

for anybody, from mood-listener to classical highbrow!

Kodaly: Summer Evening. Prokofieff: Summer Day Suite. Concert Artist Symphony of London, Vicars.

Omegatape 7005 (5")

A tape with beautiful orchestral sound quality, mixed to perfection, but the playing of these two nicely paired easy works is routine, though accurate. The Kodaly is too long for what it says, but it's full of interesting orchestral color. The simple little Prokofieff children's pieces seem to me over-orchestrated in this, the composer's own version of the piano originals. Still—not a bad tape for general interest, both musical and hi-fi.

Beethoven: Piano Concerto #5 ("Emperor"). Horowitz; RCA Victor Symphony Orch., Reiner.

RCA Victor TC-4

One of the first batch of RCA tapes that I didn't get around to, this one makes an interesting comparison with the small-company tapes above. Quality of sound is, of course, very high, but not too noticeably superior to the general run. Tape recording is good anywhere and everywhere those days, or should be. What's more immediately noticeable is the performance—not so much its superiority as its much higher tension. That's what you pay for in these big-name artists.

To tell the truth, my main impression, in spite of the skill and dramatic craftsmanship displayed, was adverse. Too tense, too hard, too high-string.

Horowitz's piano is so hard that at times you'll wonder whether it's had microphoning. I doubt it. Reiner himself, the great conductor, can be a driving, steely orchestral taskmaster in music of this sort and, it seems to me, the two men egg each other on here. Yes—it's of our times in the spirit of the atomic age, and a *tour de force* of showmanship as well. But I'd rather prefer a less nuclear reading, big names or no. Try it yourself and you'll see what I mean.

(This recording is also available on disc, as with other RCA tapes, one of *eighteen* versions now extant on LP.)

Vivaldi: Concerto Grosso in D Mi., Op. 3, #11. Mozart: "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik." Bach-Stoessel: Prelude in E Major. Tchaikovsky: Serenade for Strings. Bolzoni: Minuet. Sorkin Symphonette.

Webcor 2923-3

This is the Fine Arts Quarter, as above reviewed, augmented with more strings to make a string orchestra of excellent recording proportions, for a very nice taped sound.

The orchestra's sense of style is not profound, nor perhaps should be if this is background music. For my ear it is anything but background stuff and so I can only suggest that whereas the Vivaldi is routine string playing (minus the harpsichord *continuo* that should be included), the Mozart is excellent and the Tchaikovsky the same. These three are the main items and should please any listener who wants a good and musical string sound, beautifully recorded.

The remaining two short bits, Bach-Stoessel and Bolzoni, are musically unnecessary. They are put on the tape to round out timing, in a process that I'm now beginning to understand as a very serious thing in tape circles—indexing.

Indexing means simply that the two halves of a two-track tape must be made to end within a few seconds of the same length. Why? Well, of course, so you won't have to reel off the extra blank tape on the shorter half. But the important reason is background music.

Many tape buyers, it seems, string their tapes together in one long stretch, for hours and hours of discreet background. Therefore every individual two-track tape must be filled up with music to each end, uniformly, or there will be long silences where the longer half runs beyond the end of the shorter track.

That, my friends, will give you a nice idea of the tape promoters' present heavy prac-



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