

Records in Review



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Classical Music	55
Recitals and Miscellany	72
Spoken Word	77
World of Entertainment	81
Fi Man's Fancy	85
Jazz	88
Tape Reviews	97
Tenors of the Past, Part I	105

CLASSICAL

BACH: *Concertos for Harpsichord and Strings; No. 1, in D minor, S. 1052; No. 4, in A, S. 1055*

Ruggero Gerlin, harpsichord; Cento Soli Orchestra of Paris, Victor Desarzens, cond.

• • OMEGA OSL 13. SD. \$5.95.

The performance of the D minor is more notable for energy than for finesse. In the slow movement the orchestra is too loud for the solo instrument. The cheerful A major Concerto is dealt with in more lyric fashion, though imagination is still in short supply. Stereo is fine here: harpsichord and low strings in one channel, violins in the other, all blending at the proper distance into live, spacious, clear sound. N.B.

BACH: *French Suites, S. 812-817 (complete); Fantasia and Fugue in A minor, S. 944*

Ralph Kirkpatrick, harpsichord.

• ARCHIVE ARC 3112/13. Two LP. \$5.98 each.

Another excellent job by Kirkpatrick, comparable to his *English Suites* for the same company. The lyrical movements flow smoothly, the rhythmic ones have verve, and the slow ones sing in a manner

one had thought practically impossible on a harpsichord. For a model of penetrating, eloquent Bach playing, I direct your attention to the Sarabande of the fifth suite here. One or two of the fast movements may seem a bit too fast, but in general the tempos are satisfying. And, as usual with this artist, the embellishments sound perfectly natural. He plays all the repeats but maintains interest by changing registration for the repeat. And to top everything off, there is the beautiful sound of his splendid harpsichord. N.B.

BACH: *Kunst der Fuge, S. 1080* (arr. Winograd)

† **Beethoven:** *Grosse Fuge, in B flat, Op. 133*

Arthur Winograd String Orchestra, Arthur Winograd, cond.

• M-G-M 2 E 3. Two LP. \$10.50.

Winograd's "arrangement" is similar in some respects to the Roy Harris-M. D. Herter Norton version of this work for string quartet. Many details of tempo, dynamics, and phrasing are common to both. Like Harris-Norton, Winograd wisely omits the canons, and like them he ends abruptly just where Bach laid down his pen in the last, unfinished fugue. The result is an extraordinarily eloquent reading of this masterwork, despite a few questionable tempos (Fugues 5, 6, and 7, for example, would benefit, it seems to me, by a slower pace).

Beethoven's *Great Fugue* has, of

course, frequently been played by string orchestras, but it has always seemed to me that this remarkable work does not thereby become any less enigmatic than in its original form for string quartet.

N.B.

BEETHOVEN: *Grosse Fuge, in B flat, Op. 133*—See Bach: *Kunst der Fuge, S. 1080*.

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

Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond.

• COLUMBIA ML 5320. LP. \$4.98.

This is Walter's third recording of this work for Columbia, and like his two earlier versions with the New York Philharmonic it seems sure to establish itself among the three or four preferred editions of the score. In both spirit and substance it is very similar to its predecessors, an indication that Walter's interpretative grasp of this score as we first came to know it was a mature conception he has not found reason to change.

Sonically, this is a much more rewarding set than those which have come before. The Los Angeles orchestra engaged for this series is a virtuoso ensemble (listen to the horns in the trio of the scherzo), and it is recorded with a spaciousness that robs nothing from clarity and presence. The stereo master, which I have not heard as yet, ought to be every bit as good as that of the *Pastoral* with which