwing in a fugue), yet all of these devices seem to me to add considerable spice, color, and interest to his performances. In *Dancing on the Ceiling* he has introduced the theme of the second movement of the Tchaikovsky Sixth Symphony in a very clever fashion, and he has touched up *Let's Not Waste a Moment* and *Too Late Now* with a dash of Rachmaninoff. A crisp, staccato style effectively creates a mounting tension in *Something's Coming*, but the real *tour de force* in the program is the tremendously fleet performance of *Love Is a Simple Thing*. The orchestral arrangements, presumably by Marty Gold, and the excellent support of the orchestra make this a continuously enjoyable record. J.F.I.

"Dancin' the Golden 20's, German Style." Orchestra. Philips PHM 200-030. \$3.98 (LP).

The small German combo playing this program of international dance favorites of the Twenties has achieved a surprisingly authentic re-creation of the German orchestra style of the period. In spite of the electronic organ, which tends to subdue the snappy sounds of the piano and banjo, the performances have considerable zest, though they are less exuberant than those favored by most American orchestras of that time. Most of the tunes are, naturally, of German origin, though two of them, Katscher's *Madonna* and Leon Jessel's *Be Happy, Little Fritz*, were quite popular here under the titles *When Day Is Done* and *The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers*. American dance tunes were immensely

popular in the Germany of the Twenties, and four of them are included here—*Whispering, San Francisco, Halleluja* (sic), and *Linger Awhile*, the last masquerading under the curious title of *My Darling's Name Is Gal*. Philips mono sound is quite spacious, though also a trifle echoey and bass-heavy. J.F.I.

"Chinese Drums and Gongs." Sung Tso-Liang Orchestra of Hong Kong. Lyricord LL 102. \$4.98 (LP).

The fourth in Lyricord's scholarly yet entertaining series dedicated to Chinese instrumental music. The use of drums and gongs in Chinese compositions extends far back in time, perhaps as far as 5,000 years, yet the complex, shifting tonal texture they create strikes the modern ear with an ever fresh charm. As with so much Oriental art, Chinese music often shapes its impact through freezing a particular transitory emotion or experience against the long tableau of the ages. *Bell Ringing in the Monastery*, as played here by the Sung Tso-Liang Orchestra, offers a splendid example of this interplay of eternity and its moments. Here is a truly exotic record that—met half way—will beguile both the ear and the imagination. Sensitive, idiomatic performances beautifully recorded. O.B.B.

"The Music of Rodgers and Hart." Marty Gold and His Orchestra. RCA Victor LPM 2535, \$3.98 (LP); LSP 2535, \$4.98 (SD).

With the exception of *Ev'rything I've Got*, a song from *By Jupiter* which is suddenly being rediscovered as one of Rodgers' better numbers, this program is made up of songs that are almost automatic choices for any album of this kind. What distinguishes this disc from similar enterprises is the fabulous RCA Victor stereo sound, which quite overwhelmed me with its tonal opulence, clarity, wide dynamics, and spatial effects. The spaciousness, I would say, is due in part to Marty Gold's brilliantly conceived arrangements, which take full advantage of special microphone combinations designed to capture the sound of soloists, individual orchestral choirs, and instrumental ensembles in varying locations. The job of mixing these sounds has been so satisfactorily worked out that there is no trace of the gimmickry all too apparent in some other recordings allegedly using similar techniques. I was particularly attracted to *Manhattan*, with its moody introduction and fine alto sax solo by Phil Bodner, and the piquant arrangement of *Dancing on the Ceiling*, with interesting work by Stan Webb on the contrabass clarinet. J.F.I.

"Ethel Waters Reminiscences." Ethel Waters, with Reginald Beane, piano. Word W 3173, \$3.98 (LP).

There may be little left now of the once incomparable Waters voice (indeed her laboriously sustained tones are now uncontrollably shaky), yet her magnificent personality shines through more brightly than ever in these fervent interpretations of *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child, Cabin in the Sky, Little Black Boy, He's with Me Every Step of the Way*, and—most successful of all—*Crying Holy Unto the Lord*. Even in the twilight of her career Miss Waters still can exert a poignant, uniquely individual magic. The strong, open recording is apparently very closely miked and the surfaces of my review copy were rough. R.D.D.



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"The Stripper and Other Fun Songs for the Family." David Rose and His Orchestra. M-G-M E 4062. \$3.98 (LP). These low-down, often raucous, but always exciting instrumentals, with their insistent and insidious beat and gutty brass solos, conjure up a realistic picture of the ambience of the old burlesque theatres. The title tune, in a pulsating arrangement, sets the mood for the entire program, and the orchestra maintains it in a series of performances of varying intensity. The famous David Rose strings are used rather discreetly and, except in *Sophisticated Lady* where they get a chance to shine, they are subservient to the heavily emphasized brass and rhythm sections. Not many of these numbers would be found in the repertoire of the ordinary theatre orchestra, yet nearly all of them, from *Mood Indigo* to *Black and Tan Fantasy*, adapt quite readily to Rose's intentions. The rather coarse quality of the recorded sound only gives additional impact to these numbers, some of which, I suspect, are not recent recordings. J.F.I.

"Immortal Lullabies." Frank Chacksfield and His Orchestra. Richmond B 20108, \$1.98 (LP); S 30108, \$2.98 (SD). For his program of immortal lullabies, Frank Chacksfield has tapped just about every possible source, from Brahms and Schubert to Ethelbert Nevin and good old "Trad.," who gets credit for two selections (though *Sweet and Low* should surely be attributed to Barnby). It all adds up to as choice a collection of slumber music as one could wish for, even though thirteen lullabies on one record might be expected to create a feeling of musical monotony. Although I listened to them all at one sitting, I was never really aware of this, mainly because each one of these lovely songs has been so engagingly arranged and so beautifully played. As in previous Chacksfield discs, I was greatly impressed by the excellent work of his strings and woodwinds, and by the excellent sound Richmond's engineers have given him. The superb quality and definition of the sound on the mono version is fully the equal of that heard on the stereo edition, although the latter has the added advantage of superior spread and separation. J.F.I.

"April in Portugal." Maria José da Guia, Valentina Felix, José Borges, Isabel Silva, Alfredo Duratê, Jr., and Alice Maria Conceição. Monitor MFS 374, \$4.98 (SD). A striking anthology of Portugal's national song form, the *fado*. Six of Lisbon's leading *fadistas* collaborate in presenting a dozen typical selections; the best are *Coimbra* (the original of the fantastically successful international hit of a few years back *April in Portugal*) and the swiny *Uma Casa Portuguesa*. Taped after hours at a noted *fado* restaurant called A Severa, the disc is all relaxed spontaneity. One wishes, however, that the ragged chorus had been used more sparingly. Clear, realistic sound. O.B.B.

"Bravo Giovanni." Original Cast Recording. Columbia KOL 5800. \$5.98 (LP); KOS 2200, \$6.98 (SD). In making the transition from *Don Giovanni* to *Bravo Giovanni*, Cesare Siepi has traveled approximately the same distance as did a former Don Giovanni, Ezio Pinza, when moving into *South Pacific*, though hardly with the same fortunate outcome. For *Bravo Giovanni*, in spite of fine singing by Siepi, interest-

ing performances by George S. Irving and David Opatoshu, and a couple of fairly good tunes, is pretty routine musical fare. The book, an involved and overextended story of love and larceny in the life of the owner of a modest *trattoria* in Rome, is chiefly to blame, although Milton Schaefer's score, pretentious and dull, does little to lift the show out of the doldrums. Quite the best song in this lengthy score is *Ah Camminare*, with its typically beguiling Italian melody, well sung by Gene Varone. Siepi, of course, has all the big songs (if one can call them that), and though he sings them with expected distinction, only the lengthy *Bravo Giovanni* gives him a real chance to display his fine baritone voice and Mozartean style. *Miranda* and *If I Were the Man* make little demands on his vocal powers,

though he does project the ruminative qualities of both superbly. The male supporting cast is particularly strong, with George S. Irving especially effective in *Urti* and *Virtue Arrivederci*, and David Opatoshu scoring heavily in *Breachy's Law* and *We Won't Discuss It*, both with Siepi. Michele Lee, the nineteen-year-old leading lady, does well with *I'm All I've Got*, a lusty number sung in the early Merman style, but she is hardly up to the long vocal lines of *Steady, Steady*. Maria Karnilova, who used to stop the show as one of the strippers in *Gypsy*, is, I hear, doing the same thing here with a violent song and dance, *The Kangaroo*. Stereo is used very effectively in several numbers, particularly in *The Argument*, in which Irving (left) proffers some none-too-friendly advice to Siepi (right). J.F.I.

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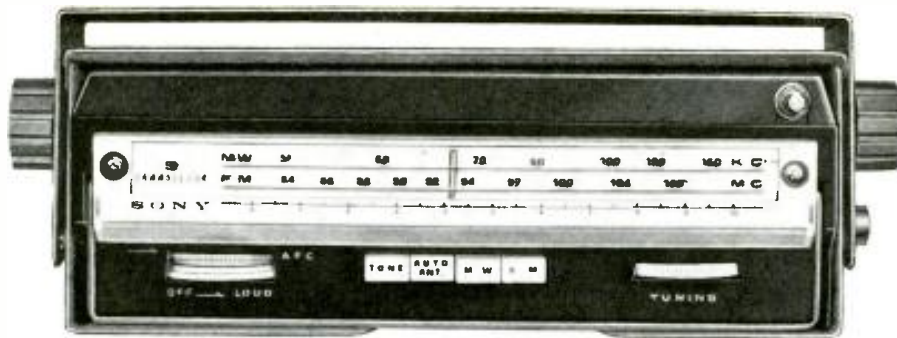
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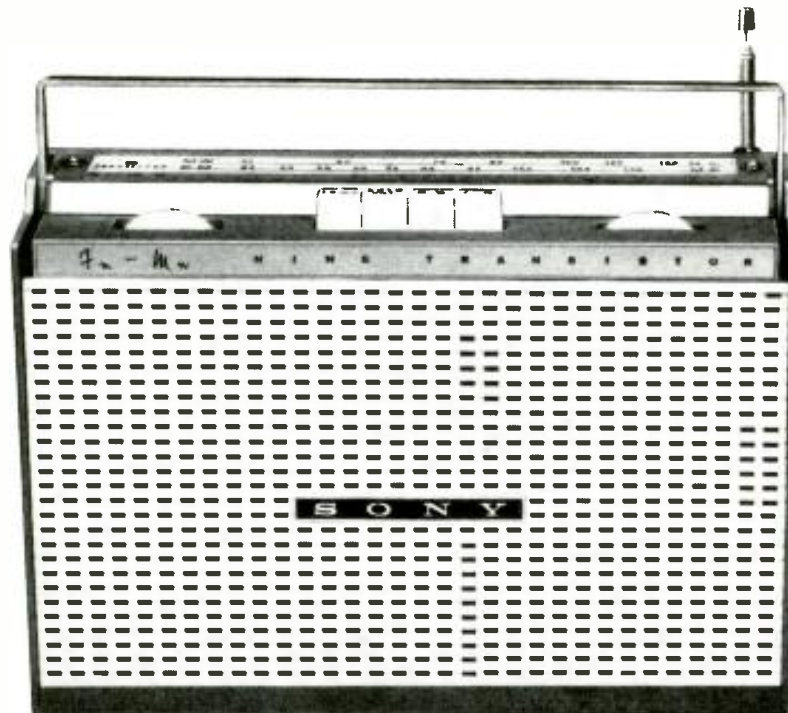
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Billy Byers: "Impressions of Duke Ellington." Mercury 2028, \$4.98 (LP); 6028, \$5.98 (SD).

One of the vital problems an arranger faces in orchestrating Duke Ellington's compositions is that Ellington has already created the definitive arrangements. The orchestrator is faced with the prospect of producing inferior Ellington if he tries to stay in the Duke's idiom or, if he deliberately rejects all Ellingtonisms, he risks losing contact with the essence of the piece. Billy Byers has managed to avoid both horns of this dilemma, producing arrangements that are apt without being too derivatively Ellingtonian. Yet these arrangements in the end simply serve as the framework from which the major points of interest emerge—the solo performances by Clark Terry and Joe Newman, and particularly that by Eric Dixon. Of the three, Dixon is easily the most provocative, not only because he is the least-known but because of the astounding range of his playing. He sometimes approximates on tenor saxophone the feeling of Johnny Hodges' alto (on *Sophisticated Lady*) or, producing an aptly sly and quite original solo on *Mood Indigo*, while a muted brass ensemble creates a misty background, he changes the character of his solo and his sound completely when the brass unmutes and opens up behind him. The recording, done on 35-mm film, is brilliantly full and rich.

Mercy Dee. Arhoolie 1007, \$4.98 (LP). Mercy Dee Walton is one of a growing number of impressive blues singers to have come out of Texas. Time was when Mississippi seemed to be the primary source of blues men, but lately Texas has been their most prolific supplier—producing, among others, T-Bone Walker, Smokey Hogg, and Lightnin' Hopkins. Mercy Dee, who accompanies himself on piano, is distinguished by the fact that he has mastered the basic blues attack as well as—or, in most cases, better than—his colleagues, and has blended this attack with relatively polished singing and playing styles without sacrificing any of his strength or effectiveness. When one considers to what extent raw emotion can count in the blues, this is no mean achievement. Mercy Dee has a good deal of variety in his repertory, ranging from brooding, trouble-bound blues to good-time pieces, and even to some which make a weak attempt to appeal to the easily titillated. His strongest point is his delivery of material that is, or might be, drawn from his own background as a Texas cotton picker and as a laborer in California. His phrasing is superbly effective, and while he keeps his piano accompaniment appropriately simple most of the time, he is capable of carrying off an occasional flourish which strikingly underlines his lyrics. With him are Sidney Maiden, a knowing harmonica player, and K. C. Douglas,

guitar, both of whom join in the singing of a boisterous piece called *Mercy's Party*.

The "JFK" Quintet: "New Jazz Frontiers from Washington." Riverside 396, \$4.98 (LP); 9396, \$5.98 (SD).

Although this young group is based in Washington, it has nothing to do with the well-known JFK who is resident there (and, apparently, vice versa). The focal point and musical director of the quintet is an eighteen-year-old saxophonist named Andy White, who ought to scare a lot of people, both musicians and listeners. The liner notes declare that his playing "sometimes suggests Cannonball [Adderley], at other times Ornette Coleman." The reflection I hear most often is Eric Dolphy but, hair-splitting opinions aside, he is definitely in the Dolphy-Coleman stream, with touches of his own that sometimes make you wonder if your turntable has gone berserk. Even when White's playing is sufficiently jarring to curdle your ear, his presence and projection are so commanding that you listen anyway. When an eighteen-year-old has so powerful a musical personality one inevitably wonders what will happen when he gets his full growth. The quintet has a buoyant, driving attack and its ensembles are vivid and biting, but Ray Codrington, a trumpeter sharing most of the solo space with White, is tentative and limited in his ideas. Six of these selections are originals by White or Codrington, the other two are pop standards.

James P. Johnson: "Father of the Stride Piano." Columbia CL 1780, \$3.98 (LP). Although this disc is part of the "The-saurus of Classic Jazz" series in which Columbia has reissued prewar material by Billie Holiday, Fletcher Henderson, and Red Nichols, it can scarcely be categorized as a reissue LP so far as the United States is concerned. Ten of the sixteen selections, recorded in 1939, have never before appeared in this country. The reissued material includes five piano solos by Johnson from the Twenties and a 1930 duet with Clarence Williams which opens with an outdated and distasteful bit of spoken dialogue before it moves into some superb keyboard work. In addition, Johnson is heard in five selections with a band that includes Red Allen, J. C. Higginbotham, Gene Sedic, and Sid Catlett. Allen and Higginbotham have several excellent spots here, the best of which is *Hungry Blues* from Johnson's one-act opera, *De Organizer*, composed to a libretto by Langston Hughes. Allen takes a brilliantly pungent solo on this selection and Anna Robinson sings the lyrics in a style suggesting both Billie Holiday and Ivie Anderson. The program includes several of Johnson's more familiar compositions—*The Mule Walk*, *Snowy Morning Blues*, *Old-Fashioned Love*, and *Carolina Shout*.

Donald Lambert: "Giant Stride." Solo Art 18001, \$4.98 (LP).

The high point for a handful of those who attended the Newport Jazz Festival in 1960 (before the riot closed it down) was an afternoon session of stride and ragtime piano played by Eubie Blake, Willie the Lion Smith, and Don Lambert. Of the three, Lambert was unquestionably the least-known but he was easily the most exciting. He showed himself to be thoroughly grounded in the work of that master of the style James P. Johnson, and to possess the added ebullience contributed by Fats Waller. The gaiety and excitement Lambert generated at Newport that afternoon are caught with brilliance and consistency on the first side of this disc (a magnificent succession of performances) and more erratically on the second side. Lambert may well have been the last of the great Harlem stride men; he died in May, just before this disc was released. His only other recordings were four sides for Bluebird in 1941 and a half dozen unissued performances recorded for the Circle label in 1950. (Perhaps Riverside, which now owns Circle, could arrange with Victor, the parent of Bluebird, to put all ten selections on an LP.) Lambert's lack of renown was due to the fact that for most of the last twenty years of his life he was content to play in a neighborhood bar in Orange, New Jersey. When one compares the first side of this disc (or even the less brilliant second side) with the dozens and dozens of routine piano records ground out during the years that Lambert was completely neglected by recording companies, one can only despair at the lack of insight on the part of those companies. One must be grateful to Rudi Blesh for getting him into a recording studio before his name was added to the unsubstantiated legends of jazz.

Tricky Lofton: "Brass Bag." Pacific Jazz 49, \$4.98 (LP).

Two of the brightest new talents on the West Coast—Tricky Lofton, a trombonist who has learned from everybody from Kid Ory to J. J. Johnson, and Carmell Jones, a pungently singing trumpeter—join forces here with Gerald Wilson, an old hand whose big-band arrangements have recently brought him back to attention. The program is split between arrangements by Wilson involving the two soloists with a four-man trombone choir, and arrangements in which the choir is replaced by a single trombonist, Louis Blackburn, lately and briefly with Duke Ellington. Although there are bright spots spattered throughout the set, the results of this triple play are not as stimulating as might be expected. Of the trio, only Jones maintains a consistently high standard of performance. Wilson's arrangements are in-and-out. He has written some rich, dark ensembles for the trombones and contributes two originals that pack a



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solid, rocking punch. But he has also wasted the basic merits of such tunes as *Mood Indigo*, *Moten Swing*, and *Celery Stalks at Midnight*. Lofton also is variable, at times showing the full breadth of his style but too often limiting himself to relatively sterile exercises.

Herbie Mann: "At the Village Gate." Atlantic 1380, \$4.98 (LP); S 1380, \$5.98 (SD).

Mann's explorations of percussion as a setting for his flute are beginning to come into focus. On this disc (on which one of the three selections, *It Ain't Necessarily So*, lasts for twenty minutes), the insistently flowing, repetitious riffs in the percussion section form a foundation for his own playing and that of Hagood Hardy on vibes. The device is particularly effective on *Comin' Home Baby*, on which he uses two bassists (he has a three-man percussion team on all three numbers). But all the selections are far, far too long, particularly since the subdued style of playing and the droning quality of the percussion produce a hypnotic effect: the music is eventually reduced to little more than a background pulsation.

Billy Maxted: "Need It Be Named?" K & H 102, \$3.98 (LP); 302, \$4.98 (SD).

Maxted's band is practically the only American group playing traditional jazz (using the term in a broad sense) with any real individuality. His two-trumpet ensembles, his own distinctive piano playing, and the versatility of John Dengler (moving readily from trumpet to tuba to bass saxophone) can make even so well-worn a Dixie piece as *Fidgery Feet* seem fresh and vital. Beyond this, the band's scope is far broader than that of most traditional groups. Included here are Red Nichols' rarely heard theme, *Wail of the Winds*; a piece usually associated with Charlie Barnet, *Pompton Turnpike*; a rip-roaring college song, *Fight the Team*; a gleaming from Bob Crosby's old book, *Dixieland Shuffle*; and a pair borrowed from Louis Armstrong, *Sleepy Time Down South* and *Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans*. The last serves as a prime showcase for Ben Ventura, an exciting young trumpeter who has recently joined Maxted. Ventura's charging lead horn and his big, sweeping solos give the band an added element of interest. After LPs like this one and the earlier *SwingabILLyTy*, and in view of the generally arid character of traditional jazz in this country, it is amazing that Maxted's band continues to be almost unknown.

Big Miller: "Sings, Twists, Shouts, and Preaches." Columbia CL 1808, \$3.98 (LP).

Miller expends a tremendous amount of energy on his vocalizing in these pieces, and Bob Florence leads a big band that can achieve a roaring shout when it is given an opportunity. Most of their efforts, however, are wasted in attempts to aim at the bullseye of commercial appeal. The monotonous beat of the twist crops up again and again (Florence wrote the very successful arrangement of *Lazy River* played by Si Zentner's band, and he resorts to the same basic formula here, time after time). But when Miller and Florence get away from this routine sort of attack they are capable of interesting performances. Florence, in particular can write big-band arrangements with vitality and variety. As conductor,

he gets his men to dig into the music with a display of enthusiasm that is rare in a studio band. For some time Florence has been threatening to burst into the limelight, both as a leader with his own band and as an arranger for Harry James, among others. This disc provides one more bit of evidence that he is eventually bound to come into his own.

Albert Nicholas Quartet. Delmar 207, \$4.98 (LP).

Nicholas, one of the finest of the New Orleans clarinetists, has been living in Paris since 1950, a situation which has deprived American listeners of hearing him either in person or on records for most of that time. During a short visit to the States a couple of years ago he recorded this disc with pianist Art Hodes (in addition to another one for Audiophile Records, released several months ago, with cornetist Doc Evans). Both releases serve to show how much we Americans have been missing during the past decade. Nicholas' playing is that of a fully matured, polished, and constantly creative musician. Although much of his work is low-keyed and casual, he can call up reserves of soaring, driving strength which give his performances a broad and varied range of interest. Hodes, a pianist who is heard on discs infrequently even though he is readily available any time a record company wants him, challenges Nicholas all through the set. He plays with a darting vivacity which adds a stimulating sense of excitement to even the more mellow and easygoing pieces. This is an especially warm and winning set of performances.

Oscar Pettiford: "Last Recordings by the Late Great Bassist." Jazzland 64, \$4.98 (LP).

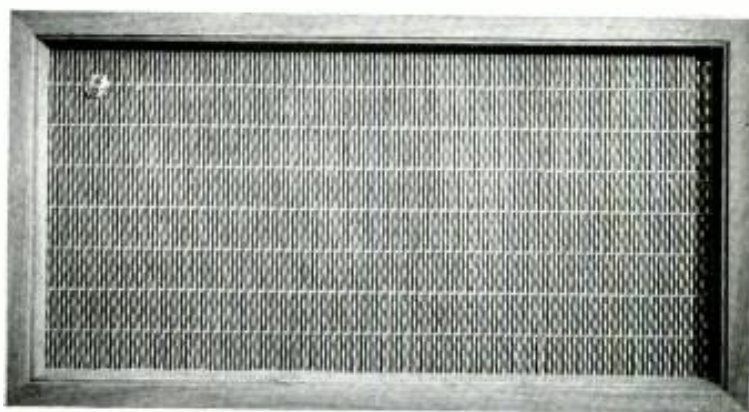
The last two years of Oscar Pettiford's life, 1958 to 1960, were spent in Europe, most of the last year in Denmark. These selections were recorded by Pettiford in 1959 and 1960 with young Danish and Swedish musicians in groups varying from duos to sextets. In such a mixed bag of performers and performances, the strength of Pettiford's musical personality is made very evident. It is stamped upon every one of the groups he plays with. It is Pettiford who establishes the tone and sets the pace, who draws out the others—Louis Hjulmund, a flowing vibraphonist; Jan Johansson, a pianist with a fondness for strong, stark figures; Allen Botchinsky, an erratic trumpeter who produces a beautiful, tightly muted solo on *Why Not? That's What*. Pettiford's conceptions are strongly rhythmic and usually very melodious. These qualities are constantly stressed throughout the disc, whether he is playing only with vibes or piano, or as part of a six-man group.

Sonny Rollins: "The Bridge." RCA Victor LPM 2527, \$3.98 (LP); LSP 2527, \$4.98 (SD). "Brass-Trio." Verve 8430, \$4.98 (LP); 6-8430, \$5.98 (SD).

The return to jazz activity of tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins after two years of reflection and practice has occasioned considerable excitement in the jazz world. Rollins, who loomed fairly large in jazz before his retirement, seems to have leaped even higher by virtue of his absence. His first postretirement disc, "The Bridge" (a reference to the Williamsburg Bridge in New York, where he did much of his solitary practicing), shows him to be an even

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more finished saxophonist than previously. The fullness and control of his tone are virtually unmatched and his virtuosity is often incredible. On the two slow pieces here—*Where Are You?* and *God Bless the Child*—he plays with a readily communicable warmth and sensitivity. The faster selections display much more polish than most blowing jazzmen possess but they become, in the long run, a series of earnest, cleanly stated phrases going nowhere in particular. Jim Hall contributes a few refreshing guitar interludes. The Verve set was Rollins' last recording before his retirement. On one side he has to fight a rugged seven-man brass team, which simply forces him to bring out a stridency that he might otherwise have covered up. On Side 2 he plays with a trio in a harsher, more aggressive manner than he now uses. The Verve set includes one of his favorite devices, an unaccompanied solo, which is easily the most interesting thing on the disc. He now plays in this manner with even more telling effect; the Victor disc, however, does not include an example of his present unaccompanied playing.

George Shearing Quintet: "San Francisco Scene." Capitol T 1715, \$3.98 (LP); ST 1715, \$4.98 (SD).

Shearing's records have been, for many years, so depressingly trite that it comes as a pleasant shock to hear a Shearing group play with the flowing, swinging ease evident on much of this disc. (One uses the term "a Shearing group" because this apparently is not the quintet he has been leading for several seasons. The identity of its members, aside from Dick Garcia, guitar, and Armando Perazza, conga drums, is not revealed in the liner information.) Not only does Shearing play with some feeling and vitality, but his spoken introductions are pleasantly subdued and without the strained "humor" that has been inescapable at his performances. There are still evidences of the old, familiar, stodgy style (*This Nearly Was Mine, Cocktails for Two, When April Comes*), but most of these performances are refreshingly unfettered, airy, and brightly rhythmic.

Sol Yaged-Coleman Hawkins: "Jazz at the Metropole." Philips 200-022, \$3.98 (LP); 600-022, \$4.98 (SD).

Yaged's Goodman-like clarinet, Hawkins' swaggeringly aggressive tenor saxophone, and some routine Dixieland are the disparate elements tossed together on this disc. Since Hawkins and the Dixieland are on separate sides, it comes off surprisingly well. Hawkins dominates his selections—by his showcase treatment of *I Can't Get Started*, and in his remaining selections simply by contrast to the amiable, good-natured playing of the other members of the group (including Claude Hopkins, piano, and Harry Sheppard, vibes, as well as Yaged). The Dixielanders, whose ranks number a reasonably authentic Dixie trumpeter, Pee Wee Erwin, as well as such outlanders as trombonist Benny Morton and pianist Nat Pierce, slug their way through *That's a Plenty, Someday Sweetheart, and Wolverine Blues* with about as much imagination as was exerted in selecting these titles. Since these are supposedly performances at the Metropole in New York, the music is accompanied by "crowd" noises so thin and forced that they constantly disturb one by the sense of phoniness they convey.

JOHN S. WILSON

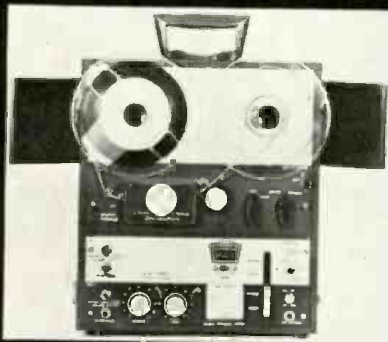
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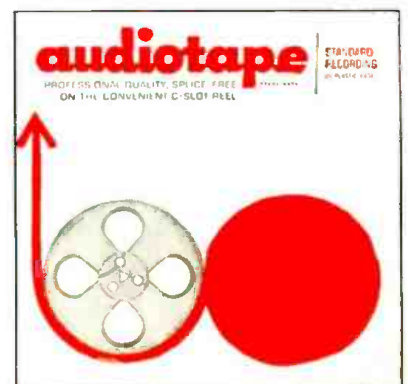
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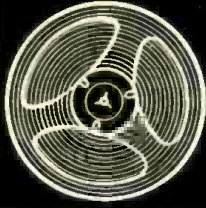
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the Tape Deck

Reviewed by R. D. DARRELL

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

BACH: *Concertos for Two Claviers and Orchestra: in C, S. 1061; in C minor, S. 1060*

Abram Chasins. Constance Keene, pianos; Kapp Sinfonietta, Emanuel Vardi, cond.

•• KAPP KTL 49007. 32 min. \$7.95.

Even listeners with a purist's preference for harpsichords, which integrate better with the strings in these concertos, are likely to welcome piano versions played with such vivacity and genuinely Bachian gusto as these. They are a sonic delight, too: the transparent recording captures to perfection the natural, bright ring of piano tone, and the integration problem is shrewdly evaded by Vardi's subordination of his alert little string ensemble. Curiously, the obvious stereogenic practice of separating the soloists (exaggeratedly exploited in the 1960 Westminster disc version by Badura-Skoda and Demus) is used here only (and more moderately) in the lovely slow movement of S. 1061, where the pianos are heard unaccompanied. In this movement, incidentally, the inactive player occasionally supplies quiet continuo support to the active one. This may or may not have been a custom of Bach's own time (as Mr. Chasins asserts it to be in his annotations), but it certainly sounds stylistically "right," as do the tasteful Chasins-Keene ornamentations and phrasings throughout. Except in this Adagio, the two pianos (which are played with remarkable homogeneity of tone and style) are grouped together in normal concert fashion; although Nathan Broder, in his recent disc review, spoke of their being crowded into one channel, with the violins in the other, they sound to me as if they were normally centered well to the front of the spread strings. In any case, such details are of technical interest only: what's meaningful here is the gloriously resilient and expressive music making itself.

CILEA: *Adriana Lecouvreur*

Renata Tebaldi (s), Adriana; Dora Carral (s), Jovenot; Giulietta Simionato (ms), Principessa di Bouillon; Fernanda Cadoni (ms), Dangeville; Mario del Monaco (t), Maurizio; Franco Ricciardi (t), L'Abate di Chazeuil; Angelo Mercuriali (t), Poisson; Giulio Fioravanti (b), Michonnet; Silvio Maionica (bs), Principe di Bouillon; Giovanni Foiani (bs), Quinault. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Franco Capuana, cond.

•• LONDON LOG 90043. Two reels: approx. 67 and 58 min. \$19.95.

Unfamiliar as it may be to many American opera lovers, *Adriana* has such a wealth of immediately appealing melodism that its weaknesses of thematic development are easily overlooked, and in recorded form its rather silly plot is far less of a handicap than it is on the stage itself. In any case, its forthcoming revival (with Tebaldi) at the Metropolitan is sure to arouse widespread attention. That alone enhances the interest of this convenient "preview" recording, which offers advance evidence of how well the leading role becomes Tebaldi, and how movingly she can project the luscious arias "*Io sono l'umile ancella*" and "*Poveri fiori*." But she is closely rivaled here by Simionato, who not only enacts the jealous Princess to perfection but also makes the most of her great "*Acerba vultù*" aria with its catchy "*O vagabonda*" section. And if Del Monaco is obviously miscast as Maurizio, Count of Saxony, he sings, at least, with his customarily uninhibited Italianate passion. The rest of the cast is extremely competent, and Capuana leads his skilled chorus and orchestra with immense verve and coloristic variety. The engineers wisely dispense with elaborate "sonic-stage" experimentation here and are content to achieve natural stage spacings, in depth as well as laterally. The recording itself is a model of translucence, and apart from a very few faint preëchoes the tape processing is immaculate.

JOSQUIN DES PREZ: *Missa Hercules dux Ferrariae. Missa da Pacem: Et incarnatus est. Motets: Veni Sancte Spiritus; De profundis*

Vienna Kammerchor; Musica Antiqua Wien, Hans Gillesberger, cond.

•• VANGUARD VTC 1643. 47 min. \$7.95.

Choral music in general and Renaissance masterpieces in particular are still so sparsely represented on tape that the present program would be welcome even if it were less meritorious than it proves to be. As it is, the only valid criticism is of the pointless side break before the six-minute final movement (the *Agnus Dei*) of the major work. Far more importantly, the whole program is nobly performed and broadly recorded (with the voices well back) in an admirably processed taping, and the music and interpretations are of exceptional sonic and musico-historical interest. The mighty *Hercules* Mass is one of Josquin's most impressive works, at once grandly solemn and poignantly tender—quite apart from the technical intricacies of its construction on a theme derived, according to a favorite custom of the time, from the vowels in the Latin title of the composer's patron, Duke Ercole of Ferrara. The

motets, too, are superbly eloquent examples of his richly flowing polyphony. What adds immeasurably to the appeal of the music itself (for novice as well as scholarly listeners) is the use of old instruments—krummhorn, sordun, pommer, alto trombone, and organ, as well as bassoon, tenor trombone, and trumpet—doubling or substituting for the voices in the Mass and the four-part *De profundis*; they are heard alone in all their fascinating timbre-piquancies in the only too brief *Et incarnatus est* from another Mass. Today's audiophiles are not unique in their passion for distinctive sonic qualities and combinations: they were anticipated centuries ago by imaginative composers like Josquin writing for insatiably eager-eared patrons!

SCHUBERT: *Quintet for Piano and Strings, in A, Op. 114, D. 667, ("The Trout")*

Clifford Curzon, piano; Members of the Vienna Octet.

•• LONDON LCL 80092. 35 min. \$7.95.

It's regrettable that London didn't re-record the Curzon-Vienna collaboration on one of the loveliest and most immediately persuasive of all chamber music favorites, for the pianist plays with delectable limpidness at his best here, and a few mannered passages by him and his colleagues would surely have been corrected a second time around. But since the obviously faded 1958 recording has been retained, this release doesn't conclusively settle the problem of choosing a tape edition of the *Forellen* Quintet. The Nádás-Galimír version (Ferrodynamics) is not in the running, but connoisseurs have to take it willy-nilly to get the precious, little-known but wholly charming Quartet for Flute, Guitar, Viola, and Cello, D. 96. The Glazer-Fine Arts Concertapes performance (Concertapes) is notably better recorded than the present London edition, but it may be a bit too vigorous and sharply focused for some tastes. I still prefer it, but more romantic listeners are likely to favor Curzon, for all his reel's less vivid, but certainly more intimate, sonics.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28*
†Tchaikovsky: *Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy-Overture*

Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond.

•• RCA VICTOR FTC 2098. 34 min. \$8.95.

If you're willing to pay the price, this reel, as a sonic masterpiece, will provide

THE TAPE DECK

Continued from preceding page

you with a spectacular tool for "demonstration." The strength, panoramic breadth, searching brilliance, and palpable solidity of the recording, miked somewhat more closely than has been customary in previous Symphony Hall sessions, are well-nigh incredible. Certainly the awesome trial-and-gibbet climax of *Till* has never before been heard on records with such shattering power; and, to single out just one isolated example of the authenticity of timbre differentiations, surely no recording has ever more clearly distinguished the subtle differences in tonal quality between the repetitions of *Till*'s theme (pages 64-5 of the Philharmonia miniature score) as played initially by the first horn in F and then by the third in D.

Unfortunately, the price for all this is considerably more than RCA Victor's customary dollar premium. Although the orchestral virtuosity is breath-taking Munch simply reads both scores literally, omitting or distorting nothing, but contributing neither humor nor compassion to *Till*, neither genuine warmth nor romantic atmosphere to *Romeo and Juliet*. Neither work has been ideally represented on tape, but in the former, Szell (for Epic) captures far more of the spirit of Strauss's scherzo, and in the latter, Von Karajan (for London) far more of Tchaikovsky's lyricism. Nevertheless, the present reel remains an executant and technical *tour de force* that no audiophile can afford to miss hearing—even though he is likely to replay it only for demonstration purposes; certainly never for musical, as distinct from sonic, enjoyment.

STRAVINSKY: *The Firebird*

Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Igor Stravinsky, cond.
• • COLUMBIA MQ 450. 44 min. \$7.95.

So you think you know *The Firebird*? So did I, not so much from innumerable hearings of the suite alone as from Ansermet's complete recording—that is, until I met the full score in the composer's own electrifying re-creation. To those familiar with the suite only, this will be a revelation, not only in its added wealth of fascinating, often almost *Petrushkian*, materials, but also in the sharpened point and enhanced drama of the more often played sections. To those who know the full score but previously have considered much of it to be fill-in accompaniment to more absorbing stage action, his tape will be no less a revelation of how *everything* in the work is integrated to meaningful purpose. In either case, the ageless Stravinsky's performance is so galvanically vital and brings out so many delectable details normally ignored or minimized, that one has the feeling of hearing the work for the first time in all its youthful exuberance.

I was shocked by Alfred Frankenstein's July disc review in which he depreciated the present *Firebird* as the "least impressive" record in Columbia's seven-release commemoration of Stravinsky's eightieth birthday. Perhaps the other discs are even more striking, but I should like to think that Mr. Frankenstein heard an inadequately processed copy of *The Firebird*. Certainly on tape this sounds to me like one of the most magnificently

engineered recordings (superbly solid, lucid, and blazingly colorful) Columbia has ever achieved. Nor has its house symphony ever played better, to my ears. It may lack something of the ultra-refinement of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande in Ansermet's beautifully poetic taping for London, but in both drama and vivid authenticity of recorded sound the latter is completely overshadowed. That's too bad in one way, for as I replayed it in alternation with the new version I kept discovering new felicities in it. But while it should not be forgotten, its atmospheric delicacy is patently more limited in appeal than the compelling forcefulness of the composer's edition. For here Stravinsky freely abandons his former preference for a dry acoustical ambience, and not only permits the engineers to embody a warm reverberance but is himself almost romantically outspoken both in his tenderness in the lyrical passages and his dynamism in the more dramatic ones. Happily, too, the tape itself is a model of preëcho- and spillover-free processing, so I can recommend it without reservations to every listener—but above all to those who have previously known only the highlights of this kaleidoscopic music.

"FIVE CENTURIES OF MUSIC" (sampler)

Various artists.
• • VANGUARD VTC 1700 (twin-pack).
78 min. \$7.95.

A bargain-priced, large-scaled anthology of excerpts from previously released Vanguard tapes which surely will rank as the most musically substantial and attractive of all classical samplers to date. The most precious jewels here are the Gabrieli and Albinoni concertos, the *Spring* concerto from Vivaldi's *Seasons*, and Corelli's *Sarabanda*, *Giga*, and *Badinerie*—all played by the Solisti di Zagreb; Boskovsky's five Schubert waltzes; and the Allegretto movement (with its famous Turkish Music) from the Haydn *Military* Symphony led by Woldike. But there are also a couple of overtures (Boult's *Coriolan* and Prohaska's *Nozze di Figaro*), and a series of single movements drawn from Dvořák's *New World* and Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* symphonies, *Scheherazade*, *Lt. Kije*, *Gayne*, etc., in performances led by Golschmann, Rossi, and Prohaska. Here performances and recordings vary more widely in quality, seldom matching the high distinction of the first-named contributions—but where else can the avid tape collector get so much fine music at so moderate a cost?

"Ray Brown with the All-Star Big Band." Ernie Wilkins, cond. Verve VSTC 270, 35 min., \$7.95.

Brown's bass and cello are costared with the saxes of Cannonball Adderley and Yusef Lateef, Sam Jones's bass, and Nat Adderley's cornet in a couple of striking Brown originals. *Thumbstring* and *Cannon Bilt*; Nat Adderley's odd *Work Song*; and various arrangements by Wilkins and Al Cohn—most notably a poignant *My One and Only Love*, a fast-jumping *Day In Day Out*, and a more rambling *Two for the Blues*. The tuttis get pretty raucous at times, but there is a diverting wealth of contrasted solos and many flashes of improvisatory imagination in

these often roughhewn but always enormously zestful performances. Brilliantly recorded.

"Ray Charles and Betty Carter." With the Jack Halloran Singers, and Orchestra, Marty Paich, cond. ABC Paramount AIC 824, 39 min., \$7.95.

Standard ballads tend to bring out both the most mannered aspects of Charles's singing and the clichés of his piano playing. They do so here in the big-band and choral performances (*Every Time We Say Goodbye*, *Cocktails for Two*, etc.), where the pleasant-voiced Miss Carter lends only somewhat colorless support. In the smaller ensemble pieces, however (particularly in *Baby It's Cold Outside*, *Takes Two To Tango*, and *Just You Just Me*), both Miss Carter and the sidemen reveal considerably more vivacity, and even Charles's own mannerisms are less flagrant. But on the whole, only his devotees are likely to relish everything in these rich but overintimate recordings.

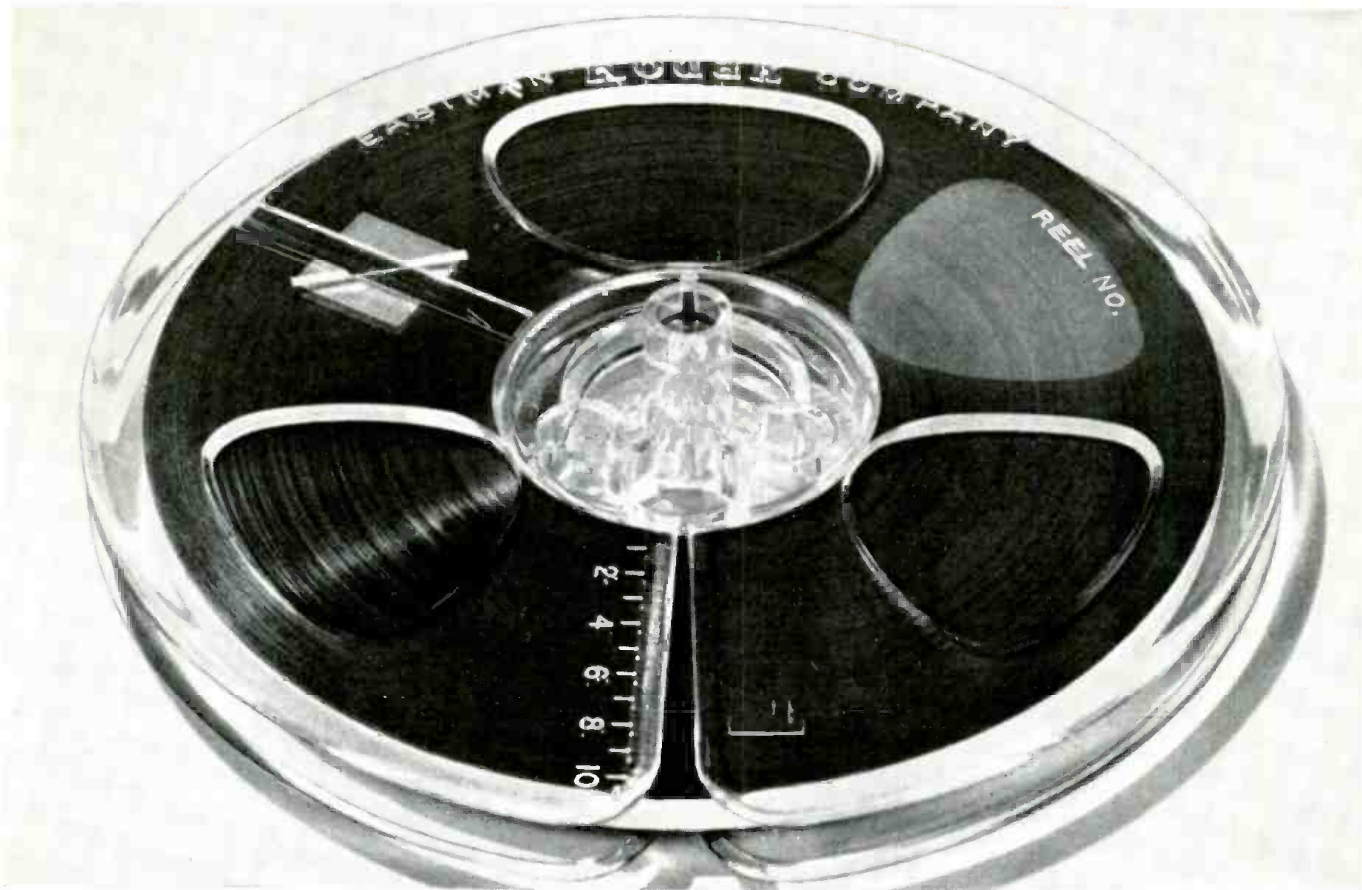
"One-Man Show." Yves Montand with Bob Castella and His Ensemble. Columbia CQ 440, 44 min., \$6.95.

I rank Montand as the greatest French singing personality since Chevalier and Charles Trenet, and I've been hankering to add this documentation of a 1958 Théâtre de l'Etoile recital to my permanent library ever since I heard the disc version several years ago. Although I may be prejudiced, I'm sure than anyone who, on first hearing, responds at all to this remarkable personality and his gripping song projections will come, as I have now, to find inexhaustible attractions in every rehearing. Best of all, perhaps, are the stoic pathos of *Planter Café*, the seductive lilt of *Le Carosse*, and the tragicomedy of *Le Chef d'orchestre* (whose girl friend preferred *Over the Waves* to Beethoven's Fifth). Indeed everything here is rich in character and color, to say nothing of superb enunciation and role-enactments. And for good measure, the recording still sounds fine (if perhaps unnecessarily closely miked), the tape processing is excellent, and the reel is accompanied by a helpful leaflet of English text paraphrases.

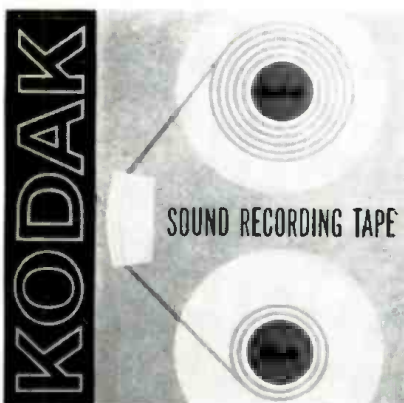
"Spirituals." Tennessee Ernie Ford with chorus and instrumental ensemble, Jack Fascinato, cond. Capitol ZT 818, 33 min., \$6.98.

The first of Ford's immensely popular gospel-hymn radio programs to reach tape must have been recorded as far back as 1958, yet there is no trace of age in its wondrously fresh, warmly reverberant and open stereoism—although, curiously, the processing itself is plagued with pre-echoes and even a touch of spill-over. The soloist has a fine, robust, admirably controlled voice, and he is ably supported by a small choral group and deftly scored accompaniments. Yet I abhor the substitution of commercialism for authenticity. The performers here are slick professional white folk, and for all their apparent sincerity and vivacity they don't have an inkling of how moving these songs can sound (even the tin-pan-alley *ersatz* hymns, which are more profuse here than the true spirituals) when done by less sophisticated artists perhaps with less skill but certainly with more validity.

London Phase-4 Plus: A note on the current tape editions (LPL 74013/21) of the first nine releases in this new series is included in my feature review of the disc versions on page 102 of this issue.



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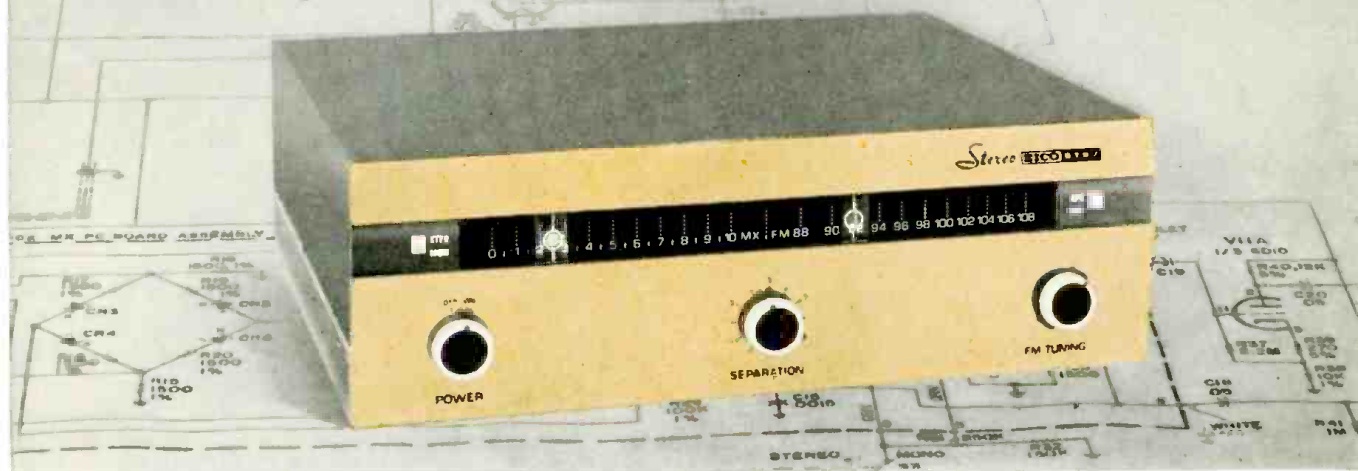
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PERFORMANCE

Pre-production field tests brought back the report "Definitely a fringe-area stereo tuner," which is simply the meaning of our laboratory measurements. We know, for example, that full limiting is achieved at 10uV input signal, meaning that the low distortion and noise specifications (the full benefits of FM) will apply to all but the most distant and difficult-to-receive stations. The sharp selectivity you need when a tuner is that sensitive is here also (a strong local station and a low-power station 100 miles distant separated by only 0.4 mc, each had its own sharp tuning-in point on the dial). While signal levels as low as 2.5uV will produce phase-locking for full stereo separation, very strong local signals will pro-

duce no higher output from the FM detector than a 10uV signal and will not be degraded in quality by overloading the stereo demodulator. Distortion is very low, both in mono and stereo, so that the sound you hear has that sweetness, clarity, and freedom from grating harshness that results from absence of distortion. The stereo output signals are so clean that there is not a sign of the 19kc pilot carrier or the re-inserted 38kc sub-carrier visible on a scope presentation.

SPECIFICATIONS

Antenna Input: 300 ohms balanced. IHFM Usable Sensitivity: 3uV (30db quieting), 1.5uV for 20db quieting. Sensitivity for phase-locking (synchronization) in stereo: 2.5 uV. Full limiting sensitivity: 10uV. IF Bandwidth: 280kc at 6db points. Ratio Detector Bandwidth: 1 megacycle peak-to-peak separation. Audio Bandwidth at FM Detector: Flat to 53kc discounting pre-emphasis. IHFM Signal-to-Noise Ratio: -55db. IHFM Harmonic Distortion: 0.6%. Stereo Harmonic Distortion: less than 1.5%. IHFM IM Distortion: 0.1%. Output Audio Frequency Response: ±1db 20cps-15kc. IHFM Capture Ratio: 3db. Channel Separation: 30db. Audio Output: 0.8 volt. Output Impedance: low impedance cathode followers. Controls: Power, Separation, FM Tuning, Stereo-Mono, AFC-Defeat. Tubes: 1-ECC85, 5-6AU6, 1-6AL5, 1-12AT7, 2-12AU7, 1-6D10 (triple triode), 1-DM70 (tuning-eye), 1-E280 rectifier, 6 signal diodes, 1 neon lamp. Power Source: 117V, 60cps; 60 watts drain; extractor post fuse. Size (HWD): 5 1/8" x 15 3/8" x 11 3/8". Weight 17 lbs.

*Actual distortion meter reading of derived left or right channel output with a stereo FM signal fed to the antenna input terminals.



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HIGH FIDELITY NEWSFRONTS

BY NORMAN EISENBERG

A Sneak Preview. Between the May Electronics Parts Show in Chicago and the few weeks preceding the New York High Fidelity Music Show (October 3 through October 6) there is a general quickening of pulses in the high fidelity world. Summertime is a season of forecasts, rumors, and speculations—a sort of long sneak preview of what will be unveiled in early October.

To begin with, we can expect a significant increase in the amount and variety of transistorized equipment this fall. Lafayette is readying a new line of transistor amplifiers, of which the most auspicious is a basic amplifier offering 80 watts per channel. Allied Radio continues its expanding all-transistor line of Knight amplifiers and tuners. Harman-Kardon has announced a new transistorized "Citation A" stereo preamplifier that has reportedly been under design for about two years. Several wafer-thin printed circuit boards that slide into slots comprise the bulk of the chassis, and a frequency response of within plus zero, minus ¼ db from one cycle to one million cycles is claimed for it. A similar, though not identical, form of construction—that of plastic modules—is employed in a new combination preamplifier-power amplifier to be released as one of Heath's costliest and most attractive kits. The Heath transistorized unit is rated at 35 watts per channel. Altec Lansing has announced a combination stereo AM-FM-multiplex tuner-cum-preamplifier and power amplifier furnishing 27.5 watts (IHFM power) per channel and dubbed—in deference to our space age—the "Astro." Transistors also have invaded the "packaged" console field, as witness a new all-transistor radio-phono from Magnavox, named—with remarkable coincidence—the "Astro-Sonic."

Beyond these specific mentions, our sleuths tell us that there is more transistor research and development going on "behind the scenes" than many firms are willing to admit just now. So be prepared for surprises at coming audio events.

We can expect, too, many refinements in tape and tape recorders. Reeves Soundcraft reports having developed a new recording tape, on tensilized Mylar, that is claimed to have a "dynamic range of 77 decibels, seven more than any tape now on the market." Other virtues also are attributed to the new tape (named "Golden Tone"). From Ferrodynamics Corporation comes a forecast of "wrist-watch" size recorders, made possible by this company's "Microtape," which uses a polyester base of 0.25-mil thickness, or half that of present tape. Up to 180 feet of this tape, providing forty minutes of play, can be wound on a reel the size of a half-dollar. (All that's still needed,

then, are motors the size of quarters and capstans the size of pinheads.) As for normal-size tape equipment, there will be a galaxy (we may as well get into this space age lingo too) of star performers from just about everyone in the business, among them the Newcomb with its unique shift-stick control that somehow makes the user feel he's controlling a sports car. Another very special item from California is an all-transistor professional recorder, the Model V-30 produced by a new company, Vega Electronics Corp. This unit will be "in the about-\$1700 price range."

Speaking of tape, anyone reading this issue of HIGH FIDELITY may obtain a free roll of recording tape by clipping the coupon from the Triton advertisement on page 29 and presenting it to any authorized Triton dealer. The dealer will return, free, a three-inch roll of 1½-mil acetate tape that normally retails at 75 cents. Triton Electronics, Inc., of Woodside, N.Y., is confident that "a house trial will gain many converts to the Triton brand." If you multiply 75 cents by the number of readers of this magazine, you get a sizable sum. Triton must be awfully confident.

FM and stereo multiplex equipment will continue to appear in increasing numbers and variety, but so far no one has suggested a way of getting decent FM stereo, with any adapter, from an FM set of older vintage lacking wide-band response. As for new equipment, there is much talk about a forthcoming tuner from Marantz, the first from this manufacturer. Its circuitry is reportedly quite unconventional.

Certain "big-name" manufacturers are about to enter the high fidelity components field—to wit, Zenith, Westinghouse, Philco, and RCA. Actually, RCA's would be in the nature of a re-entry, since this company did produce some high fidelity components several years ago. The first unit to be offered by RCA will be a stereo tuner-amplifier.



Vega's all-transistor recorder.

The tuner is an AM-FM-multiplex type, with a rated IHFM sensitivity of 2.5 microvolts; the amplifier section features the usual controls and is rated at 15 watts (sine-wave power) per channel. At the Chicago show, this unit was demonstrated through an Olson 15-inch speaker—a high fidelity "classic," which (the man in charge told us) may or may not be reintroduced on the high fidelity market. Zenith's first entry will be an automatic record player and ceramic cartridge—both new designs. What the other firms bring out remains to be seen.

As for speakers, there seems to be a trend away from stereo satellites and toward the concept of two (maybe three) full-range systems. The field seems evenly divided between big systems and compacts (the term "bookshelf" to describe an enclosure that can sit on a shelf only by displacing an oversize set of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* has seemingly become passé—and good riddance). There will be an increase in the number of "thin-line" systems offered, but our guess is that unless these are built around radically new types of speaker units, they never will capture the "hard core" of audiophiles. There are just too many better-sounding "normal size" systems around. And, of course, "normal size" these days must include the behemoths as well as the two cubic-footers. Among the former, look for a newly styled model of Electro-Voice's "Patrician" as well as an entirely new line of other E-V systems. In the compact category we can expect an improved version of the IMF-Styrene Pressure speaker from Britain, as well as shipments of the long awaited Leak "Sandwich" system (which will be discussed in our "Equipment Reports" section in the near future). We're also promised a new system from England that features a rectangular-shaped woofer. For private listening, more and more headphones will be offered, including—from Jensen—the first commercial application of the CBS-Bauer network that "mixes" headphone signals to achieve a more natural stereo effect (for a full discussion of the principle, see "A Private Sonic World," HIGH FIDELITY, November 1961; the network itself will be covered in a forthcoming equipment report).

Over-all, and increasingly pervading the entire home audio field, are kits—and the related products that go with kit building such as tools, working-aids, and parts storage systems. Modern design has taken over in this field with some astonishingly attractive and handy drawer-and-bin arrangements available in colors to lend a splash of décor to any man's workroom. The subject of kits, however, is a story (or two) unto itself, to be told in next month's issue.

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DEBUSSY ON MICROGROOVE *Continued from page 69*

- Charles Rosen, piano. Epic LC 3842, LP; BC 1242, SD.
- Daniel Ericourt, piano. Kapp KDC 9068, LP; KDC 9068 S, SD.
- Walter Gieseking, piano. Angel 35250, LP.

Epigraphes antiques (1915)

Originally intended as background music for the recitation of Pierre Louÿs' poems *Chansons de Bilitis*, these pieces were reworked into their present form during the 1914 war, as a patriotic contribution to the composer's beloved France. It is said that Debussy also intended to orchestrate them, but that task fell to Ernest Ansermet. The music has a curious "drugged" atmosphere that takes some getting used to; these pieces are very modal, soft-textured, and strangely hypnotic in effect. They have the same soothing, near-soporific qualities that are also to be found in the Second Sonata, for Flute, Viola, and Harp, which dates from around the same period. The performance by Robert and Gaby Casadesus is extremely fine, and since an earlier, equally fine edition by Gold and Fildale (Columbia) and also one by Ansermet of the conductor's orchestration (London) have been withdrawn from circulation, it is without competition. Fortunately, it is more than equal to the situation.

—Robert and Gaby Casadesus, piano.
Columbia ML 4977, LP.

En blanc et noir (1915)

This piece is Debussy's last four-hand work. It was originally to be entitled "*Caprices en blanc et noir*" before Debussy decided upon the shortened form. The first movement, *Avec emportement*, is dedicated to Serge Koussevitzky, while the second is in memory of Lt. Jacques Charlot, who was killed in battle during March 1915. The third, and final, part is written for Stravinsky. Debussy's title is very apt, for the music has a sharply defined and contrasted tonal fabric—a steel-point engraving rather than a sensuous oil painting. The performance by Robert and Gaby Casadesus is brilliant and effective. Indeed, it has as much glitter and rather more substance than the now deleted readings by Vronsky and Babin (Columbia) and José and Amparo Iturbi (RCA Victor).

—Robert and Gaby Casadesus, piano.
Columbia ML 4977, LP.

MISCELLANEOUS PIANO PICES

These pieces span Debussy's entire career, although most of them are products of his formative years and are therefore strongly derivative in style. *Danse bohémienne* and *Le petit nègre*, in fact, date from 1879 and are the earliest-known compositions to come from his pen. The first of these trifles is a charming, if very Borodinesque, creation and far outshines the second. The latter,

however, due to its modest technical demands is within the reach of elementary-grade piano students and consequently is more popular. The two *Arabesques*, a product of the composer's twenty-seventh year, are also performed often by youngsters. *Danse* (also known as "*Tarantelle styrienne*") is an agile, high-spirited affair, well worth knowing, while the later *La plus que lente* is a quirky, sophisticated waltz employing a flexible rubato. The *Ballade*, however, is a bloated piece of musical cotton-candy, and *Rêverie* and *Nocturne* are also somewhat pallid and sugary.

L'Isle joyeuse, *Masques*, *Hommage à Haydn*, and *Berceuse héroïque* are, by far, the most important compositions among the miscellaneous pieces. These are mature works, original in their treatment of harmony, rhythm, and atmosphere. *D'un cahier d'esquisses* also dates from the period of Debussy's richest masterpieces (1903-05) and contains many superior elements.

Gieseking's edition groups all of these miscellaneous titles together on a single disc (Angel 35026, LP). The one exception is *D'un cahier d'esquisses*, which fills out the pianist's edition of the twelve Etudes. He plays them all in a cool, spirited fashion, seeking neither to "interpret" unduly nor to miniaturize. *Danse* has a bracing motor energy in his performance and is by far the most rollicking account available. (Gieseking's nearest rival in this respect is Werner Haas; Ericourt's contrasting interpretation is more urbane and gracious.)

Ericourt sprinkles these pieces throughout his Kapp set, using them to fill out the discs of more important fare. His accounts are very perceptive and technically brilliant. He dramatizes more heavily than Gieseking, although he is well able to keep proportions at an intimate level when that is desirable.

Werner Haas plays *Rêverie*, *Ballade*, *Masques*, and *Nocturne*, in addition to *Danse*, on his Epic release (BC 1100). These are very lucid, rhythmically precise performances, and the recorded sound is very good, if a bit overbright. Richter's Carnegie Hall recital of October 25, 1960 (Columbia M2L 274) contains a memorable account of *L'Isle joyeuse*—the grandest and most evocatively dramatic interpretation this piece has received on records.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

Printemps (1887)

The earliest orchestral composition that Debussy allowed to be published, *Printemps* was composed in 1887 during the composer's stay in Rome. The original version of the work incorporated a wordless female choir; the present revision was done in 1913. Although the work is highly derivative and of no great consequence, it is also thoroughly enjoyable and very excellently scored.

Ansermet's edition, the only one presently listed in the catalogue, is a well-organized reading recorded with mirrorlike clarity. Good as it is, however, the deleted versions of Irving and Beecham are even better. Beecham's interpretation featured much highly atmospheric tonal painting. He stressed the ripe, lush sonorities of the orchestration, building to a fine rhetorical climax. Indeed, Beecham brought out the strong Delian flavor of the music.

Irving, on the other hand, favored a very sharp, biting definition of the solo elements of the scoring, thereby making the orchestral texture sound more satiric and even a bit exotic. He seemed, rightly, to perceive a kinship with Richard Strauss here.

Ansermet sticks to the straight and narrow path in his recording, interpreting the work in typically Debussy terms. Since, as I have already stated, *Printemps* is far from the most potent or original composition penned by Debussy, it seems to me that M. Ansermet has chosen to dwell on the least interesting facet of the piece. All three records are well engineered, although the Beecham (nearly a decade older than the other two) naturally lacks some brilliance.

—Royal Philharmonic, Robert Irving, cond. Capitol G 7130, LP (Deleted); SG 7130. SD (Deleted).

—Royal Philharmonic, Sir Thomas Beecham, cond. RCA Victor LM 9001, LP (Deleted).

—Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. London CM 9209, LP; CS 6079, SD.

Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra (1889)

This rather amorphous early work has achieved three recorded performances, which is exactly three more than it had during the composer's lifetime. The neglect was in accord with Debussy's wishes; upon hearing a rehearsal of the music (at a Société Nationale Concert) he was moved to withdraw it from performance, since he felt that he had advanced beyond its idiom. Actually, however, the *Fantasy* is not a bad work at all, although it is a bit sprawling and tentative—more reminiscent of Franck's *Symphonic Variations* than anticipatory of its own composer's matured style.

The Jacquinet-Fistoulari effort for M-G-M had a bit more poise and refinement than the Schultes-Kloss edition. Both discs had good sound. The third alternative once available was a percussive, clattery reading for Musical Masterpiece Society by Pellig and Goehr, with the Netherlands Philharmonic.

—Fabien Jacquinet, piano; Westminster Symphony, Anatole Fistoulari, cond. M-G-M E 3069, LP (Deleted).

—Helmut Schultes, piano; Frankland State Symphony Orchestra. Eric Kloss, cond. Lyricord LL 38, LP.

Trois nocturnes (1893-99)

Debussy's original intention here was to compose a work scored for orchestra with solo violin. When it was finished, some six years later, it demanded a large orchestra throughout, with additional

trombones in the second section. *Fêtes*, and a women's choir in the third, *Sirènes*. Because of its choral demands, the last part of the triptych is often omitted in performance, and several of the recordings evaluated here present the work in that form. Some critics severely condemn such "incomplete" performances, but I do not see much harm done to the music. These nocturnes are individual pieces, not inseparably linked like movements of a symphony. *Nuages* and *Fêtes* are perfectly capable of standing alone.

I shall consider first recordings of the complete set, of which Schwann currently lists nine editions. Ansermet has recorded the set twice. He stresses the lucid, classical lines of the music in taut, balanced, and controlled, yet highly poetic and atmospheric readings. The Richmond reissue is an attractive bargain at its low price, but the newer version on London, even with its slightly overbrilliant sound, offers more mobile and flexible orchestral playing.

Ansermet's only really close competition has been eliminated by RCA's deletion of the excellent Monteux-Boston Symphony version. In contrast to Ansermet's poised objectivity, Monteux stressed the earthy, genial animation also inherent in the writing. His readings were darker in hue, less sharply contoured, and made freer use of rubato. The warmth of Victor's sound was as appropriate here as the brilliance and clarity given to Ansermet.

Dorati conducts with vigor and control. His version, however, is seriously handicapped by the flat, nasal tone of his orchestra, and Mercury's cramped and distorted reproduction of it. Ormandy's edition, on the other hand, is greatly aided by the sumptuous sounds produced by his magnificent ensemble, well preserved on this reproduction. His work is straightforward, but lacking somewhat in subtlety and intimacy. Another lush version, the Stokowski on Capitol, is plushy and soporific, replete with fussy mannerisms that form an impenetrable barrier between the listener and the music.

Inghelbrecht's style is out of place in the impressionistic nocturnes. Pedantic and academic, rather than philosophical, this conductor's interpretation is fast in *Nuages*, slow in *Fêtes*, and unselective in *Sirènes*. This version, formerly an Angel release, has been reissued in France by Ducretet-Thomson.

Silvestri's account is rather stiffly phrased and tonally blaring. His Angel disc also contains a wrong bassoon entrance in *Sirènes*. Van Beinum (Epic) conducts competent, rather four-square performances, admirable enough in intent but lacking the requisite flexibility and nuance. Paray's ruthlessly stiff, disjointed approach gets the perfunctory engineering from Mercury it deserves.

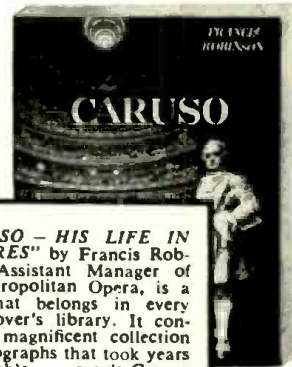
Of the recordings that omit *Sirènes*, Cantelli's performance is a miracle of incandescent interpretation and miraculous execution. The lamented young Italian had supreme technical control, admirable feeling for both color and rhythm, and,

Continued on next page

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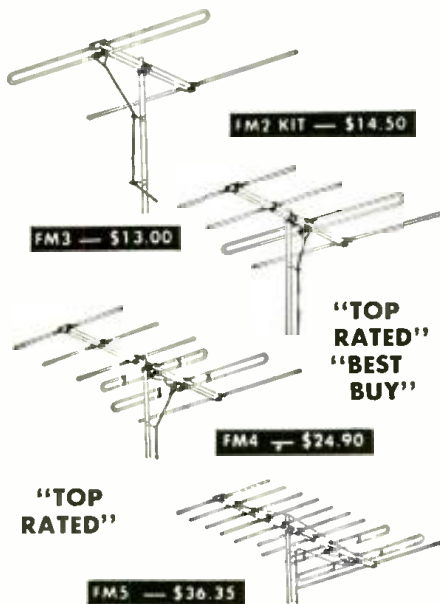
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DEBUSSY ON MICROGROOVE

Continued from preceding page

best of all, a refreshingly direct approach to the music he conducted. Angel gave him sound both detailed and atmospheric, altogether gorgeous in fact. A record not to be missed.

On a Columbia disc Bernstein too gives an admirably straightforward performance of *Fêtes*, without slowing the procession section. His orchestra, however, lacks the Philharmonia's exquisite tonal beauty, and *Nuages* seems to trouble this conductor, for he gives it a dense, syrupy interpretation which I find rather unconvincing.

Rosenthal plays *Fêtes* before *Nuages* and prefaces both with *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, thereby separating two quiet pieces with an active one. His performances are *sec*, somewhat eccentric (the procession section of *Fêtes*, for example, is taken at half the original tempo, with resulting complications at the return to the material of the first part of the piece), but interesting. *Désormière* is poetic, imaginative, and a bit too languorous on an old recording. The Czech Philharmonic plays well for him, and as an economy edition his disc forms a worthy alternative to the Ansermet reprint of the complete set. Page (Cook and Rondo) goes all out for impressionism, and is inadvertently aided in his approach by murky sonics and an orchestra that lacks precision. Dervaux (Command), who uses *Fêtes* as a filler for his *La Mer-Ibéria* disc, suggests a death march to the quicksand bogs rather than riotous festivity.

A Munch-Boston Symphony version of *Nuages* and *Fêtes* was recorded last spring by RCA Victor and at the time of writing has still to be issued.

- Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Ernest Ansermet, cond. London CM 9230. LP: CS 6023. SD.
- Boston Symphony. Pierre Monteux, cond. RCA Victor LM 1939, LP (Deleted).
- Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Ernest Ansermet, cond. Richmond 19044. LP.
- Philadelphia Orchestra. Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia ML 5112, LP.
- Philharmonia Orchestra. Guido Cantelli, cond. Angel 35525, LP (*Nuages* and *Fêtes*).
- Orchestre du Théâtre National de l'Opéra. Manuel Rosenthal, cond. Westminster XWN 18771, LP (*Nuages* and *Fêtes*).
- Czech Philharmonic. Roger Désormière, cond. Parliament PLP 110, LP (*Nuages* and *Fêtes*).

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune (1894)

The first (and only) part of what was intended to be a triptych based on Mallarmé's poem, this popular work is a beautifully constructed symphonic poem, of about eight minutes' duration, and contains an elaborate flute part which is a near-solo.

Extensive as the list of recorded per-

formances of *L'Après-midi d'un faune* is, there are several glaring omissions. Where, for example, is Toscanini's memorable reading? (There was, at one time, a version by the Maestro on a "V-disc," distributed to our Armed Forces.) And why hasn't Monteux been given the opportunity to record his sensitive, authoritative rendition?

The finest available editions are the ones by Cantelli, Ormandy, Fournet, Pedrotti, Rosenthal, and the older Ansermet disc. The Cantelli is delicate and understated, with sleek, rich sound and beautiful playing. Fournet's is flowing and symmetrical in an atmospheric and gently distant, but realistic, recording. The playing of the Concertgebouw here is silken and evocative, with subtle tints of lavender and gray. Both Ormandy readings are mellifluous, warm, and robust. This conductor avoids wide alterations of tempo and does not expose any unusual details, but his genial, idiomatic interpretation is most effective. Both the Pedrotti and Rosenthal editions feature a flute solo with a wide vibrato. The latter's reading is tart and impetuous, with faster than usual tempos and a lean, mercurial orchestral tone, while Pedrotti's is darker in texture, more sensuously poetic. The Ansermet is very transparent, and almost classical. I find these six editions to represent the cream of the list, but find myself at a loss to say which one of them is the best. The order of preference given below is, then, admittedly highly subjective.

There are several far from negligible versions in the next division, too. Certainly, the newer Ansermet is a fine performance even if it lacks the flexible poetry of the same conductor's earlier rendition and has been given sound too close and bright. The Munch, Beecham, and Lehmann issues also have many fine qualities. Munch's, however, is marred by a feeling of restless agitation, while Beecham's, conversely, is just a shade too bland and careful. There is nothing at all really wrong with the Lehmann, but I have the uneasy notion that these Teutonic players, intelligent and poised though they are, are a bit uneasy with the idiom.

Paray (Mercury) drives through the work in a businesslike, unappealing manner. The Stokowski (Capitol), on the other hand, would profit from more forward pressure from the podium. This rendition has too many curlicues and rococo embellishments. Bernstein (Columbia) is a would-be Stokowski here, but lacks some of the older man's ambiguous resourcefulness and virtuoso control. The Flagello (20th-Century Fox) is interesting in instrumental detail, but interpretatively maudlin: the Page (Cook and Rondo) and Remoortel (Vox) are handicapped by inferior orchestral work without compensating features, and suffer from poor sound—the first being muzzy and submerged, the second raw and gratingly close-to. There is a Whittemore and Lowe version on two pianos (Capitol) and one on the harmonica by Sebastian (Decca).

The Inghelbrecht version, which appeared here on the Angel label, has been reissued in France by Ducretet-

Thomson. It is not one of this conductor's most successful efforts, being rather perfunctory and analytical. The recorded sound is wooden and flat, though very clear.

- Philadelphia Orchestra, Guido Cantelli, cond. Angel 35525, LP.
- Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Jean Fournet, cond. Epic LC 3636, LP; BC 1054, SD.
- Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia ML 5397, LP; MS 6077, SD.
- Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. London CM 9170, LP.
- Czech Philharmonic, Antonio Pedrotti, cond. Parliament PLP 157, LP.
- Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia ML 5112, LP.
- Orchestre du Théâtre National de l'Opéra, Manuel Rosenthal, cond. Westminster XWN 18771, LP.
- Berlin Philharmonic, Fritz Lehmann, cond. Decca DL 9936, LP.
- Boston Symphony, Charles Munch, cond. RCA Victor LM 1984, LP; LSC 1984, SD.
- Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. London CM 9228, LP; CS 6024, SD.
- Royal Philharmonic, Sir Thomas Beecham, cond. Angel 35506, LP; S 35506, SD.

Rhapsody for Saxophone and Orchestra (1903)

This composition was commissioned by Mrs. Elise Hall, a Boston dowager of considerable wealth who enjoyed giving recitals for her friends on the saxophone. It is a witty, pungent piece of writing, beautifully constructed, but light of substance.

The performance by Jules de Vries is large-scaled and sturdy, a bit hefty of tone, rough of accent. The older edition by the superb saxophone virtuoso Marcel Mulé had greater stylistic sophistication, tonal suppleness, and rhythmic buoyancy. Moreover, it benefited from suaver orchestral work and recorded sound which was more delicately veiled than the clear, rather raw tone of the Lyricord disc. It is, alas, unavailable, and in its absence the De Vries passes muster.

- Marcel Mulé, saxophone; Paris Philharmonic, Manuel Rosenthal, cond. Capitol L 8231, LP (Deleted).
- Jules de Vries, saxophone; Frankland State Symphony Orchestra, Eric Kloss, cond. Lyricord LL 38, LP.

Danse sacrée et danse profane (1904)

These pleasantly dignified dances were written upon a commission from MM. Pleyel et Cie., makers of a then new instrument, the Chromatic Harp. They are a homage to the ancient rites of Greek civilization, stately, dignified, and, in truth, a bit dull. There is little opportunity for display here.

The London and Decca-Deutsche Grammophon editions, by Berghout-

Continued on next page



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DEBUSSY ON MICROGROOVE

Continued from preceding page

Van Beinum and Cotelle-Markevitch respectively, are the most urbane and subtly integrated. The Dutch musicians on the former set are very dark in color and broad in accent, while the members of the Lamoureux Ensemble who participate in the second are a bit drier in texture. Both are gentle, swaying performances, with polished teamwork and fine sound. The Markevitch record, formerly Decca DGS 712040 in the domestic catalogue, is unlisted there at present, but will probably return in an imported Deutsche Grammophon pressing.

The Zabaleta-Fricsay and Grandjany-Slatkin performances seize upon whatever virtuoso possibilities they can find in the music. In both of these recordings the harpist is allowed too much prominence, and in each case the *Danse profane* is overdriven, and a bit square and graceless. These slight pieces just don't lend themselves to the exhibitionistic treatment. Decca's sound is bright and clear, a bit lacking in aural subtlety and atmosphere; Capitol's is very resonant and rather too glossy.

The earlier Capitol edition also has a plushy type of tone, but the performance is a bit more supple and retiring than the newer one with Grandjany. Stockton is a somewhat more modest soloist, or rather, she is not a soloist—she is a chamber music player. The Vito (Period) is a bit perfunctory in performance, and suffers from a somewhat drab, constricted studio-type reproduction. A version by L'Orchestre de la Société de Musique de Paris, on French Ducretet-Thomson, is lusty and spirited, but a mite raw from the tonal standpoint.

- Phia Berghout, harp; Amsterdam Chamber Music Society, Eduard van Beinum, cond. London CM 9170, LP.
- Suzanne Cotelle, harp; Lamoureux Orchestra, Igor Markevitch, cond. Decca DGS 712040, SD (Deleted).
- Stockton, harp; Concert Arts Orchestra, Felix Slatkin, cond. Capitol P 8304, LP.
- Nicanor Zabaleta, harp; Berlin Radio Symphony, Ferenc Fricsay, cond. Decca DL 9929, LP.
- Marcel Grandjany, harp; Concert Arts Orchestra, Felix Slatkin, cond. Capitol P 8492, LP; SP 8492, SD.

La Mer (1905)

The greatest Debussy orchestral work is more than just a tone poem: it is, in many ways, a symphony. The three sections of the piece, despite their descriptive titles, correspond to movements in the classical symphonic form, the first, "From Dawn to Noon on the Sea," even being cast in a loose sonata-allegro mold. The reviews of the first performance in 1905 were by no means rhapsodic. The then advanced nature of the writing disturbed critics not yet fully oriented themselves to the many new devices, such as the whole-tone scale, used here; furthermore, the general public attitude at the

time was hostile to Debussy, whose recent desertion of his wife had driven her to attempted suicide.

The Toscanini interpretation of *La Mer* developed over the years almost legendary status. His RCA Victor recording, made in June 1950 (following the transcontinental tour of the NBC Symphony, and after at least four unsuccessful previous attempts to preserve the Maestro's reading for posterity), is one of the best of the late-period Toscanini performances of the work, and one which confronts us with a turbulent, fiercely omnipotent ocean. The recorded sound is amazingly detailed, very close-to, and a bit flat (due to the use of the confined Studio 8-H rather than a large concert hall). RCA's current mastering (stamper no. 41-S) is notably suaver and more natural than some of the earlier incarnations of this recording.

It is worth mention, in passing, that the Toscanini views of *La Mer* expounded on LM 1833 should not be taken as the *only* approach to the music espoused by the late Maestro. I have, during the course of this study, been fortunate enough to hear several air-check Toscanini performances of the work, from various periods of his career, and can testify that they differ astonishingly from one another, both as regards interpretative outlook and details of scoring. In contrast to the breadth of the commercial issue, for example, the performance of November 29, 1947 sets new speed records for the first and last movements, while the wonderful 1935 Queens Hall transcription with the BBC Symphony is loosely romantic and altogether the antithesis of the grim, unyielding later efforts. Thus, one can only speculate about the performance of *La Mer* which won for Toscanini such lavish praise from the composer!

Inghelbrecht's reading, which enjoyed several domestic releases, is still available as an import (sonically much improved) from France. This conductor's approach to Debussy is roughly parallel to Weingartner's in Beethoven and Brahms; somewhat brusque in sonority, certainly not impressionistic, but possessing a certain granitelike cohesion and integrity. The epic canvas of *La Mer* lends itself well to Inghelbrecht's broad solidity. The Montoux performance (with the Boston Symphony on a now withdrawn RCA Victor disc) had equal authority, but was more genial and improvisatory—a sort of Gallic equivalent to a Schubert performance by the late Bruno Walter (whose death, incidentally, deprived us of another projected *La Mer* recording). Montoux's edition did not stress orchestral virtuosity *per se*, and one might have even sensed a lack of really soft playing in the last two movements. But the conductor's individual conception was one of the most probing and interesting treatments of the score to be put on disc.

Désormière's effort is lyrical, intense, and finely proportioned. It is, in its taut flowing contour, very similar to Cantelli's performance with the Philharmonia Orchestra on HMV A1P 1228 (a disc never released domestically). Al-

though the recorded sound is dated on the Parliament edition, it is to be preferred as an economy offer to the Ansermet on Richmond, which is also an old recording.

The several stereo editions present problems. Quite a few of them are good, but none would make me want to part with the already mentioned mono versions. Ansermet's offers the conventional, picture-book, impressionistic Debussy, technically adroit, but essentially small-scaled and a bit perfunctory in its rigorous nonrubato phrasing. The smooth, distant sound of the stereo version of Munch's performance transforms it into something appearing far more suave and controlled than it does in mono (where the sound evokes an overcrowded Coney Island on a sizzling, mid-July day). Leinsdorf's sea voyage also follows the lean, uneventful course navigated by the two last-named conductors. His orchestra patently lacks the finesse and tonal sheen of some of the other aggregations heard in this music, although the execution is by no means bad. Rosenthal's full-throated, sanely balanced interpretation, while also not quite "stellar" in its orchestral playing, nevertheless has enough temperament and color to rank it with the best stereo editions.

Ormandy's tempos are well chosen and admirably steadfast, but the weighty massiveness of his celebrated orchestra is not offset by comparable delicacy and detail in the solo filigree passages of the score. Van Beinum's account (Epic) is very forthright, but without the flexibility and volatility for the idiom. The sleek, darkly massive colors produced by his fine orchestra are more effective in Sibelius. Formerly available on a Decca disc, Markevitch's evocative but rather episodic interpretation will probably be reissued soon in an imported Deutsche Grammophon edition. There are big, splashy orchestral colors here, and also some individualistic manipulations of tempo, such as the *lustpausen* between the three important climactic chords which occur twice in the first movement. Details of this sort are often, to be sure, distracting, but they also yield a certain dramatic effectiveness.

Silvestri's ocean (Angel) is beset with sharks and pirates. This conductor's glaring clarification of every strand in the scoring (obtained, at times, by reorchestrating woodwind parts so that they may be doubled by trumpet) is immediately arresting, but ultimately brutal. Reiner's (RCA Victor) is a finely organized specimen of virtuoso conducting, but also lame, fussy, and too "expressive"—so much so that despite the gorgeous sound on his version, the performance comes to an almost complete standstill at times. Paray's reading (Mercury) is a thoroughly lackluster affair, recorded with clammy sound. Dervaux's performance (Command) can most charitably be given a decent burial-at-sea.

—NBC Symphony, Arturo Toscanini, cond. RCA Victor LM 1833, LP.

—Orchestre National de la RTF, D. Inghelbrecht, cond. Ducretet-Thomson 320C152, LP (Import).

Continued on next page



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CIRCLE 80 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

DEBUSSY ON MICROGROOVE

Continued from preceding page

- Boston Symphony, Pierre Monteux, cond. RCA Victor LM 1939, LP (Deleted).
- Czech Philharmonic, Roger Désormière, cond. Parliament PLP 110, LP.
- Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. London CM 9228, LP; CS 6024, SD.
- Orchestre du Théâtre National de l'Opéra, Manuel Rosenthal, cond. Westminster XWN 18770, LP; WST 14020, SD.
- Boston Symphony, Charles Munch, cond. RCA Victor LM 2111, LP; LSC 2111, SD.
- Los Angeles Philharmonic, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. Capitol SP 8395, SD.
- Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia ML 5397, LP; MS 6077, SD.

Images pour orchestre (1906-09)

The first two books of *Images* were written for the piano, and date from 1905 and 1907, respectively. Another two years elapsed before the third set for orchestra, came into being. From the outset it is evident that Debussy conceived this final trio on a larger scale than its predecessors, for even in its keyboard sketchbook form the work called for two pianos rather than one solo instrument. The three movements of the orchestral *Images* are all inspired by folk music. *Gigues* uses English folk tunes, *Rondes de printemps* French, while *Ibéria* is strongly permeated by Spanish rhythms and color. The latter is the longest section of this triptych and is itself divided into three movements. It is often played by itself. (For recordings of *Ibéria* alone, see below.) Debussy sought in the orchestral *Images* what he termed "réalité" rather than "impressionism," and the effect he achieves in his intricate, highly detailed musical fabric is not as immediately winning and assimilable as in *La Mer* or the *Trois nocturnes*. Indeed, the *Images* might be called the most Stravinskian of all Debussy's compositions.

None of the complete recordings of *Images* is outstanding. Inghelbrecht's edition on French Ducretet-Thomson used to be available piecemeal in this country (*Rondes* and *Gigues* on the Angel label, *Ibéria* in two incarnations—first as a poorly processed Westminster release, later as a much improved London-Ducretet issue). *Gigues* and *Rondes de printemps* are gusty and hearty in this rendition, but *Ibéria*, as Inghelbrecht performs it, sacrifices rhythmic propulsion for absolute clarity of outline. The detail is amazing, but the tempos are unusually deliberate, indeed rather stodgy. The Munch version is fairly spirited throughout, but tends to be brilliant and efficient rather than imaginative. I have heard this conductor lead a far more flexible and atmospheric *Ibéria* in concert, and indeed his 78-rpm Decca-London version with the Paris Conservatoire

Orchestra far transcends the one in the present set as regards poetic feeling and flexible rubato phrasing. Ansermet too has been more successful with this music in the past. In his new re-recording, *Gigues* is highly detailed if rather unsubtle rhythmically, *Ibéria* starts off well but in its later stages sounds merely perfunctory, and *Rondes* is stiff and tepid. He does, however, get the best engineering of the lot (Munch and Inghelbrecht both have rather boxy sonics), and his is the only edition in the domestic catalogues to place the three sections of the work in their proper order. All things considered, Ansermet's is the preferred version.

Bernstein's edition not only places *Ibéria* out of sequence, but also reverses the order of *Gigues* and *Rondes de printemps*. The rearrangement of movements is not the only disruptive element on the Columbia disc, however; Bernstein's readings themselves are noisy, vulgar, and heavy-handed. Argenta's account is also noisy and deficient in atmosphere, but his performances must be admired for their controlled nervous tension and exciting temperament. Whether you will find the sound given him to be "réalité" or merely blaring and ugly will depend on your aural preferences. I subscribe to the second description. Van Beinum's brisk, extroverted readings are a mite inflexible from the rhythmic standpoint, and the sonics on his Epic disc are dated.

- Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. London CM 9293, LP; CS 6225, SD.
- Boston Symphony, Charles Munch, cond. RCA Victor LM 2282, LP; LSC 2282, SD.
- Orchestre National de la RTF, D. Inghelbrecht, cond. Ducretet-Thomson 320C151, LP (Import).
- Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ataulfo Argenta, cond. London CM 9210, LP; CS 6013, SD.

Ibéria

Although only five editions survive in the present catalogue, the list of once published microgroove recordings of *Ibéria* increases that number many-fold. Many of the bygone versions were good enough or interesting enough to warrant mention here. The oldest of these, and also one of the finest, was the Reiner-Pittsburgh edition (Columbia), a far more spirited account than the same conductor's later one (for RCA Victor) with the Chicago Symphony. Columbia also had a splendid reading, with vigorous rhythm and luscious playing, by Ormandy and the Philadelphians. The latter performance, incidentally, was available in two couplings—one with the Albéniz-Arbós *Ibéria*, the other with *La Mer* conducted by Mitropoulos. Less totally convincing than either of these, but no less striking in originality of design was the one for EMI-Capitol by Stokowski. This was an exotic, almost oriental reading, with the conductor obtaining lushness at the expense of cohesive rhythm.

Turning to the editions still in print, I

Continued on page 128

THE RESPECTABLE CLAUDE,

THE IRREVERENT ACHILLE

Continued from page 65

hand, ready to keep life at a safe psychic distance, during the worst moments of composition, those moments when his note-tired brain "resembled a field devastated by grasshoppers" and the slightest disapproval was demoralizing. In 1917, tired and ill, he ran temporarily dry while writing the third movement of his Sonata for Violin and Piano. The movement was supposed to be Neapolitan. "like a serpent biting its tail," but it refused to be anything in particular, let alone Neapolitan. Claude had already done two unsatisfactory versions, and must have been close to a nervous rout when Achille gently intervened and put the disaster in perspective. A letter to the critic Robert Godet refers to the failure as just "one of the thousand little intimate tragedies which make no more noise than a rose petal that falls without disturbing the repose of the universe. In a few days you will see Naples again—and you won't die."

The remarks quoted may warrant an attempt to situate Debussy on the list of witty composers—which is not very long. I would place him about halfway between Rossini and Satie. The *gamin* Achille was often ruthless in his mockery, and often facetious, but he had his limits in both directions. He was rarely gratuitous. He never rose, for instance, to the wonderful, disinterested brutality of Rossini, who once described the aging Mme. Rossini's rather prominent nose as "a tower spared by time, standing amid the ruins." Nor did he ever indulge in the waggishness of Satie, who remarked, after listening to the *aube à midi* movement of *La Mer*, that he liked the part "around a quarter to ten."

In short, semiprofessional though it was, Debussy's fun was also relatively human. Our awareness of it would therefore be incomplete without an appendix

of family items. One can imagine an Achille subdued by the existence of Claude the loving husband and doting father, but in fact he simply adjusted his sights to the spectacle. The wit is still present in the composer's letters to his wife Emma, to their daughter Claude-Emma (nicknamed Chouchou), and to family friends; and it acquires poignancy when one remembers that Chouchou, who was born illegitimately in 1905, survived her father by only one year. D'Annunzio called her "the freshest melody in the heart of Debussy."

A few examples can give the tone. A 1911 letter to Caplet, then in Boston, says: "I don't see much to tell you, unless it would interest you to learn that Chouchou has just finished her first symphonic poem, for voice, two paperknives, piano *ad libitum*; the latest title is *The Elephant on the Branch*. It's extremely dramatic." A series of postcards written to Chouchou from Vienna in 1910 is devoted to *Les Mémoires d'Outre-Croche* (he had been reading Chateaubriand's *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* on the train). The series is signed "Lepapadechouchou." A card from St. Petersburg in 1913 is a reminder that Debussy and T. S. Eliot shared some literary influences: "*Près la perspective Newsky/Habite monsieur Debussy.*"

A letter to Emma from Moscow during that same trip reveals him homesick as only a Frenchman can be: "We dine. There are two bottles of Evian water, as at home. It's stupid, but they make me want to weep. . . . I go to bed, woe-begone. . . . In an hour I get up and pace like an idiot. . . . I fall into an armchair, go to sleep, and am awakened by the cold. An ugly dawn, of a nasty white. . . . I go to bed again. . . . Somebody asks what I take for breakfast. . . . Ah, if I could take the train for Paris!"

THE HERITAGE OF DEBUSSY

Continued from page 55

Orchestra. Either score will prove to be most instructive. And their combined presence will remind the composer (and the rest of us) of at least three things:

First: that in the technique of composition the spirit of fantasy and improvisation should now and then take over from the spirit of rigid construction.

And second: that if anything makes up for the unavoidable and terrifying lack of poise and harmony (in the human, not the musical, sense of the word) in today's music, it is its being so stimulatingly a plurality of worlds. In 1830, between Berlioz and Cherubini, taste and insight had to choose at a glance: Boldness was clearly on one side, and Coldness on the other—although, in retrospect and in the old-wine view, Cheru-

bini appears to be quite a good composer. But in 1962 there is no reasonable reason why we should have to choose, for example, between the world of Edgard Varèse and the world of Benjamin Britten: with Berlioz and Cherubini the choice was between a race horse and a cart horse; with Britten and Varèse it would be between a Siamese cat and a cactus—clearly not a rational affair.

And third: that if ingenious handling of several different modes—Gregorian, dodecaphonic, or structural—makes for good scores, imaginative handling of several different moods—sense of the tragic, sense of humor, grim smile, tender smile, sense of sound's transience and music's permanence—makes for excellent ones.



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DEBUSSY ON MICROGROOVE

Continued from page 126

would say that Toscanini's splendid effort wins easily. Sharply emphasized, broad tempos and highly detailed, polished orchestral work are much in evidence here. The studio 8-H sound (from 1950, with a bit of a 1948 broadcast dubbed in) is extremely focused, if a bit thin and hard; but this is not inappropriate, since the Maestro's reading is intentionally linear and monochromatic.

Rosenthal's approach gives more play to the colorful, dancelike elements in the music. Although his orchestra lacks the ultimate virtuosity of the NBC Symphony, it plays very well indeed by any other standards. The reproduction is very close-to, but more succulent than RCA's. Rosenthal's languorous flexibility of rhythm makes an instructive comparison to Toscanini's hard-hitting approach. Both are thoroughly Iberian.

There is not much to be said for the three remaining alternatives. The Bloomfield (Everest) is a drab-sounding studio recording of a performance which strives for Toscaninian clarity but falls very short of the mark. Dervaux (Command) is plodding in the opening section, rigid and four-square in the second, and pointlessly fast in the third. Paray (Mercury) races throughout; and while both he and Dervaux receive magnificent assistance from their recording technicians, neither bothers with dynamics lower than *forte*.

—NBC Symphony, Arturo Toscanini, cond. RCA Victor LM 1833, LP.

—Orchestre du Théâtre National de l'Opéra, Manuel Rosenthal, cond. Westminster XWN 18770, LP; WST 14020, SD.

—Pittsburgh Symphony, Fritz Reiner, cond. Columbia ML 4021, LP (Deleted).

—Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia ML 4434, LP; CL 921, LP (Deleted).

Marche écossaise (1908)

This sparkling little *divertissement* was first composed as a piano duet in 1891. It was orchestrated in 1908. The full title is almost as long as the piece itself: *Marche des Anciens Comtes de Ross, dédiée à leur Descendant, le Général Meredith Read, Grand-Croix de l'Ordre Royal du Redempteur*. The music is based on Scottish folk tunes, and the orchestration is very suggestive of bagpipes. One of its themes is startlingly jazzlike, and in fact foreshadows Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. All told, a delectable little novelty.

Van Beinum's performance is rotund in tone, animated in tempo. Inghelbrecht's, which used to be available on the domestic Angel label, is much heavier in style. This veteran conductor approaches Debussy in a manner which we have become accustomed to associating with Beethoven; but unusual as his method may be, it carries logic and conviction. A version by Ansermet (London LL 1404) has been discontinued.

—Concertgebouw Orchestra, Eduard van Beinum, cond. Epic LC 3477, LP.

—Orchestre National de la RTF, D. Inghelbrecht, Ducretet-Thomson 320C153, LP (Import).

Première rapsodie pour clarinet et orchestre (1910)

Thoroughly mature Debussy, this is the best of all the composer's concerted works—varied in content, colorfully scored, and demanding impressive virtuosity from the solo protagonist.

The virtuosity is forthcoming from Kell, but, alas, his version is in the composer's uninteresting earlier setting with piano accompaniment. Jos D'hondt (Musical Masterpiece Society) has orchestral assistance from Goehr and the Netherlands Philharmonic, but his admirable, well-recorded performance lacks the polish and sensitivity of Kell's. (This disc, it might be added, is all but impossible to obtain.) What we need is a worthy new version, and perhaps London (with both Gervase de Peyer and Ansermet under contract) is the company to give it to us.

—Reginald Kell, clarinet; Charles Rosen, piano. Decca DL 9570, LP; DL 9744, LP.

—Jos D'hondt, clarinet; Netherlands Philharmonic, Walter Goehr, cond. Musical Masterpiece Society MMS 81, LP (Deleted).

Boîte à joujoux (1913)

This children's ballet is a "bitty," disorganized assortment of melodic fragments, motivic splinters, and thoroughly unfunny paraphrases and quotations. The story, allegedly involving dolls, sounds more like life among beatnik Parisians. The action, taking place in a toy-box, centers around a toy soldier who is enamored of a dancing-doll. She, however, is already being kept by a flibbertigibbet punchinello. There is an ensuing battle between soldiers and punchinellos (with dried peas as the lethal weapons), and our soldier is wounded. He is nursed back to health by our heroine (who has, by this time, been deserted by her first lover), wins her heart, and eventually marries her. The last tableau depicts the blissful couple twenty years hence. They are surrounded by offspring, and the punchinello has settled down as a game-keeper. Sketched as a piano score, the orchestration was begun by Debussy in 1913, but abandoned, since the outbreak of World War I precluded the ballet's being produced. The scoring was completed by André Caplet after the composer's death.

The only recording of the original piano version, by Pressler, on M-G-M, was very fine, but the disc is no longer available. Ansermet conducts skillfully, and gets very crisp, detailed recording. His version, however, lacks the wit and sparkle of Perlea's deleted Remington edition.

—Menahem Pressler, piano. M-G-M E 3042, LP (Deleted).

—RIAS Symphony, Jonel Perlea, cond. Remington R 199159, LP (Deleted).

—Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. London CM 9209, LP; CS 6079, SD.

Jeux (1913)

This work is one of the most obscure of the ballets commissioned by Diaghilev. Its obscurity is due to two factors: first, the music is highly elusive, almost as much so as a wisp of vapor; second, it received its first performance only two weeks before Stravinsky's *Sacre* and was soon lost in the ensuing shuffle. The story of *Jeux* deals with a tennis game and three participants, a boy and two girls. During the course of this twenty-minute work, the three young people forget about tennis in favor of more universal interests, quarrel, are reconciled, and finally return to their game. Debussy's impressionistic writing captures the abrupt movements of the dancers by sudden and constant shifts of meter and tempo. It takes many hearings of the music before one is able to grasp its full logic and meaning. In my opinion, it is fully worth the effort to do so.

Unfortunately, the three finest recorded performances of *Jeux* are no longer to be found in the domestic catalogue. De Sabata and Ansermet were the most mercurial and impressionistic in their approaches, while Inghelbrecht—on a onetime Angel disc (35678)—since reissued in France by Ducretet-Thomson—favored a more massive symphonic style. In each instance, the recorded sound was appropriate to the kind of performance it preserved: De Sabata's effort, the eldest of the trio, was muted and poetic; Ansermet's, brighter, crisper, but, again, delicately colored. The Inghelbrecht, on the other hand, stresses an ample concert hall sonority, with a full complement of string tone and with woodwinds clear, but distinctly to the rear of the sonic spectrum.

Of the available versions, the Rosenthal is too earthbound for this music, the conductor attempting to give the piece a definition alien to its threadlike texture. The very close-up microphone placement further stresses the modernistic, Stravinskyan approach of the interpretation. But, however alien Stravinsky might be to this work, he is certainly more congenial to its nature than Johannes Brahms and Richard Rogers, who clamorously demand our attention in Bernstein's egregiously heavy and coy exposition.

- Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. London LL 992, LP (Deleted); CS 6043, SD (Deleted).
- Orchestra of the Augusteo (Rome), Victor de Sabata, cond. RCA Victor LM 1057, LP (Deleted).
- Orchestre National de la RTF. D. Inghelbrecht, cond. Ducretet-Thomson 320C153, LP (Import).
- Orchestre du Théâtre National de l'Opéra, Manuel Rosenthal, cond. Westminster XWN 18771, LP.
- New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond. Columbia ML 5671, LP; MS 6271, SD.



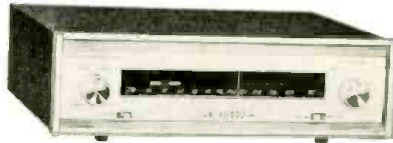
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"AN INNER UNITY"

Continued from page 58

sonata form, fugue, and so on. In his music the work itself, the inspiration, creates the form. But what must be observed is that this form completely conforms to the tonal basis of form. Take, for instance, the first movement of *La Mer*: it begins with a short introduction in B minor, through changing tonalities up to the first proper entry into D flat major. Then comes a motif on the horns. It comes three times, the third time leading to a second motif in B flat major. The second motif also comes three times. The third time it moves through various modulations, and this leads to a passage with a horn chorale that finishes the movement, as it began, in D flat. Thus the tonal scheme of a sonata is observed: we move from one tonality to another, which takes the place of the dominant in classical music, and then through various modulations back again into the initial tonality.

But while the condition of tonal form is observed, the content is quite different. This movement of *La Mer* is a unique example of a movement without recapitulation. Once the first motif appears, it has fulfilled its role and it then disappears. Then a second motif appears, it plays its role and is succeeded by another. The musical imagination keeps providing new ideas up to the end of the piece. That is what is typical of Debussy in all his works, and what

is so different from the classical composer, who always used a recapitulation.

P.H. What about his late works? Do you feel these show a decline over his earlier pieces?

E.A. Well, every composer has certain limits, especially those who are particularly individual. Look at Schumann, for example. You cannot imagine that Schumann would have gone very much beyond what we know of him. His last works are not quite the same as the earlier ones. The earlier ones have more freshness. In a certain sense it is the same with Debussy. But in fact what is so marked in his later work is concentration—a growing mastery of his own style, which enabled him to achieve a more concentrated expression at the end of his career. This is apparent in, for instance, the song *Promenoir des deux amants* and the Mallarmé songs: the single melodic line is much simpler than in the earlier Verlaine songs. And that is also true of *Le Martyre de Saint-Sébastien*, and of the last sonatas.

P.H. Do you think it is untrue to say that there was a decline?

E.A. It is not true. Debussy never repeated himself, and his music was always developing towards a more direct and more concise expressiveness. But illness attacked him too soon and deprived us of knowing where his genius could have led him.

P.H. You said that, in France, Debussy was not on the whole properly understood, but Pierre Boulez, in particular, has expressed very great admiration for him. Do you think there is any stylistic link between Debussy and Boulez?

E.A. No, there is none. The point is that young men like Boulez need to find some ancestor because they cannot be like orphans. They first found Varèse, but he was not a sufficiently impressive relative. So then they tried to find someone more imposing and they have found—Debussy. But only for one work: *Jeux*, because here Debussy's fantasy is exceptionally free and its formal development is quite extraordinary. Because they found in *Jeux* a freedom they had not found in Debussy's earlier work, they thought that it was a model for them. But *Jeux* is tonal and they are not tonal, and there is therefore no link between their music and Debussy's. If Debussy could return, he would protest against this claim.

P.H. But you think Boulez is attracted by the lack of thematicism in Debussy?

E.A. Yes, he is attracted by the liberty of Debussy in all aspects of his style. But Debussy's liberty is conditioned by tonal law, and this is something Boulez and his school reject. Debussy is as different from these composers as is a man who lives freely, but who observes moral and civil law, from a man who is a complete anarchist.

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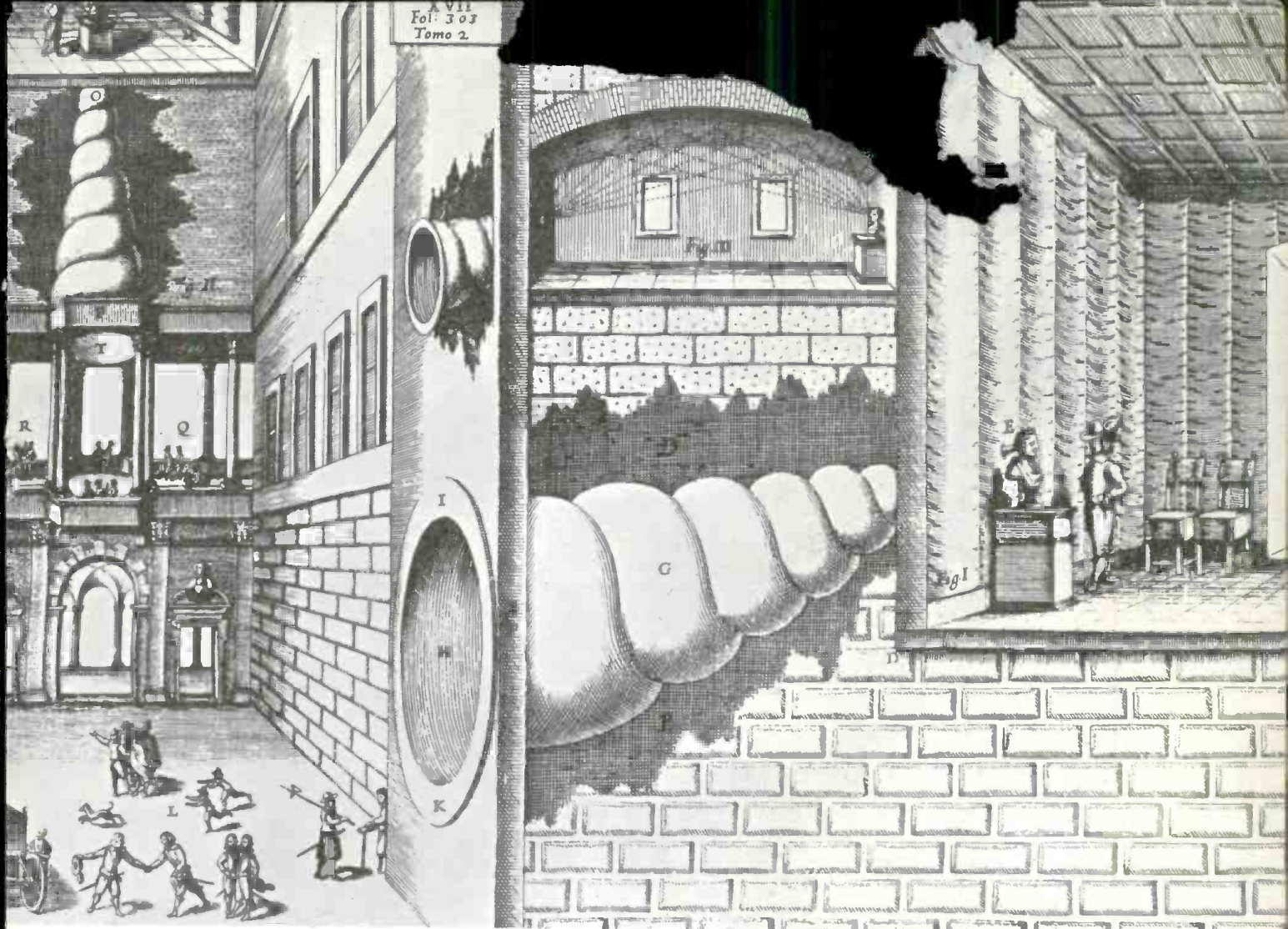
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14	Audio Originals	125	66
15	Audio Unlimited	130	Music Appreciation Record Club
16	Audio World	130	7
17	Audion	130	67
18	Benjamin Electronic Sound Corp.	125	68
19	Bozak, R. T., Co.	103	Pickering & Co.
20	British Industries Corp.	50	2
21	Brown, L. M., Sales Corp.	130	68
22	Cambridge Records	98	Pilot Radio Corp Inside Front Cover Professional Directory
23	Cameo/Parkway	85	130, 131
24	Carston Studios	130	70
25	Citadel Record Club	130	71
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30	Decca Records	82	Record Source International
31	Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft	91	129
32	Dixie Hi-Fi	130	77
33	Douglas Radio	130	78
34	Dressner	130	79
35	DuKane Corp.	128	80
36	Dynaco, Inc.	100	Rabsons-57 St., Inc.
37	Eastman Kodak	117	132
38	EICO	118	71
39	Electro-Voice	39	72
40	EMPIRE	1	73
41	Ercona Corp.	48	74
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43	Finney Co.	122	Reeves Soundcraft
44	Fisher Radio Corp.	9-17	31
45	Garrard Sales	50	76
46	Goodwin, C. C.	131	77
47	Grado Labs., Inc.	38	78
48	Granco Division	112	79
49	Gray Research & Development	120	80
50	Harman-Kardon, Inc.	49	Royce Electronic Developments
51	Heath Co.	32, 33	126
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53	Hi-Fidelity Supply	130	82
54	Jensen Mfg. Co.	46	83
55	Kenwood	42	84
56	Kersting Mfg. Co.	130	85
57	Key Electronics	130	86
58	KLH Research & Development Corp.	127	87
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60	Leak	48	89
61	Lesar of America	128	90
62	Library of Recorded Masterpieces	99	91
63	Lion Electronics	131	92
64	London Records	84	93
65	Magnecord	106	94
66	Marantz	40	95
67	McIntosh Laboratory, Inc.	47	111
68	Metropolitan Opera Guild	121	96
69	Music Appreciation Record Club	7	97
70	Pickering & Co.	2	98
71	Pilot Radio Corp Inside Front Cover Professional Directory	130, 131	99
72	Rabsons-57 St., Inc.	132	100
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79	Rek-O-Kut	43	107
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81	Rotorn Mfg. Co.	28	109
82	Royce Electronic Developments	126	110
83	Sanborn's Hi-Fi Center	124	111
84	Saxitone	130	96
85	Schwann Catalog	126	97
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87	Scott, H. H., Inc.	22, 23	99
88	Sherwood Electronics	Back Cover	100
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111	Weathers Division of Teleprompter Corp.	6	108
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S-8000 FM/MX 64-watt Stereo Receiver



S3000 IV FM/MX Stereo Tuner



S-5500 II 64-watt Stereo Pre-amplifier-Amplifier

This typical room setting includes Sherwood's "Superb Stereo Starters,"—one S-8000 Receiver and two SR3 Loudspeakers. Sherwood Electronic Laboratories, Inc., 4300 N. California Ave., Chicago 18, Illinois.

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