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Edited by Roland Gelatt

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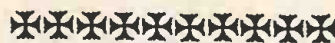
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Continued from page 106

and sometimes popularized reworkings of authentic folk stuff; but at their best (as in the extremely catchy *When the Dark Clouds Roll Away* and *Come Along, Charlie*), they have an unpretentious charm which is deftly underlined by the spontaneity of the little group of participating singers and the *solito voce* organ accompaniments by S. Benskin. As seems *de rigueur* with Josh, he and his guitar are extremely closely miked, as also is, less happily, Al Hall on an overponderous double bass. The stereo separation of the ensemble is somewhat excessive too, yet the over-all effect is admirably intimate and disarming—more so, I dare say, than it was in the LP version, Period SPL 1115, May 1956. (• • T 1085 BN, 7-in., \$11.95)

OMEGATAPE: The latest sampler from the West Coast firm, which also represents the Alphatape and Jazztape labels, is the most ambitious yet: entitled *Music for High Fidelity Shows* and illustrating some eighteen different reels (most of which have been reviewed lately in these pages) by surprisingly substantial excerpts framed by portentous opening and closing announcements. Omegatape's recent technical advances are excellently exemplified, as is the impressive diversity of its repertory; but the rapid alternation of, say, a Bach *Brandenburg* Concerto bit and Frank Costock's *Frantica* makes for a schizophrenic frenzy only too characteristic of the audio shows this sampler evokes (D 8, 7-in., \$5.95). The same company's first *Stereo Demo*, however, is more consistently light in musical content (except for a bit of Antheil's *Ballet mécanique*) and its sales pitch is made more palatable by Tom Mercein's ingratiating manner. Best of all, there are some fine examples of impressive stereo technology made available at a price few stereo novices can resist. (STD 6, 5-in., \$4.00)

SONOTAPE: How Glère must have chortled when he combined the rigidly orthodox Soviet "line" (c. 1927) of *The Red Poppy* ballet's story with every decadent-capitalistic musical and scoring cliché he could recall or anticipate. Yet in the present performance of a concert suite by the Vienna State Opera Orchestra (available earlier on Westminster LPs in WAL 210; more recently in XWN 2212 or separately as W-LAB 7001), I can't detect the slightest indication that Hermann Scherchen ever has his tongue in his cheek in these perfectly serious and indeed almost loving readings. Only the engineers may have been a bit ironical in endowing his playing with such massive weight and glittering brilliance. But nothing anyone can do ever can make the first five movements sound any less like travesties of film-and-broadcast pseudo-exotic sound effects: only in the rambunctious *Sailor's Dance* does the music suddenly come to triumphant life. (SW 1026, 7-in., \$7.95)



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