

# THE STEREO REEL THE STEREO REEL THE STEREO REEL

Reviewed by DAVID HALL and JOHN THORNTON

## CONCERT

● **BRUCKNER**—Symphony No. 7 in E Major (Original version). Symphony Orchestra of the Southwest German Radio, Baden-Baden, Hans Rosbaud cond. SMS S 11 \$8.95

Musical Interest: Lush romanticism  
Performance: Mediocre  
Recording: Same  
Stereo Directionality: Fair  
Stereo Depth: Good

In the symphonies of Anton Bruckner, two things are necessary: a conductor with an expert ear for tempo, and a virtuoso orchestra. The first is needed because of the sheer length of his orchestral scores, and the latter not so much in terms of principal desk ability, but to sustain a lovely ensemble tone throughout. Bruckner has many splendid moments, with some long spaces between, and it calls for an expert hand on the podium to join the rambling bars together, and to make coherent musical sense from a symphony that can seem interminable and repetitious. The late Eduard van Beinum's wonderful issue on London, which goes back several years (LL852/3), provided the perfect solution in point.

In this SMS release, evidently processed from Vox masters, neither Rosbaud nor the Baden-Baden orchestra can match, even with the advantage of stereo, the strength and glow of the van Beinum reading. The sound of the old London album holds up amazingly well too! Rosbaud is heavy-weight, and offers little sunlight. There are times when the orchestra's string sections are not together. His reading as such is lushly romantic. At \$8.95, this 4-track stereo tape is a real bargain, for the sound is satisfactory if not spectacular, and some of the heaviness of bass can be balanced out by judicious adjustment of tone controls. J. T.

● **SYMPHONY OF DANCE**. RIMSKY-KORSAKOV—Dance of the Buffoons; SIBELIUS—Valse Triste; BIZET—L'Arlésienne: Minuet; GLIERE—Red Poppy; Russian Sailor's Dance; GLINKA—Russian and Ludmilla: Overture; BORODIN—Prince Igor: Polovtsian Dances. Musical Arts Symphony, Leonard Sorkin cond. Concertapes 4T 3003 \$6.95

Musical Interest: Well-balanced variety  
Performance: Vigorous  
Recording: Good  
Stereo Directionality: Classic seating  
Stereo Depth: Good

On four tracks of surprisingly wide-range  
NOVEMBER 1959

fidelity, Concertapes has issued an appealing tape containing six familiar selections including the 'complete' "Polovtsian Dances" from *Prince Igor*. Sorkin leads the ensemble in vigorous accounts of this popular fare shown above, and displays particular excellence in the Bizet. Percussion sound is a trifle buried, but all else is in fine balance. J. T.

## ENTERTAINMENT

● **THE ARMY WAY**. On, Brave Old Army Team; The Blue Tail Fly; Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child; World War I Medley—There's a Long, Long Trail A'Winding, K-K-K-Katy, It's a Long Way to Tipperary, Till We Meet Again, Mademoiselle From Armentieres, My Buddy, Over There; Onward Christian Soldiers; The Army Goes Rolling Along; While Strolling thru the Park One Day (Cadet Quartet of '58); Yellow Bird (Cadet Quartet of '58); 76 Trombones; Dixie; Alma Mater. The Cadet Glee Club of West Point. Chief Warrant Officer Frederick W. Boots, Director; John H. McKillop, Cadet Director; Cadet Rexford Good, accompanist. SMS S12 \$7.95

Musical Interest: Fine nostalgic stuff  
Performance: Good  
Recording: Some faulty processing  
Stereo Directionality: Excellent  
Stereo Depth: That's where the rub comes

The cadets sing most of the time in very creditable fashion, the arrangements are splendid, but the release is all but spoiled by two things: the piano could have been dispensed with (this is no criticism of Cadet Good), and there is too much level piled onto the tape, or at least this was true in my review copy. For at low-volume level, crosstalk from the other tracks comes through. Just as the cadets warm up to *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*, you hear in the background *Army Goes Rolling Along* or some such, in reverse, if you please, and the mood is spoiled.

The West Point group sings much in the tradition of Fred Waring, although not so trickily, and the arrangements are very appealing. *Strolling Through the Park* and *Yellow Bird* are delivered matchlessly by the Cadet Quartet of '58. They are so good it makes this reviewer wonder why they were allowed only two selections. If you

All tapes reviewed are 4-track, 7½ ips  
unless otherwise noted

want this tape, play it first before you buy. Go to the end of *Brave Old Army Team* and see if there is backward-background sound at high-volume level as *Motherless Child* begins. Perhaps my review tape was just a bad one. Let's hope so, for such a fault is hard to take. J. T.

● **GIGI & MY FAIR LADY**—Highlights, Hollywood Radio City Orchestra and Hollywood Light Opera Singers, Thomas M. Davis cond. Omega ST 4010 \$9.95

Musical Interest: No substitute for original casts  
Performance: Same  
Recording: Small studio mostly  
Stereo Directionality: OK  
Stereo Depth: Not much

The capsule comments above say just about all that can be said for this production. *Gigi* definitely suffers from small studio acoustics; there is some improvement in *My Fair Lady*; but I can't imagine anyone choosing these versions in place of the original soundtrack or original cast recordings, be they mono or stereo. D. H.

● **GIGI & MY FAIR LADY**—Highlights. The Radiant Velvet Orchestra, Caesar Giovanni cond. Concertapes 4T 4001 \$6.95

Musical Interest: Bon-bons from two great musicals  
Performance: Pro  
Recording: Good  
Stereo Directionality: Sharply divided  
Stereo Depth: Adequate

The Radiant Velvet Orchestra is a title that takes some real playing to live up to, and the Giovanni ensemble is not radiantly velvety, thank heavens. They play professionally and most of the time precisely. Things are a little on the heavy romantic, thickly emotive side, but you can't have everything. Giovanni's piano lead is satisfactorily strong without too much *arpeggio* improvisation and his arrangements are tasteful. Quality is fine throughout. J. T.

● **THE KING AND I** (Rodgers-Hammerstein). Orchestra, Warren Barker cond. Warner Bros. WST 1205 \$7.95

Musical Interest: Vintage Rodgers  
Performance: Can't replace the voices  
Recording: Bright  
Stereo Directionality: OK  
Stereo Depth: OK

The predominant brightness of War-