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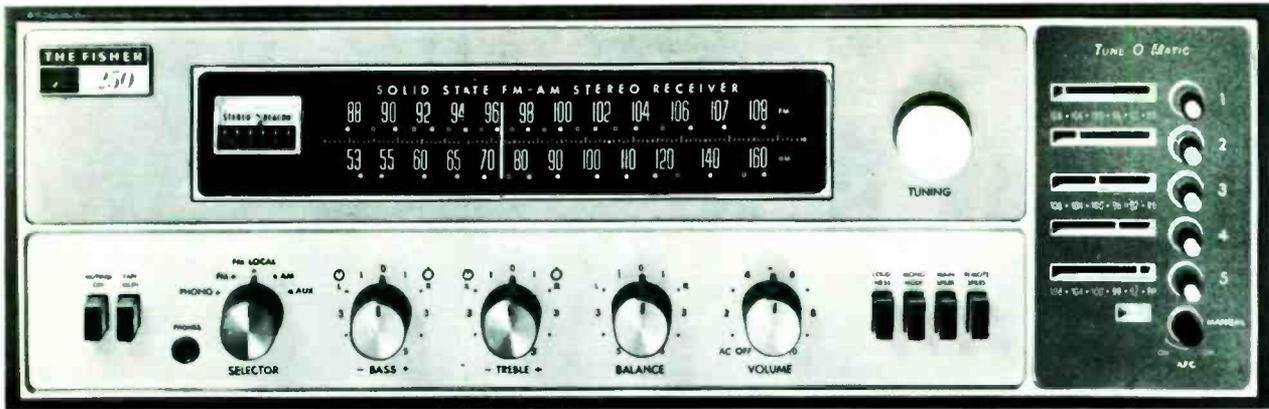
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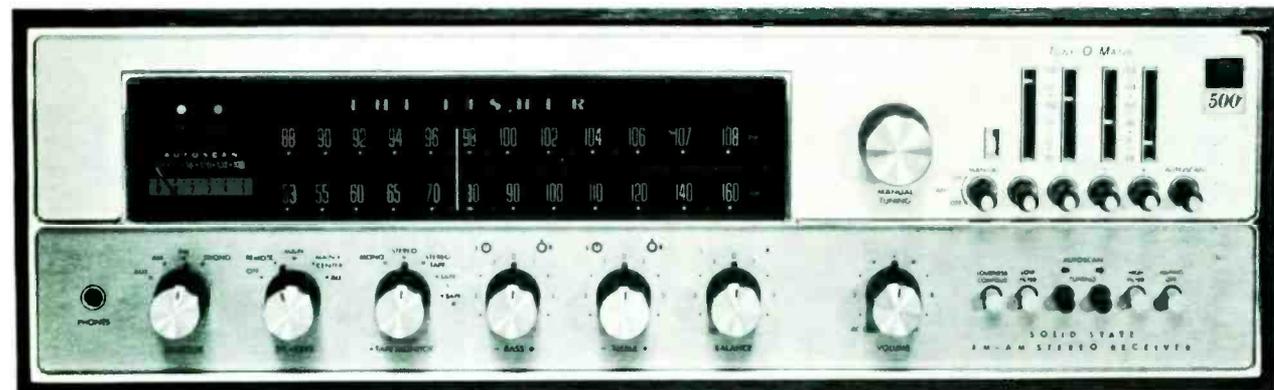
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HIGH FIDELITY

VOL. 19 NO. 5 May 1969

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Our New Department

DEAR READER:

This month we initiate a new department, "Speaking of Records." It is intended to fill a vacancy which, by the very nature of a critical journal like ours, often seems unavoidable.

As you know, the vast majority of HIGH FIDELITY'S reviews are of new releases. While our classical critics generally refer to previous versions of those works that have previous versions, for purposes of comparison, contrast, etc., "newness" is the peg to which any consideration for discussion must be attached. If there is no new release of a work, a previous one will have little chance for discussion in our review section.

We also publish record-appraisal articles pegged not to newness but to subject—the discographies such as this month's assessment of the recordings of Sibelius' symphonies.

This leaves the bulk of the discs found in any well-stocked record store outside the boundaries for discussion. And this is where "Speaking of Records" comes in.

Each month a different connoisseur—a professional musician, or an established critic, perhaps a serious collector—will tell you about recordings that have given him (or her) particular pleasure. We will expect that most of the recordings under discussion will be available to the reader who has been stimulated enough by the article to buy them. But this guideline will not always be adhered to: we've got one exceptional column that deals with a selection of extraordinary recordings which were deleted almost as soon as they were released. In this new open-ended, no-holds-barred column, you will find such singular accounts as the one this month by Leontyne Price who extols the recordings not only of other prima donnas like Callas and Schwarzkopf but of pianists like Weissenberg and Cliburn—and even of the Supremes!

The column will give our regular reviewers a chance to expound on recordings they might otherwise not have a chance to tackle. We are a magazine of specialists. If we have a standard opera to review, it will probably go to Conrad Osborne. An out-of-the-way classical or baroque opera? Paul Henry Lang is the man. A rock album? John Gabree. A piano recording? Who knows more about recorded piano literature than Harris Goldsmith? A medieval or renaissance recording? Susan Thiemann Sommer will review it. But our specialists don't listen only to their specialties. Perhaps Curator Sommer has a favored Beethoven or Shostakovich recording she would like to share with our readers. Mr. Goldsmith might particularly relish some stereo bon-bons or Wagnerian epic. Is Professor Lang secretly enjoying some original cast or rock album? I can hardly wait.

* * * * *

Look for our annual speaker issue next month. It will feature a three-way round-table discussion on "Speakers, Present and Future" by KLH's Victor Campos, JBL Sound's Dr. Robert Howard, and Electro-Voice's John Kelly. Among other topics, they will discuss whether the new radical designs are superior to the conventional paper cone in a box. We also hope to enlighten you with "Speaker Facts and Fiction," which should dispel some common misconceptions about these transducers. "A 60-Year-Old Controversy Has Flared Up Again" because of conflicting biographies of two onetime antagonists: conductor Serge Koussevitzky and composer Alexander Scriabin. We will print both versions and even come up with our own discovery of a critical object that was vainly sought by Scriabin scholars in the U.S.S.R. and Europe for half a century.

Leonard Marcus

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CIRCLE 17 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Perilous Hobby

As a serious and aggressive classical record collector for twenty-five of my thirty-five years, I identified totally with Leo Haber's "The Perils of Record Collecting" [February 1969]. I have passed through Mr. Haber's five crises—the last one when, bravely defying the critics, I purchased the universally damned Bortkiewicz Piano Concerto in B flat major and found it delightful. Allow me to add to Mr. Haber's five, two more crises of my own, thus putting myself on just the other side of Mr. Nixon's canonical six.

1) **The jaded collector's compulsion to explore and savor obscure musical byways:** This dangerous state is reached when one is overexposed to Tchaikovsky's Fourth, Liszt's *Les Préludes*, and other works ruefully labeled "war-horses." There is no limit to which one will not go in search of new exotic thrills. A knowing smile, indicative of my membership in an inner circle of priestly initiates, illumines my face whenever I play Josip Slavenski's striking *Sinfonia Orienta*, Roine Rautio's poignant D major Symphony and *Kelevala Suite*, Fnesco's brooding Third Symphony, the Taktakishvili Second, or E.T.A. Hoffmann's brilliant Piano Trio in E major.

2) **The drive to acquire out-of-print records:** There is something magical about a record long deleted from Schwann. Perhaps the item was not a red-hot money-maker and for this lame reason it was withdrawn, thereby unjustly cheating us of a delicious musical experience. Thus I have been breathing down the necks of out-of-print specialists from New York to San Francisco in search of such rarities as Mendelssohn's Second Symphony (on the aptly named Unicorn label), Bantock's haunting *Fijine at the Fair*, and Busoni's Violin Concerto. Ever since I accidentally found a long-deleted recording of Hugo Wolf's beautiful D minor Quintet in a teenybopper emporium which was otherwise given over to sheer junk, I have held the unshakable conviction that somewhere in this great land every record on my out-of-print list is waiting patiently for me.

William E. Oyler
St. Paul, Minn.

Collectors who share Mr. Oyler's tastes in esoterica, if not his energy in searching out that elusive deleted disc, will be pleased to hear of new recordings of both Mendelssohn's Second Symphony (on Philips—reviewed this month) and Wolf's String Quartet (on DGG—to be reviewed next month).

My wife always thought that she was the only LP-record widow around until I showed her Leo Haber's article in your February issue. You certainly have my

number. However, I differ from Mr. Haber's general description in the following respects.

1) I specialize in collecting works by composers of the Russian school, including imports of obscure symphonies by Scriabin, Miaskovsky, and Taktakishvili. I also specialize in pianists playing Chopin, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, performances by Rubinstein, and most all cello music.

2) I have a three-by-five card file completely cross-referenced by composer and performer so that I can put my hand on any record at will. I shelve records by label and number rather than by composer or category.

3) Once I acquire a record I will rarely part with it even on an exchange basis. To do so would mean adjusting the card file, and of course I have become so attached to the record that it would be like giving up a part of me.

Generally, I give each new record one or two hearings and file it. I would like to come to the end of my never-ending want list so that I can do more listening to earlier acquisitions. Perhaps I am now collecting just for the sake of collecting, but the temptations are too strong to stop.

Saul Kruger
Silver Spring, Md.

I was rather appalled to find that Mr. Haber had written my biography in your February issue, for I had no idea that someone was studying the sordid facts of my life behind my back.

But despite the painful shock of recognition, I was pleased that *something* had escaped Mr. Haber's acute eye: the passion for the "noncommercial" or "private" recording. This often takes the form of a tape made off the air where a great artist at the height of his powers and inspired by the immediacy of a live audience captures for posterity the electric charge of live music-making. Dare I cite Lotte Lehmann's farewell recital, Ezio Pinza's Giovanni (from the Met in 1942 with Bruno Walter conducting), and a Horowitz/Szell Tchaikovsky First that makes the old Toscanini collaboration look tame?

Eric Kisch
New York, N.Y.

Sonic Boom

Robert Angus' article "Hi-Fi in the Sky" [February 1969] has frightening implications. The picture of the trijet cabin with stereo speakers gives me cold chills. It is high time that the whole philosophy of background music be re-evaluated. I challenge the notion that it can contain "something for everybody without of-

Continued on page 8

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

press comment *on the*

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HIGH FIDELITY

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(Bernard Jacobson)

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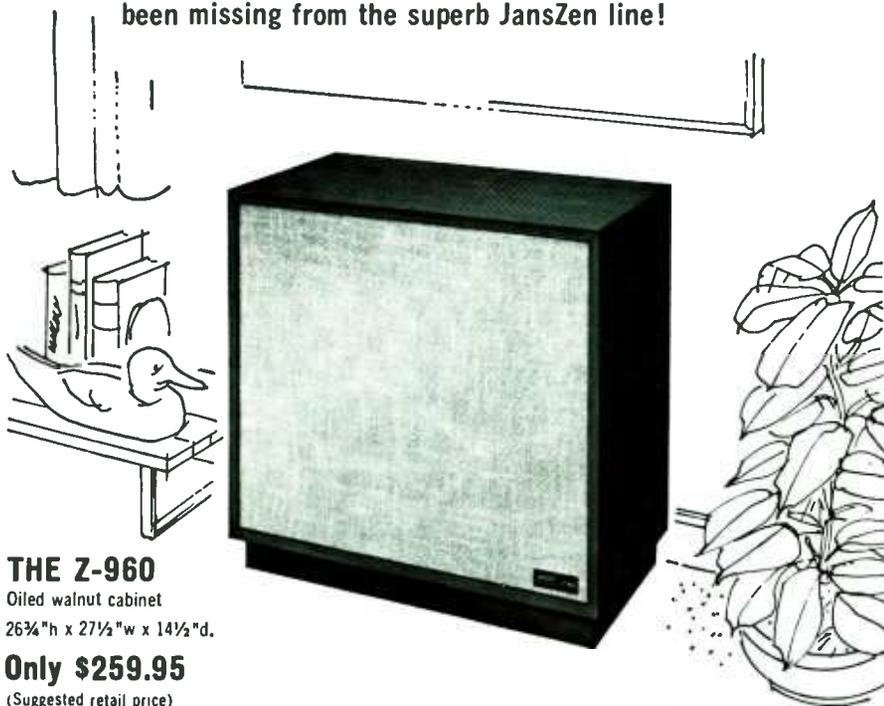
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CIRCLE 47 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

LETTERS

Continued from page 6

fending anybody"—this is offensive by its very nature. The incessant, inescapable spate of low-grade, constant-volume pipeline "music" that permeates our whole existence is the American equivalent of the Chinese torture, and it ought to be suppressed before we all go mad.

Music is a form of nourishment, and people should choose what they listen to as carefully as what they eat, and not just be sprayed with it all the time. As long as there are idiots around who are afraid to be alone with their own thoughts, I suppose we can go on feeding them intravenously, as it were, via headphones. But we should certainly turn off the loudspeakers that are disturbing the peace for the rest of us, especially in places like plane cabins with captive audiences. Now, how about headphone sets for restaurant tables and for supermarket shopping carts?

Ernest Stavenhagen
Galveston, Texas

In your article "Hi-Fi in the Sky" you might have mentioned one very effective side benefit of those nasty plastic earphones the airlines use: nothing has been previously invented to shut up a gabby bore in the adjacent seat so completely as wearing the earphones, even with the program material shut off.

Frank Tack
Los Angeles, Calif.

Exclusive Artists

Apropos of Leonard Marcus' "Fausts in the Studio" [January 1969], I must agree that exclusivity of recording contracts is a very real problem.

I recently asked Nathan Milstein if he might consider reviving his chamber music collaboration with Vladimir Horowitz for a few Carnegie Hall recitals and recordings. Although hesitant at first, for fear that his remarks might be taken as an indication that they were definitely going to do it, Milstein finally conceded that he would be "delighted" provided Horowitz indicated some enthusiasm for such a project.

In response to a follow-up query, I received a letter from Mr. Horowitz stating that he was "seriously considering the proposal" but "the fact that we record for different companies (Columbia and EMI) makes matters a little complicated." That was last May, and as yet I have heard nothing further to indicate that anything has been done about the Horowitz/Milstein recitals and recordings.

Naturally, if the "devil" of exclusive contracting should prevent two giants of musical history from committing their collaborative efforts to disc, the recording industry would have to bear the responsibility of allowing a collaboration between two great musicians to go undocumented. In this particular case, the only thing that maintains my optimism is the recent Columbia/EMI exchange permitting the Cleveland Orchestra and Szell

Continued on page 10

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LETTERS

Continued from page 8

to record with Gilels on Angel. Perhaps EMI now owes Columbia a favor (if such reciprocity exists in the recording industry) and would allow Columbia to borrow Milstein for recording sessions with Horowitz. Let's hope so.

Jim Roos
East Lansing, Mich.

Critical Gall

I suppose any sane person has a boiling point and I have finally reached mine. I cannot understand Bernard Jacobson's prejudiced and irrational remarks concerning Eugene Ormandy and the Phil-

adelphia Orchestra. I refer to his review of the Telemann concertos on RCA ["The New Releases," March 1969] and his snide crack at Ormandy's older recording of Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique* ["Berlioz on Records," March 1969]. I, for one, do not consider the Telemann recording akin to "badly played Brahms," which was Mr. Jacobson's analogy. Perhaps Ormandy does bring a romantic treatment to baroque works, but I am nonetheless impressed by the élan and elegant playing of the Philadelphia first-desk virtuosos.

Mr. Jacobson's criticisms are typical of his attitude toward the Philadelphia Orchestra. His hysterically partisan comments on the Chicago Symphony are quite well known to anyone who reads

your magazine regularly, and to those of us who follow his weekly criticisms in the *Chicago Daily News*. Mr. Jacobson is entitled to civic pride in his city's orchestra, but not to the extent where he allows his emotions to do away with reason, to say nothing of musical judgment.

Richard J. Grande
Madison, Wisc.

Mr. Jacobson replies: Mr. Grande accuses me of civic pride, prejudice, and irrationality. Civic pride, which I happen not to possess, is neither here nor there—I accepted a post in Chicago partly because I knew the orchestra to be a great one, not the other way around. And I'd be glad if Mr. Grande could instance some of those "hysterically partisan comments." As for prejudice, anyone who has read my reviews of the Karajan Bruckner Ninth, the Szell Mahler Fourth, or even the Ormandy Nielsen Sixth, and compared them with the general trend of my writing about these three conductors will know that my judgments are not determined by prejudice. As for irrationality, anyone who can read at all will absolve that Telemann review of the charge: there can surely be no more "rational" grounds for adverse criticism than bad intonation, unsteady tempos, and unrealistic balances. Mr. Grande is certainly entitled to like what I don't like, since we all ultimately judge by the emotional effect a performance has on us, and his gut is different from mine. But his total ignoring of the specific points I drew attention to suggests that it is he, not I, who is being prejudiced and irrational.

The "snide crack" he alludes to consisted, I take it, in pointing out Ormandy's rescorings of Berlioz. It's odd how often people leap to the defense of an interpreter at the expense of the composer. If stigmatizing such tamperings as presumptuous is snide, I am happy to be so.

I am very worried. May we have an immediate report on the state of Harris Goldsmith's mental health? Could it be that his psychiatrist's couch is out to be reupholstered and he is taking his frustrations, phobias, delusions, and other mental aberrations out on his typewriter? When, all in the same issue [March 1969], he can: a) label Artur Schnabel's sensitive, poetic, sober, introverted, thoroughly beautiful performance of the Chopin F minor Concerto as "roughneck . . . heavy, dull, and brutal"; b) find nothing but praise for Cliburn's unidiomatic, technically insecure, thoroughly dull reading of the Grieg A minor Concerto; c) prefer Watanabe's slapdash, rough-edged, tonal-balance-and-orchestral-ensemble-be-damned set of the Sibelius symphonies to Bernstein's altogether exemplary account—then he has lost me completely. As if this weren't enough, there is Mr. Goldsmith's rave review for that egocentric crackpot, Glenn Gould, whose performance of the Prokofiev Seventh Piano Sonata is the worst I've ever heard.

Every man to his own taste: however, as far as I am concerned, Mr. Gold-

Continued on page 14

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

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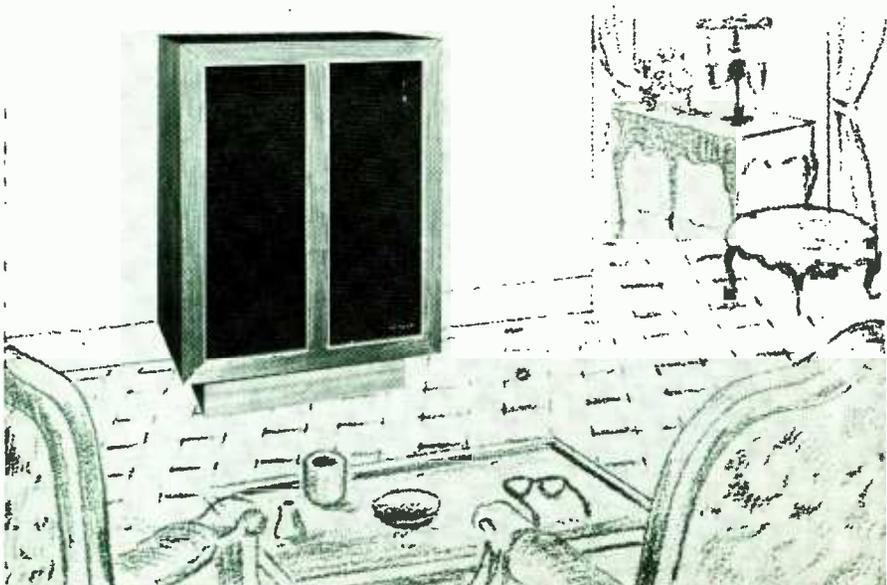
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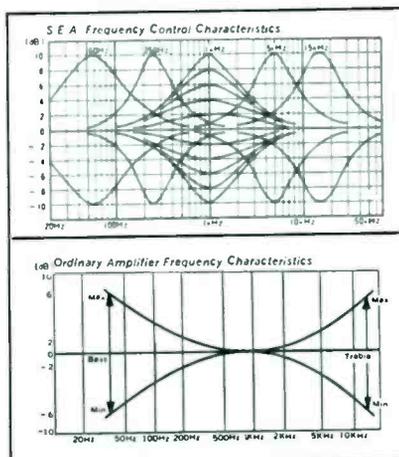
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LETTERS

Continued from page 10

smith isn't competent to criticize Andy Williams playing the *Spinning Song*.

Herbert Reno
Denver, Colo.

Mr. Goldsmith replies: Reader Reno is quite right in his assertion "every man to his own taste." Personally, I'd much prefer Roger Williams on piano, though it might prove interesting to hear Andy Williams sing Mendelssohn's *Spinning Song*.

Now Generation

Peter G. Davis is out of his mind! How could anyone with ears in their head praise the god-awful, off-pitch, strained,

ugly singing of Giovanni Martinelli on that *Otello* reissue ["Repeat Performance," December 1968]? I took my copy back to the store so fast it nearly melted.

When we have had Vinay, Del Monaco, Vickers, and McCracken to show us that *Otello* can sound beautiful as well as dramatic, why do your reviewers insist on praising the hacks of olden times? Every time I listen to a Martinelli or Melchior record I thank God for Kraus, Corelli, King, Windgassen, Pavarotti, and the other twenty-five great tenors we have today. Boo on you.

Stella Sherman
San Francisco, Calif.

The Beatles' Own Thing

In reference to John Gabree's review of

Somebody finally designed a speaker that's compatible with the human ear.

Speakers are shaped like cones, right?

The existing cone type speaker was invented by A. S. Sykes in 1919. Then it was refined by C. W. Rice and S. W. Kellogg. The enclosure and bass reflex enclosure happened between 1920 and 1930. The exponential horn was developed about 1919. By 1930, the fundamentals were perfected. And today, these fundamentals are still the same.

Recently, manufacturers have tried to reproduce sound which they believe is comfortable to the human ear — thus, the advent of unreal booming bass and strident highs. And, a great many people like it that way because they think it's high fidelity (in a way it is), but it usually isn't NATURAL sound the way it was originally produced.

With full consideration of the human ear and with the desire to produce a speaker which faithfully reproduces sounds as they were originally created, Yamaha

successfully developed the NATURAL SOUND SPEAKER. It's not based on the piston motion concept of conventional cone type speakers. It's based on the principles of acoustical musical instruments such as the piano, guitar or violin. The quality of sounds produced are directly correlated to the acoustical design of their sounding boards. The sounds are called BENDING MOTIONS of sound, and they are natural sounds.

Following the concept of acoustical bending motions of sound, Yamaha developed the Natural Sound Speaker. Its construction is entirely different from that of a conical type speaker. It has a rigid diaphragm constructed of a spe-

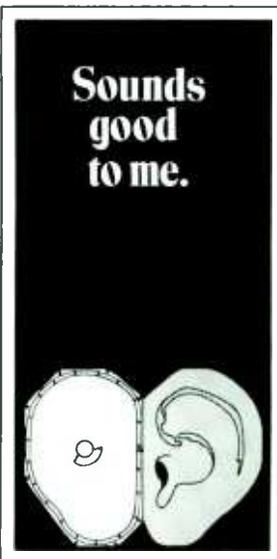
cially formulated polystyrene. The entire edge of the speaker is firmly fixed on a frame.

What about the unusual shape of our speaker? Well, a grand piano isn't exactly round. Like we said, the Natural Sound Speaker operates on the same concept as the sounding board of a grand piano, violin or guitar. They are shaped the way they are for a very good reason, and so is the Yamaha Natural Sound Speaker. Tests show that a symmetrical design (round, rectangular, square, triangular, etc.) gives rise to degeneration in the vibration mode at specific frequencies.

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CIRCLE 78 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

the new Beatles recording [March 1969]: I agree, the Beatles are becoming harder and harder to write about, but not because of, as Mr. Gabree puts it, "sociological treatises," but because their music and philosophical "being" is more complex.

The Beatles is a farewell to the provincial sound of the Sixties and the even more traditional sound-makers. If the Beatles perform here in the styles of Dylan, Joplin, the Beach Boys, and many others, it is not to mock, but to show that they can master these styles if they wish and in some cases even do a better job of it.

I have always received the message of the Beatles albums and I think that their latest says: a) we are the Beatles and no one else—we have our style and they have theirs; b) so long to the traditional: now we can become ourselves in our music.

There is no mediocrity in this album, only in the styles of the people they are emulating. There is no mockery in the simplicity of *Blackbird*, only the idealistic beauty of the Negro's "freedom." And can a man and his music be commonplace if one song reveals several connotations? *Happiness Is a Warm Gun*, for example, touches on sexual aggression, drug use, and gun legislation.

No, Mr. Gabree, there is no mediocrity in the Beatles' latest album, only a subtle and disturbing transition. The Beatles have reached a stage where they no longer need outside influences. They have reached a point in their work where they can become themselves.

J.B. Hanson
Atlanta, Ga.

It becomes increasingly difficult to read reviews about the Beatles. I am tired of critics looking for "a sharp sense of what sounds nice," though indeed, when listened to on that level their music *does* sound "nice." But that is surely damning with faint praise.

I have read few reviews of the Beatles—and none recently—which treat them as musicians. They are not culture heroes, and when a critic who treats them as such is disappointed, he invariably attacks the "flab foursome." (As an aside to Mr. Gabree: Where did you find such a God-awful epithet?)

I am as biased as Mr. Gabree and don't deny it. But I am fed up with such "in-depth" reviews, where the underlying criticism is based on the peculiarity of their private lives, their "differentness." When a critic looks for hidden meanings and doesn't like what he finds, perhaps he should analyze his own interpretation, not the music itself.

I am not saying anything against the Stones; they are a fine group. But Mr. Gabree's comparison is not valid. Their respective styles are radically different: one might as well compare the Beatles with the Brothers Four. The Stones' *Banquet* is a good album, but so is the Beatles' latest. They are simply not fair game for comparison.

In the future, please get someone to review the Beatles who won't hold up

Continued on page 16

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

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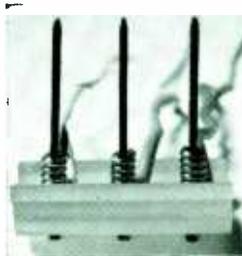
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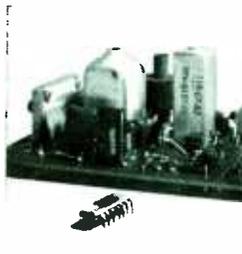
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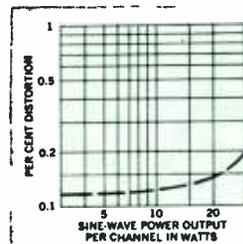
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LETTERS

Continued from page 14

the standards of Muzak as the measure of musical worth. This much, at least, is owed the performers.

*Frederick Wasti
Brockton, Mass.*

A Reprise for Deletions

I agree wholeheartedly with the views of Dr. Abram Chipman in his letter to the editor titled "A Mono Repository" [February 1969]. I believe that there is a definite need for deleted recordings to be made available from some central source, and I think that the most practical way to accomplish this would be to convince each record company that it would be profitable to do so. The cost of actually pressing a copy of a record is very low; the vinyl is probably worth about ten cents. What the customer pays for when he spends \$5.98 is the performance and recording costs. Therefore, it would cost a record company very little to make extra copies before they destroy the stampers and delete the record. Then, when a collector wants the deleted record, it could be ordered directly from the company that recorded it. This system would also be of great benefit to the company, because through it they could find out first-hand if there is still a great demand for a particular record that they may have deleted prematurely.

In order to convince manufacturers of the value of such a plan, interested collectors will have to organize. One group that I know of, which may be able to help, is the Association for Recorded Sound Collections. Presently, it has approximately 150 members, many of whom will make tape dubs of deleted recordings they have for anyone who can't find a copy. For further information, write to Mr. Paul T. Jackson, Oakland University Library, Rochester, Michigan 48063. If the ARSC became stronger, I think that this organization could have the power to influence record companies to consider some form of solution to this problem.

*Steve Keller
Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

Criticism Criticized

Criticizing criticism is normally a completely wasteful intellectual pursuit, but Philip Hart has driven me to lay aside my intellect temporarily and grasp my emotional cudgel. No less than three of his reviews in the January HIGH FIDELITY represent, respectively, the epitome of fatuous self-indulgence, sophomoric hyperbole, and misdirected emphasis. In addition, he hasn't done his homework.

In his review of Elgar's *Enigma Variations* and *Cockaigne Overture*, Mr. Hart writes ". . . Elgar's pomposity in the *Enigma Variations* is less offensive than *Cockaigne*. About the latter work. I have nothing further to say." This is the sum total of all Mr. Hart says about the *Cockaigne Overture*! Very informative! Mr. Hart is so livid at the quality of

Continued on page 18

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the music that he refuses to review it. Does Mr. Hart have such an ego problem that he really believes that HIGH FIDELITY readers care to read about his rage at the music? Did it not occur to him that some readers who enjoy the music just might be looking for a record review?

Mr. Hart's review of Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony misses what is perhaps the most important point of this release; that at long last, this is the first completely uncut performance on records. I'm sure that there are myriad admirers of this work who have been waiting to hear what an uncut performance sounds like. Alas, if their sole source of information is HIGH FIDELITY, they won't know that this experience is now within their grasp because Mr. Hart makes absolutely no mention of it.

I have now read the lead sentence of Mr. Hart's feature review of Haydn's London Symphonies five times and I still don't believe it. I reluctantly accept his assertion that ten thousand symphonies were written in Europe in the eighteenth century (though this figure seems absurd). For all I know, some eccentric may have devoted thirty or forty years of his life to counting them and Mr. Hart may well have come across this figure in a reference. But I can't believe Mr. Hart's monstrous conceit in pontificating that ". . . those by Mozart and Haydn alone deserve to be remembered . . ." (italics mine). Has Mr. Hart heard all ten thousand? Or perhaps he's heard, say, three thousand and examined the scores of the remaining seven thousand? Let me simplify the question. Has Mr. Hart at least heard the four symphonies comprising C. P. E. Bach's Wq. 183? If he has not, he hasn't done his homework. If he has, I question his judgment.

Delwin Morrison
Melville, N.Y.

Mr. Hart replies: Nothing pleases a critic more than evidence that he is being read: in this case I at least rejoice in having roused more than passive interest on the part of the reader. In baseball parlance, Mr. Morrison has one out of three.

My opinion of Elgar's Cockaigne Overture is simply that—legitimate critical opinion about an aspect of Elgar's music that repels me. My statement was precise and, to the general reader, possibly informative. To the Elgar fan, who may well like the Cockaigne Overture, my subsequent endorsement of Davis' performance should give some help in determining whether or not he might investigate this record.

In the case of the Rachmaninoff Second Symphony, I plead an abject mea culpa. I shall not pretend here, nor could I in my review, that I have listened to all recorded versions of this symphony. I did listen to it with the score, as I do all records I review whenever possible, and would have reported cuts had there been

any. Subsequently, after my review went to press, I saw promotional material stating that this is in fact the first complete recording of this Symphony; had this information been available earlier, I would have mentioned it.

Finally, my authority for the estimate of the number of symphonies written in the eighteenth century is not some "eccentric," but rather the annotator of the set of records reviewed—Dr. Joseph Braunstein, a distinguished musicologist specializing in precisely this area of study. Of course I have not heard all ten thousand symphonies estimated by Dr. Braunstein, but I have heard enough to substantiate the opinion—I repeat opinion—expressed in this review. Among those I have heard were many by C. P. E. Bach, and these may include those mentioned by Mr. Morrison; if such were the case, they did not make the kind of impression on me that they have on Mr. Morrison. But, as in the case of Elgar, he has his opinion and I have mine.

The Sound of Bizet

Of course Bernstein's new recording of Bizet's Symphony in C "is . . . one of the finest sounding records I [Philip Hart] have heard from the Philharmonic in some time" [January 1969]. The Bizet was recorded in the warm acoustic ambience of Manhattan Center, a site Columbia Records used until late 1965, whereupon they foolishly opted for acoustically dead Philharmonic Hall.

Since the switch, every New York Philharmonic recording has sounded thin, confined, and murky; not once have we had a recording to equal the brilliance of older discs such as *Alexander Nevsky*, Shostakovich's *Leningrad Symphony*, and others. One shudders to imagine how awesome Bernstein's recording of Mahler's Sixth might have sounded if he recorded it in the old site. As it is, the companion Mahler Ninth sounds richer and more resonant, even though recorded two and a half years before the Sixth.

Milton Zapsolski
Schenectady, N.Y.

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NOTES

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS



LONDON

Richard Wagner and Richard Rodgers—

As Sung by Renata Tebaldi

Renata Tebaldi was intent on thwarting all eavesdroppers during her recent recording sessions in Kingsway Hall—and understandably, too. The soprano's repertoire for her two latest Decca/London recital discs (her first in over four years) is decidedly out of the ordinary and any sort of audience, however sympathetically disposed, might well have aggravated an already tense studio atmosphere. Although I was unable to attend the sessions, the prospect of Tebaldi taping such unexpected items as Isolde's *Liebsteod* and Rodgers and Hammerstein's *If I Loved You* sends the imagination racing.

One disc will be entirely devoted to operatic arias, and besides Isolde's ecstatic "Love Death," Tebaldi decided to include another Wagner selection, "Elsa's Dream" from *Lohengrin* (Elsa, by the way, at one time actually figured in the soprano's active repertoire; followers of filmed opera may recall an Italian version of Wagner's music drama with Giacinto Prandelli and Tebaldi on the sound track). A sequence of popular French arias is also planned for this recital, including the Habanera from *Carmen*, "Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix" from *Samson et Dalila*, and two arias from Massenet's *Manon*. Everything was sung in Italian, of course, and the conductor for the occasion was Anton Guadagno, who led the New Philharmonia Orchestra.

The second record will be of a decidedly mixed nature. Richard Bonyngé, who has had plenty of experience directing accompaniments in lightweight show pieces for his wife, Joan Sutherland, took charge of the conductorial duties for these sessions. Tebaldi described her choices here as a collection of encores, ranging from the heavier splendors of Aida's "Ritorna vincitor" to such pop favorites as *Estrellita*, *Granada*, *Cor'ingrato*, and the aforementioned *If I Loved You*. Tebaldi enjoying herself, just that.

Davis' Finger-Splitting Encores. In the same hall, just a few days earlier, Decca/London also recorded the brilliant young American pianist, Ivan Davis, in a comparable collection of encore numbers. In two visits, this year and last, Davis has

made quite an impact in London with his deliberate avoidance of pianistic "good manners" (as he sees it, when people started following Schnabel, the rot set in). "If I'm going to copy Horowitz, it's got to be good," he said boldly, pointing out that he had added the Horowitz elaborations (not to mention some of his own) to Moritz Moszkowski's already daunting *Fantasy on Themes from Carmen*. So he applied himself diligently for three successive days, seven hours a day, battling with this and other equally formidable show pieces until the ends of his fingers were in danger of splitting and he had to tape them up.

The record pays tribute to eight great virtuoso pianists from Clara Schumann to Horowitz—an idea somewhat similar to Joan Sutherland's homage to her great predecessors in "The Art of the Prima Donna." As a precaution, the Decca engineers had placed the microphones rather further away from the piano than they usually do in Kingsway Hall, and the sound was correspondingly fuller and richer, less clangorous, though cleanly focused to catch all of the fiendish repeated notes in Moszkowski's *Caprice espagnol*. The collection will include Liszt's *Fantasy on Mendelssohn's Wedding March* (with Ivan Davis' elaborations), Schumann's *Abegg Variations*, Chopin's *Andante spianato and Grande Polonaise brillante*, Rachmaninoff's arrangement of *The Flight of the Bumble-Bee*, and Liapunov's *Lesginka*—nearly an hour of hair-raising acrobatics at the keyboard.

Lewenthal Records an Oddity. Raymond Lewenthal has also been hard at work, recording a brilliant nineteenth-century oddity for CBS—the Piano Concerto by the German pianist and composer Adolf von Henselt. Lewenthal was scheduled to record this concerto before Christmas with the London Symphony Orchestra under Antal Dorati, but Asian flu sabotaged the project. The sessions were postponed to a later date and the new conductor was Charles Mackerras—the recently appointed musical director of Sadler's Wells Opera. Lewenthal, unlike Davis, was nervous about having critics present, but the sessions were kept to schedule, with the pianist recording both the Henselt and Liszt's *Totentanz*—a conflation of the composer's two different versions prepared by Lewenthal himself. The recording should be appearing on both sides of the Atlantic before the end of the year. EDWARD GREENFIELD

Continued on page 24



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The Missing

NOTES FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS

Continued from page 20

TORONTO

Canada Enters The International Recording Picture

The Canadian record industry, hitherto content with releasing best-sellers from Britain and the United States, is now beginning to bring Canada into international prominence as a recording center for serious music. The Dominion's centennial year, 1967, saw RCA recordings featuring the Montreal Symphony and a Winnipeg group, as well as CBS's two-disc set of "Canadian Music in the Twentieth Century." In recent months such domestic labels as Dominion have joined RCA, Columbia, and Capitol in recording works by native contemporary composers, including Murray Adaskin, Pierre Mercure, Kelsey Jones, J. J. Gagnier, and Howard Cable. Additionally, RCA has issued a twenty-disc collection, mainly of Canadian music, performed largely by Canadian artists. The same company commissioned and has just recorded *Asterism for Piano and Orchestra* by the Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu, performed by pianist Yuji Takahashi with the Toronto Symphony led by Seiji Ozawa. Earlier, Columbia recorded music of Schoenberg (*Verklärte Nacht*, *Three Little Orchestra Pieces*, *Survivor from Warsaw*, *Pelleas and Melisande*) with Robert Craft and the CBC Symphony, and a Stravinsky collection (*Symphony in C*, *Suites 1 and 2 for Small Orchestra*, *Mavra*) with the same orchestra led by the composer. The Takemitsu, Schoenberg, and Stravinsky projects encompass distribution in the United States as well as Canada.

Of course, ever since early LP days the Canadian record industry has been active in tapping pop material for the Quebec market, and indeed future growth will include further inroads into Canada's pop and folk legacy. (RCA, for example, has issued a ten-record anthology of Canadian folk music.) While the Canadian pop scene has long concentrated on recording American hits translated into French and performed by native talent, recent years have seen the growth of peculiarly French-Canadian artists, the *chansonnier*—Gilles Vigneault comes to mind—who writes his own material, words and music, with local topics as the source of material. Virtually unknown outside the Province of Quebec, they can nonetheless sell as many as 100,000 copies of a hit LP—a Gold Record in Canadian terms. (Not only is the Canadian record market numerically small, but only two out of thirteen people own phonographs, as compared to the U.S. ratio of two to eight.)

Merchandising Methods. Two parallel—and occasionally overlapping—programs

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have so far resulted in several dozen LPs, with many more promised. The International Service of the CBC has collaborated with RCA to produce such albums as the ten-disc folk set mentioned above and Harry Sommers' opera *The Fool*. Similarly, the Composers, Authors, and Publishers Association of Canada (its equivalent of ASCAP) is in the second stage of a project to underwrite recordings that major labels have agreed to release.

Composer/conductor Louis Applebaum supervises the CAPAC program (which has already produced ten LPs), as well as pursuing his musical career. He acted as conductor, for instance, for CAPAC's album of music composed by Eldon Rathburn for Expo '67's Labyrinth. Released by Dominion, this disc is CAPAC's best seller; ironically it has yet to show a profit. As Dominion's president, T. St. Clair Low, explains, "It may have been one of the most expensive records ever made in Canada because of the size of the orchestra and the amount of studio time required for special audio effects." CAPAC put up the money, and Low, who believes profit to be just around the corner, handled manufacture and distribution.

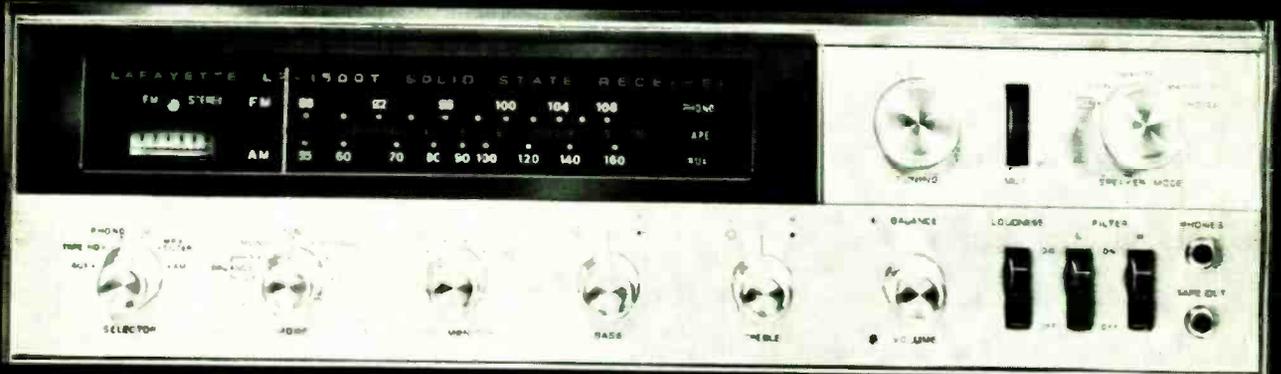
Applebaum's zeal and flair for merchandising is reflected in an album called "Heritage," containing works by seven Canadian composers. He had discovered that the developers of the St. Laurent shopping center in Ottawa were searching for a distinctive gift for VIPs, and managed to persuade them that there would be nothing more distinctive than a record featuring Canadian music. "I made arrangements with Dominion to release and distribute the disc at list price," he recalls; "and we guaranteed the developers that the shopping center's symbol would appear on every record, along with credit for their sponsorship in the liner notes. They were delighted and agreed to pay for the recording and to underwrite Mr. Low's costs of manufacture."

George Harrison of RCA admits that most of his Canadian music projects won't make a profit. However, since the Canadian Broadcasting Company generally supplies the tapes (from CBC broadcasts), costs are relatively small. Harrison sees libraries and radio stations as the main market for these records at present, but is optimistic about Canada's future in the recording field. "You won't see the Toronto Symphony recording Beethoven or Brahms for sale in New York," he notes. "We'll have to stick to the unusual and unrecorded if we want to do business in the world market. But we have several things going for us. For one thing, the CBC subsidizes groups like the Winnipeg Orchestra. Furthermore, because these Canadian musicians play so many twentieth-century works they don't need as much rehearsal time as their colleagues abroad."

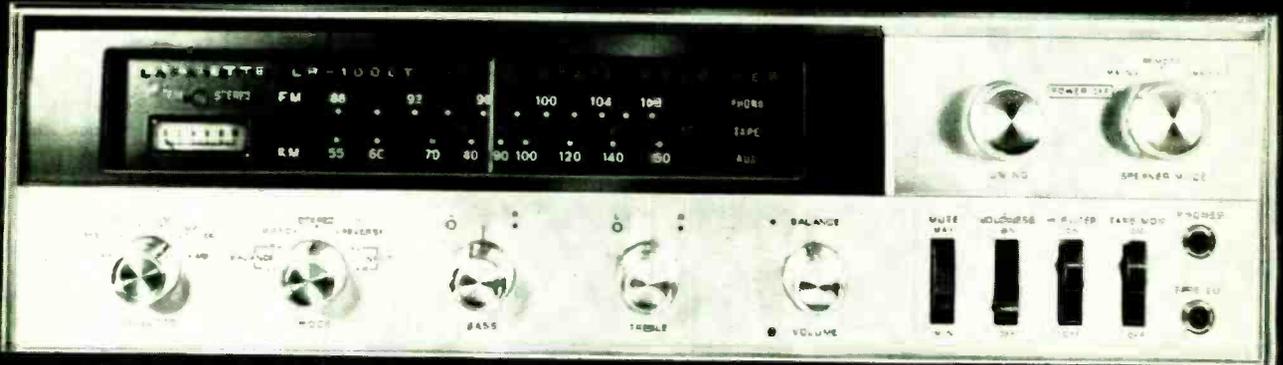
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SPEAKING OF RECORDS

BY LEONTYNE PRICE

FOR SOMEONE whose public image is tied exclusively to the operatic, it may seem rather odd to make the following admission, but—I don't listen to vocal recordings very often. My record collection contains mainly piano music (perhaps because I'm something of a frustrated pianist). My favorite is Van Cliburn's recording of the Rachmaninoff Third. I've made a special effort to get everything Van has recorded, partly for sentimental reasons (we made our New York debuts on the same day: Van appeared with the Philharmonic in the afternoon and I gave my debut recital that evening at Town Hall), but mostly because I love Van's direct, honest approach to the romantics—whenever I play one of his records, it's like getting a faceful of fresh air.

Alexis Weissenberg, on the other hand, is a very different sort of pianist and I like listening to his perfumed style with Chopin for a change of pace. His performances of the concertos on Angel and, of course, Van's "My Favorite Chopin" on my own company's label, RCA, have given me much pleasure. As you might have guessed, my own predilections are in the classical/romantic concerto category, and I believe I own every major work in this repertoire, performed by maestros Rubinstein, Horowitz, Weissenberg, Gilels, Dichter, and Cliburn.

Collecting records is a comparatively recent hobby. When I was studying at the Ohio Central State College and later at Juilliard, there was little spare time for record listening. I did, however, take advantage of the student tickets, heard as much live music as possible, and occasionally borrowed records from the school libraries. But, in those days, it was mainly orchestral records and I specifically remember falling in love with Debussy's *La Mer*—Koussevitzky's version with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. I nearly wore out the library's copy. *La Mer* is still one of my favorites, and my current preferred recording is of Charles Munch's performance.

When I do listen to vocal recordings, I do so not for any professional reason, but simply for pleasure and relaxation. I would never attempt to learn a role from a recording, nor listen to another singer's version of an opera that I'm studying. I stick to the old-fashioned method of learning, beginning with the libretto and then working out the music at the piano—and here is where my role of would-be pianist comes in handy.

It is quite possible that one can learn something about vocal style or tradition from listening to recordings by singers of the past and it is certainly interesting to



America's
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discusses
the recordings
she likes
best

hear how Flagstad or Lehmann solved the problems of interpretation. But I believe that whatever a singer may possess in the way of a Verdi, Puccini, or Mozart style is an individual matter and comes from within—a singer's response to this music will either flow spontaneously or it will not. This may sound a bit mystical, but it is what could be called a natural rapport between a singer and the music, which of course can never be taught.

That said, let me now admit that my operatic heroine is Maria Callas. I own almost everything she has ever recorded. No one, as far as I am concerned, sees beyond the notes and into the heart of a role quite as she does. My favorite complete opera recording is Callas' first version of *Tosca*, probably the most exciting operatic performance ever made. After having recorded so many operas myself, I know how difficult it is to walk into a cold studio atmosphere with those naked microphones staring at you and try to whip up the immediacy of a live performance—but Callas does it. I must confess that I also find Elisabeth Schwarzkopf's singing of Strauss's *Four Last Songs* a gorgeous match of voice and material. When I have nothing better to do, I play a recording of my own, probably *Carmen*: frankly, I'm mad about that one—it really entertains me.

In popular music I prefer the soft, easy torch singing of Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra or the soothing guitar-playing of Jobim. The *Francis Albert Sinatra/Antonio Carlos Jobim* album is a marvelous combination of talent: the interplay of voice and guitar produces some really fascinating musical effects. I also enjoy André Previn's tinkling cocktail piano flavor, especially on his *All Alone* solo album. Peter Nero's original and versatile approach to everything he plays makes for wonderful listening: his *Love Is Blue* is a delight. I don't really go in for hard rock, although some of the Beatles' later productions—*Sgt. Pepper* and their new two-disc set—have moments for me. If I'm in a little more exuberant mood, I'll listen to the Lady of Soul, Aretha Franklin, who has afforded me many hours of fantastic enjoyment. And then there's Nancy Wilson, Tom Jones, Ray Charles, and especially the Supremes—I've everything they've recorded too.

But classical piano music will always be my first love. My idea of a night out is an oriental dinner, followed by a concert where someone plays a piano concerto. It always inspires me to try my own hand at popping off some Beethoven sonatas or a couple of Chopin études—very badly of course, but I enjoy it.



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TOO HOT TO HANDLE

My KLH Twenty distorts severely on the inner grooves of most of my records, especially during loud passages. I've set the stylus pressure to three grams as specified, used a Preener to clean my records (which are in very good condition), and am using a needle only a few months old. Is there any way in which I can get rid of this distortion? Would my using an elliptical stylus or a different cartridge help? Or would I be better off if I sold the Twenty and purchased a Dual changer with a Shure V-15 Type II, which with the other components, would cost over \$200? Also, I've noticed that several records in my collection are turning grayish (I play them about three times a day). My unit has been checked by the factory, and I was told that it was in excellent condition.—Kurt M. Wiley, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Inner groove distortion usually signifies mistracking, itself caused by a defective cartridge or arm, incorrectly installed cartridge, excessive dirt on the stylus tip, or any combination of these causes. Three grams is a correct stylus force to use on the KLH Twenty, so we'd suggest checking the other possibilities. As for your question about the Dual/Shure combination, yes—it would be a better setup than the combination supplied in the KLH compact system in terms of arm balance and inclusion of antiskating—and because the cartridge is acknowledged to be one of the best on the market. For one thing, the Dual/Shure combination would allow you to use a lower tracking force. But first check your stylus. Even a new stylus may be damaged and can play havoc with your records. A grayish coloration on records (usually found on loud passages) signifies severe wear. If you really play these records three times a day, it's no wonder they are worn out. Laboratory tests indicate that vinyl suffers fatigue under the pressures—in the order of tons per square inch—that result when your three grams are concentrated on so microscopic a bearing surface. The vinyl won't recover fully for about twenty-four hours. If you must play this music so often, why not copy the records onto tape?

Was it HIGH FIDELITY that published an article about building a loudspeaker system from sixteen little speakers? If

so, are reprints available?—Larry H. Draper, Oak Harbor, Wash.

No it was not. In fact, we look on such projects with a skeptical eye and don't believe that putting a great many bad speakers together will somehow produce a good system.

Are the standard brand tapes that I buy (Scotch 111 and 201 for most recordings, 190 when I need greater length, and Scotch 200 or 290 when I occasionally record an entire opera) equal technically to the tape used by manufacturers both for master recording purposes and for making prerecorded tapes? If not, what brands are of the same superior quality and where can I get them? Until recently I recorded almost completely at 7½ ips, but with the acquisition of my new pride and joy—the Teac 4010S—I am doing a great deal at 3¾ ips.—Charles S. Lipton, M.D., Philadelphia, Penna.

It is no secret that for years Scotch 111 has been regarded as a standard tape, both for master recording and for testing of equipment. It is a 1.5-mil acetate-backed tape that has excellent response and durability and is easily spliced for editing purposes. However, our tests of recording tape indicate there is no best tape. Any of the branded tapes can yield optimum performance with respect to a given tape machine when that machine's bias and equalization (especially its bias) have been correctly adjusted for that particular tape. The Teac 4010S is factory-adjusted for optimum performance with Scotch 150 tape. It can be readjusted for best results with any other tape but Teac recommends having this adjustment made only by a factory-authorized service station.

You recently made statements about the Heathkit color TV that were very misleading. The impression that only Heath owners can make adjustments is untrue. Most big-name color TVs have the same type of controls as the Heath. I have found that by using the Heath manual (\$2.00) and my own commercially made TV's service manual, I was able to adjust my set for very good performance. Of course, I had to borrow a dot generator, but this item costs under \$100 with color-bar and cross-hatch test patterns, as well as dots. So, for almost the same price as the Heath,

one can buy a commercially built color TV with automatic fine tuning (which the Heath does not have) and a test generator.—Max Wexler, Brooklyn, N.Y.

We never said that "only Heath owners can make adjustments." We did say that this is the only set we know of which readily permits service adjustments by the owner without additional test gear. The point of the Heathkit approach is that it's aimed at non-technicians who don't know one end of a test probe from the other. And what color set with a big screen and the superior audio section of the Heath includes a test generator? You're right, of course, that the Heath does not have automatic fine tuning.

To join the controversy over recommended weights to use with various arms using the Shure V-15 Type II, what would you recommend as the tracking pressure of the following arms: the ADC-Pritchard, the arm of the Dual 1019, and that of the Miracord 50H?—Peter Ballou, S. Freeport, Maine.

With any arm, and with any cartridge, the accepted rule is: balance the arm according to the manufacturer's instructions; then adjust the stylus force (popularly and incorrectly termed "tracking pressure") to the maximum amount recommended by the cartridge manufacturer. Next, reduce the stylus force in small increments, say ¼ gram at a time, until you reach the lowest stylus force at which the cartridge will satisfactorily track your most demanding records—without going below the minimum recommended for the cartridge.

If the cartridge cannot track those records at any force within its recommended range, then either the arm may be incorrectly balanced or defective, the cartridge incorrectly installed in it, or the arm not capable of handling that cartridge.

Any of the arms you mention, however, should be capable of handling the Shure V-15 Type II (or any other recent high-quality cartridge) within its recommended range of stylus forces. The Shure cartridge's recommended stylus force range is ¾ to 1½ grams. The ADC arm tracks as low as ¾ gram; the arms on the Dual and Miracord track as low as ½ gram.

Being a newcomer to high fidelity, I still have a hard time distinguishing between what is good and what is bad. Would you please advise me on the best stereo FM/AM tuner in the \$100 price range.—Bohdan Dombchewskyj, State College, Penna.

We haven't tested any AM/FM tuner in the price range you specify, although there are some listed by purveyors of hi-fi products: Allied 285 (\$80), Heathkit AJ-33 (\$100), Knight-Kit KG-765A (\$100), Lafayette LT-225 (\$80), Olson RA-940 (\$100), and Radio Shack TM-70 (\$100).

Continued on page 32

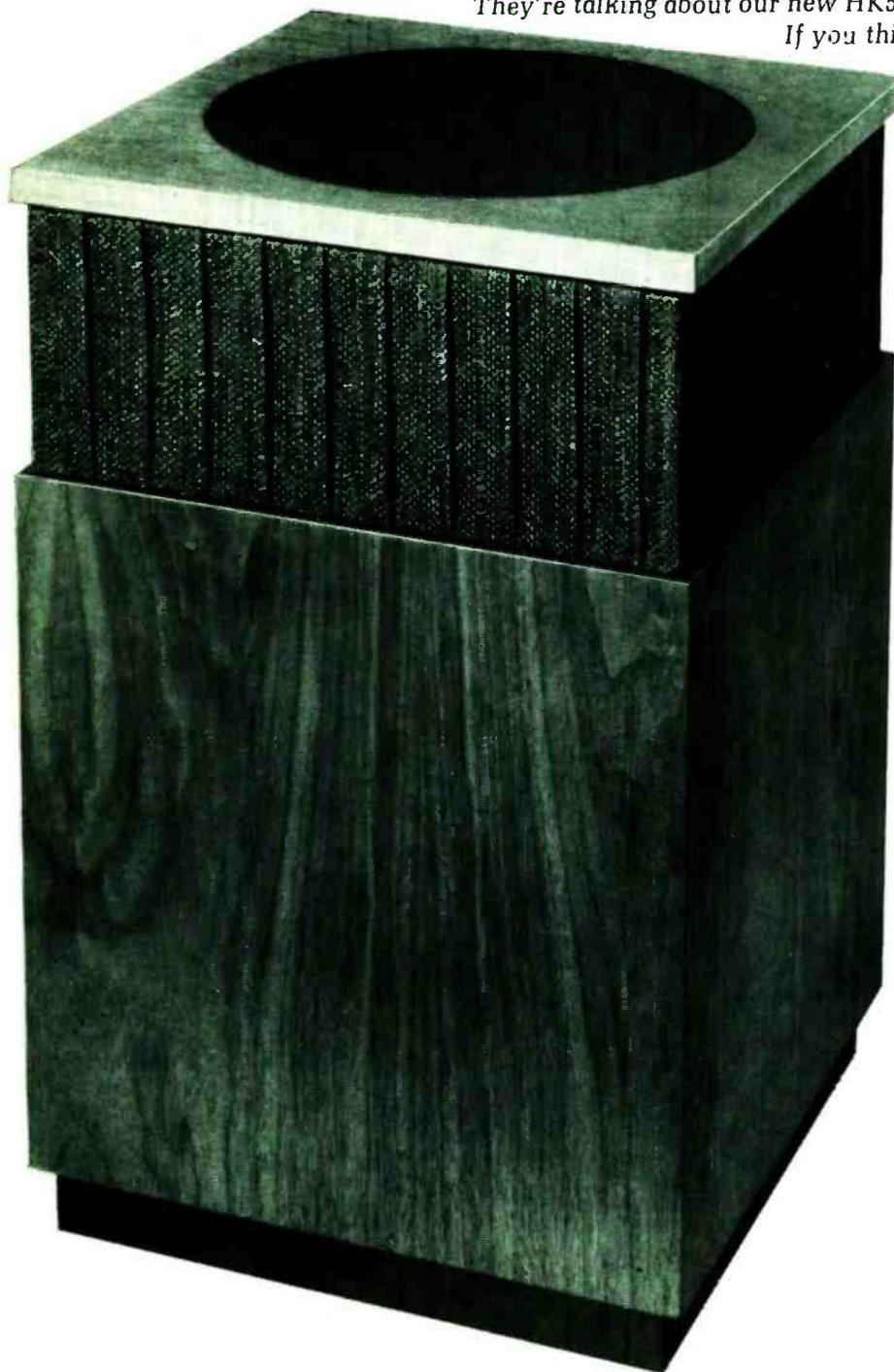
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TOO HOT TO HANDLE

Continued from page 30

I've seen in an audio club here a Fisher receiver 800-T which seems to resemble the 500-T advertised in American publications. I will be coming home soon and could get an 800-T cheaper here through the club than a 500-T in the States, but are they the same?—Capt. Arthur Fenner, Frankfurt, Germany. Yes, except that the 800-T available in Europe has a multivoltage power transformer that makes it usable both there and in this country. The face plate is somewhat different, but that would hardly affect function or performance. If you can get the unit cheaper through your audio club, by all means do so.

I cannot make up my mind which stereo tuner to buy. I'm thinking of the Dyna FM-3 (tubed, about \$100), and the Scott LT-112B (about \$150), and the Heath AJ-15 (about \$190). I would like the best value for my money but I'm totally confused.—Bill Bornemisza, New York, N.Y.

The Heath FM circuit has something none of the others has—crystal IF filters, which can be great if you need to sort out a weak signal from among adjacent, stronger ones. As far as we know, the AJ-15 is identical to the tuner section of the AR-15 receiver, to which we gave top marks in our Test Report [Sept. '67]. The other designs are all older. We reported on the LT-112B (together with its wired counterpart, the 312C) in the March '67 issue. It remained one of the most advanced tuners on the market until the Heath came along. But it usually sells for about \$180; if your dealer is selling it for \$150 now that the LT-112B-1 (which is only superficially different) is out, we'd say that's an excellent buy. The FM-3 is oldest of all (we reviewed it in March '65) but it was so well designed that it remains the best buy of all unless you want the refinements and added flexibility (muting, to name only one feature) of the later models. One other consideration: roughly speaking, the lower the price, the easier the construction job and the simpler the operation. Comparison of the specs we published is a matter of hair-splitting where the basics of FM reception are concerned. As to the extras, we would consider them largely a question of personal choice.

I have a De Wald tuner and a Fisher X-202B preamp and amplifier. I was thinking of replacing both with the Heath ARW-15 (wired) receiver, but I hear that the Lafayette LR-1500T is excellent. Have you tested it?—Ellis G. Stone, Lima, Peru.

Yes, the report was published in our October 1968 issue. We never tested the X-202B, but its specifications are exceeded only slightly by the Fisher 250T receiver and at least equaled by the LR-1500T—both of which cost \$299.95. In other words, your amplifier is still worthy of respect today. Why not hang onto it and replace only the tuner with a more modern one?

This little speaker may cause the downfall of the capitalist system.

Until a few months ago, only capitalists owned high-fidelity systems of really superior quality. For the ordinary rich American, the price was simply too high.

Of course, we aren't talking about those nice middle-class systems for six or seven hundred dollars, with their loud and clear but unmistakably canned sound. We mean the real goods, the big, professional-type stereo installations in which the two loudspeakers alone may have cost well over a thousand.

That kind of capitalist system was economically justified by its performance, until the September Revolution. Then, at the New York hi-fi show last September, Rectilinear introduced a small loudspeaker, called the **Mini-III** and priced at \$79.50. After hearing it, even capitalists began to wonder why anyone should pay more for any speaker.

The Rectilinear **Mini-III** is the brain-child of a group of young, unorthodox, we might even say radical, engineers. The kind you'd be more likely to find working for, say, NASA than for the hi-fi Establishment. They took great delight in demolishing the Establishment myth that speaker performance depends on size and price. And they came up with enough bright new ideas to make the 12" by 19" by 19½" deep, under-eighty-dollar **Mini-III** one of the four or five best-sounding loudspeakers available today—regardless of size or price.

If that claim strikes you as so much propaganda, we're not the least bit worried. The superiority of the **Mini-III** isn't so subtle or elusive that you can possibly fail to recognize it when you hear it. Its exceptional smoothness, definition, freedom from distortion and lack of "boxiness" are easily audible characteristics to music lovers.

However, you may not recognize the full consequences of this revolution. The downfall of the capitalist system is just one of them. (Obviously, the same system with the same—or better—sound for about a thousand dollars less is no longer exclusively for capitalists.) But middle-class and even lower-middle-

class systems are also affected.

Suppose, for example, that you've been thinking of buying one of the widely advertised stereo compacts. The better ones cost upwards of \$400, complete with their own speakers. Now consider the alternative:

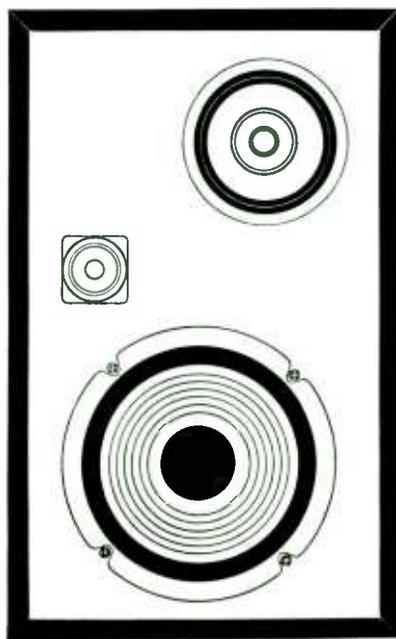
A pair of **Mini-III**'s for \$159. One of the new generation of high-powered solid-state stereo receivers (they're great!) for well under \$300. One of the best imported four-speed automatic turntables with a good magnetic stereo cartridge, for about \$100. Total: just over \$500.

This combination will perform almost in a class with the world's most expensive systems and about seventeen classes above the best stereo compacts—for barely \$100 more. Plus about ten minutes more of your time, to connect the speakers and plug in the turntable.

Remember, it's capital that we made superfluous. Not labor.

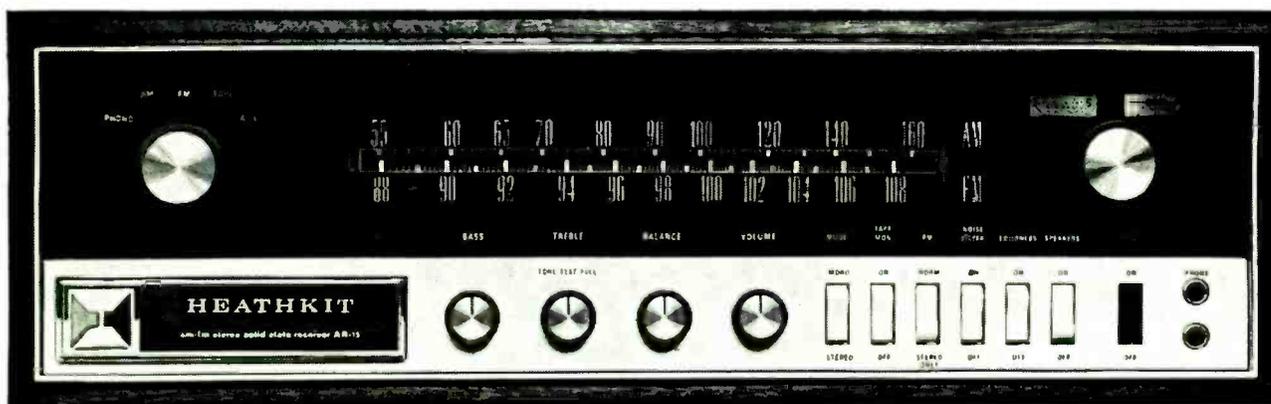
(For further information, see your audio dealer or write directly to the Rectilinear Research Corporation, 30 Main St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201.)

MINI-III
by Rectilinear

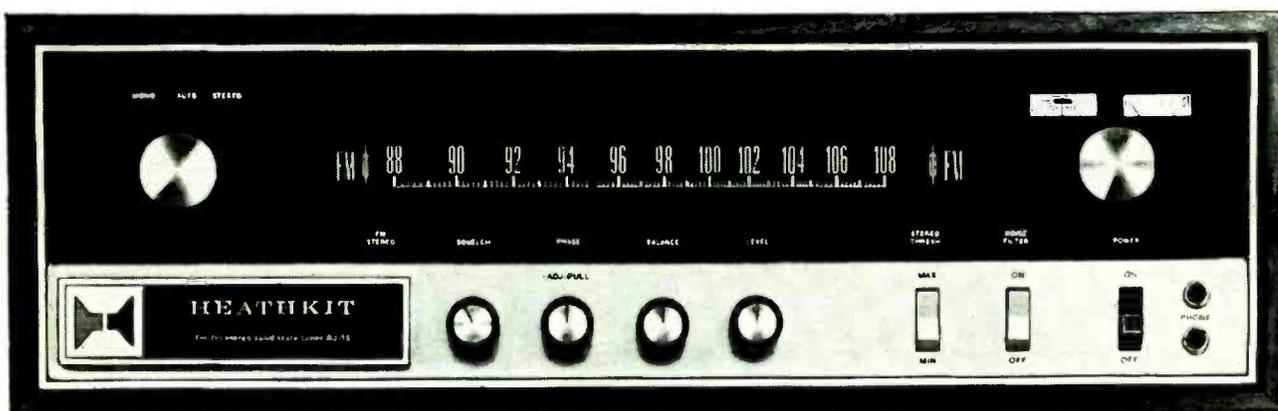


CIRCLE 54 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

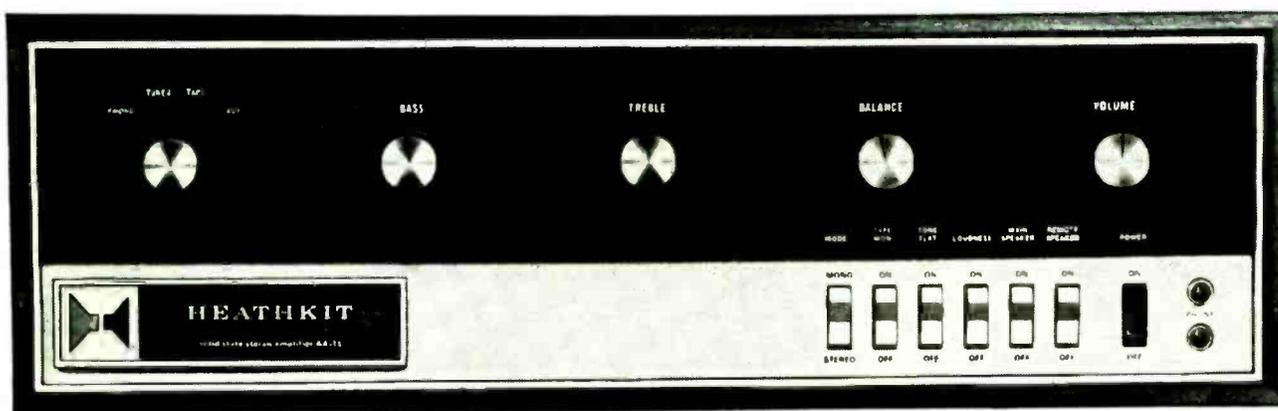
from the world's finest stereo receiver...



comes the world's finest stereo tuner...



and the world's finest stereo amplifier...



**for the man who already owns a
fine something or other.**

CIRCLE 35 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Heathkit® AR-15

Every leading electronics magazine editor, every leading consumer testing organization, and thousands of owners agree the Heathkit AR-15 is the world's finest stereo receiver. All give it top rating for its advanced design concepts and superior performance . . . all give it rave reviews such as these:

. . . "an audio Rolls Royce" . . . "engineered on an all-out, no compromise basis" . . . "cannot recall being so impressed by a receiver" . . . "it can form the heart of the finest stereo system" . . . "performs considerably better than published specifications" . . . "a new high in advanced performance and circuit concepts" . . . "not one that would match the superb overall performance of the Heath AR-15" . . . "top notch stereo receiver" . . . "its FM tuner ranks with the hottest available" . . . "it's hard to imagine any other amplifier, at any price, could produce significantly better sound" . . . "a remarkable musical instrument."

The Heathkit AR-15 has these features: exclusive design FET FM tuner for best sensitivity; AM tuner; exclusive Crystal Filter IF for best selectivity; Integrated Circuit IF for best limiting; 150 watts music power; plus many more as shown below.

Kit AR-15, \$339.95* ; Assembled ARW-15, \$525* ; Walnut Cabinet AE-16, \$24.95*

Heathkit® AJ-15

For the man who already owns a fine stereo amplifier, and in response to many requests, Heath now offers the superb FM stereo tuner section of the renowned AR-15 receiver as a separate unit . . . the AJ-15 FM Stereo Tuner. It features the exclusive design FET FM tuner with two FET r.f. amplifiers and FET mixer for high sensitivity; two Crystal Filters in the IF strip for perfect response curve with no alignment ever needed; two Integrated Circuits in the IF strip for high gain and best limiting; elaborate Noise-Operated Squelch to hush between-station noise before you hear it; Stereo-Threshold switch to select the quality of stereo reception you will accept; Stereo-Only Switch rejects monophonic programs if you wish; Adjustable Multiplex Phase for cleanest FM stereo; Two Tuning Meters for center tuning, max. signal, and adjustment of 19 kHz pilot signal to max.; two variable output Stereo Phone jacks; one pair Variable Outputs plus two Fixed Outputs for amps., tape recorders, etc.; all controls front panel mounted; "Black Magic" Panel Lighting . . . no dial or scale markings when tuner is "Off"; 120/240 VAC.

Kit AJ-15, \$189.95* ; Walnut Cabinet AE-18, \$19.95*

Heathkit® AA-15

For the man who already owns a fine stereo tuner, Heath now offers the famous stereo amplifier section of the AR-15 receiver as a separate unit . . . the AA-15 Stereo Amplifier. It has the same deluxe circuitry and extra performance features: 150 Watts Music Power output . . . enormous reserves; Ultra-Low Harmonic & IM Distortion . . . less than 0.5% at full output; Ultra-Wide Frequency Response . . . ± 1 dB, 8 to 40,000 Hz at 1 watt; Ultra-Wide Dynamic Range Preamp (98 dB) . . . no overload regardless of cartridge type; Tone-Flat Switch bypasses tone controls when desired; Front Panel Input Level Controls hidden by hinged door; Transformerless Amplifier for lowest phase shift and distortion; Capacitor Coupled Outputs protect speakers; Massive Power Supply, Electronically Filtered, for low heat, superior regulation . . . electrostatic and magnetic shielding; All-Silicon Transistor Circuitry; Positive Circuit Protection by current limiters and thermal circuit breakers; "Black Magic" Panel Lighting . . . no dial markings when unit is "off"; added features: Tuner Input Jack and Remote Speaker Switch for a second stereo speaker system; 120/240 VAC.

Kit AA-15, \$169.95* ; Walnut Cabinet AE-18, \$19.95*



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CIRCLE 35 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

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BY ROBERT LONG

VIDEO TOPICS

TV PREVIEW: THE LASER AND LIVING COLOR

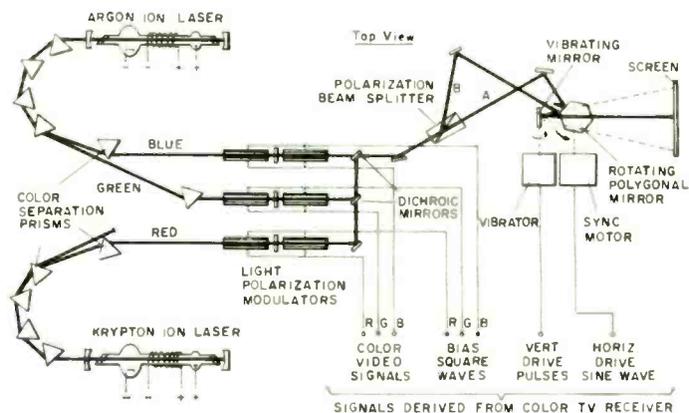
NOTHING'S NEW UNDER THE SUN—so they say. But the new recombinations of old ideas seem legion these days, particularly in audio-visual technology. Many of the most advanced proposals center around the laser, that space-age producer of so-called coherent light which has been used for all kinds of things from welding retinas in eye surgery to lunar communications.

From lasers came holography, invented in 1948. A hologram stores visual information in photographic film not as an image but as a record of interference wavefronts between two sources of coherent light—one a laser, the other the laser light reflected from an object. Properly viewed, a hologram allows you to see the object in the round rather than as a flat picture.

Anyway, we have long heard excited twitterings about the possible applications of the laser to video. The idea was that the laser's thin, intense, monochromatic, all-in-phase beam might somehow be made to scan a screen and, using the properties unique to laser light, add special refinements to televiewing.

At first—probably owing to the three-dimensional properties of the hologram—speculation centered on concepts of 3-D TV. More recently, as the spectrum of colors available from lasers has been widened, we've been regaled with visions of color TV requiring no phosphors and dealing in light intensities (and therefore screen sizes) far beyond the capabilities of presently available color picture tubes.

One setup for applying lasers to color TV (diagramed here) has produced very promising results, we are told, in the laboratories of General Telephone & Electronic Corp. A krypton laser produces the red beam,



an argon laser both blue and green. The beams are refined for color purity in a series of prisms. Relative brightnesses of the three beams are controlled by the modulators. (The square-wave bias helps in cutting off the beams altogether when there is no video signal.) Then the beams are combined through dichroic mirrors (which reflect some colors, let others pass through), and the multicolor beam is split in two, the halves alternating in producing scan lines on the screen. Horizontal scanning is controlled by a rotating mirrored drum; vertical scanning by a single, vibrating mirror.

Very interesting. But not yet commercially available.

90Watts. AM/FM. \$199⁹⁵.

And that's only the beginning.

Most receivers that cost about \$200 are severely compromised. If they have reasonable power, they lack features. If they have features, their power is usually marginal. And most \$200 receivers are less than elegant looking. The kindest thing you can say about them is that they are adequate. For \$200, we don't think adequate is good enough.

So we've introduced our Nocturne Three Thirty.

It's beautiful. It has big power. (90 watts, 1HF, ± 1 db.) Ultra-wide-band sound. A truly sophisticated AM/FM tuner. And every important feature you could possibly want in a receiver. Like function indicator lights. Defeatable contour. Headphone receptacle. Tape monitor switch. And front panel switching for stereo in two

rooms, separately or at once. (The Three Thirty has enough reserve power to drive 4 speaker systems without stress or distortion.)

The Three Thirty is at your Harman-Kardon dealer now. See and hear it soon. We think you'll agree that it delivers a degree of excellence never before available at such a modest price.

For complete technical information write: Harman-Kardon, Inc., 55 Ames Court, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.



CIRCLE 34 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

New developments in the great bass revival.

Last year, when we introduced the Fisher XP-18 four-way speaker system with its huge 18-inch woofer, we predicted a renewed interest in bass among serious audiophiles.

We pointed out that no bookshelf-size speaker, not even the top Fisher models that are famous for their bass, could push the low frequencies around a room with quite the same authority as a big brute like the XP-18.

This came as no surprise to those who remembered that a 40-cycle sound wave is more than 28 feet long. That's why it takes a double bass or a contrabassoon to sound a note that low. Bass and big dimensions go together.

But the sound of the big XP-18 did surprise a lot of people. They knew it had to be good at \$329.95, but they weren't prepared for a completely new experience.

And then came the obvious request: Couldn't we make the XP-18 concept available in more moderately priced speakers?

We could. And did: in the new Fisher XP-12 and XP-15B.

They're a little smaller (24" x 22½" x 13¾" and 27" x 27" x 14¾", respectively), but still twice as big as bookshelf speakers. They're three-way systems instead of four-way, but they have the same type of 8-inch midrange driver with molded rubber surround, plus the exclusive Fisher dome tweeter with a new half-roll suspension and an improved dual dome.

The main difference from the XP-18 is in the woofers: a 12-inch unit with a 6-lb. magnet structure in the XP-12 and a 15-inch driver with a 12-lb. magnet structure in the XP-15B.

The prices justify the slight comedown in woof-inches; the XP-12 is listed at \$199.95 and the XP-15B at \$269.95.

How do they sound? Not quite like the XP-18. Just better than anything but the XP-18.

(For more information, plus a free copy of the Fisher Handbook 1969 edition, an authoritative 72-page reference guide to hi-fi and stereo, use coupon on front cover flap.)



The new XP-15B

The new XP-12

The Fisher

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PRICES SLIGHTLY HIGHER IN THE FAR WEST.

CIRCLE 30 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

NEWS&VIEWS



Enthusiastic crowds, in evidence everywhere at the Washington High Fidelity Show, line up here for a demonstration of the KLH/Dolby tape recorder.



Personal introductions are a feature of shows. The man from Panasonic is saying, in effect, "Miss X, I'd like you to meet the RF-60 stereo FM headset."

A CAPITAL SHOW IN THE CAPITAL CITY

Officials of the Washington, D.C. High Fidelity Show (Feb. 14 to 16 at the Sheraton-Park Hotel) claim a total attendance of 22,000—a whopping number for this sort of affair. Even without statistics, it was obvious to anyone who attended that the show had to be reckoned as a success; not only were there enthusiastic visitors everywhere, but there were a surprising number of new products on display, considering how recently last fall's shows were held.

Seminars on various relevant subjects—all well attended—were presented with the co-operation of the Federal Communications Commission, Catholic University, the Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers, and the Audio Engineering Society. The AES further participated by supplying members to answer technical questions posed by show visitors.

Most conspicuous among the new products was a bevy of loudspeakers. Entirely new to the merry-go-round of hi-fi shows were Loudspeaker Design Corporation, Power Research Products, and the Erath Co. of Texas.

LDC was showing two models named Ezekiel after the company's president. The Ezekiel is a large folded-horn system 65 inches tall, selling for \$2,500 per pair, and designed for corner placement. A smaller, against-the-wall version, the Ezekiel IV, sells for \$550 each.

PRP's system is quite different. It's a three-way design with a total complement of twenty-six speakers (two viscous-damped tweeters, twelve 3½-inch midrange drivers, twelve 6½-inch foam-damped woofers). Yet to be announced are both the price and the model designation of the PRP system—in fact, a contest to name it was a feature of the exhibit.

Erath is a name we had heard before, but the Washington Show was the first event of its kind at which the company had shown its LWE line of feedback loudspeakers. All four models are connected into the

power amplifier's feedback loop (as well as to its output terminals), so that the amplifier can correct nonlinearities in the speaker's performance. Erath says that the job of making the feedback-loop connection is a simple one and that amplifier manufacturers have agreed that the connection will not void the amplifier's warranty.

Fairfax, another recent entry, showed its latest, the Color Cube speaker systems measuring one foot per side and available in a number of color combinations. The Model C-150 cubes sell for \$59.50 each.

Other new speakers at the show included a prototype "Experimental S-7" in the Rectilinear room. The S-7 is a two-cubic-foot system (more or less) with a special diffuser in the tweeter, a 5-inch midrange, and a 10-inch woofer crossing over at 100 Hz. It is expected to sell for less than \$200.

A large number of new products on display elsewhere were either tape recorders or combinations including some sort of tape facility. Of these, one of the most interesting was the Ferrograph Series 7 recorder. Ferrographs have been made (and sold) in England since the very beginnings of home tape recording and have appeared on the American market from time to time. Now Elpa is importing them. The new Series 7 is designed with the serious recordist in mind. It will handle reels up to 8¼ inches in diameter, and offers three heads, three motors, three speeds, and some niceties of control functions including a front-panel bias adjustment to optimize the recorder for various tapes. The particular model that should be of most interest in the U.S. (several options of heads and electronics are available) is the 704 4-track stereo deck, which sells for \$549—or \$599 with its own case.

Panasonic showed several new models, including the RS-796US, an auto-reverse deck for \$249.95. Craig also

Continued on page 40

NEWS & VIEWS

Continued from page 39

had an auto-reverse deck (Model 2405) and other open-reel recorders. And Harman-Kardon showed its CAD-4 stereo cassette deck, a walnut-cased home unit carrying a minimum resale price of \$159.50.

Wollensak displayed a whole new line of recorders, decks, and cassette units. It claims to be the first American company to manufacture its own cassette transport mechanism. Prices range from \$54.95 for the Model 4000 portable mono cassette recorder to under \$240 for the Model 6300 4-track stereo recorder with two speakers.

Among the combination products were Scott's latest Casseiver, two cassette recorder/receivers from Panasonic (the RE-7060 at \$249.95 and the RE-7080 at \$349.95), and an 8-track cartridge home music system from Lear Jet (Model H-459, \$289.95 with record changer, AM, and FM). Fisher's complete line, including its new cassette units, also was on hand.

Except for the Radio Shack room, where a whole new line was on display, most electronics at the Washington Show had been seen previously elsewhere. But, even so, it's hard to remember a February when hi-fi manufacturers had so much that was new so soon after Christmas.

PENN CENTRAL'S TORTURE TOUR

Bob Angus, who reported on the state of fidelity to be found on the nation's airlines in our February issue, took the Penn-Central Railroad's new Metroliner to Washington for the hi-fi show. There is a music system on the high-speed train, he reports, "that makes the lowest fi in the sky sound delightful by comparison." Each coach has several loudspeakers mounted in the ceiling and music is provided by a tape unit on the train. According to Angus, "The speakers are only nominally mounted; the one over my head rattled all the way to Washington. Baffles seem to be only skin-deep and the tape itself sounded hesitant about passing the playback head. Worst of all, like those systems in elevators and airliners on the ground, you couldn't shut it off. The best a distressed traveler could do was to tune in to the clack of the rails (virtually nonexistent on some welded sections) and the whoosh of air outside."

CHOOSE YOUR STYLUS

ADC recently held a press conference to announce its \$100 ADC 25 stereo pickup system. A major feature of this system is a supply of three easily interchangeable styli. ADC, it seems, believes that a single tip can't be all things to all records.

The three styli include two with elliptical tips (0.3 by 0.7 mils and 0.3 by 0.9 mils) and one with a spherical tip (0.6 mils). The first of the ellipticals will ride somewhat deeper in the groove than the other. ADC suggests a trial-and-error system to determine which will produce the best reproduction with which records. The spherical is suggested specifically for such records as RCA's Dyna-groove series, whose inner-groove compensation, ADC implies, is designed for playback with spherical tips and will not produce optimum sound with an elliptical.

The offering of interchangeable styli for a given cartridge body is in itself not news; but when a cartridge manufacturer takes on a specific record company, we sit up and take notice. RCA's comments were not yet available at press time. Stay tuned to this column for further developments.

CIRCLE 153 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

EQUIPMENT *in the* NEWS



CASSEIVER MIXMATCHER

Scott's latest Casseiver (cassette-receiver combination) not only matches component assembly functions for diverse uses, but permits mixing during recording. For instance, microphone inputs can be mixed with music from tuner or auxiliary inputs (turntable or separate tape recorder) while recording on the built-in stereo cassette deck—a good way to make slide-show sound tracks, for one thing. The Casseiver—with FM tuning, 82-watt output, and a full complement of controls—sells for \$399.95.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



GLASS FIBER USED IN SPEAKERS

The 14½-by 8¾-inch elliptical woofer of the EMI 205 speaker system is reinforced with glass fiber for a significant increase in power handling capacity, according to Benjamin Electronic Sound, which imports the bookshelf system. A pair of cone speakers handle the midrange; the tweeter is a new compression driver. Three-position controls are provided for both midrange and tweeter. Price is \$225.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Continued on page 42



the 1969 Ampex stereo tape catalog for everyone who owns a tape player/recorder

It's all *hear*—the most complete selection of pre-recorded stereo tapes ever put between two covers . . . for your open reel, 4-track cartridge, 8-track cartridge and cassette player/recorder. In 160 pages this entertainment guide lists over 5,000 selections from more than 65

different recording labels. Pop, rock, folk, soul, jazz, classical and spoken word selections, too . . . all categorized by type of music and listed alphabetically by artists for easy reference. Included are informative articles written by the leading authorities in the music and entertainment fields.

Mail to: Dept. H-70-1, P.O. Box No. 7340 A, Chicago, Ill. Please send me the 1969 Ampex Stereo Tape Catalog. Enclosed is 50¢.

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MAY 1969

CIRCLE 5 ON READER SERVICE CARD

41

EQUIPMENT IN THE NEWS

Continued from page 40



SERVO/SONY/SUPERSCOPE

Superscope has announced a Sony two-track mono tape recorder with servo speed control. The portable Servo-control 800-B has several other unusual features as well: a built-in "electret" microphone, four-speed (15/16 to 7½ ips) operation, and a two-position automatic level control allowing wider dynamic range in the music position. There is an outboard mike, too, with its own stop/start switch; both mikes can be used at once. The 800-B is expected to sell for less than \$230.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

IRISH STRETCHES CASSETTES

Two new long-play formats have been announced for the Irish cassette line: 261-C90 (ninety-minute playing time) and 261-C120 (playing two hours). Retail prices for the blank cassettes will be \$3.95 and \$4.95 respectively.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



HOOKUP HELPER

A connector adapter kit designed with users of electronic instruments in mind has been made available by Switchcraft. The K130 kit contains seventeen different adapters and Y connectors, capable of solving just about any riddle of incompatible three-prong Cannon-type and phone-type fittings—whether the riddle grows out of mixing types or from trying to mate two males or two

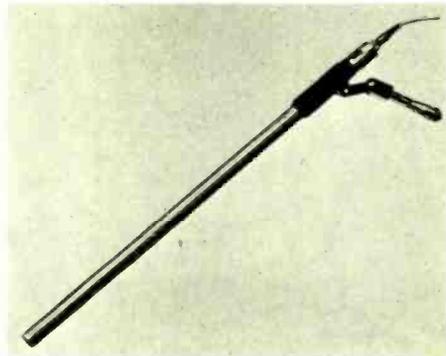
females. The \$56 price may seem high unless you are a frequent user of these types of connectors.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

PREMIUM FEATURES, MODERATE PRICE

The Panasonic RS-768US is a four-track stereo tape deck with some unusual features for its price class. Separate record and playback heads permit monitoring, sound-on sound, and sound-with-sound. The motor is a synchronous design, powering a three-speed transport. The deck's list price is \$219.95.

CIRCLE 150 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



TELE-MIKE FROM AKG

A professional-quality "shotgun" microphone has been announced by the AKG division of Norelco. The D-900E has a dynamic element, set at the end of a two-foot barrel, which controls incoming sound to make the microphone's sensitivity pattern extremely directional. A two-position (-7 and -20 dB at 50 Hz) roll-off switch is provided to control effects of low-frequency boom, rumble, or wind noise. Its impedance is 200 ohms; its price, \$149.

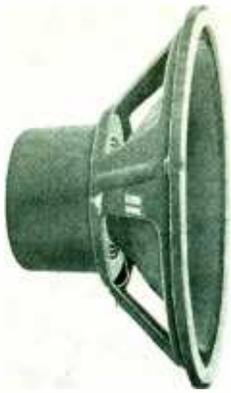
CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



CASSETTEER FOR THE CAR

Lafayette's RK-200 cassette player/recorder is designed for 12-volt DC operation in autos or boats. It is capable of 2-track mono record or playback, or 4-track stereo playback of prerecorded materials. The price (\$79.95) includes a remote stop/start mike with a coiled, retracting cord. Lafayette's number is 99-1573.

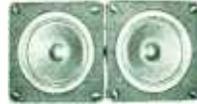
CIRCLE 152 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



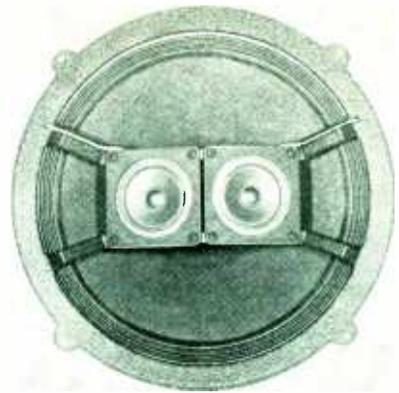
B-199A Bass Speaker



B-209B
Midrange Speaker



B-200Y
Treble Speaker Pair



B-207B Two-Way Coaxial Speaker

These **BOZAK** loudspeakers re-create all music precisely

Just as a fine orchestra is composed of outstanding musicians with fine instruments, so Bozak loudspeaker systems are comprised of the finest component speakers available in each sound range. Which is why Bozak speaker systems are unsurpassed in their ability to re-create music realistically.

The very same component speakers used in Bozak's Concert Grand — the ultimate in home loudspeaker systems — are available individually for building into existing furniture or even into walls.

For Bass with a sense of feel, there is the Bozak B-199A with its variable density cone which has a 50% wool content.

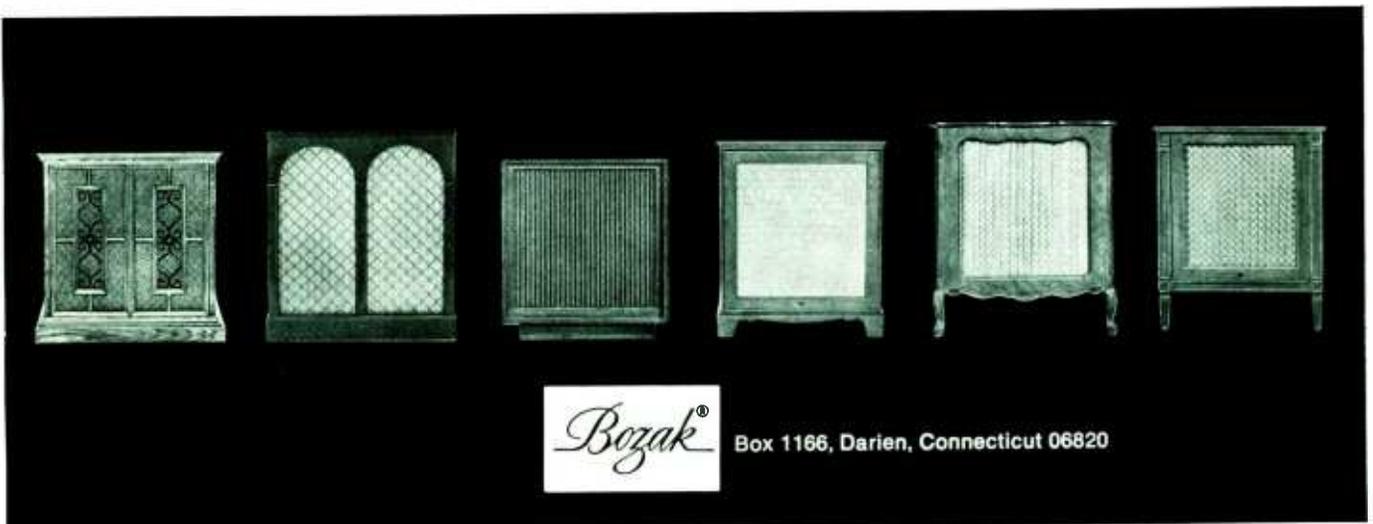
For Midrange with tones essential to the identification and timbre of sound, the B-209B is unique in both design and construction. A patented laminated neoprene-and-aluminum diaphragm eliminates the

coloration usually associated with the "break-up" of speaker cones.

For Treble with sweetness and warmth, the Bozak B-200Y uses an aluminum diaphragm nested in a bed of rubber which prevents spurious peaks and ringing, and assures smooth, broad response.

A Basic System complete in itself is the Bozak B-207B coaxial two-way loudspeaker which combines a B-199A bass speaker and a B-200Y treble speaker on a single mounting frame. It need only be installed in one of the Bozak fine furniture enclosures shown below, an existing cabinet or a wall to become the foundation from which a larger, more complete speaker system can "grow" by the addition of components in logical steps in the future.

Complete descriptions of these Bozak component speakers, panel-mounted speaker systems and complete systems in fine furniture enclosures are included in our catalog. It's free.



ARE YOUR COMPONENTS COMPATIBLE?

"IT'S A LOT EASIER than assembling knock-down furniture," a hi-fi salesman will tell you. "You just plug everything together, and you're ready to roll. Tape recorders, record playing equipment, electronics . . . they're all designed to recognized standards—which means you can interchange the products of different manufacturers and get the particular features you want without worrying about whether the separate parts will work together."

What the salesman is talking about is component compatibility, and there is much truth in what he says. But for the best possible performance from the finest equipment there's a good deal that you should know. If you're the sort who spends \$50 or so for a stereo pickup, who wants to be able to distinguish, say, string bass from low organ pedals, or the clarinet in the upper register from a flute, then read on. Much of what follows may strike you as hair-splitting. So it is—but it is from those split hairs that the finest sonic fabrics are woven.

TO BEGIN, consider the pickup end of the hi-fi chain. Today's cartridge is lighter—that is, it has less total mass—than its predecessors. It also has much higher compliance (particularly to vertical forces) than did earlier models. For optimum performance, modern cartridges should be used in modern arms that offer such refinements as negligible bearing friction, low mass, damped counterweighting, accurate tracking-force adjustment, and antiskating.

The variables of stylus compliance and arm mass or inertia actually interact between arm and cartridge to determine the combination's resonance—typically in the 4- to 15-Hz range. If it is too pronounced (more than a few dB in amplitude, and close to the 15-Hz mark), arm resonance can produce low-frequency transients and cause mistracking, especially of warped records. It also can reinforce a turntable's rumble. Consequently, the highest-compliance cartridges can prove incompatible with less than the most refined of tone arms. Used in an older or cheaper record changer, such a cartridge may not only fail to improve the system's sound, it actually may degrade it.

Counterbalancing arrangements also can be a source of arm-cartridge incompatibility in some inexpensive changers. If the cartridge you want is unusually light or unusually heavy, try it in the arm before you buy to make sure that the range of adjustments on the arm will accommodate the cartridge weight. Similarly, tracking force adjustments must allow for small increments ($\frac{1}{2}$ gram or less), must be accurately calibrated, and must cover an appropriate range (say, $\frac{3}{4}$ to 2 grams) if you are to achieve optimum performance with the finest cartridges.



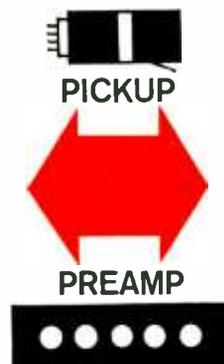
IN CONNECTING YOUR PICKUP to a preamp input (whether it is on a receiver, an integrated amplifier, or a separate preamp) you are completing a circuit containing a number of electrical variables that add up to a value of impedance. Inasmuch as this characteristic has been standardized, input impedance at the preamp is always assumed to be 47K ohms. Variations in the capacitance of this circuit, however, can pose problems: excessive input capacitance can cause some high-frequency attenuation.

You can help avoid attenuation by keeping the leads from the turntable to the preamp inputs as short as possible, preferably no more than a few feet. If, in a particular installation, the run from turntable to preamp exceeds three feet, a thicker than usual signal cable is recommended; a good choice is 3/8-inch-diameter microphone cable. It can be fitted with the common phono plugs. Short signal cables also help reduce the chance of hum pickup. In this regard, the thicker cable won't help—but there's another type that will: known as twin-conductor shielded cable, it consists of two inner conductors surrounded by braid. To use it, connect the inner conductors to the signal ("hot") and ground pins of one channel of the cartridge's output. Do *not* connect the braid to anything at the turntable end, but do connect it (together with the ground lead) to the phono plug ground at the preamp input end. This technique, known as a "floating ground," has been known to eliminate hum in many an installation that otherwise defied all attempts to defeat hum pickup.

Signal level between pickup and preamp also bears watching. Theoretically, the ideal relationship would be to match cartridge output to the preamp's input sensitivity *if* the maximum output of your amplifier can drive your speakers somewhat beyond the loudest levels you will want, and do so without undue clipping or other distortion. In practice, however, matching cartridge output to input sensitivity within 50 per cent will do nicely. A cartridge rated for 6 mV output, for instance, will work well into any input rated between 4 mV and 9 mV, enabling the amplifier to furnish substantially its full rated power. (We are assuming, as we will throughout the article, that ratings are consistent with those of CBS Labs, as published in our test reports.)

Mismatches in excess of 50 per cent between cartridge output and preamp input sensitivity threaten trouble. Since these ratings are in volts, they must be squared in order to calculate power ratings; hence, a reduction to one-half in cartridge output will produce a drop to one-quarter the power at the amplifier's speaker terminals. For example, if your amplifier can produce 60 watts per channel, with a rated input phono sensitivity of 6 mV, it will furnish only 15 watts when driven by a cartridge supplying 3 mV of signal—not enough, perhaps, to produce full-bodied sound with the speakers you are using. The possible remedies then would be to change to a cartridge furnishing a higher output signal (closer to 6 mV), or to a preamp with higher input sensitivity (actually expressed as a smaller number of millivolts, say, 3 or 4 mV), or to a heftier power amplifier (one able to supply much more than 60 watts per channel), or to more efficient speakers capable of producing more acoustic power for a given amount of electrical signal).

Conversely, if cartridge output is higher by more than 50 per cent than the sensitivity rating of the preamp, the excessive signal levels may require you to keep the input gain control well down. If your preamp is provided with input level controls, correction is easy; without them, you may, in extreme cases, damage the amplifier or the speakers if you have the volume control turned to much past 2 or 3 o'clock. You may also find that the signal level overloads the input stage of the preamp, producing distortion at any gain control setting.



IT IS AXIOMATIC IN AUDIO that transducers (cartridges, speakers, microphones, and earphones) are the least linear links in any system; they exhibit characteristic peaks and dips in their response. However, a peak in one component, reinforced by a similar peak in another component, will lend the sound an overemphasized, unnatural quality in a particular frequency region. If both peaks occur in the highs, the sound will seem overbright or shrill. In the midrange, the peaks may cause a honking effect. In the lows, the peaks will produce over-heavy bass, often at the expense of a better-defined (if less prominent) bass line.

By the same token, dips in response—reinforced by more than one component in the sound chain—lend the sound a deficient quality. Treble dips produce a lackluster, thin sound, wreaking havoc with critical overtone structures of music. Bass dips weaken the entire foundation of musical sound, and unbalance the tonal presentation.

Between the relative response characteristics of pickups and speakers there is ample

Continued **ARE
YOUR
COMPONENTS
COMPATIBLE?**

room for gross mismatching; there is also opportunity for canny mating to achieve reasonably balanced and lifelike sound.

In comparing speakers, note which have bright-sounding highs and which are more muted. Then study cartridge response curves as a guide to compatibility. In doing so, though, keep in mind that a very live (or very dead) room will further emphasize (or attenuate) apparent high-frequency response.

At the opposite end of the audio range, beware of using a pickup known to have a low-frequency resonance together with a speaker similarly known for its ample bass output—especially if that speaker is to be driven by a husky amplifier or is to be installed in a corner where the bass will be reinforced.

MISMATCHES BETWEEN A TAPE RECORDER and other equipment are also possible. For instance, a tape recorder's inputs may be so sensitive that they tend to overload at the normal "tape feed" signal levels (1.5 to 2 V peaks) supplied by a system amplifier or receiver. On playback, the tape deck's output may be lower than normal, requiring unusually high settings of gain and volume controls. As a general rule, when audio devices of roughly similar quality are used in a system, all level and gain controls—up to the final or master volume control—should be set at 12 o'clock position (midway rotation) for the best signal-to-noise ratio consistent with the sound level you opt to hear and which you control with that master volume control. Thus, if you own a tape deck feeding into a system amplifier or receiver for playback, the deck's own output level controls should be set midway. If the receiver or amplifier has input level controls, they too should be set midway. Then, for the actual listening level adjustment, use the main volume control on the receiver or amplifier. You can demonstrate the wisdom of this advice for yourself: turn your tape deck's playback level control to, say, 3 o'clock, and your main volume control to, say, 9 o'clock. Listen for a few moments. Now, back off the former control to 12 o'clock, and raise the latter control to 12 o'clock or to whatever setting gives the same volume as before. You can expect to hear as much signal but with less background noise.



OFFBEAT HEADPHONE-JACK IMPEDANCES are another source of some incompatibility. Most of today's equipment is designed to handle low-impedance (8 to 16 ohms) headphones. A slight mismatch upward (say you're using 600-ohm professional headphones) should result in little or no audible change and is considered okay. A gross mismatch upward—with headphones whose impedance is in thousands of ohms—may be something else again. Be prepared for extra-high levels, since high-Z phones may be more sensitive than average.

Conversely, some tape recorders have headphone jacks designed for 600-ohm impedances. Again, the mismatch to low-Z headphones is not serious; though it produces less sound. However, a higher mismatch downward (a very high-impedance output feeding low-impedance headphones) may allow excessive current through the phones, loading down the tape recorder's output and introducing distortion into related circuits. The only remedy here is a matching transformer.

The rule to remember is that if impedances do not match, you're almost always safe driving a high-impedance device from a low-impedance source; but avoid driving a low-impedance from a high-impedance source.

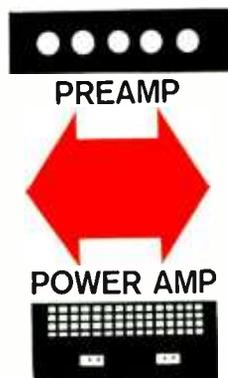
IF YOU HAVE READ THIS FAR, the chances are that you already know something of the problems of determining optimum speaker-amplifier relationships for your room. Briefly, the larger, or more acoustically dead your room the more acoustic power you need to produce a given level of sound. And the less efficient your speakers, the more amplifier power you need to reach a given acoustic power level.

Amplifier power ratings (even assuming they are all given in terms of rms values of continuous power, as we do in our test reports) do not vary as dramatically as would appear at first glance. Remember that doubling the power produces only 3 dB more sound, an easily discernible but not startling increment. Mismatches between amplifier power and speaker efficiency must, then, be large indeed before you find that you cannot attain the loudness levels you want or—on the other hand—that you must keep the gain control well down to avoid uncomfortable loudness, or even speaker damage.

Power levels actually can become harmful to your speakers before they hurt your ears, especially if you are trying to fill a large room with speakers that are not designed for the job. Power-handling capacity ratings for speakers tell the story. If your speakers are rated for a 15-watt capacity and you drive them with 40 watts per channel, all will be well as long as the amplifier is putting out no more than 15 watts to each speaker. More power, however, may damage the speakers.

And you may, occasionally, get more power without touching the gain control. Spurious transients, such as those caused by a dropped pickup arm, various switching noises, or a bad connection in your system—these and other causes can produce sudden surges in amplifier output that might be disastrous. Since it usually is relatively hard to drive an amplifier much beyond its rated power, matching amplifier and speaker ratings more closely will help protect the speakers.

Damping factor is another specification worth considering in the amplifier/speaker relationship, although real incompatibility is unlikely and can occur only with very low or extremely high damping factors. In general, most sealed-enclosure, direct-radiating speaker systems (air-suspension or infinite-baffle) seem to benefit from high damping factors—typical in solid state amplifiers—in terms of clean bass. In contrast, ported systems (bass reflex, for example) could seem deficient in bass if the amplifier's damping factor is up around 200. Since that is about twice the rating of many modern amplifiers, cases of real incompatibility in this respect are rare.



IF YOU HAVE AN INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER or a receiver, you can skip this section altogether. If, however, you locate separate preamp and power amp at some distance from each other, you may suffer noticeable compatibility problems.

Here's why: IHF specifications call for separate preamps to be tested under loading that approximates the conditions presented by 30-foot leads between preamp and power amp. Not all preamps are produced to so rigorous a specification, however, and may contribute to some losses in high-frequency response if long leads are required. While these losses may not be serious (and, again, may even be desirable if the speakers or the room tend to emphasize high frequencies) you may want to check the manufacturer's recommendations for any self-powered speaker system you contemplate using at any distance from your preamp.

HOW SERIOUSLY SHOULD YOU WORRY about compatibility in the system you own or contemplate buying? You probably will find that most potential incompatibilities can be ruled out in your system. Still, if you are serious about your equipment, you will want to consider all angles of the problem of high fidelity—and you might find other areas we could have covered (impedance matching in FM antennas, for example—a problem that almost invariably will be solved for you by the owner's manual provided with your tuner or receiver). In short though, most components really *are* compatible; it's just that some are more compatible than others.



The recent release of a ten-record set of 160 traditional ballads casts a new, and sometimes startling, light on a major aspect of our cultural heritage.

Drunkenness, Incest, Murder,

AMONG ITS BLESSINGS, the English-speaking world can number perhaps the finest body of folk ballads extant. Unlike a poem, which achieves its final form at the hands of the poet and/or printer, a ballad—transmitted orally from singer to singer, generation to generation—remained unfixed. Sometimes the endless verbal editing improved a song; not infrequently, it debased the original. In any case, the sole constant for our ballads through almost a thousand years was constant change.

Not until the end of the last century when Harvard Professor James Francis Child published his collection of 305 British traditional ballads with variants did this material attain anything approaching codification. Since then, collectors have recorded variants of given Child ballads in the hundreds; they have also discovered that the ballad remained a vital, proliferating art in North America long after it had lost relevance to life in the British Isles. Indeed, early in this century the English specialist Cecil Sharp rediscovered in the southern Appalachians several magnificent Elizabethan ballads that had been completely lost in their homeland.

Essentially, then, no ballad possesses anything resembling an "original" form, or even a "best" recension. With this in mind, the team of Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger—long-time laborers in the vineyards of authentic folk song—have undertaken to present a ten-disc series ("The Long Harvest," Argo ZDA 66/75, \$5.95 each) devoted to great traditional ballads with their principal Scots, English, and North American versions. Of the forty-eight selections, forty-three appear in Child's collection: including all variants, the series offers 160 songs, and playing time exceeds seven hours.

One's first reaction is almost reflexive: *Voici*

a great dollop of monotonous iteration! But it isn't. In point of fact, few releases of recent years can so fascinate the listener, catching him up at once in musicology, history, art, psychology (folk ballads have no rival in exploring the tangled human thickets of love and lust and tenderness and murder), and a seascape of glorious melody, wave upon changing wave. Here the listener sails to his death across a wintry ocean with the despairing *Sir Patrick Spens*; after a bout of incest, he murders his pregnant sister. *Lizie Wan*: poisoned by his sweetheart, he lies down to die as *Lord Randal*; drunken, he rapes a peasant girl beside the road in *The Knight and the Shepherd's Daughter*. All of it is here—the fleeting joys, the besetting frailties, the incessant horrors of the human condition—as valid today as when seen through the mists of a millenium.

Mr. MacColl and Miss Seeger sing with due regard for the-way-it-was. Most of the songs, particularly the early Scots and English versions, they present neat—a solo voice without accompaniment of any kind. Miss Seeger, an American, deals with most of the New World variants in a true, somewhat nasal soprano redolent of the Appalachians. MacColl's virile, roughhewn voice, while not immune to the occasional catch or wobble, ranges magnificently through the archaic Scots dialect of songs like *The Twa Corbies*, *The Cruel Mother*, and *The Elfin Knight*. He reaches the summit of the balladeer's art in his bitter, mortuary singing of the six-hundred-year-old dirge, *Sir Patrick Spens*. His harsh, intense voice inflects with high tragedy—and savage irony—the final stanza wherein the brutally drowned ship's company sway endlessly at the bottom of the sea with their unwilling skipper:

and Rape—Fa-la-la La



by O. B. Brummell

“Half ower, half ower be Aberdour/Whaur
the sea’s sae wide and deep/It’s there it lies
Sir Patrick Spens/Wi’ the Scots lairds at his
feet.”

TO TRACE THE provenance and evolution of the individual ballads provides yet another fascination. I, for one, am convinced—and this splendid set reinforces the conviction—that many of the ballads are far older than most experts dream. Take *Lord Randal*, for instance, whose origins various authorities fix anywhere from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries. There is a neglected Icelandic analogue, *Olaf and the Elf-Maid*, which certainly derives from a prethirteenth-century Danish source. Another ballad, *The Maid Freed from the Gallows*, exists in lands as disparate as Sweden, Estonia, Russia, the Faroes, and Sicily; it is generally traced through an ancient Yorkshire variant, to a ninth-century Irish folk tale called *The Distressed Handmaid*. Now, it is instructive to note that all of these places share a common factor—a Viking occupation. The song was born in Ireland (Dublin was founded by Vikings in the ninth century), passed through Yorkshire (York was a Viking capital in the tenth century), and appears in Russia (Novgorod and Kiev were Viking strongholds in the tenth century), Scandinavia (home of Vikings), Estonia (dominated by Vikings), the Faroes (settled by Vikings), and Sicily (ruled in the twelfth century by Normans, the descendants of Vikings). This can be no coincidence. *The Maid Freed from the Gallows* most probably stems from an old Norse ballad with roots well into the previous millenium. Other ballads, notably

Lord Brand and *The Twa Sisters*, also share a Norse ancestry. It seems to me that the Viking role in developing and disseminating folk ballads would prove a fruitful subject for musicological investigation.

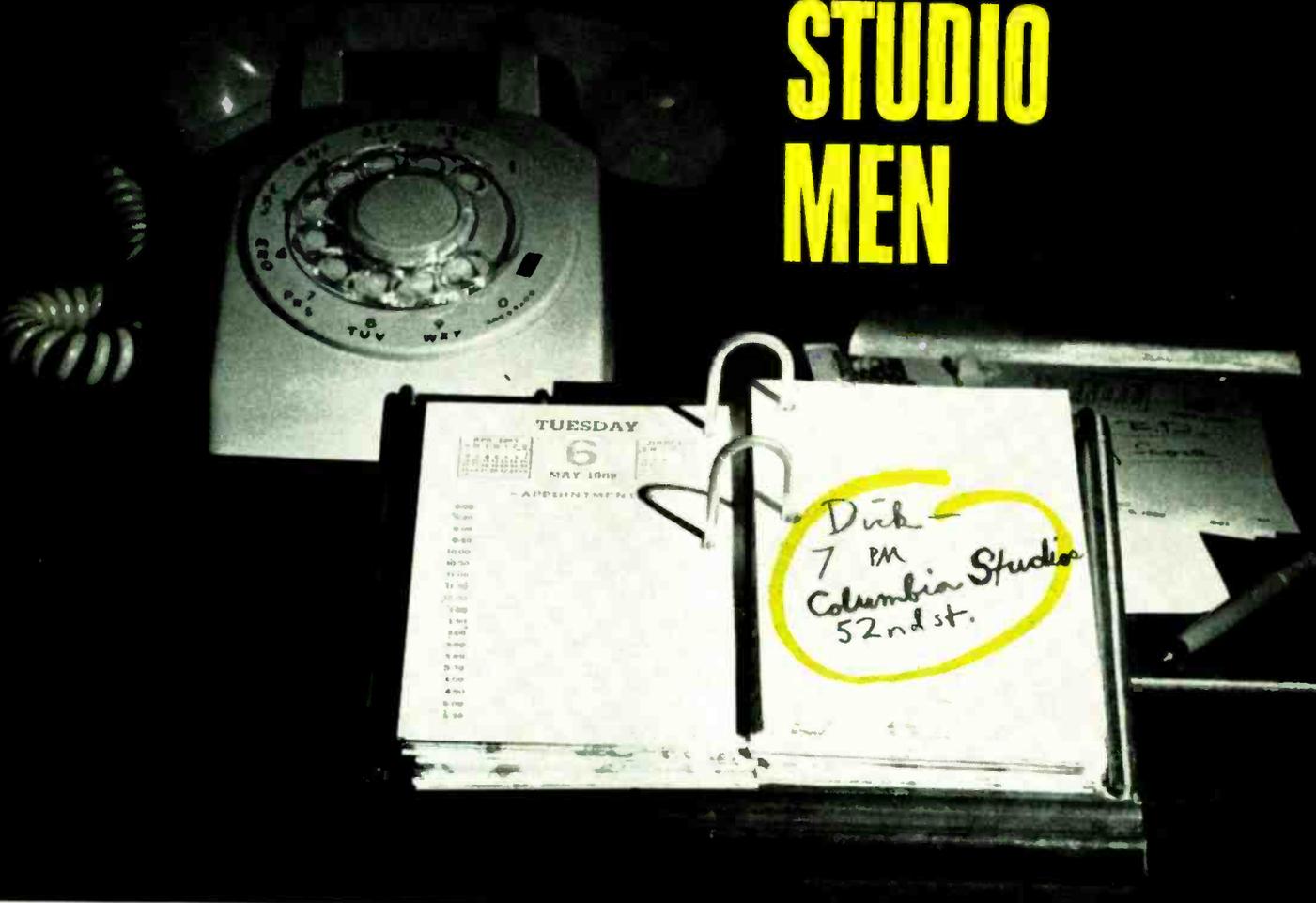
One cannot sufficiently praise the annotations Argo has provided. Each album contains a booklet with scholarly commentary on and complete texts of every ballad. As examples of the intriguing lore purveyed in the notes, one learns that the color green (“down by the greenwood,” “in the green hills,” etc.) in ancient belief symbolized death; the refrain of *Riddles Wisely Expounded*—“Lay the bent to the bonnie broom”—is not nonsense but an incantation against witchcraft: the herb juniper routs evil spirits, hawthorn (or gentle) placates the good fairies, rosemary wards off the evil eye—hence the otherwise incomprehensible refrain “Jennifer (juniper) gentle and rose-marie.”

Finally, one remarks with rue the incredible dilution of those ballads that have crossed the Atlantic. We have an uncanny ability to purge them of their ancient passion. The sinister *Lord Randal* degenerates into the jolly *Billy Boy* whose sweetheart can indeed “bake a cherry pie.” *Lord Lovel*, who deserts his Scottish sweetheart to roam the world, turns into the puerile *Abe Lincoln at the White House Gate*. The barbarously anti-Semitic *Sir Hugh* transmutes into a gay little chant of childhood joys. A strange phenomenon, given our national proclivity for violence. One can only wonder why.

To summarize, here is a series that combines consummate artistry with impeccable scholarship. It adds a new dimension to our knowledge of the birth and evolution of that great cultural heritage—the English ballad.

By John S. Wilson

HYMAN AND THE STUDIO MEN



Portrait of the virtuoso as a free-lance recording musician

ONE STORMY EVENING a few months ago, I met Dick Hyman hurrying down Madison Avenue on his way to work. Hyman is a pianist, organist, and harp-sichordist (not to mention arranger, composer, and conductor) who is part of the very busy inner core of that pool of approximately two hundred musicians who do most of the recording in New York—primarily, pop discs and TV/radio commercials. He was going to a recording session at Columbia's studios on East 52nd Street. A couple of nights before, he had been at this same studio conducting his own arrange-

ments at a session for the singer Enzo Stuarti. This time he would simply be a sideman.

"Piano or organ?" I asked.

"I don't know," he said.

That surprised me. "What kind of music will it be?"

"Don't know that, either."

"Well, who are you playing for?"

Hyman laughed. "Look, all I know is that Stan Applebaum's conducting. Whose date it is, who the other musicians will be, what we'll play—these are

all things I won't find out until I get to the studio."

The call was for seven o'clock. Hyman walked into the studio building at five minutes of seven, greeting Max Polikoff, the violinist (clue No. 1: there would be strings on the date). Up one flight, the lobby outside the studio was filled with musicians hanging up hats or coats, exchanging greetings, splitting into small gossipy groups. They might have been old friends arriving at a dinner party. Hyman chatted briefly with Urbie Green, the debonair trombonist who was smoking a small cigar, waved to guitarist Al Caiola and bassist George Duvivier, and went into the studio.

It was a forest of spindly microphone booms, towering gobo walls, baffles, coat racks, and a silvery set of chimes. Music stands and chairs were arranged in neat patterns. The scores on the stands were stamped "Anita Bryant" (clue No. 2: it was a pop vocalist's date). At one end of the studio, some of the violinists were tuning up. Hyman found he had been supplied with piano, organ, and harpsichord. He tested a few notes on the piano as the other musicians began drifting in.

By seven o'clock everyone was in or next to his chair, most of them still talking. Phil Kraus strode behind his barricade of percussion—a xylophone, a vibraphone, a Chinese bell tree, a set of orchestra bells, chimes, and two kettledrums. He gave the kettledrums a couple of businesslike raps with his knuckles, tuned them with a quick twist of the wrist, and, like a haberdasher raising the shade on his door to indicate he is open for business, turned to face Stan Applebaum.

It was 7:01 as Applebaum, a tall, handsome man whose eyes darted humorously behind dark-rimmed glasses, gave the down beat for the first run-through of *Over the Rainbow*. Phil Bodner, who was unpacking his flute as the down beat was given, played most of the run-through from a Groucho Marx crouch in pursuit of his music stand as it was moved from the French horn chair, where it had been set up by mistake, to a new position. Applebaum found something he wanted his three guitarists to change. While they worked on this, the rest of the men pulled out tax withholding forms and began filling them in.

Two more run-throughs for notes and Applebaum was ready to try it with Anita Bryant. By now most of the nonblowing musicians had lit up cigars, which they clamped in their teeth as they played. Jackets were being shed (Kraus hung his on his chimes). Applebaum, resplendent in a bright canary shirt, put on earphones. Miss Bryant, slim, chestnut-haired, disappeared into her gobo, blowing her nose. Another pair of run-throughs and then, at 7:30, the first take was made. Six tries resulted in two complete takes.

While the last take was being played back, the musicians wandered out of the studio, some purposefully, others casually. The blowing musicians took the opportunity to light up *their* cigars as smoke

began to hang mistily in the high-ceilinged studio. By the end of the playback, everyone had returned. They did one more take which was pronounced okay.

It was 7:50, and these players had completed work on a score that none of them had seen an hour earlier. At 7:53 they turned to *You'll Never Walk Alone* and ran through it for notes. By 8:30 they had finished that too.

THE FREE-LANCE MUSICIANS who accomplish these feats day after day in the New York studios are unique among professionals in any field. Not only must they produce instant music, faultlessly played, but they must be able to perform with equal facility in areas as far removed from each other as standard symphonic works, rock and roll, and commercial jingles—and in whatever styles, old or new, that may be called for.

"The demands made on their talents," says Enoch Light, who has been conducting these musicians for more than a dozen years on his Command and Project 3 recordings, "are more than those expected of any sportsman or professional in any field. If Arnold Palmer has eight or nine bad tournaments, he just keeps on going. In golf, these things happen. But if Tony Mottola or Doc Severinsen should hit a bad note, everybody in the studio would be shocked. These men have got to be *so* felicitously facile because they've got to be able to do everything."

For their "felicitous facility," the professional professionals are paid \$65 for a three-hour recording session. Bookings are made by a contractor, who may himself be one of the musicians on the date. Usually this is done by phone and, equally usually, the contractor simply leaves a message at the musician's answering service offering a date at a certain time and a certain place. The musician phones back an acceptance or a rejection. That is the extent of communications until the time of the session when the contractor hovers nervously near the entrance to the studio, hoping everyone will turn up. Considering the number of such sessions held in New York every day, there are relatively few slip-ups.

To become one of those who are constantly sought out by contractors, a musician has to be versatile, flexible, cooperative, and, Dick Hyman adds, lucky—"you have to be at the right place at the right time."

For Hyman, the right place at the right time was the NBC staff in the mid-Fifties. By then he had had classical training with his uncle, Anton Rovinsky, the pianist, and he had studied jazz with Teddy Wilson. He had worked as a jazz pianist at Wells' in Harlem, at Café Society in Greenwich Village, and at Birdland. He had toured with Victor Lombardo's orchestra and with Benny Goodman's sextet. He got into radio and TV with Alvy West's group, backing Eddie Fisher, Don Cherry, and other singers. He went to NBC when Mort Lindsay (now a neighbor of Hyman's in Montclair, N. J.) arranged for Hyman to replace him as pianist in Milton De-



Dick Hyman, with coworkers: "The great thing in this . . . business is friendship."

lugg's house band. There he was steered towards recording sessions by Eddie Safranski, the bassist. Hymie Schertzer, the alto saxophonist, and other friends on the NBC staff.

"The great thing in this free-lance recording business is friendship," Hyman told me. "It's not just a matter of making contacts and keeping them up. You have to like people. You have to be able to subordinate yourself to a total unit. You have to like the music you're playing, at least for the moment, because you have to commit yourself to it. Loyalties and friendships are very important. My best friends are the ones that I work with. We appreciate each other and try to help each other.

Most of the free-lance work in New York is done on a moonlighting basis. These musicians usually have some kind of steady job—on staff at one of the three networks, in the pit band of a Broadway show (to which they can send a substitute when necessary), at Radio City Music Hall, or with the New York Philharmonic. Hyman began moonlighting at NBC, continued it during a three-year period when he was music director for Arthur Godfrey on radio and television and was also playing on *Sing Along with Mitch*. Since 1962, however, he has not had a steady job for more than a couple of weeks, thus joining the ranks of those who depend entirely on free-lance work for their income.

It is possible, if you have the talent and the stamina, to make a good living as a free-lance sideman. Between recordings, transcriptions, and TV films, a sideman who is in demand can maintain a

full schedule; but if it is too full, fatigue and/or boredom are apt to set in, if not outright punchiness.

Those like Dick Hyman who have no steady source of income are usually involved in something other than the sideman's trade. Hyman (along with Joe Harnell, the pianist, and guitarists Al Caiola and Tony Mottola, among others) is not only an arranger and conductor but a recording artist in his own right on Command Records. Phil Bodner, who would have no trouble finding opportunities to play his various woodwinds twenty-four hours a day, is the arranger and producer of the instrumental group called The Brass Ring. Trombonist Buddy Morrow has a band that he takes out on college dates on weekends. Saxophonist Tommy Newsom is an arranger and conductor.

AS HYMAN'S INTERESTS and capabilities have expanded, he has found that each step of his progress is part of an interlinking series of experiences which must be maintained to sustain each other.

"When I arrange and compose," he explained, "I find that everything derives from the playing experience. The playing is the root of everything. It all starts with the fingers. On a record session you may be asked to draw on all the experience you've had in the past. You have to simulate styles of playing that you may have done on club dates, in a show, or on a live radio program. The tunes you learn on club dates are a musician's ABC.

"That's why I still take outside jobs. I did a week

with Bob Crosby in Atlantic City in July. I played at Eddie Condon's for a couple of weeks last winter. I did a weekend with Tony Scott at a psychedelic discothèque. I played organ at a church wedding for a friend—forty minutes of quasi-Bach as a prelude because I can play my own Bach better than Bach's Bach.

"There's a lot of blowing of this kind going on if you look for it. And you have to seek out these opportunities because you must use them to keep up what started you in the field.

"What I like best about free-lancing," he went on, "is the challenge of each new thing, the variety that you run into, the odd combinations of things that you may do in one day. The contrasts can be funny—a honky-tonk ragtime session, then some soul organ, and then a pseudoclassical date.

"You find yourself doing things with a single tune that would never happen on a regular job. The first time I played *Illya, Darling* was for an album arranged by Emmanuel Vardi for Columbia. Then I arranged it and played it at a Muzak session. Next, I played it on harpsichord in United Artists' original cast album for the show, augmenting the bouzoukis. And right after that I did a honky-tonk piano version on a funny, un-Greek treatment by Louis Prima."

Keeping up with musical fads can also keep a free lance on his toes. Those who become adept at new developments quickly are the ones who are likely to be in the greatest demand. In the past few years, studio men have had to add new instruments to their arsenals—fluegelhorn, Fender bass, ondioline, sitar. Other instruments are being put to new uses with the help of exotic engineering techniques. New kinds of accenting and phrasing have come along, and new rhythms too: bossa nova, bugaloo.

Studio men must be constantly alert for every coming musical twist and turn. Bobby Rosengarden is a drummer who prides himself on being on top of developments in Latin music, particularly Latin rhythms. When Rosengarden left New York for a short trip, Hyman and the other free lancers who work with him prepared an elaborate put-on for his return. They greeted him with reports of a new thing called the Columbo which, they said, had been sweeping the music business during Rosengarden's absence. The free-lance community had been so widely alerted to the gag that Rosengarden spent several anxious weeks discreetly trying to find out how to play the Columbo before he discovered that it was a figment of Hyman's imagination.

For a keyboard player, the varieties of style and material that free-lancing requires are made even broader by the fact that much of what he plays is more or less improvised.

"The keyboard part is sometimes completely written out and you play it as is," Hyman explained. "But quite often it just consists of chord names, a bass line, and possibly orchestral or vocal cues. Then you have to complete it, using your judgment

about what would be appropriate, very much like realizing a baroque figured-bass. As a rule, the arranger will expect you to do this in the rhythm section, and when I conduct I encourage the rhythm section players to contribute.

"Whether you deviate from a written part—and how much you deviate—has to do with the kind of music involved, general precedents, and your relationship with the conductor, who is usually also the arranger. The string and wind parts are more fixed, but even here there is usually room for some tinkering. Of course, a band of arrangers can be overly helpful. I once heard that Abe Lyman fired any player he suspected of knowing too much about arranging. Or was it Joe Venuti?

"To me, the most fun is in improvising. In the Twenties, I'd have played for silent movies. In fact, I've done an equivalent thing with baroque harpsichord improvisations for TV plays and with organ on soap operas. Improvising is instant composition and, particularly for a keyboard player, it has uses that go beyond jazz. For me, however, it started with jazz."

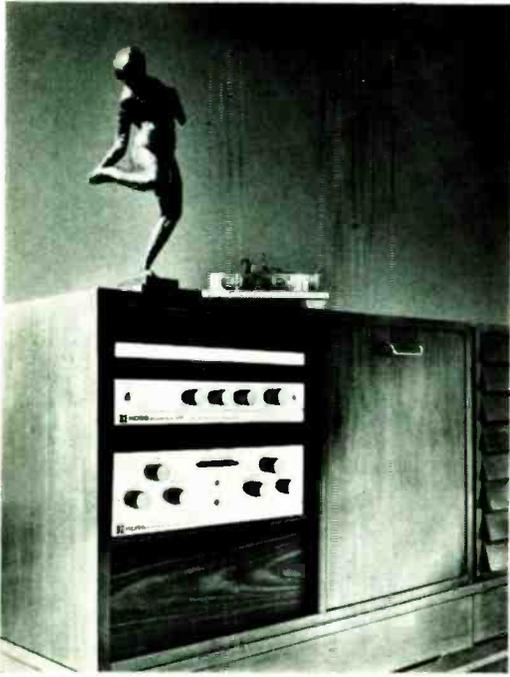
JAZZ IS ONE OF several sources that have produced today's free-lance studio musicians. Some have symphonic backgrounds, many grew up in the traveling dance bands of the Thirties and Forties, and now even rock and roll is beginning to contribute to the pool. But regardless of their primary backgrounds, the successful studio men are those who have gone beyond specialization and have assimilated the nuances of all the other types of music currently being recorded. They know the whole scene.

"With these guys," declares Enoch Light, "all you have to say is, 'Look, I would like to play this in a very stiff style' or 'Play it very loose' or 'Play it corny' or 'very modern' or 'improvise on such and such a basis.' They know what you mean and their response is instantaneous."

This type of studio work is producing a hybrid musician of a caliber never before known. Despite the requirement that everything must be played on sight and given only a few minutes of run-through before being committed to final form, composers and arrangers are finding that they can present the studio men with increasingly complex and difficult material and expect to get good results.

A similar sense of assimilation is bubbling all through contemporary music. The lines that have segregated classical music from jazz, that cut off popular music from folk music, are disappearing. A new generation of composers, apparently oblivious to such departmentalization, can already be heard at work on the collegiate level. They are as familiar with rock and roll devices as they are with the forms of traditional European music, the ethnic music of India, and jazz. They are drawing on all these sources to create what could be a new kind of music. And a new breed of musician has developed to play it.

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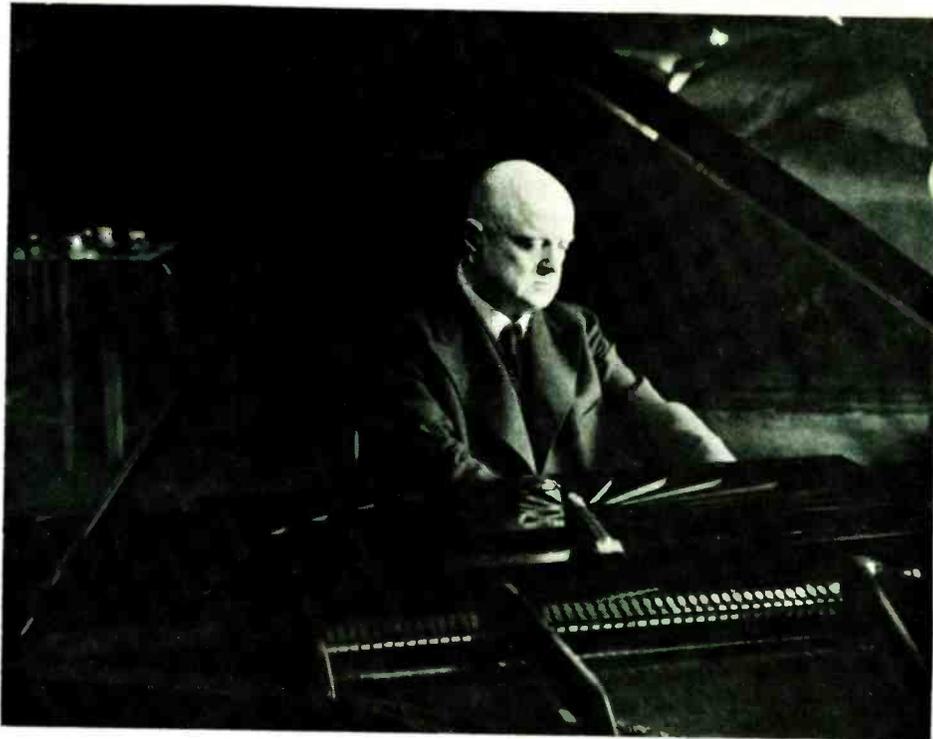


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Sibelius' Seven Symphonies

A CRITIC'S VIEW OF THE RECORDINGS

by Harris Goldsmith

JEAN CHRISTIAN SIBELIUS was a man of deliberation. Like Brahms, Sibelius waited until he felt himself a seasoned craftsman in orchestral technique before he attempted his first symphonic work; he was, in fact thirty-four when he completed the Symphony No. 1, in 1899. The following twenty-five years saw the publication of six more symphonies—and then the great Finnish composer was to live another thirty-four years as a veritable compositional drop-out.

There have been several explanations tendered for this unhappy circumstance. One of the most plausible has it that Sibelius was trammled by his greatest admirers: with every new work heralded as a consummate masterpiece, the highly sensitive, self-critical composer might have been loath to bring into being anything his worshipers (let alone an objective posterity) might find less than exalted. Another explanation has it that, like Brahms and Dukas, he built a censorial bonfire. (Intimates of the composer such as the conductor Basil Cameron—who swore he held the score of the conjectural Eighth Symphony in his hands—lend credence to the latter theory.)

Whatever the case, we do have twenty-five years of solid symphonic growth, characterized by uncom-

promising aesthetic sinew and originality. The first two symphonies arguably owe something to Tchaikovsky, Borodin, Dvořák, and other illustrious forebears, but they are nonetheless unmistakably Sibelian. As for works like the Fourth and Sixth symphonies, there is nothing in their content that is even remotely derivative. One has to turn to the roughly concurrent masterpieces of Béla Bartók to find twentieth-century music of comparable emotional range, complexity, and rapt communion with nature.

In the last-named quality lies the crux of the matter: Sibelius' writing, being so allied with nature sounds, is crucially dependent upon mood and notational specifics; yet his directions are often very vague and open to widely divergent interpretations. Sibelius no doubt knew exactly what he wanted, but his visions and aural impressions were often too elusive to translate into precise words and notation. To compound the problem, despite the plenitude of recordings and written evidence from interpreters who could claim direct and intimate association with Sibelius, there is no clear-cut "performance tradition" for his music as there is for Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms, or Stravinsky. In point of fact, the various

"authentic" Sibelius readings are often startlingly diverse, even contradictory. What traditions exist should rightly be called "Cults of Personality" for Sibelians, both interpreters and listeners, have always been a cultish lot. Often these factions are unreconcilable, with one set of devotees antipathetic to another. It might then be advisable, before passing on to the works themselves, to outline the best-known and most encountered styles of Sibelius interpretation.

1) *The Koussevitzky Tradition.* This approach stresses broad outlines with weighty, sensuous sonorities and a romantic softening of the music's starker, less compromising aspects, while at the same time retaining a basic reserve and continence. Of modern-day exponents, Bernstein's readings can largely be taken as the paradigm for the Koussevitzky approach.

2) *The Stokowski Tradition.* Conductors espousing this school achieve results just as lush as Koussevitzky, but their manner tends to be more wayward and overtly theatrical. Here the music is frequently subjected to little exaggerations and distortions of balance and accent. Dynamic extremes are often widely contrasted and, in general, the music frequently becomes superheated and (for me) incongruously tropical and sensational.

3) *The Beecham Approach.* In lieu of the lush, hefty sounds of Koussevitzky and Stokowski, Beecham keeps the strands of Sibelius' instrumentation

cool and sharply defined, phrasing with compact lyricism and bright understatement. And as a colorist, Beecham provided an orchestral spectrum that covered as much range in pointed light rays as Koussevitzky/Stokowski did with their more massive swashes of color.

4) *The Teutonic Sibelius of Karajan.* Here the music is poured into a Germanic mold—the tempos and rhythmic scansion have a four-square regularity which gives the symphonies a decided Brahmsian flavor. This is certainly a valid point of view, for Sibelius owes much to the German romantic movement. In terms of instrumental coloration, Karajan veers closer to Beecham's light transparency than to either Koussevitzky's or Stokowski's blended opulence.

5) *The Nonvirtuoso Approach.* This kind of reading generally eschews hair-trigger sensationalism and precipitate tempos, presenting the music rather soberly and with an emphasis on structural values. Many of Sibelius' own countrymen—such as Robert Kajanus, Tauno Hannikainen, and Akeo Watanabe (who, despite his Japanese name, is half Finnish)—subscribe to this somewhat reserved (but rarely dull) mode of expression.

One further point: the recordings by Bernstein and Watanabe are available only in five-disc sets containing all seven symphonies—with the exception of Bernstein's version of the Fifth, which may be bought separately.

Symphony No. 1, in E minor, Op. 39

Eugene Ormandy is a veteran interpreter of this symphony (he recorded the work twice on 78-rpm discs), and his current edition (Columbia MS 6395) is my own favorite among presently available recordings. Ormandy brings to this performance a sturdy, well-considered choice of tempos, and only occasionally does he lapse into Tchaikovskian rhetoric—an inherent danger with this billowing, extroverted opus. For the most part, the Philadelphia's customary massive sonority does not become too lush or cloying, and details of scoring are unusually clear. Indeed, one even notices that Ormandy has retouched the instrumentation here and there, transposing a few violin passages in the first and last movements up an octave, adding an occasional harp twang and cymbal crash, and so on. All that is missing from Ormandy's well-reproduced reading are those vital intangibles: rapt sensitivity, communicative introspection, and the last word in dramatic inspiration.

Barbirolli, who also once recorded the First with the New York Philharmonic on Columbia 78s, can be heard with his own Hallé forces in two interpretations. I prefer the earlier Vanguard/Everyman edition (SRV 132 SD) where Sir John's broad, romantic inclinations and his predilection for flexible adjustments of tempo and gushing (or "committed") string playing are kept in check by the dry astringency of the bright recorded

sound. On the soft, amorously reverberant new Angel release (S 36489) the tempos seem bloated and leaden, and the entire interpretative aura degenerates into a Sunday-school *religioso* manner.

Bernstein's account (Columbia M55 784) is unquestionably inspired but also lamentably flawed. He goes at the first movement hell-for-leather and quite succeeds in sweeping the listener off his feet—temporarily. Bernstein is dreadfully cavalier about details, however, and he frequently permits hectoring, scrappy-sounding playing from his orchestra. By virtue of its ardent vitality though, I can almost succumb to this performance despite the glaring reverberant sound and the sloppy tape editing. Certainly as a performance in the concert hall (as opposed to a record intended for repeated hearings) it would be a knockout.

Watanabe's reading (Epic BSC 157) is sober, a bit lethargic in the first movement perhaps, but otherwise strong and honorable. The *secco* tone of the Japan Philharmonic—ultrasharp definition between strings, wind, and brass—may not be to everyone's taste.

Maazel's account (London CS 6375) has many enthusiastic adherents, but I am not one of them. For me, the first movement is theatrically hauled about and utterly disunified. I would guess that Maazel does not feel this music deeply—he seems determined to make it sound "new" and "different"—and I end up being more exasperated than convinced (I must admit, though, that the slow

movement—taken a bit more *con moto* than usual—has a nice line). The Vienna Philharmonic's playing here frequently sounds like Tchaikovsky with a heavy foreign accent, another factor that puts me off.

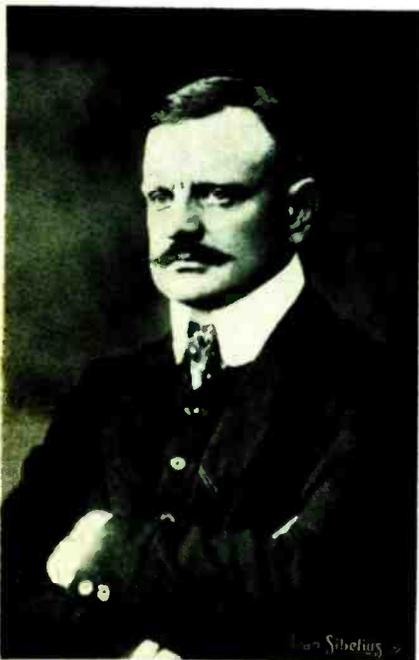
Beecham avoided the Tchaikovsky trap and as a result I found his recorded performance incomparably "right" (Columbia ML 4653, mono only—deleted). While his tempos were always broad, there was also plenty of sinew and muscle in his music making. This sane, natural-sounding, and, for all its individuality, completely unaffected version further profited from the Royal Philharmonic's superb execution, and its sound was perfectly ample. Odyssey should certainly reissue the disc.

Sir Malcolm Sargent's version, which I know from its original Capitol/EMI incarnation (I have not heard the current Pickwick pressing) is a sturdy, objective account. It resembles the Beecham but without the latter's urgency or eloquence.

Symphony No. 2, in D, Op. 43

Inasmuch as the Symphony No. 2 is Sibelius' third most popular work (*Finlandia* and *Valse Triste*, of course, take pride of place), the range of choice is extremely wide. My preference is the Szell recording (Philips PHS 900092). For one thing, the Cleveland conductor's approach is subtle, broad, and controlled; for another, he is not directing the Cleve-

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Sibelius provided no clear-cut performance tradition for his symphonies; hence "cults of personality" developed among his many interpreters and his devotees.

land Orchestra in this Philips release. I do not wish to discredit the Ohio aggregation, which of course is a superb ensemble, but only to point out that the dark, burnished timbre of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw suits this music to perfection. Here is a Sibelius performance without melodramatic excess but replete with dramatic flair and genuinely expressive details. Toscanini's view (RCA Red Seal LM 6711—available only as part of RCA's 10th anniversary five-disc package) is a bit more impetuous than Szell's but not dissimilar in its rugged, albeit intellectualized drive. Though the Maestro's reading derives from the broadcast of December 7, 1940, its candid Studio 8-H sound is strikingly ample and agreeable. In any case, since clarity rather than lushness is Toscanini's essential goal, the acoustical compactness may even be construed as helpful.

Monteux and the London Symphony also rate among my favorites in this work (RCA Red Seal LSC 2342). Monteux's approach is a bit more easygoing, but (except for a surprising bit of overphrasing in the third movement trio) emotionally direct and urgent enough. The fine playing by the LSO is reproduced in one of RCA's cleanest, most lifelike recordings.

Beecham's 1954 concert performance with the BBC Symphony is available on an imported pressing (Odeon ALP 197) and might be a bit difficult to locate. This is a performance that will conjure up pine trees and snappy northern air, and as Sir Thomas himself might have said, "to hell with the ragged brass entries."

Those with limited budgets have two fine performances to choose from. One is the Dorati, taped in 1967 and well played by the Stockholm Philharmonic (RCA Victrola VICS 1318). Some details are presented with almost chamberlike deftness, but in the main this is a muscular, extroverted performance. The late Tauno Hannikainen was one of the composer's intimates and his brilliantly analytical presentation (Crossroads 22 16 0226) is a handsome homage to that association. Basically, Hannikainen's approach is akin to Szell's though without quite the latter's kinetic intensity. The Sinfonia of London plays sturdily for him and with brilliant detail well captured by the recording.

Those who admire the Koussevitzky interpretation (which, incidentally, was recently reissued in England but not here) might investigate the performance in Bernstein's integral set (Columbia M5S 784). Bernstein, like his mentor, opts for a slow tempo in the first movement, and while he goes in for some fancy excesses, his reading holds together well. The same New York Philharmonic occasionally summons up more opulence and color for its performance with Thomas Schippers (Columbia MS 6535) but on the whole that conductor's rampant Stokowski-isms sound mighty pu-erile alongside the more mature views of Bernstein.

Barbirolli's latest account for Angel (S 36425) projects a unique loneliness,

an icy desolation. I find it interesting, but ultimately inappropriate. The sound is fine, however, and so is the Hallé's playing, some unpolished moments aside.

I had recalled Karajan's Angel record (S 35891) as a dim, drab performance, but an actual rehearing has compelled me to alter that view. Yet for all its sturdy, musicianly playing, the approach is a bit unidiomatic and Prussian. Maazel's performance (London CS 6408) suffers from the same traits as his account of the First, and Watanabe's statement (Epic BSC 157) is brutally frank, without much personal poetry. Ormandy once made a fine 78-rpm version of the Second, but his stereo remake (Columbia MS 6535) is turgid and bloated. Paray is interpretatively threadbare and claustrophobic in its recorded sound (Mercury SR 18057), while Ansermet's stodgy conception (London CS 6391) is tentatively played by the Suisse Romande Orchestra.

Symphony No. 3, in C, Op. 52

The four available interpretations of No. 3 tend to divide themselves right down the middle: Maazel (London CS 6591) and Kletzki (Angel 35315, mono only), favor headlong tempos while Bernstein and Watanabe share a more staid, deliberate point of view. There is something to be said for all four versions. Maazel, I feel, tightens up the work and makes its content easier to grasp than does any other performance in my experience. He gets a delectable, romping vitality into his first movement by virtue of the most meticulous attention to articulation and accentuation. Kletzki's energy, by contrast, sounds more febrile, although to some tastes that quality might be congenial here.

The principal difference between the more sober accounts by Watanabe (Epic BSC 157) and Bernstein (Columbia M5S 784) lies in orchestral tone: the Japanese orchestra is clear and undiffused, while the New Yorkers tend to produce an altogether warmer and more matted sound. Bernstein's strings sometimes project a greater feel for the underlying pulse, but as counterbalance, Watanabe's forces occasionally achieve greater breadth. All four discs (including the Kletzki) are well recorded. While Maazel's Third may succeed best in terms of structural clarification, I have a premonition that the Watanabe or the Bernstein might offer the richest rewards in terms of long-term acquaintance. I'll declare a tossup for all four versions and leave it at that!

Symphony No. 4, in A minor, Op. 63

For me, the Fourth is Sibelius' greatest symphonic achievement. It is a strange, grim, utterly desolate work, full of suggestive, vague undertones that are finally structured into epic proportions. Its secrets can be elusive, and many—if not most—of our modern maestros have strayed far wide of the mark in this

work. One of the most frequent re-creative maladies is the tendency to choose ludicrously slow tempos. In various divergent ways, Bernstein, Karajan, Watanabe, and Ansermet fall prey to this pitfall (the last-named distressingly so). Ormandy, on the other hand, is fast, slick, and vacuous: this superficial, soupily reproduced edition (Columbia ML 5045, mono only) can be summarily discarded.

Maazel's reading (London CS 6592) offers a fairly reliable compromise between the too slow and personal and the too brisk and impersonal approaches. His outlines are, for the most part, taut, clear, and stark. One can generally feel a definite rhythmic pulse in every movement, but in the main I am left unfulfilled by what Maazel accomplishes here. What results is an odd sonorous hybrid wherein the Vienna Philharmonic produces a cold, "age-of-steel" glitter in *tutti* passages, while the first-desk playing (the all-important cello most particularly) sounds flaccid. This, to be sure, is a very personal reaction, and Maazel's effort is probably, by default, the best of a problematical lot.

Karajan's account (DGG 138974) is darkly burnished, mushy, and soft-centered. His curvaceous, yielding emphasis on sonority makes his Fourth sound like excellent Brahms. Bernstein's is equally flaccid (Columbia M55 784) but a little closer to the appropriate grayness. Ansermet's account (London CS 6387), for all its lethargic impersonality, is rather better than his Second. Indeed, certain details have a rapt concentration that leads me to suspect that the Swiss conductor knew more about this music than his nonvirtuoso orchestra allowed him to show. London's sound, in contrast to the overrich quality accorded Karajan and Bernstein, is clinically transparent and a bit "white."

Watanabe (Epic BSC 157) recovers with reasonable success from an unsteady first movement; and as for those snarling *sforzando* brass attacks, the playing is far more effective than the sleek politeness of Maazel's, Karajan's, or Bernstein's men, not to mention Ansermet's anemic forces. The situation regarding the Fourth Symphony would be immeasurably improved, indeed quite possibly solved, were Philips to usher George Szell back to Amsterdam for another session with the Concertgebouw.

Symphony No. 5, in E flat, Op. 82

The most popular of the later Sibelius symphonies. No. 5 shares structural similarities with both its two immediate predecessors. Its first movement, like that of No. 4, builds up to holocaust proportions from a beginning stated in muted resignation. But as in the Third, the subsequent sections of the work make use of short insistent rhythmic/melodic figurations. The principal mood of the E flat Symphony is one of distant, wind-swept optimism. Like Smetana's *Moldau*, the work tends to flow like a mighty river that continually gathers momen-

tum until it discharges, finally, into a mighty harbor.

My own favorite account of this Symphony is by Sir Malcolm Sargent and the BBC Symphony (Capitol SG 7181—deleted). It is a reading of ruddy dynamism and breadth, and it should certainly be reissued. While none of the available editions really displaces Sargent's in my affections, many diverse and interesting points of view are presented.

My favorite of the currently available lot is Maazel's (London CS 6488). It is very tight and compressed, often unnaturally so. I have the interesting sensation of being whisked through the work on a musical conveyor belt. It is also a highly charged, ultradynamic reading. To be sure, such acute extroversion can't help missing out on mood, although I must say that I am highly impressed by Maazel's strong, clear-headed ideas and also his remodeling of the Vienna Philharmonic. Here the players sound utterly unlike themselves: knife-edged, precise, and compellingly committed.

Barbirolli's Vanguard Everyman edition (SRV 137SD) has a relaxed, rhythmically restrained, low-toned understated quality that perhaps would be more appropriate applied to the Fourth Symphony. Yet the interpretation works. This is not the Fifth Symphony itself, but rather, a revealing confession about it from a musician who has loved and lived with the music for a long time. It will be interesting to compare Barbirolli's remake for EMI which has already appeared in England but is as yet unreleased in this country.

Prêtre (RCA Red Seal LSC 2996) gives us the work as Debussy might have composed it, while Karajan (once again) gives us a Brahms-eye view (DGG 138973 and Angel S 35922). With the Frenchman, everything caresses the ear: tempos and accents are gauged for maximum plasticity and nuance. Karajan is sonorous just as elegant, but metrically divided squarely in four- and eight-bar phrases. His DGG version has a more brilliant recorded sound than his earlier Angel, and all things being equal, it is to be preferred.

While Watanabe's performance (Epic BSC 157) is also alert and extroverted, its brisk tempos are less extreme than Maazel's. Watanabe is particularly successful in the eerie tremolandos at the start of the finale. Ormandy's account (Columbia ML 5045, mono only) is cut from substantially the same cloth as Watanabe's, though his famous "Philadelphia Sound" tends to draw an inevitable curtain between the music and me.

Alexander Gibson's clear, alertly played, and well-recorded account (RCA Victrola VICS 1016) is one of the best nonperformances that I have ever heard. How so superficially positive an interpretation can be so utterly without a point of view (in the sublime sense) is a mystery, all told, and I feel rather guilty for not liking it more. Gibson's accompanying *Karelia* Suite, though, is lovely.

I like Bernstein's performance less now than I did when I first heard it

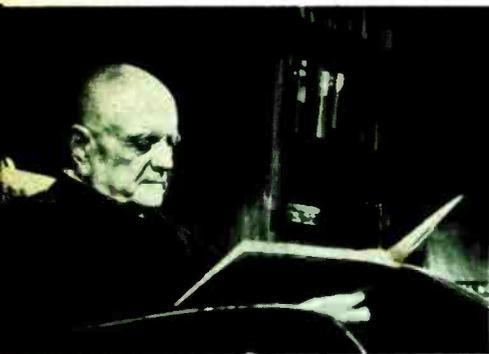


Pictured here with Sibelius in 1940, the year of his seventy-fifth birthday, Georgia Graves, American contralto, sang a group of his songs to benefit For Finland, Inc.

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H. (Columbia MS 6749 or, in the complete set, M5S 784). His reading conveys a certain heroic quality, but I feel that much of his direction here is tentative and soggy (or perhaps merely imperfectly conveyed to his players). In the first movement Bernstein's strings wear their sentiment too coarsely and seem unable to project any sort of continuous line. It is this sluggish, unshaped, rhythmically uncertain phrasing in the opening two movements, and the clumsily negotiated transitions there, that are at fault rather than slow tempos per se (though what Bernstein makes of the second movement's *Andante mosso, quasi allegretto* is absurdly slow by any reckoning). Moreover, the New York Philharmonic's ensemble tone seems not only at odds with the music but with itself: on the one hand, you have heavy, glutinous, soft-textured low strings, and on the

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Did the highly sensitive, self-critical Sibelius compose an Eighth Symphony and condemn it to be a "censorial bonfire?"

other, hard-toned woodwinds and harsh, overblown brass. The acoustic too tends to be overreverberant and confused. If you prized Koussevitzky's famous reading, perhaps you will be able to tolerate Bernstein's, which—in intent anyway—is interpretatively similar.

Bloomfield's Everest version (3068) sounds like a competent sightreading job, recorded in a telephone booth.

Symphony No. 6, in D minor, Op. 104

Like the Fourth Symphony, the Sixth is another misunderstood, often maligned opus. This is a brief, tersely impersonal, and yet very intimate utterance: its phrases, like the best classical music, are crystalline in their shining severity. Bernstein (Columbia M5S 784) offers a warmly romantic, richly curvaceous, and generally subjective reading. In short, his account presents all the qualities that should not be applied to this score. To be sure, both the playing and reproduction are better than elsewhere in his recorded cycle, but the flavor still has the characteristic of cigar aroma in a lady's boudoir. A more objective complaint is that the third movement tempo *poco vivace* is far too leaden-gaited.

Both Watanabe (Epic BSC 157) and Karajan (DGG 139032 and Angel 35316) offer some improvement, though both conductors unfortunately share Bernstein's laggardly views about the aforementioned third movement. I prefer the Watanabe: for one thing, his reading is refined, but unlike the two Karajan versions not overrefined.

Maazel again takes top honors here. He gives you the sharpest, clearest, coldest Sixth yet to be heard on LP (London CS 6591). It scores an immediate victory in the problematical *poco vivace* which startles at first until one accepts the movement as the scherzo that the composer intended—and is here. About the other three movements, I am less certain. To be sure, Maazel's very severe, metrical approach makes the outlines of the music much easier for the listener to grasp, though isn't it all a mite cold-blooded and prosaic? The Vienna Philharmonic plays exquisitely, no mistaking that, and London's sound is extremely compact and brilliant. I suspect that Maazel's dry-eyed outlook is, in the long run, good Rx for the music.

Symphony No. 7, in C, Op. 105

This one-movement work was first performed under the title of *Fantasia Sinfonica*; not until publication did Sibelius decide that here was, after all, Symphony No. 7. Many Sibelians have spoken of its qualities as an apotheosis, but I feel that even they understate the case when they call the Seventh a composite of the composer's symphonic output. For Sibelius was not merely summarizing himself in this work; he was in fact distilling a very ingenious "moonshine" from many famous earlier orchestral C major works. There is some of the gallant pomp of Mozart's K. 503 Piano Concerto and *Jupiter* Symphony, and some of the weighty stride of the *Meistersinger* Prelude. There is a lyrical motif that plainly reminds one of Tchaikovsky's String Serenade, some of the sensuous opacity that is Schumann's Second Symphony, some of the fierce eruptiveness out of the finale of Beethoven's Fifth, and—most specifically—a recurrent trombone motto that sounds like an amalgam of the Brahms First Symphony chorale and the transfiguration theme from Strauss's *Tod und Verklärung*. Sibelius has here fashioned a magnificent "through-composed" tone poem that attains, in the right kind of interpretation, a triumphant, heroic grandeur.

The present array of recorded performances offers a goodly interpretative leeway, though every one of the available versions leaves something to be desired. Bernstein (Columbia M5S 784) seems emotionally most *en rapport* with the work. He approaches it with epical breadth and the sort of big, free-wheeling expansiveness that brings to mind Koussevitzky's long discontinued but legendary recording with the BBC Symphony. Where Bernstein falls down is in the area of discipline: he permits his deeply

felt, highly charged emotions to get the better of him at times. As a result, some of the sharp, clear orchestral attacks become a bit soggy, tentative, and scrambled, particularly in the climaxes. The recorded acoustic too tends to be woolly, matted, and unclear.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is Beecham's idyllic statement (Angel S 35458). In terms of sophistication and beautifully organized orchestral execution, his edition is way out in front. Sir Thomas also makes a few judicious dynamic adjustments (e.g., the second, *mineure* entrance of the trombone motto) that greatly enhance clarity and definition. But Beecham's conception is too pretty, too intimate, too lacking in transcendental ferocity. While each episode is in itself probably phrased and shaped with more penetration and point than in any other version, the requisite cumulative build-up is lacking. Big orchestral moments here should burst the bonds of civilized restraint, but never do in Beecham's affectionate rendition.

Both of Karajan's accounts (DGG 139032; Angel 35316, mono only) offer orchestral playing that rivals Beecham's in clarity, subtlety and articulation. Furthermore, Karajan's point of view does succeed better than Beecham's in projecting the music's internal granite. Yet in the long run, Karajan's bigness is parochially Teutonic where it should be triumphantly universal: there is, in both his recordings, a wooden, square-toed lethargy and an emotional oppressiveness. Of the two editions, I prefer the Philharmonia/Angel because of its louder, weightier, more impressive-sounding reproduction, despite its pre-stereo engineering.

Watanabe's completely forthright presentation (Epic BSC 157) is the one that presents, aesthetically speaking, the least to quibble at. He provides just the right ratio of muscle to delicacy, and the right kinds of emotion and intellect. Moreover, he gets clean recorded sound and has his Tokyo aggregation playing with discipline. But you can plainly hear that the orchestra's capabilities (particularly in the realm of tonal quality) are simply not of the best. Some of the more intricate bits of instrumentation sound raucous and infelicitous. In sum, Watanabe's performance is sturdy but not eloquent or incandescent.

And yet I prefer the Japan Philharmonic's execution to the patently superior but unconsciously foreign-speaking dialect of the Vienna Philharmonic. Maazel's intelligent reading (London CS 6488) is sapped of energy by the enervated, vibrato-laden strings and uncrisp wind playing (the brass comes through gallantly, however). Sibelius *aus Wien* is just not my cup of tea! London's sound is beautifully balanced and defined.

I'm afraid I must opt for the Bernstein in the Seventh, but if you don't want to get the whole set, I'll recommend the Karajans, with a slight edge to the mono Angel version. Both Karajans come with their respective Sixths. Of course, if you have Maazel's dynamic Fifth you also have his flaccid Seventh.

**Because accuracy of
reproduction is essential,
AR-3a speaker systems
are used by
Connoisseur Society.**



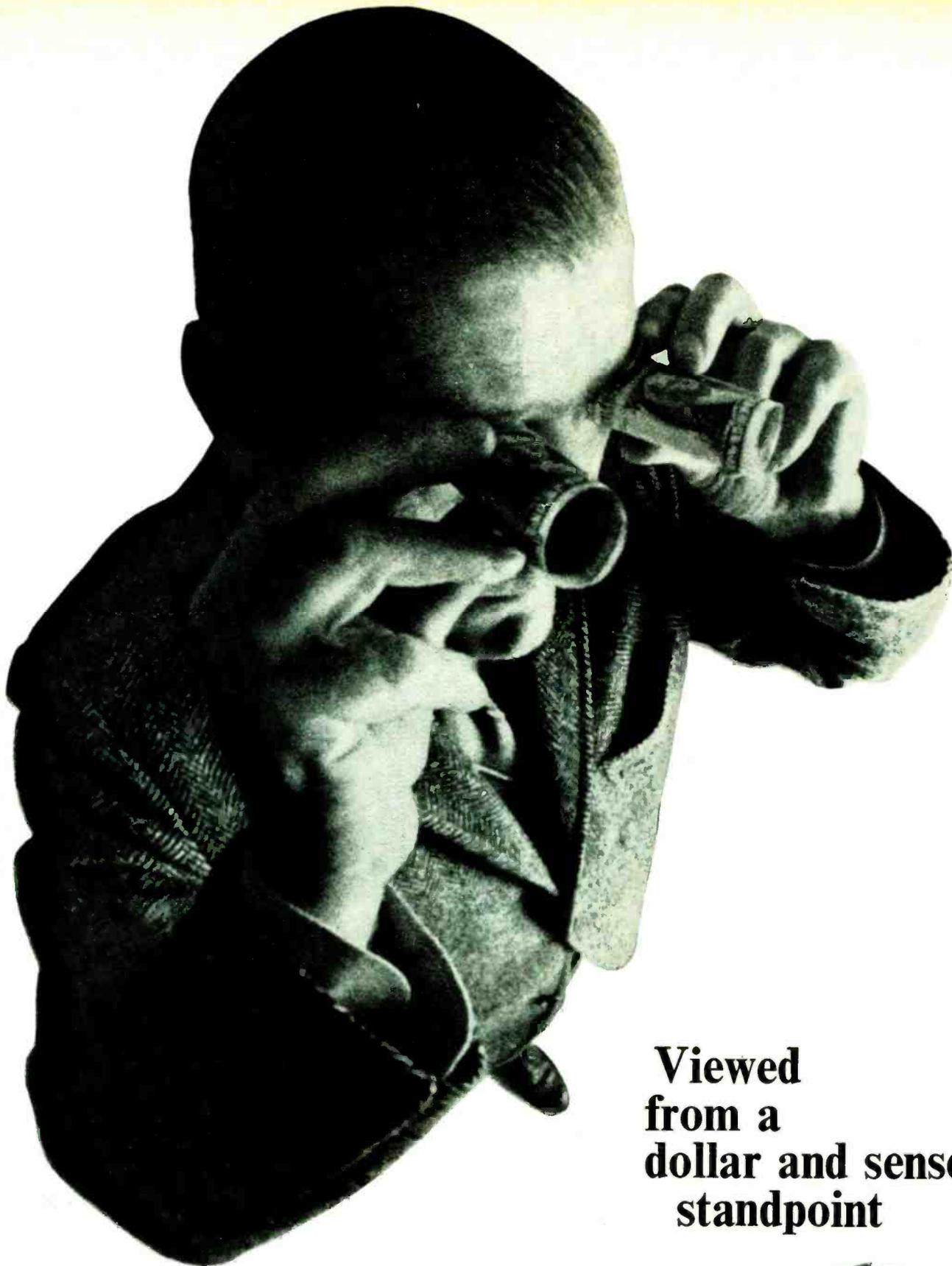
For their Vienna recording sessions with internationally distinguished Czech pianist Ivan Moravec, Connoisseur Society brought AR-3a speaker systems from their New York facility. Earlier recordings by Moravec on Connoisseur Society records have received awards for outstanding technical and musical excellence. The newest release in the series is record CS 2010, piano music of Debussy and Ravel.

Acoustic Research makes AR speaker systems, amplifiers and turntables. All are described in our catalog, obtainable for the asking.

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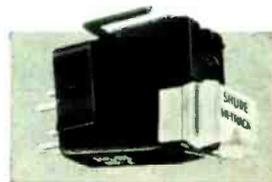
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CIRCLE 2 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Viewed from a dollar and sense standpoint

You can't get a better buy for your new hi-fi system than a Shure cartridge, whether it's the renowned "Super Track" V-15 Type II at \$67.50 or the new M91E Easy-Mount "Hi-Track" at \$49.95, made in the tradition of all fine Shure cartridges. If you're new to hi-fi, benefit from the published opinions of experts the world over: the **Shure V-15 Type II** Super Track makes a decidedly hearable difference. If you want to spend less, the M91E is right for you. You can always "trade-up" to a V-15 Type II at a later date. Shure Brothers, Inc., 222 Hartrey Avenue, Evanston, Illinois 60204.



NEW! M91E Hi-Track Elliptical Cartridge with optimized design parameters for trackability second only to the incomparable V-15 Type II. Bi-radial .0002" x .0007" diamond stylus. 20-20,000 Hz. Channel Separation: more than 25 db @ 1 KHz. Tracking force range 3/4 to 1 1/2 grams. Trackability specifications @ 1 gram: 20 cm/sec @ 400 Hz.; 28 cm/sec @ 1 KHz.; 25 cm/sec @ 5 KHz.; 18 cm/sec @ 10 KHz. \$49.95.

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CIRCLE 59 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

EQUIPMENT REPORTS

THE CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO NEW AND IMPORTANT HIGH FIDELITY EQUIPMENT

**FIRST COMPACT IN KIT FORM:
EASY TO BUILD AND LISTEN TO**



THE EQUIPMENT: Heathkit AD-27, a compact stereo system (stereo receiver and automatic turntable less speakers), housed in one cabinet. Dimensions: 22 by 8 by 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Price (electronics in kit form, cabinet factory-built and finished): \$179.95. Manufacturer: Heath Company, Benton Harbor, Mich. 49022.

COMMENT: In a world in which the "caveat emptor" warning seems to be called for increasingly, it is a genuine joy to come across a product such as this new kit from Heath. It goes together easily and it performs, without the need for professional adjustments or touchups, better than the manufacturer claims. What's more, it is genuinely attractive in its walnut and black box, the kind with a rolling tambour lid that disappears into the back when you open it to use the set. The only point which we could possibly find fault with would be in the location of the unit's connecting terminals. Recessed or hidden as they are to preserve the unit's stylish look, they are fairly difficult to get at; the screws for hooking up speaker lines are especially hard to work with, and the antenna terminals are smack on the cabinet's underside and near the front. If you're using 300-ohm ribbon lead-in, you can simply dress it under the cabinet, but if you're feeding the set from a 75-ohm line via a balun transformer, the location of the terminals translates to: "Where do you put the balun except to let it dangle out in front?"

Having delivered ourselves of these criticisms, we now can dwell on the set's virtues which are manifold. For playing records, the AD-27 incorporates a BSR 500A automatic turntable. When we reported on an earlier version of this machine (the BSR 500, May 1967) we found it had low rumble, better than average speed accuracy for its price, negligible wow and flutter, and a well-balanced lightweight tone arm. The only fault we found then was the too-rapid descent of the arm which caused the pickup to land too hard and bounce on the record. Apparently, this an-

noyance has been taken care of; the arm in the 500A used in the Heath does descend at a suitably dignified rate during automatic operation, and during manual operation you can control it precisely by using the built-in cueing lever.

Supplied with the player is a Shure M44 cartridge. Though not Shure's newest, it still is a very good one that seems well suited for use in this system. According to our tests of this pickup (August 1964), its conical stylus will trace both stereo and mono record grooves; its compliance is among the higher values available; frequency response on either channel is uniform within a few dB across the band; channel separation is ample; both harmonic and IM distortion are very low.

We come now to the "strictly Heath" (and kit) part of this package—the electronics that comprise a sweet little tuner/amplifier combination. And the package seems all the sweeter when you weigh its performance against its cost: in our view, the receiver alone is worth the price of the entire system. The tuner section, to begin with, does not have the highest sensitivity available these days but it is low enough in distortion, high enough in capture ratio, and good enough in signal-to-noise ratio to present clearly just about all the stereo and mono FM available in any locale. The test data accompanying this report documents the set's performance; note that it either meets or exceeds claimed performance. In our cable-FM test, the AD-27 logged no less than forty-five stations, a number that compares favorably with the mark attained by many sets costing much more than this one.

The tuner section is complemented by a doughty low-powered, low-distortion control amplifier that provides better than 10 very clean watts per channel across an astonishingly wide range. Its low-output level frequency response is uniform within a few decibels out to 100,000 Hz; IM remains low up to the set's rated output; signal-to-noise figures are very good; equalization is accurate. Tone-control response

REPORT POLICY

Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by CBS Laboratories, Stamford, Connecticut, a division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., one of the nation's leading research organizations. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. Manufacturers are not permitted to read reports in advance of publication, and no report, or portion thereof, may be reproduced for any purpose or in any form without written permission of the publisher. All reports should be construed as applying to the specific samples tested; neither HIGH FIDELITY nor CBS Laboratories assumes responsibility for product performance or quality.

characteristics are unusually good. It won't, however, drive low-efficiency speakers to full output; but hook it up to a pair of high-efficiency speakers and you'll be pleasantly surprised at what 10 (clean, honest) watts per channel can do.

Operating the AD-27 should prove easy enough for the most nontechnical householder. The FM dial is to the right of the record player; there's no signal-strength meter but there is a stereo indicator which lights up whenever a stereo station is tuned in. The channel dial is amply dimensioned and accurately calibrated, and the tuning knob's "feel" (like that of all the controls) definitely suggests higher priced gear. To the right of the FM dial are additional controls. There's a phase knob which helps you adjust the FM reception for maximum channel separation; a treble tone control that handles both channels simultaneously; a similar-acting bass tone control; a channel-balance control; the volume control; and a selector knob (phono, FM, auxiliary). Three rocker switches at the bottom handle power off/on, speakers off/on, and stereo/mono mode. The connections, except for the antenna terminals, are along the right-hand side of the unit, where there's also a stereo headphone jack (live at all times).

Taking its performance and features against its cost, the AD-27 certainly impresses us as a best buy in stereo today.

HOW IT WENT TOGETHER

The AD-27 comes with a very comprehensive 126-page instruction and service manual which covers every phase of the unit's construction and maintenance. The fold-out pictorials, sectional blow-ups of circuit boards, and detailed drawings help make the construction simple and trouble-free. The work of wiring the three printed circuit boards is especially well planned; possible problem areas are noted and explained as they arise.

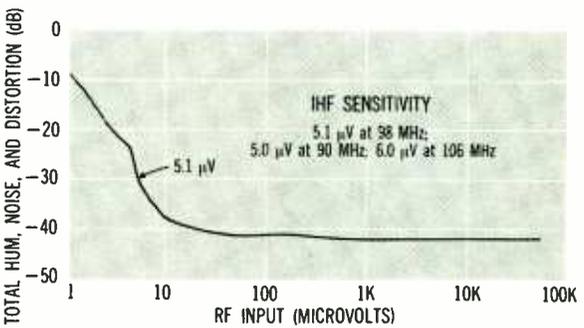
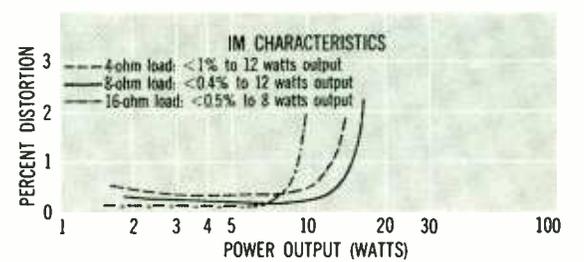
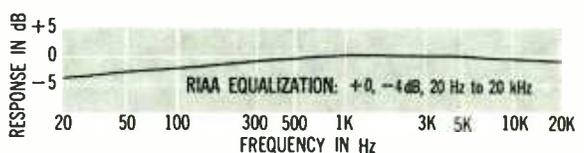
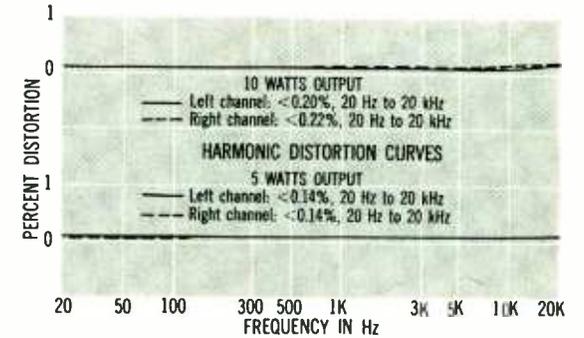
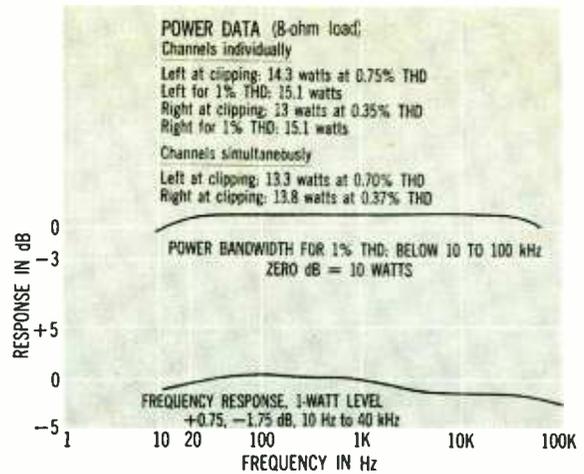
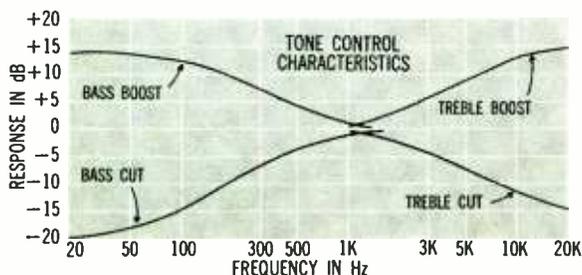
The extra wiring that is required to join the three circuit boards and other components of the unit is greatly simplified by the use of a wiring harness, which also makes for a neat, easy-to-trace wiring job.

We recommend using a low-wattage soldering iron to wire the AD-27. We also note that the chassis is made up of many individual sections screwed or bolted together. Care should be taken to properly align all parts so that the finished unit is square and all surfaces lie on the same plane. This prevents undue pressure on circuit boards when they are installed in the unit.

When the tuner bracket assembly is put in place, check the flywheel to make sure it clears the amplifier circuit board. If it doesn't clear, it could cause a short in the amplifier. The physical tolerance here is very close.

One of the easier kits to build, the AD-27 took us approximately thirteen hours to construct. No problems were encountered in the set's wiring or physical construction, and the AD-27 performed satisfactorily on the first trial.

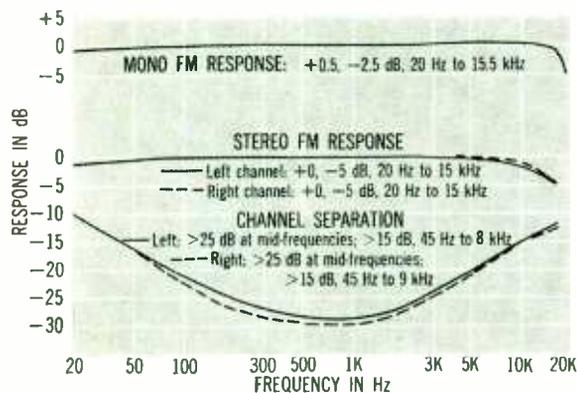
CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



REPORTS IN PROGRESS
Pioneer SX-1500T Receiver
Revox A77 Tape Recorder



Square-wave response to 50 Hz, left, and to 10 kHz.



Heathkit AD-27		Additional data	
Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	3 dB		
S/N ratio	58.5 dB		
IM distortion	1.4%		
THD, mono	0.66% at 400 Hz; 0.80% at 40 Hz; 0.83% at 1 kHz		
THD, stereo	l ch	1.7% at 400 Hz; 0.83% at 40 Hz; 1.6% at 1 kHz	
	r ch	0.84% at 400 Hz; 1.9% at 40 Hz; 1.0% at 1 kHz	
19-kHz pilot	-35 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-58 dB		
Amplifier Section			
Damping factor	56		
Input characteristics (for 10 watts output)	Sensitivity	S/N	
	phono	4.8 mV	57 dB
	auxiliary	300 mV	63 dB



KLH'S FIRST AND ONLY RECEIVER

THE EQUIPMENT: KLH-27, AM/stereo FM receiver. Dimensions: 13³/₈ by 4¹/₂ (including rubber feet supplied) by 16¹/₄ inches (including built-in AM antenna and control knobs). Price: \$299.95. Manufacturer: KLH Research & Development Corp., 30 Cross St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

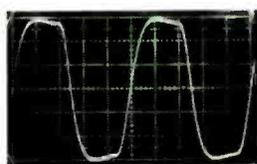
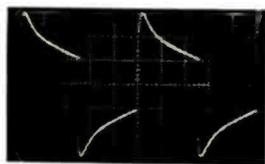
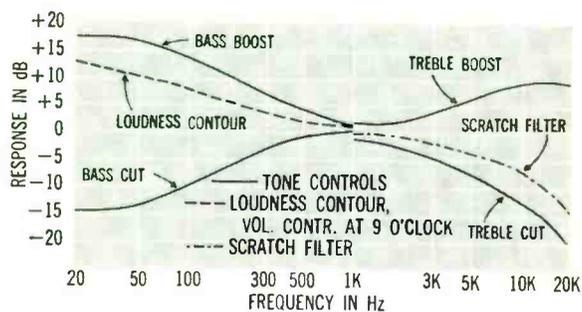
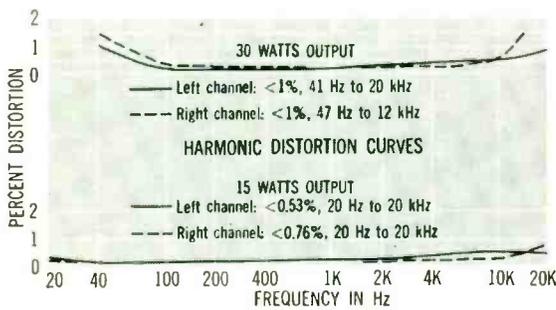
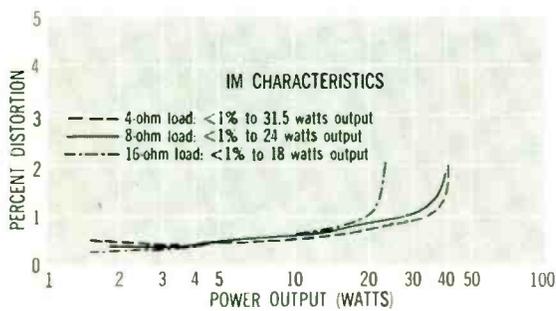
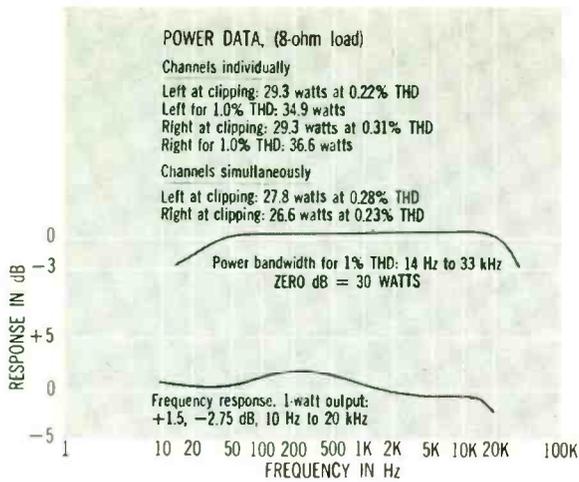
COMMENT: The one and only receiver from KLH has arrived at last. For a compact, high-performing all-in-one in its price class, it was well worth waiting for. The set's distinctive appearance, styled around the two direct-drive vernier tuning knobs that have become KLH hallmarks, manages to combine a logical grouping of control functions with a unique, clubby sort of look. The receiver may be installed "as is" in the walnut-sided case supplied, or—with its small rubber feet removed—fitted into a custom cut-out.

The front panel contains four main groups of controls. At the upper left is a row of push buttons for stereo/mono mode, loudness contour, multiplex (stereo FM) filter, scratch filter, tape monitor, main speakers off/on, extra speakers off/on. Below these controls are four knobs: power off/on combined with the volume control, channel balance, bass, and treble (the last two regulating both channels simultaneously). The large dials handle AM and FM tuning; above each, a pilot lamp goes on when either AM or FM is selected. Centered above them is a master pilot lamp; centered below is a stereo headphone jack, low impedance and live all the time. The narrow panel at the right contains a tuning meter (center of meter for FM; maximum deflection for AM), yet another pilot lamp

to indicate stereo FM broadcasts, and the input signal selector (phono, FM, AM, auxiliary).

The speaker switches, combined with sets of outputs at the rear, permit you to run two separate pairs of stereo speakers and choose one, both, or neither. Also at the rear are the stereo input jacks corresponding to the front-panel selector, and a pair for feeding signals to a tape recorder. The phono input is controlled by a two-position switch that adjusts the input sensitivity (see accompanying data chart), while the auxiliary inputs feature a three-position gain switch. Two AC outlets (one switched) are provided. The set's three fuses (one for the power line and one each for the amplifier output channels) are fairly hidden behind the built-in AM loopstick antenna. There are also terminals for a long-wire AM antenna and for a 300-ohm FM lead-in. A system grounding post completes the picture here.

With its fairly high sensitivity and very low distortion, the Model 27's FM section logged a respectably high total of 48 stations in our cable-FM test, of which 38 were deemed acceptable for long-term listening or off-the-air taping. Interestingly, the set's FM performance actually improves on stereo: distortion gets lower and audio response becomes more linear than on mono. The multiplex filter reduces some high-frequency hash on weaker stereo FM signals without at the same time appreciably degrading the musical portion of the signal or lessening its channel separation. Both the AM and FM tuning dials are accurately calibrated; the set's AM section, by the way, is better than average. The tuning dial arrangement in KLH sets



Square-wave response to 50 Hz, left, and to 10 kHz.

KLH-27

Additional data

Tuner Section

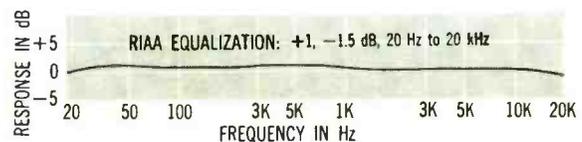
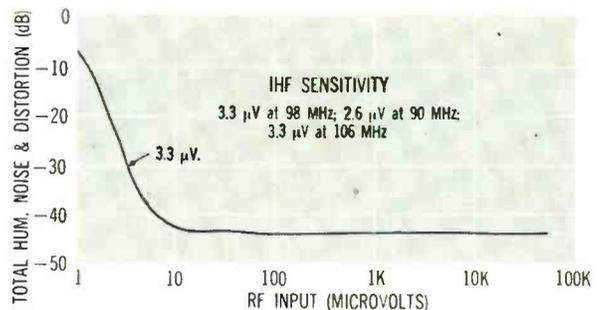
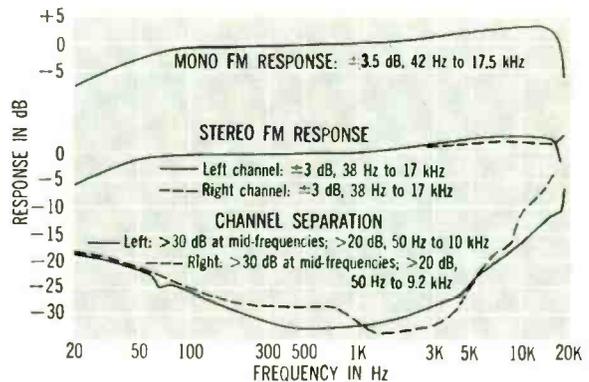
Performance characteristic

Measurement

THD, mono	0.75% at 400 Hz; 0.95% at 40 Hz; 0.71% at 1 kHz
IM distortion	0.5%
Capture ratio	6 dB
S/N ratio	66 dB
THD, stereo, l ch	0.38% at 400 Hz; 0.33% at 40 Hz; 0.50% at 1 kHz
r ch	0.32% at 400 Hz; 0.44% at 40 Hz; 0.36% at 1 kHz
19-kHz pilot suppression	-36 dB
38-kHz subcarrier suppression	-45 dB

Amplifier Section

Damping factor	44	
Input characteristics	Sensitivity	S/N ratio
For 30 watts output, 8-ohm load		
mag. phono, low	4.5 mV	64 dB
mag. phono, high	1.6 mV	64 dB
tape monitor	175 mV	87 dB
auxiliary, low	1.4 mV	65 dB
medium	500 mV	66.5 dB
high	140 mV	65.5 dB



is worth commenting on: it is offered by KLH as being more trouble-free than dial-cord, flywheel tuning; and it certainly takes up less space behind the chassis. It also is very precise—a virtue that is best realized by tuning very deliberately and slowly across the band lest you run right past a station.

The amplifier section of the Model 27 exceeds its published power output claims and can provide better than 25 clean watts per channel. Distortion is low across most of the audio band at maximum output levels, and very low across the entire audio band at

lower output levels. Signal-to-noise ratios for all inputs are very favorable; damping factor is moderately high, square-wave response, generally good. The set has accurate equalization, effective tone and filter controls, and an agreeable loudness contour lift that could help some bass-shy speaker systems.

As KLH's sole entry in the receiver class, the Model 27 stands as a lone competitor against all others. We think, at its price, it will do all right for itself.

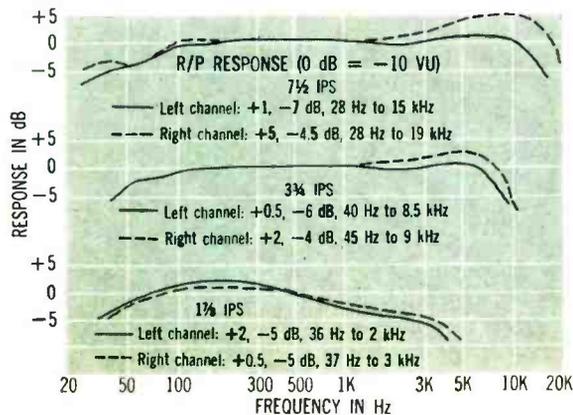
CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



LOW-COST DECK BOASTS MANY FEATURES

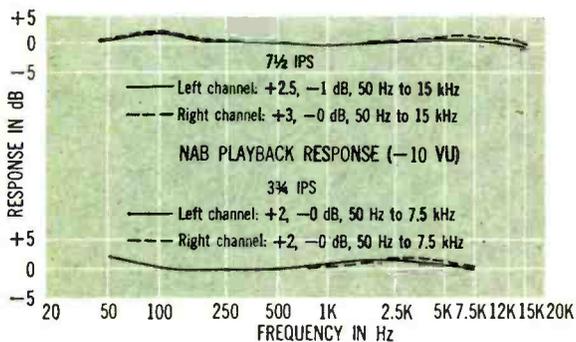
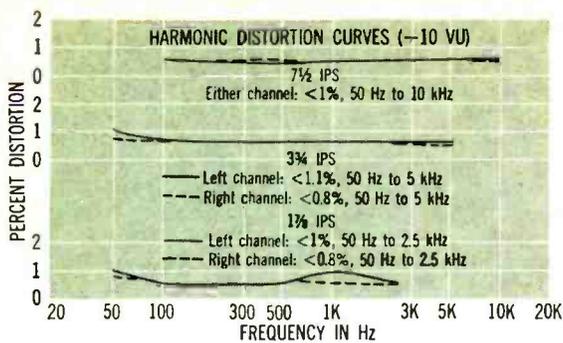
THE EQUIPMENT: Ampex 1450, a quarter-track tape deck (with built-in preamps for playback and recording). Dimensions: 15¾ by 13 by 6½ inches. Price: \$299.95. Manufacturer: Ampex Corp., Elk Grove, Ill. 60007.

COMMENT: The 1450 is a moderately priced stereo tape deck that offers an unusual number of performance features, including self-threading take-up reel, automatic reverse on playback, and separate recording and playback heads that permit direct monitoring and sound-with-sound recording. The unit, which records and plays in mono or stereo at any of its three speeds (7½, 3¾, and 1⅞ ips), contains stereo preamps for recording and playback equalization and gain. It may be fed from the tape-output jacks on any normal amplifier or receiver, or from microphones. For playback, its line outputs must be connected to an external amplifier and speakers. The sound-with-sound feature lets you record two sound tracks separately: that is, you can record on one track, then play the signal back while recording new material onto another track. The composite then can



Ampex 1450 *Additional data*

Performance characteristic	Measurement	
Speed accuracy, 7½ ips	105 VAC: 0.06% slow	
	120 VAC: 0.13% slow	
	127 VAC: 0.13% slow	
	3¾ ips	105 VAC: 0.10% slow
		120 VAC: 0.13% slow
		127 VAC: 0.10% slow
1⅞ ips	105 VAC: 0.16% fast	
	120 VAC: 0.16% fast	
	127 VAC: 0.16% fast	
Wow and flutter, 7½ ips	playback: 0.07%	
	record/playback: 0.10%	
	3¾ ips	playback: 0.12%
		record/playback: 0.12%
	1⅞ ips	record/playback: 0.55%
Rewind time, 7-in., 1,200-ft. reel	1 min. 57 sec.	
Fast forward time, same reel	1 min. 50 sec.	
S/N ratio (ref 0 VU, test tape)		
	playback	l ch: 53 dB r ch: 49 dB
	record/playback	l ch: 52.5 dB r ch: 48 dB
Erase (400 Hz at normal level)	60 dB	
Crosstalk (400 Hz)		
	record left, playback right 62 dB record right, playback left 62.5 dB	
Sensitivity (for 0 VU, record-level) line input		
	mike input	l ch: 150 mV r ch: 120 mV
		l ch: 2.2 mV r ch: 1.6 mV
Accuracy, built-in meters	left: reads 1 dB high right: reads 1 dB high	
IM distortion (record/play)		
	7½ ips,	
	0 VU record level	l ch: 10.5% r ch: 6.8%
	-10 VU record level	l ch: 3.6% r ch: 2.2%
	3¾ ips, 0 VU	l ch: 9.6% r ch: 5.0%
		-10 VU
Maximum output	l ch: 2 volts r ch: 1.8 volts	



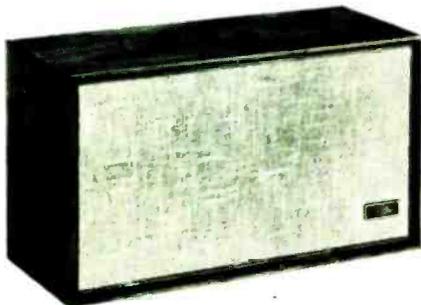
be played in stereo. The deck is quite compact and should fit readily into the well, or on a shelf, of any modern standard-size stereo equipment cabinet. Alternatively, you can install the 1450 in its own walnut housing which, together with a smoked-glass cover, costs \$49.95 extra.

Controls include a speed selector, tape movement levers, press-to-record buttons, an equalization selector for the three speeds, individual level controls for each channel, and dual-concentric knobs that choose automatic reversing, tape repeat, stereo, mono, and so on. A separate button impresses a reversing signal onto a tape. Two accurate VU meters indicate tape signal levels, and a three-digit counter with reset button serves as an index to tape usage.

The transport section of the 1450 performs in above-average fashion for a machine in this price class: speed accuracy and wow and flutter all are very much within the outside limits for high quality recording and playback. The 1450's electronics offer average performance in terms of frequency response, and somewhat better than average characteristics as regards low distortion. The self-threading feature combined with the automatic reverse should prove the answer to the prerecorded tape listener's prayers: you can hear a full opera on 3 3/4-ips tape with one loading of tape and one manipulation of controls.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

ALTEC'S SMALLEST SPEAKER SYSTEM HAS FAIRLY BIG VOICE



THE EQUIPMENT: Altec Lansing 893A, a compact full-range speaker system in enclosure. Dimensions: 12 1/4 by 9 1/2 by 22 inches. Price: \$89.75. Manufacturer: Altec Lansing, 1515 S. Manchester Ave., Anaheim, Calif. 92803.

COMMENT: This lowest priced speaker system from Altec demonstrates that a manufacturer long identified with large and fairly costly speaker systems can produce a very creditable compact system that can easily hold its own in the under-\$100 price range. A sealed direct-radiating system, the Model 893A, dubbed the "Corona," houses a long-throw (high-compliance) 10-inch woofer, a 3-inch hard-cone tweeter, and a 2,500-Hz dividing network within a neatly styled walnut enclosure that may be positioned vertically or horizontally. It sounds equally good either way and doesn't seem terribly critical of whether you place it on a shelf or on a low bench. Efficiency is higher than most sealed cabinet compacts but not as high as Altec's floor-standing models. A rugged little beast, the Corona can take up to 40 watts per channel of continuous power from an amplifier to fill a large room with sound, although it does seem to work with a bit less audible strain at lower power levels and in a normal-size room. Input impedance is 8 ohms. Connections are made to press-type bind-

ing posts (our favorite kind: no fussing with screw drivers, no need for spade lugs, just strip the lead and insert it) marked for polarity. A three-position switch adjusts the treble range in steps of 3 dB to suit individual room acoustics and listening tastes.

The 893A is conservatively rated by Altec to respond down to 50 Hz. Indeed, it responds to tones lower than this, albeit with increased doubling. At that, the effect is no more pronounced than in most speakers in this price range, and the Corona actually will growl back when fed with a 20-Hz tone. At more than normal loudness levels in a large room, some doubling first became evident at 75 Hz although it was fairly slight in proportion to the speaker's fundamental bass output. There's a very slight "fringe" on the tones from 75 Hz up to about 200 Hz; from here on up it's all clear, smooth, and strong. Directional effects do not become really noticeable until 8 kHz and even at this high frequency they seem less pronounced than we've observed in some speaker systems costing more than the Corona. A 9-kHz tone is audible a full 180 degrees off axis (that is, from a point directly behind the speaker); 10-kHz is audible about 120 degrees off axis; 11-kHz, nearly 90 degrees off axis, and so on up the scale. A 15-kHz tone is audible faintly on axis, and from here the response dips toward inaudibility. White noise response is somewhat on the bright side when listening on axis; more subdued off axis.

For a speaker in its price class, the 893A gives a very good account of itself on program material. If you doubt that its rated 50-Hz bass limit is adequate for projecting a hefty amount of clean bass, listen to a pair reproducing the 4th movement (March to the Scaffold) of the Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique* on London CSA 2101; those opening drums and the guttiness of the string bass that follows are handled very competently. A pair of 893As should do very nicely for a modest, though decent, installation in a normal or small room, or as high-quality extension speakers. They may be the babies of the Altec family, but they're definitely part of the breed.

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SOLOMON AS KING OF ENGLAND AND HANDEL'S ONLY CHRISTIAN ORATORIO

by Paul Henry Lang



George Frederick Handel: two poles of his creative mind—*Solomon and Theodora*

HANDEL'S *Solomon* and *Theodora* offer a marvelous brace of that composer's highly personal creation, the English oratorio. They represent the two poles of his creative mind, the ceremonially magnificent, and the introspective. While the religious aura surrounding Handel's music is still very much present to many listeners, some—and what is more important, the performers—are beginning to realize that with the exception of *Messiah*, the English oratorio is not "sacred" music, much less church music, but English music drama. Handel used Biblical history for his own dramatic purposes.

The matter of nationality is most important too, because if we keep thinking of Handel as a German, we shall continue to make meaningless comparisons between him and Bach, between English oratorio and German Passion. The great difference is that unlike the Germans, the English shared with the Jews a belief in theologically sanctioned history. The interchange of the profane and the religious, the Scriptural and the political, was an altogether English quality not to be encountered in any other Protestant country, and the German immigrant, who was laid to rest among Britain's great in Westminster Abbey, made that quality wholly his own. The English may occasionally behead one of their kings, but his office was transcendentalized until an almost independent royal liturgy developed side by side with that of the Church. From the defeat of the Spanish Armada, the English thought of themselves as the new people chosen by God, the "new sacred people of promise," and the roots of their institutions and destiny were sought not in the profane evolution of Anglian, Saxon, and Norman history, but in the sacred world of the Old Testament.

We might say that like Milton, who,

after the collapse of the order which for twenty years he so ardently helped to build in tracts and essays, turned past middle age to poetry and rose to the highest spheres, so Handel, in his fifties, turned from opera, which had been his ardently cultivated world for a whole generation, to the oratorio, and achieved an artistic eminence reached by few. This was not, as has been assiduously maintained, a "religious conversion" making Handel into "the composer in ordinary of the Protestant religion," but a sober artistic—and business—decision that had nothing to do with religion in general or Christianity in particular. Handel did not really cease to compose operas, that is, dramatic music, he only changed the framework and the subject matter to suit English tastes. In so doing he vastly increased his freedom of action, because he was no longer bound by the conventions of the Venetian-Neapolitan opera seria.

The English, in their turn, were pleased by seeing the stories and the heroes of the Bible, familiar to them from their daily reading, replace the stories and figures of Greek and Roman legend and history with which they had little in common. Furthermore, this new oratorio was in English, sung largely by native singers, and not in Italian and sung by those "Italian capons" whom only those godless and depraved Italian papists could have inflicted upon the world.

So the Biblical stories notwithstanding, the Handelian oratorio was music drama made acceptable by its subject matter. The elements of style, the recitative, arioso, aria, were the same as in opera, as was the art of characterization in music, but one important new element was added: the chorus. However, this chorus did not come from the choir loft of the church but from the English theater, and it assumed the role it once played in the Attic tragedy; it was one of the protagonists, the people, who could be onlookers, commentators, or active participants. Almost all these oratorios are therefore really theater pieces that should be staged, but the fact that the librettos were paraphrases of stories from the Bible forbade this, the "playhouse" being morally tainted. This prohibition, originated by the Bishop of London after the staging of Handel's first oratorio, *Esther*, was strictly observed for two centuries. Verdi's opera *Nabucco*, having an Old Testament theme, had to be changed for England into *Nino*. Rossini's *Moses in Egypt* was acceptable as an oratorio, but in the opera house it became *Pietro l'eremite*. Henry Chorley, the waspish critic, remarked in the 1860s that "we English are not so hard, or so soft, as to be willing to see the personages of Holy Writ sung in theatres."

Among the oratorios there are several

distinct types. There are the anthemlike works, *Messiah* or *Israel in Egypt*, the dramatic oratorios. *Saul* or *Belshazzar* (the two great classical dramas *Semele* and *Hercules* also belong in this class), there is even a comic opera hidden there, *Susanna*, and then the final two, *Theodora* and *Jephtha*, which are in a class by themselves. *Solomon*, the first of our two recordings under discussion, is somewhere between the victory oratorios like *Judas Maccabaeus* and the dramatic ones. Except for one episode in the middle, it has no real drama because it is an apotheosis of the ruling dynasty and the nation. Solomon is the King of England not very elaborately disguised, and the oratorio extols his virtues (a fact which George II did not fail to appreciate) and the richness and beauty of the land over which he rules. The last act presents a masque in honor of the visiting Queen of Sheba, which is sheer engrossing entertainment. All this Handel translates into magnificent eight-part choruses and noble, beautifully turned arias. The librettist, with an eye for the appropriate compliment, shows Solomon as a guileless man of high moral character, radiating not only the traditional wisdom, but modesty, becoming expansive only when praising the beauties of his domain. (Of course, all his concubines were dismissed.) His Queen has no marked personality either, but she is a young woman in love; her uninhibited ardor caused much discomfort to the Victorians. The Queen of Sheba is not the enchantress into which fiction has made her; in this oratorio she remains the visiting monarch who has come to pay tribute to the wise king and to see how a kingdom should be administered. She is decorous, not amorous, and the relationship between the two rulers is polite and "official." Then there is Zadok, the High Priest, sentimental and unctuous; Handel obviously did not care for his "sacred raptures" but gave him some fine music, as Mozart did to Don Ottavio.

But *Solomon* is not made up solely of wreaths of laurel; there are also the fragrant posies of wayside and woodland. Handel pours out all his pantheistic love of nature when Solomon sings of his land, and as to the glorification of love-making *al fresco*, the tender bucolic charm of the "Nightingale Chorus" is unexampled in the entire choral literature. The only danger this rich and poetic oratorio presents to the conductor is that its peculiarly English glow may be taken for high tea and crumpets felicity—and Stephen Simon does not altogether escape it.

This is really the first recording of the great work. It has been done before by Sir Thomas Beecham, but the peppery baronet, a musical autocrat equal in grandeur to the original King Solomon, completely butchered the oratorio, leaving out about one third, including the pivotal judgment scene, rearranging helter-skelter the rest, and noting, with smug satisfaction, that "the entire score has been reorchestrated by me."

Theodora is the only oratorio with a Christian subject. It is not, like *Messiah*,

an anthem-oratorio with direct quotations from the Bible, but a dramatized novel. *Theodora*, who refuses to worship Jove and Caesar, is condemned by Valens, the Governor of Antioch, to become a temple prostitute. She is loved by Didymus, a Roman soldier secretly converted to Christianity and shielded, out of compassion, by his immediate superior, Septimus. Didymus exchanges clothes with *Theodora* so that she can escape, but both are condemned to death after their final refusal to offer sacrifice to Jove and the emperor. The Reverend Morell's libretto does not amount to much, but Handel found it congenial and exploited its smallest particles. This is a work by a man gorged upon introspection—and that is a Handel his contemporaries did not know, nor do we. To his audience a story of Christian faith and self-sacrifice was not fashionable; they wanted trumpeting hallelujahs. "Jehovah with thunder arm'd," and they wanted to

Bettmann Archive



Solomon, guileless, of high moral character—like a certain king of England?

see the great Biblical heroes triumph over adversity. *Theodora* was a total failure. But at this stage of his career, when *Judas Maccabaeus* or *Alexander's Feast* would invariably fill the house, Handel showed a magnificent and philosophical indifference to fashions, even to success, which formerly was so important to this exalted showman. He now wrestled with his own feelings; indeed he now struggled to arrive at a religious conviction on his own terms. He took the religious drama but did not subject it to the expected *a posteriori* symbolization; instead, sometimes disregarding the literal meaning of Morell's libretto, he immersed himself in the spiritual problems of one nearing the end of his life. This is extremely difficult for us to grasp, for music divorced from the actual meaning of the text cannot convey such complex sentiments, except to its composer. Yet this probing into his own soul is ever present in *Theodora*. Didymus loves The-

odora, but it is not the carnal aspects of love that Handel, the erstwhile composer of warm and erotic love music, was interested in; his protagonists are seeking an answer to the purpose of life. And in the great choruses Handel wonders aloud about this same theme. The one ending the second act. "He saw the lovely youth," which tells the story of the son of the widow of Nain whom the Lord called back to life, is the aging composer's profession of faith, but a profession that was free of the stated articles of Christianity. This is the greatest choral piece Handel ever composed; he himself considered it so, and *Theodora* was his favorite oratorio.

Most of the arias, and even some of the choruses, are of a controlled simplicity, which is the best sort of magnificence. The reserve which delineates true power once more constitutes a trap for the performers, and once more the conductor, Johannes Somary this time, does not altogether escape it. Unlike Solomon's world, that of *Theodora* and Didymus is small, but in this world everything is felt deeply and intensely and the shadow of tragedy that falls over it grips the listener.

Stephen Simon gives *Solomon* a good, if at times a bit four-square, performance. The orchestra plays well, the crisp string sound is nicely aerated by the oboes and bassoons. The tempos are excellent and the "church tone" is avoided, though the piece-ending *rallentandos* are at times clumsy and display the usual annoying hesitation before the last chord. But then *così fan tutte*; the idea that all "old music" ends like a watery hymn is so firmly ingrained that even excellent musicians succumb to it. Simon deserves particular credit for making a German chorus sing well in an idiom which is as strange to them as is the English language they were obliged to use. In the madrigalesque pieces they are engagingly prickly and bouncy, valiantly echoing English speech rhythm. The conductor is solicitous about balances, and deals with the continuo far better than does Somary. He has a first-class harpsichordist in Martin Isepp, who is in evidence most of the time, though still not as much as he should be. But Simon, a good musician, is not a good showman, as indeed neither of these excellent conductors is a man of the theater. Yet this is theater music, which means that it must be flexible, free, and dynamically varied. The great trio in the judgment scene does not come off well. The Second Harlot is a little arch, the King seems to be bored and he wobbles a bit, and only the plaint of the true mother rings genuine. A stronger operatic hand could have made this marvelous scene more convincing.

It was an excellent idea to substitute a baritone for the alto part of Solomon, and John Shirley-Quirk, though not exactly brimming with temperament, gives a good account of it; the pastoral arias are delivered with a smooth, mellifluous voice. Saramae Endich takes two of the principal parts. She is a fine artist, but her voice—which can soar—is a dramatic

soprano, really a very high mezzo, better suited for the dramatic role of the First Harlot than for that of the cooing ingenue that is the Queen. Alexander Young is excellent as Zadok, and Patricia Brooks takes care of the dual role of Second Harlot and Queen of Sheba satisfactorily.

Johannes Somary has a more uniformly excellent cast, all of whom enunciate with the utmost clarity, but he too should have transferred Didymus' part to a male singer. Maureen Forrester is a great artist whose phrasing and articulation are matchless and whose magnificent voice is unwaveringly on pitch. Still hers is a particularly "nutty" dark alto, too matronly feminine, and with an unmistakable touch of the "churchly." When she pours coals on that velvety dark low register (all altos like to do that), the dramatic confrontation suffers because all plausibility of the impersonation of a male character is lost. Heather Harper's Theodora is superb; her voice has many shades and she never fails to rise to the dramatic demands. Maureen Lehane (Irene) is equally impressive, except that some of her recitatives are a little too subdued. Alexander Young shows an ability to dispose of coloraturas that any soprano could envy, and John Lawrenson is a

fairly authoritative Valens, though his voice is a little unsteady.

Somary demonstrates remarkable musicianship, a fine feeling for tempo, mood, and expression. Unfortunately, he was severely handicapped by the quality of the recording. The minute the chorus goes above mezzo forte all distinction is lost, and in the fortes the treble is near distortion. Simon's engineers, who had a much more difficult task with the widely spaced eight-part choruses in *Solomon*, managed to avoid the haze that envelops Vanguard's choral forces. Somary commendably tried to reflect the intimate and inward character of the music, and most of the time he is successful, but at others the sound he gets is pale and filtered. The vocal soloists fare well, but the strings are often a little distant and lusterless, especially when they try to be too self-effacing in the accompaniments. The conductor made some substitutions that are somewhat questionable. When Handel demands *violini unisoni e bassi* he did not expect a solo fiddle and a solo cello. Even more surprising—well, a little grotesque—is the use of a single violin and one bassoon, the latter particularly mournful as it ambles along without any support from the harpsichord. This absence of an always clearly audible

continuo is disconcerting: aria after aria is sung superbly but without proper harmonic support. Except for the recitatives, one would hardly guess that there is a harpsichord in the ensemble. Finally, there is a good deal of pre-echo, especially annoying in the dramatic pauses. But when the chorus sings gently it can be beautiful, and many of the solo pieces come through nicely to save the day and give a good idea of the richness of this profound score.

HANDEL: *Solomon*

Saramae Endich (s), Patricia Brooks (s), Alexander Young (t), John Shirley-Quirk (b); Martin Isepp, harpsichord; Vienna Jeunesse Chorus; Vienna Volksooper Orchestra, Stephen Simon, cond. RCA RED SEAL LSC 6187, \$17.94 (three discs).

HANDEL: *Theodora*

Heather Harper (s), Maureen Forrester (c), Maureen Lehane (c), Alexander Young (t), Edgar Fleet (t), John Lawrenson (b); Amor Artis Chorale; English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary, cond. CARDINAL VCS 10050/52, \$10.50 (three discs).

TWO PROKOFIEV SYMPHONIES

—A LOGICAL SECOND AND A LYRICAL FIFTH

by Philip Hart

NO ONE CONDUCTOR has yet recorded an integral set of Prokofiev's seven symphonies, but collectors may now assemble their own complete package by choosing from various projects more or less officially under way. Leinsdorf's planned comprehensive survey of the orchestral Prokofiev now includes Symphonies Nos. 2, 3, 5, and 6. Rozhdestvensky's series of new performances on Melodiya/Angel presently offers Nos. 1, 4, 6, and 7. And there are, of course, numerous other recordings of Prokofiev symphonies—Nos. 1 and 5 in particular are available in many different versions—from which to select a representative survey of one of the century's most important symphonic masters.

Each of these new releases merits more than passing interest: Leinsdorf's because it offers the first thoroughly adequate recording of Prokofiev's least-known symphony; and Karajan's because it offers a highly individual and superbly engineered version of a major contemporary work.

Long regarded as the most difficult of the seven (even by the composer himself), the Second sounds considerably

less formidable than it must have over forty years ago, when its unfavorably received first performance virtually consigned the work to oblivion. The two-movement symphony, modeled on Beethoven's last piano sonata, is certainly straightforward enough: a violently energetic yet classically developed sonata form followed by a series of variations on a lyrical theme.

Leinsdorf presents the first movement in the most intelligible reading it has yet enjoyed on disc. His direction, the playing of the Boston Symphony, and the fine reproduction, all contribute to the clarification of an extremely dense texture. Moreover, Leinsdorf discovers more coherent expression, musical logic, and subtle dynamic variation in this problematical music than any previous conductor on records. The same elements are strongly evident in the long variation movement.

The conductor is somewhat less successful in finding the proper satiric bite and folklike quality of the *Lieutenant Kijé* Suite. Other conductors, notably Reiner and Ormandy, achieve happier results with this lighthearted score. To



Erich Leinsdorf



Herbert von Karajan

Leinsdorf's credit, however, one must note that he includes the optional (but certainly preferable) vocal parts in two of the Suite's movements. David Clatworthy, a fine-sounding young baritone, sings these in what seems to be good but not completely idiomatic Russian.

There are several ways of interpreting the Prokofiev Fifth Symphony. Karajan quite predictably opts for the lyric approach, and no conductor today can match him when it comes to conjuring up long, expressive orchestral lines. This luminous performance and recording immediately takes its place among the best versions of Prokofiev's most popular large-scale symphony. Karajan's songfulness is totally antithetical to the equally valid epical approaches taken by Ormandy, in a still viable though tubbily recorded performance, and more recently by Bernstein, where energy and sonority sometimes overcome orchestral precision.

The recording that comes closest to Karajan's interpretation is the version by the late Ernest Ansermet, who often excelled in the twentieth-century Russian repertoire. Prokofiev in particular. Ansermet projects his lyricism with more intensity than Karajan, and he favors a richer, more generalized sonority. But Karajan draws a far finer, more extraordinarily subtle orchestral sound and texture from the Berlin Philharmonic. By refining the typically warm, rich sound of his brass and lower strings, and by his incredible control of the intonation and vibrato of the upper strings, Karajan achieves a texture comparable to the luminescence one associates with good string quartet playing. At the same time, this refined sonic medium is made to complement a musical conception in which the lyrical line and phrase are developed in a most sophisticated manner. One may or may not care for Karajan's treatment of Prokofiev, but it is impossible to deny the perfection with which every detail is executed. To my mind the lyric is certainly one very valid approach to Prokofiev, especially here in the Fifth Symphony.

Finally, I must compliment DGG's engineers and producers for the beautifully balanced stereo ambience, the unginger-micked recording, and the tasteful fidelity with which the orchestra's dynamics and tone color have been reproduced. This is everything that an orchestral record should be and nowadays so seldom is.

PROKOFIEV: *Symphony No. 2, in D minor, Op. 40; Lieutenant Kijé: Suite, Op. 60*

David Clatworthy, baritone (in the *Lieutenant Kijé*); Boston Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. RCA RED SEAL LSC 3061, \$5.98.

PROKOFIEV: *Symphony No. 5, in B flat, Op. 100*

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 139040, \$5.79. Tape: ●● C9040, 7½ ips, \$7.95; ● M189040, \$6.95.



Ruggiero Leoncavallo

A CASE FOR THE "OTHER" LA BOHEME

by Conrad L. Osborne

THOSE READERS WHO have been collecting records since the early days of LP will understand what I mean when I say that one must approach this release in the spirit with which one approached many of the Cetra opera albums of that time. I don't mean the good ones, the characteristic representations of decent, idiomatic performances (like the *Rigoletto*, the *Don Carlo*, the Puccini *Bohème*), but the really bad ones—like the *Luisa Miller* or *I Lombardi*—which just happened to be (in some cases, still are) the only commercial recordings of the works.

In this case, we have the only acquaintance most of us are ever likely to acquire with a major effort by one of those several verists who have come to be known as "one-opera" composers. Of course, Leoncavallo is often enough sneered at even for his one stunning success, *I Pagliacci*. But how absurd that judgment is: *Pagliacci* is not only popular and workable, it is a brilliant piece of writing. Few operas go so directly and compellingly to the hearts of their characters, and few have structures so expertly crafted to the demands of the content.

Leoncavallo turned out two other pieces that held at least some claim to attention in their day: *La Bohème* and *Zazà*. The *Bohème*, of course, has never emerged from the shadow of Puccini's, and doubtless never will. This is something that must have gnawed at Leoncavallo. The opera was *his* idea—he broached Puccini with it. When Puccini indicated disinterest, Leoncavallo went ahead with his own setting of the idea. But Puccini, without a nod toward the other composer, proceeded to make arrangements for another libretto and plunged ahead with his own opera, scoring triumphs long before Leoncavallo's ever saw the light of day.

And the Leoncavallo setting is far

from negligible. It does not have the flashes of melodic illumination, the stick-to-the-ribs arias or ensembles that would guarantee it a spot in the repertory. Nor does it have the balanced, almost pat structure that helps make the Puccini so workable. Yet the oddities of the structure are among the fascinations of the piece. The first two acts are extremely ha-ha, very heavy on the *joie de la vie de Bohème*. The writing is by no means without interest—vigorous, colorful stuff not unlike the "busy" music in *Andrea Chénier*, though a bit lighter and more transparent. Scattered throughout this portion of the opera are little songs, in a couple of instances drawn from Alfred de Musset. There is, for example, a lilting piece for Mimi, "*Musette svara sulla bocca viva*." But the two characters to emerge most strongly in these two acts are Musette and Schaunard. The former has a charming *chanson*, "*Mimi Pinson la biondinetta*," which verges on the memorable, while the latter acts as a sort of master of the revels, with at least two fine solos—the first an introductory ticking off of his companions and himself, the second a lovely Rossinian parody (remember, this is Paris in the 1830s).

So there are many interesting moments, the only problem being that sustained gaiety and charm always threaten boredom. Then, the opera suddenly turns. The relationships which had been convivial and a bit superficial become dark and real, the music changes to more typical *verismo* outcry. Some of it is quite powerful: some of it, in fact, is high drama. The separation of Musette and Marcel is full of rage and pain; in contrast with the Puccini treatment, there is no hint that these two might ever come together again. Rodolfo, who figures only in a very minor way in the first two acts, gives us a sample of his poetry at the opening of Act IV—it is a

bit pompous, and is full of ugliness and death. Throughout these two acts, there is an interesting acknowledgement of the fact that these people are in fact miserable, that they lead squalid and despairing existences, that the gaiety is a hysterical response to a life in which nothing really works. I rather like the way the piece comes to grips with this truth; it is as if Leoncavallo had determined to show us first the illusion of the irresponsible, asocial life, and then to show us that it is really filled with hate and hopelessness. You can sometimes get away with an unpaid bill, but finally you cannot get a doctor when you need one. And I like the atmosphere of the work, its acceptance of the spirit of Murger and De Musset, and of the episodic nature of these tableaux. The libretto is not the work of a dummy.

My suspicion is that, given a group of juicy, Italianate voices and a director who meant business, this *La Bohème* could amount to a moving evening in the theater. Unfortunately, the performance has only a certain basic liveliness to recommend it. The orchestra is adequate, sometimes even rather sharp. The two singers who emerge with some honor are the American mezzo Nedda Casei (who performs the lighter parts of Musette's music with considerable grace and, though lightweight for the heavier demands of the third act, still sings securely and attractively) and Orazio Gualtieri (whose plump, warm baritone and musicality would make him a fine artist if only he had more technical ability in approaching the top). Mazzini, the Rodolfo, has a dark baritone that is sometimes impressive but not often beautiful. He more or less assaults the music.

Antonio Annaloro has plenty of temperament and a sufficient range, but in terms of beauty of tone or line, he is not easy to listen to. Miss Medici hardly passes professional muster.

In short, no one is truly first-line, and in a couple of instances the listener must exercise patience and imagination in hearing out the score. Everest's libretto is a fat help: a synopsis of the Puccini version (very different), plus an Italian-only text. The sound is middling—not enough depth or space, everything a bit overmiked and/or overcut (stereo, it says). But, though the performance is obviously drawn from the production given at San Remo in 1963, it seems to be a studio product.

I am happy to commend the piece to anyone's attention. As for the performance, what choice have you got?

LEONCAVALLO: *La Bohème*

Antonietta Mazza Medici (s), Mimi; Nedda Casei (ms), Musette; Anna Lia Bazzani (ms), Eufemmia; Antonio Annaloro (t), Marcello; Ottorino Begali (t), Gaudenzio; Cesare Masini Sperti (t), Durand; Guido Mazzini (b), Rodolfo; Orazio Gualtieri (b), Schaunard; Giulio Montano (b), Colline; Bruno Cioni (bs), Barbemuche. Chorus of Teatro Comunale, Bologna; San Remo Philharmonic Orchestra, Alberto Zedda, cond. EVEREST S 462/3, \$8.94 (three discs).

CLASSICAL

AMY: *Diaphonies; Inventions*—See Webern. *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, Op. 10.

ARNE: *Concerto for Harpsichord and Orchestra, No. 5, in G minor; Sonata for Harpsichord, No. 1, in F; Overture No. 1, in E minor*
 †Bach, C.P.E.: *Symphony No. 2, in B flat; Variations on "Folies d'Espagne," for Harpsichord; Concerto for Harpsichord and Orchestra, in C minor*

George Malcolm, harpsichord; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Martin, cond. ARGO ZRG 577, \$5.95.

The two solo harpsichord works are the prize items on this unusually attractive disc. The Arne is noble, rather Handelian in its first movement, bright and prancing, full of sparkling fingerwork in its second. The Bach is a positive bag of tricks; Carl Philipp is adventurous in almost any circumstances, but give him the opportunity of launching into a set of variations, and few can match him. These twelve excursions in, through, and around the *Folies d'Espagne* melody (the same *La Folia* of Corelli) make a kaleidoscope of varying textures, sonorities, and register-interplay, of angular melodic contours and notable independence of hands. George Malcolm is superb; he will bring you to the edge of your chair.

Arne's delightful Harpsichord Concerto also gives the soloist plenty to work with (the orchestra is exceedingly polite in the first movement, and the second is for the soloist alone); even in the Overture the harpsichord continuo manages to break out in occasional flourishes during the final movement. Elsewhere in this work Arne's lively turn of mind and the crisp, clean phrasing of the St. Martin players keep affairs moving briskly. Bach's Symphony boasts not only unexpected shifts of melodic idea but a lively independence of parts, and the setting of one orchestral section against another is the work of a master hand. I found his Harpsichord Concerto, despite its unusually forward-looking form, less interesting. S.F.

BACH: *St. Matthew Passion, S. 244*

Teresa Zylis-Gara (s); Julia Hamari (c); Theo Altmeyer (t), Evangelist; Nicolai Gedda (t); Hermann Prey (b); Franz Crass (bs), Jesus; South German Madrigal Choir and Boys Choir; Consortium Musicum, Wolfgang Gönnerwein, cond. ANGEL S 3735, \$23.16 (four discs).

Any new recording of the *St. Matthew Passion* automatically faces stiff competition from a number of fine versions currently listed in Schwann. Angel's latest entry brings the total of complete performances to an even dozen, and Gönnerwein's solid, traditional interpretation takes a place very near the top of the

list—in certain respects it even outclasses all the others. The conductor recognizes that the entire work is a dramatic recitation of the Passion story with appropriately spaced interruptions for reflective solo arias and contemplative chorales and he always manages to strike an excellent balance between the dramatic and the meditative. His handling of the chorales is particularly satisfying: each one is varied in tempo and mood to reflect the meaning of the words, which are never overinterpreted and always retain the character of "congregational" singing.

The South German Madrigal Choir is a moderate-sized group that sings in a very smooth, clean, precise manner. Their approach differs considerably from the bright, *détaché* style preferred by Karl Richter on the fine Archive recording, but they achieve results of almost equal clarity while producing a rather warmer, richer choral tone.

In terms of sheer vocal quality, Theo Altmeyer's Evangelist is perhaps the best on discs. His voice sounds younger and more immediately attractive than either Peter Pears (who sings in both the Klemperer performance on Angel and in the Münchinger version for London) or Archive's Ernst Häfliger; and while he may not project all the dramatic nuances of his predecessors, Altmeyer's clear, unforced tenor and his sensitive approach to the text are very much in his favor. Hermann Prey and Nicolai Gedda are quite outstanding. In the arioso "*Am Abend da es kühle war*" and the following aria, "*Mache dich*," Prey reaches several peaks of moving eloquence. Gedda makes an even better effect here than he did on the Klemperer recording, partly because he sounds more comfortable with Gönnerwein's tempos, which are much more realistic than Klemperer's preposterous foot-dragging. The two ladies are more than satisfactory, but one might wish for a bit more warmth and involvement from Franz Crass's Jesus.

If ever a work demands the ultimate effort from recording technicians, it is the *St. Matthew*: a poorly engineered job would render the complex texture of three independent choirs and two independent orchestras totally unintelligible. London gets top honors here for its spectacular antiphonal effects and generally rich and lush sound, but Angel has done a fine job with its new version in terms of stereo separation and definition of individual lines. It must have been recorded in a large, spacious hall, but the reverberation is not excessive and never mud-

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A Marvelous Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto

ANY RECORDING OF BEETHOVEN'S Fourth Concerto to enter the sweepstakes at this late date—particularly one spread over two sides of a full-priced disc—would have to be quite exceptional to merit a recommendation. This one is.

If this concerto's extravagant format were to bring a murmur of protest, it would immediately be silenced by the superbly rich, live recorded sound. Although the volume level is high, the instruments breathe with expansive resonance and all problems of balance and dynamics are solved with great skill and imagination. Istomin's interpretation too is marvelously wrought. The American pianist has tremendous facility and cultivation, and he uses his beautiful, pellucid tone to emphasize the music's underlying harmonic structure. And yet the interpretation is completely natural and unforced. It is, in short, a traditional performance in the best sense: while nothing is eccentric, every note is shaped and colored with rapt concern for its part in the totality. Of the two cadenzas that Beethoven wrote for the first movement, Istomin opts for the second—to my mind the more suitable one—and similarly inserts the composer's only extant cadenza in the finale. At measure 138 in the first movement's recapitulation, the pianist favors the original text (in company with Rudolf Serkin and virtually no one else). I rather like the effect of the altered right hand part. It lends a bit of diversity to the corresponding section in the exposition.

Ormandy is a sympathetic partner here. His approach is generally robust, strong-limbed, and detailed. The orchestral unisons at the start of the *Andante con moto* sound downright fierce, which provides a contrast to Istomin's melting responses.

If this performance is typical of Istomin's work these days, let us by all means hear more from him! I can think of no greater compliment than to say that his G major is spiritually on a par with Schnabel's. HARRIS GOLDSMITH

Beethoven: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 4, in G, Op. 58

Eugene Istomin, piano; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. COLUMBIA MS 7199, \$5.98.

dies the sound. All in all, this performance certainly ranks as one of the top three, and for its own special attributes I would have no hesitation in recommending it as a possible alternative to either the excellent Münchinger and Richter recordings. C.F.G.

BACH, C.P.E.: Symphony No. 2, in B flat; Variations on "Folies d'Espagne"; Concerto for Harpsichord and Orchestra, in C minor—See Arne: Concerto for Harpsichord and Orchestra, No. 5, in G minor.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 9, in D minor, Op. 125 ("Choral"); Fantasia for Piano, Chorus, and Orchestra, in C minor, Op. 80

Martina Arroyo (s); Regina Sarfaty (ms); Nicholas di Virgilio (t); Norman Scott (bs); Juilliard Chorus (in the Symphony); Rudolf Serkin, piano; Westminster Choir (in the *Fantasia*); New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond. COLUMBIA M2S 794, \$11.96 (two discs). Tape: ●● M2Q 1065, 7½ ips, \$11.98.

Interesting though it may be to hear the Ninth Symphony in juxtaposition with its stylistic precursor, I'm afraid that Columbia's lamentable "public-be-damned" policy of recoupling already available material sounds a sour note right at the outset: this is the *third* appearance of the Serkin/Bernstein *Choral Fantasia*—a performance which ought to have been rejected in the first place. Although its expansion to a full twelve-inch side (prior incarnations only took half that space), does, in fairness, unscramble some of the earlier releases' confused acoustics, the insensitivity and lack of unanimity between pianist and orchestra are still, unfortunately, very much in evidence. The present rendition is indeed a very poor caricature of the magnificent performances Serkin gives of the *Fantasia* every summer at the close of the Marlboro season. Since there are fine tapes in that festival's archives of last year's account (with Casals conducting), perhaps Columbia may eventually be coaxed into releasing them. But quite aside from the goodness or badness of the performance in question, why must collectors be duped into purchasing the selfsame recorded performance more than once in order to acquire something else that might interest them?

The performance of the Ninth Symphony is a considerable improvement over the *Choral Fantasia*. Bernstein offers an intelligent, tightly knit, strongly phrased, and occasionally crass reading. The first movement maintains a good, solid basic pulse at a moderate-to-fast tempo virtually identical with that heard in the fine Montoux version on Westminster. The Scherzo crackles with tension, and almost (but never quite) gets out of hand in its relentless, breakneck speed. (After subscribing to such rarely observed repeats as those in the First Symphony's *Andante*, the *Eroica*'s first movement, and the Fifth's finale, Bern-

stein might have taken the truly crucial second-section repeat in the Ninth's Scherzo—all the more so since this is a three-sided version. Its omission here is a serious blemish.) The Adagio fares best of all. Bernstein's interpretation is completely original without being in the least eccentric. He gives the music a yearning, almost Mahlerian intensity quite far removed from both the polished impersonality of Toscanini's recording and the effusive romanticism heard in the typical Furtwängler/Walter approach. The choral finale is the least successful portion of Bernstein's account: I find his direction there a bit heavy and overstressed.

Which brings me to the chief flaws of the present release. For one thing, the recorded sound strikes me as thoroughly unpleasant. It is harshly reverberant, hectoring, and generally overmiked. Why, for instance, must the orchestral *recitativo* following the reprise of the Scherzo in the last movement be accompanied by so much grainy tone and such horrible scrunching of bows on strings? This rasping quality and lack of a true *pianissimo* is evident throughout the performance, and the overly extroverted acoustical ambience is hardly flattering to the vocal quartet.

While this Ninth is far from being the worst version in the catalogue, it is also far from the best. Those by Toscanini (Victrola), Montoux (Westminster), Schmidt-Isserstedt (London), and Ansermet (London) are my recommendations. H.G.

BERG: Sonata for Piano, Op. 1
†Schoenberg: *Piano Pieces, Opp. 11, 19, 23*
†Webern: *Variations for Piano, Op. 27*

Beveridge Webster, piano. DOVER HCRST 5285, \$2.00.

This record was evidently planned with a keen eye for the lacunae and lapses of the current catalogue; Webster gives us the only current domestic version of the Berg Sonata and the only Webern *Variations* outside of the complete-works set, plus the three sets of Schoenberg piano pieces not presently available in adequate recordings. (The remaining Schoenberg pieces, Opp. 25 and 33, will be found on Epic BC 1140 in superior readings by Charles Rosen.)

Berg's single-movement sonata, composed in 1907 and 1908, predates any of his teacher's works for solo piano. The twenty-three-year-old student retained the traditional outlines of sonata-movement form (complete with literal repeat of the exposition, which Webster plays), but the hyperchromatic harmonies and the elliptical rhythmic development speak forth here more loudly and individually than the voice of tradition. Webster's reading is quite satisfactory—perhaps not as impressively projected as Glenn Gould's now deleted version, but also not as wayward.

Each of the three very different Schoenberg groups stands as a milestone

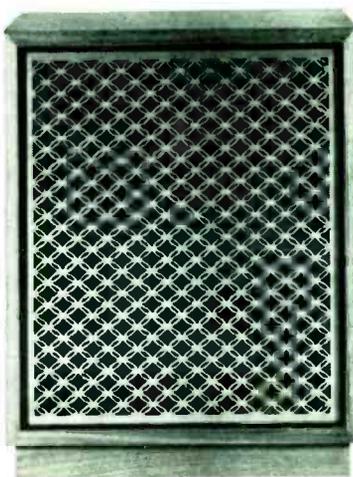
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in music history: Op. 11 marks the affirmation of the contextual, nontonal organization adumbrated at the end of the Second String Quartet: the miniatures of Op. 19 are the closest Schoenberg came to the kind of writing we associate with Webern; and Op. 23 contains the first twelve-tone piece (there is some doubt about absolute priority; at any rate, it was the first such piece to be published).

In a way, it's too bad that these pieces are always played (and recorded) in their original groupings, for they stand on their own quite well, and might be easier to approach as pieces if they weren't always programmed as "monuments." Of course, the Op. 19 miniatures are too short to stand alone, but Schoenberg is working in a long tradition of solo piano pieces: I sometimes think that if Schoenberg had given them titles, they would be more popular: *Moment Musical* (say, Op. 19/1), *Nocturne* (Op. 11/2), *Intermezzo* (Op. 11/1), *Capriccio* (Op. 23/1). And I promise to contrive some very special award for the first pianist to offer Op. 11/3 as an encore instead of the Sixth *Hungarian Rhapsody*.

These are very difficult pieces to play, and to date only the late Edward Steuermann's recording has done them complete justice—a recommendation that will be of no value to you, since Columbia has seen fit to delete Steuermann's record in favor of Glenn Gould's astonishingly perverse (mis) readings. Webster's honest, accurate, and musical playing goes a long way toward filling the gap, but for all his accuracy in detail, the utterly convincing way in which Steuermann "spoke" the phrases and molded them into longer lines still eludes Webster (as does some of the wit, especially in the Op. 23 Waltz).

Webern's concise and transparent Variations (composed in 1936) are also well played, if without as much precise dynamic shading as would seem desirable.

Throughout, the recorded sound is good—indeed, good enough to reveal some distracting pedal noises (especially in the Webern) and to show that the piano is not quite in perfect tune (Op. 19/6). Eric Salzman's informative notes are allowed to expand over three pages of an inserted leaflet, as well as being reprinted in digest form on the sleeve.

D.H.

BERWALD: *Septet for Strings and Winds, in B flat*—See Nielsen: *Quintet for Winds, Op. 43*.

BUSONI: *Sonatina for Piano, No. 6 (Chamber Fantasy on Bizet's "Carmen")*; *Turandot's Boudoir (Frauengemach-Greensleeves)*; *Nine Variations on a Chopin Prelude*
†Liszt: *Réminiscences de Don Juan*; *Réminiscences de Simon Boccanegra*

John Ogdon, piano. SERAPHIM S 60088. \$2.49.

"John Ogdon plays Liszt and Busoni improvisations" proclaims the album cover

of this record—but the title is only partially correct. Certainly, Busoni's set of Chopin variations is not an improvisation, but a work as ingeniously devised as Rachmaninoff's essay on a theme by Corelli. Indeed, there is more than a mere suggestion of Rachmaninoff here, not only in the three ultrachromatic Busoni studies, but also in the Liszt *Simon Boccanegra Fantasy*. This work, by the way, was the last in the composer's series of adventurous paraphrases. It is a late (1882) composition and quite without the obvious bravura effects one expects from this genre.

Ogdon plays with magnificent panache. He intentionally roughs up the edges a bit, for it is clearly his intent to give us an unvarnished, "composer's workbench" view rather than that of a flashy virtuoso. Yet make no mistake, the British pianist has colossal technique. His interlocking octaves are hair-raising, and his fingerwork varies from almost an inaudible delicacy to torrential fortissimo clangor. His account of the Busoni *Carmen* Sonatina is particularly welcome, for that piece, when presented without such encompassing ease and sarcastic humor, can sound like cocktail music. The Liszt *Don Juan Fantasy*, as Ogdon plays it here, is basically the composer's original, although it has been spruced up here and there by some of Busoni's editorial emendations.

Chalk up this disc as a well-recorded, thoroughly engaging bargain. H.G.

CATALANI: *La Wally*

Renata Tebaldi (s). Wally: Lydia Marimpietri (s). Walter: Stefania Malagù (ms). Afra: Mario Del Monaco (t). Hagenbach: Piero Cappuccilli (b). Gellner: Justino Diaz (bs). Stromminger: Alfredo Mariotti (bs). An Old Soldier: Coro Lirico of Turin; Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra, Fausto Cleva, cond. LONDON OSA 1392. \$17.37 (three discs). Tape: ●● T 90150. 7½ ips. \$17.95.

Like any composer of high purpose, individual vision, and less than first-class talent, Alfredo Catalani fascinates the specialist and disappoints the public. *La Wally*, premiered in 1892 a year and a half before the composer's death at thirty-nine, stands well outside the mainstream of Italian opera: it neither looks back to the robust, straightforward swash-bucklers of middle-period Verdi (as does Ponchielli's *La Gioconda*, for instance), nor does it indicate that Catalani had much musical sympathy with the kind of supercharged, slightly lurid fare being dished up at the time by young *verismo* types such as Mascagni. No, Catalani was very much his own man and the elegant music of *La Wally* defies easy categorization.

There is certainly nothing particularly remarkable about the libretto, a conventional melodrama of thwarted love and ultimate disaster in the Austrian Tyrol. Wally (soprano), a headstrong village girl, loves the intrepid young hunter Hagenbach (tenor). Stromminger (bass), a wealthy landowner and Wally's father,

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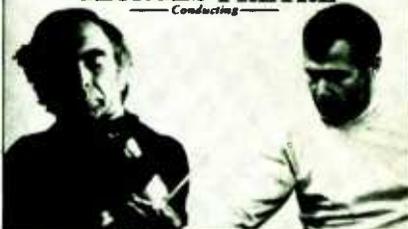
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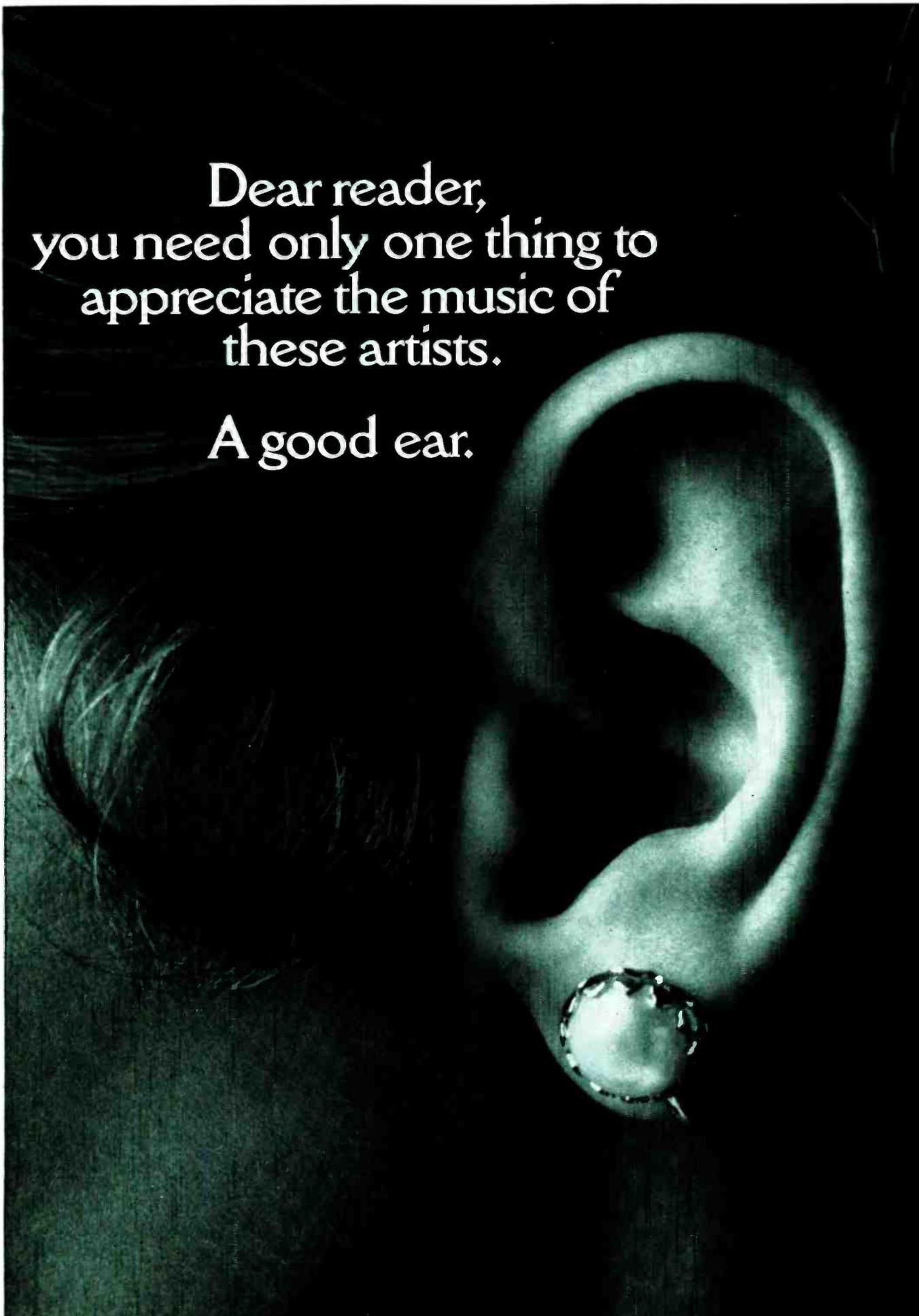
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favors a match between his daughter and his bailiff, the surly Gellner (baritone). The details of the plot are presented in a logical, theatrically viable fashion, but they hardly tell us more about characters than the above sketch. Let it suffice that Wally and Hagenbach surmount all obstacles to their love and, as they are about to embark upon a new life together, are buried under an Alpine avalanche.

The libretto may be very ordinary but the music has considerable appeal and never settles for commonplace or banal solutions. As William Weaver points out in his sympathetic notes to this recording, Catalani's aristocratically sculpted, febrile melodic style reminds one strongly of Bellini. Wally's lovely long-lined, melancholy aria "Ebben? . . . *Ne andrò lontano*" has a distinctly, delicate Bellinian flavor to it. But this sort of thing, stretched over four acts, does tend to give the whole opera something of a sick-room aroma and, while still appreciating the score's sensitive chromatic touches and atmospheric instrumentation, one occasionally longs for more vigorous characterizations. Jealous rages, passionate love, and personal intrigues were simply not this elegiac composer's long suit.

Fortunately, when he got to Act Four of *La Wally*, Catalani found precisely the situation he needed to bring out his very best: two despairing, doomed lovers surrounded and threatened by mighty natural forces. Having spent some time in the town of Sölden and the neighboring mountains where the opera takes place, I feel that Catalani has written an uncannily accurate musical description of these icy, desolate, snow-laden peaks in his evocative prelude to the opera's final scene. This polished little tone poem perfectly sets the mood for the unhappy events to follow: Wally's touching farewell to her companion, the young ballad singer Walter; her visionary monologue in which she identifies with the legendary maiden from Sölden, stranded on the mountain slopes, blanketed by snow, and transformed into edelweiss; the subsequent appearance of Hagenbach and his confession of love; and finally the dramatic double death in the snow slide. The music of this entire act sustains a level of tragic nobility quite unlike anything else in Italian opera at the time. Toscanini, who named two of his children after characters in *La Wally*, valued Catalani as a personal friend, and while he probably recognized the composer's limitations, there is no question that the two men shared the same uncompromising artistic ideals.

London's recording reunites the two stars of La Scala's 1953/54 production celebrating Catalani's centenary. Fifteen years can be a long time in a singer's life and Tebaldi and Del Monaco are not especially successful in disguising the fact that they are both well past their prime. Since it appears very unlikely we shall have another recording of this opera in the near future, it's a shame that the two leading roles are sung with so much strain and effort. There's not much pleasure to be had from Del Monaco, who quite literally yells his way through

Hagenbach's music. The actual quality of the voice is still fairly vibrant and secure, but such constant fortissimo braying and musical insensitivity make this performance very wearing on the ear. Tebaldi's honest, forthright approach to Wally works well with the character, and she can still manage some nice effects as long as the music remains in the middle of her voice. Insecurity and strain up top seem to have distracted her during the two major arias, however, neither of which possesses the kind of delicate phrasing and vocal freedom evident on a London recital disc of over a decade ago.

The minor parts are exceptionally well cast: Piero Cappuccelli, a much undervalued baritone, makes a fine sound as Gellner; Justino Diaz's grumpy Stromminger is a very positive contribution to Act I; and Lydia Marimpietri's attractive, sweet-toned soubrette suits the trousers role of Walter very nicely. Fausto Cleva's headlong tempos cause him to miss some of the score's finer poetical points, but at least his reading is always vital and involved—London's sonics are up to standard—the avalanche of snow on Side 6 may send you running for cover. Despite the disappointing work by Tebaldi and Del Monaco, I would recommend this recording to anyone who has enjoyed the arias from *La Wally* and is now curious to hear the opera in its entirety. You may well find a soft spot for Catalani's flawed yet oddly haunting score.

P.G.D.

CHOPIN: *Waltzes* (14)

Philippe Entremont, piano. COLUMBIA MS 7196, \$5.98.

Entremont opts for a middle-ground approach to the standard Chopin Waltzes. His playing combines the light-textured salon elegance of the Lipatti/Angel and Werner Haas/Epic (now Wing) editions

with the more subjective freedom of the traditional Slavic manner. While for the most part his interpretations are tasteful and pleasing, there are two areas that tend to put me off. One limitation has to do with piano technique: Entremont gets over quite a bit of the treacherous writing with considerable facility, though his long runs and passagework rarely have the glistening, unlabored fluency of some other keyboard lapidarians. The occasional uneven notes and overpedaled articulation comes close to belaboring music that (to borrow Mozart's favorite phrase) must flow like oil. My other reservation is more personal, and thus harder to document: in the slower, lyrical episodes, I simply feel that Entremont's instinct for rubato is not completely natural. He tends to produce a stop-go effect fragmenting the musical line. I also take exception to what sounds like excessive use of the soft pedal. As most pianists know, that device cannot merely make things "softer" but is actually a muting apparatus; and I attribute the frequent pallor here (or, if you prefer, the *sec* quality) to its indiscriminate use. In fairness to Entremont, however, it should be pointed out that the tonal constriction could be a fault of the recorded sound—certainly some of his quiet playing is ravishing in its low-keyed subtle coloration.

The Chopin Waltzes are now available in so many first-rate editions that choice among them becomes a matter of personal taste. My own particular favorites are the aforementioned Lipatti/Angel and Haas/Wing, but the Entremont is a welcome addition to a distinguished circle.

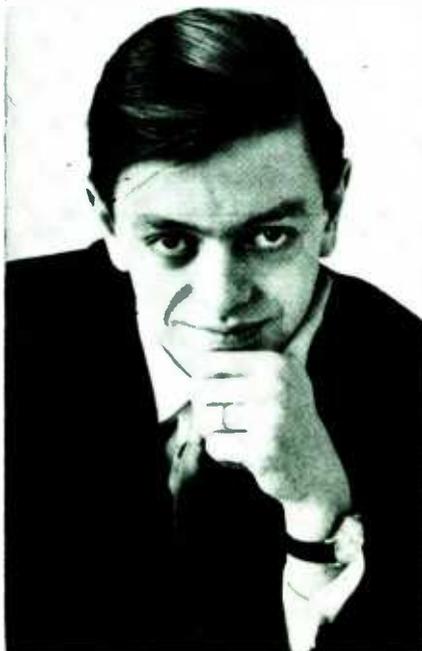
I.C.

COPLAND: *Short Symphony; Dance Symphony*.

London Symphony Orchestra, Aaron Copland, cond. COLUMBIA MS 7223, \$5.98.

Copland's *Short Symphony*, written in 1933, is one of the focal pieces of the composer's output, and it is good that we now (finally!) have a recorded version. Written in the austere, noncompromising style of the roughly contemporary and better-known Piano Variations, the work has had a somewhat checkered performance career. Shortly after its completion, the symphony was cancelled, after being scheduled by both the Philadelphia and Boston orchestras, due to its difficulty. It consequently did not receive its U.S. premiere until 1944 and has not been performed too frequently since. In fact the work is best known in a chamber version (the Sextet for Clarinet, Piano, and String Quartet), apparently made by the composer when he began to despair over the Symphony's difficulty for a large ensemble.

Listening to this work today, it is difficult to understand what caused all the trouble. Granted, it is rhythmically quite tricky in places, but certainly no worse than numerous scores by Stravinsky or Bartók from the same period. I suspect that the problem was not only execu-



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tional, but an inability to understand the score in a more general sense as well. The piece is sparse from a textural point of view: there is absolutely no padding whatsoever. As a result, the piece has little surface appeal. Once one gets into the work a bit, however, it becomes apparent that this is one of Copland's strongest and most original compositions. The symphony does require a first-rate performance to be completely comprehensible, however, and I'm afraid that this performance has some shortcomings. The problem is difficult to analyze: Copland's own deficiencies as a conductor, whether English musicians are unable to "feel" the kind of rhythmic relationships in the score, or simply insufficient rehearsal time. The answer may lie in a combination of all three factors. In any case, there is a sense of insecurity in the performance—particularly in the outer movements—that mars the over-all effect. It is a pity, now that a version of the piece has finally materialized, that the performance hasn't been put together more successfully.

The *Dance Symphony* isn't really a symphony at all but rather a symphonic arrangement of sections of Copland's early (1922) ballet, *Grohg*. The piece is effective, rather in the manner of *Music For the Theater*, has been widely performed, and there are several recorded versions available. I would recommend this version for those interested in Copland, due to the coupling—there is no other recording of the *Short Symphony*. Additionally, the performance is considerably better here, perhaps because the score is so much less complicated, or because it was recorded some two years later than the *Short Symphony*. The point is, these things get easier every year!

R.P.M.

COUPERIN, FRANCOIS: *Music for Harpsichord*

Sylvia Marlowe, harpsichord. DECCA DL 710161, \$5.79.

Sylvia Marlowe follows her fine recording of Couperin's *Apothéoses* with a bouquet of genre pieces showing the astonishing range of this French master, who deservedly earned the sobriquet "*le Grand*." Some of these are delicate dance pieces, others whimsical "portraits," but Couperin can be majestic in the grave overture style or drive relentlessly a large-scale passacaglia to its climax. The days are past when all these clavecin pieces were played like bonbons; the excellent notes by H. M. Schott rightly stress that Couperin's keyboard writing was as idiomatic in the French way as was Domenico Scarlatti's in the Italian. In other words, it is virtuoso music that requires virtuoso interpretation—and this it gets in full measure from Sylvia Marlowe. She plays the slow movements with quiet intimacy, and the brilliant fast ones with crisp vigor. Our able and musicologically enlightened harpsichordists experiment much these days with baroque performance practices. They are of course right; Couperin himself laid



A bouquet of genre pieces by François Couperin performed by Sylvia Marlowe.

down the rules of the game in a fine treatise. The danger is that more is read into the music than is really there. Marlowe is discriminating and avoids all eccentricity, and while occasionally the agogic accents are perhaps a trifle disruptive, she never fails to find a thoroughly musicianly solution. Fine sound. P.H.L.

CRUMB: *Eleven Echoes of Autumn*, 1965—See *Wolpe: Trio*.

DESSAU: *In Memoriam Bertolt Brecht; Bach Variations*

Gewandhaus Orchestra (Leipzig), Paul Dessau, cond. PHILIPS PHS 900208, \$5.79.

Since the death of Hans Eisler in 1962, Paul Dessau (born in 1894) remains unchallenged as the leading composer of East Germany and survives as the last of that small group of musicians, including Eisler and Kurt Weill, who were once closely associated with Bertolt Brecht. For these reasons Dessau is a particularly interesting figure, especially at a time when cultural contact with East Germany is so limited. The present disc, containing two works written in the past ten years, serves a valuable function in giving us some idea of what is at present happening there compositionally, at least in regard to the older generation.

Unfortunately, I can't report that there are any exciting revelations. One hears, in fact, just about what one would expect: straight-faced neoclassicism of an overly serious cast, gray in color and cheerless in character. This is particularly true of the *In Memoriam*, a work which is intended to be both a sort of requiem for Brecht and a musical depiction of the character of his thought. The requiem aspect is focused on the two outside movements, a "*Lamento*" and "*Epitaph*," both of which make frequent use of the traditional musical symbol for mourning, a descending minor second. The middle movement consists of a seemingly endless tune from Dessau's score for Brecht's

Mother Courage, blared out in the trombones and accompanied by various counterpointing melodies in the other instruments, all of which, according to the notes, is meant to symbolize the contradiction at the center of Brecht's play. Be that as it may, it's a musical disaster.

Also problematic, if more provocative, are the *Bach Variations*, written in 1963. The work is based not on a single theme but on several. One by C. P. E. Bach and two by J. S. Bach. The C. P. E. Bach theme (a country dance) is stated first, after a short introduction, in a straight brass setting; then the point is that the other themes (which, unlike the first, are never presented in their original forms) should grow out of the first. It is an interesting idea and the piece starts very well, with the first few variations gradually undermining the harmonic-rhythmic structure of the original theme. But then things seem to lose their way, and the work degenerates into a series of stylistic parodies, ranging from baroque figuration through nineteenth-century schmaltz to the popular song *Blue Moon*. In the last analysis it comes out as little more than a pops concert potpourri.

Finally, the performances do not help the situation. The Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig plays so carelessly—attacks are ragged and generally speaking the ensemble is very shaky—that one can only wonder if this can be the local standard. Fortunately, however, I have reason to believe that this is not the case: I recently reviewed a recording by the same orchestra under Hans Werner Henze on which the performance was excellent.

R.P.M.

LAZAROF: *Structures sonores*—See *Varèse: Ecuatorial; Nocturnal*.

LEONCAVALLO: *La Bohème*

Soloists; Chorus of Teatro Comunale, Bologna; San Remo Philharmonic Orchestra, Alberto Zedda, cond.

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

LISZT: *Late Piano Works*

Csárdás; Csárdás obstiné; Csárdás macabre; Abschied; En Rêve; Nuages gris; Preludio funèbre; R.W.-Venezia; Mephisto Waltzes: No. 3; No. 4; Schlaflos! Frage und Antwort.

Ernö Szegedi, piano. QUALITON LPX 11340, \$5.79.

This collection, labeled Volume II in a series that presumably will include all of Liszt's piano music, will probably interest more listeners than Volume I, most of which was tied down to the rather static "Hungarian Historical Portraits." Here, the literature is decidedly more striking, whether in the distant beauty of *En Rêve*, the near-impressionism of *Nuages gris*, or the trans-

Continued on page 89

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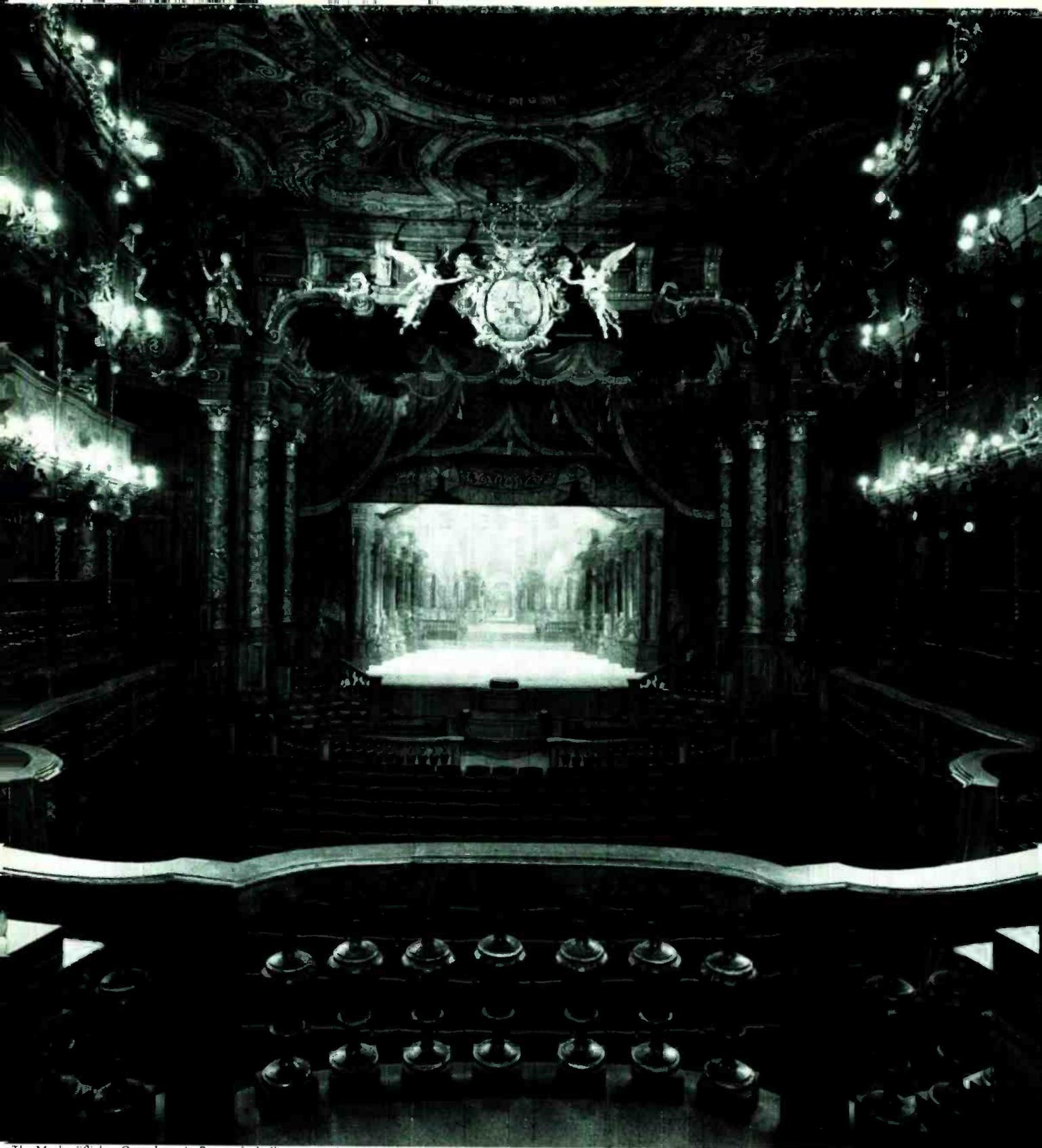


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figured bravura of the three *Csárdás* pieces. In his last years, Liszt—never one to bypass an unusual-sounding harmony—became truly mesmerized by the sounds of the augmented triad and the whole-tone scale.

This music is highly cryptic and would sound so under any auspices. Nevertheless, I could envision its being projected more acutely, with more, if you will, of "the performer's Art." Szegedi, obviously a fine musician (he studied with Leo Weiner and Ernő Dohnányi and currently teaches at the Budapest Academy of Music), sometimes fails to show an instinct for timing and is apt to italicize in a rather schoolmasterish fashion. This characteristic is most noticeable in works like the *Csárdás macabre* and the late *Mephisto* Waltzes, which—however late—still require some Lisztian panache. I also felt that the very solid, warmly resonant, and somewhat unyielding sound of the piano he uses here (which would be ideal for Brahms) tends to bring *Nuages gris* down to a pretty earthbound level even for low-lying clouds. On the other hand, Szegedi delivers a remarkably sensitive account of *En Rêve*, where all the surprising harmonic felicities are consummately prepared, and where a long, shimmering trill is unraveled with silken finesse.

Qualiton gives us its typical closely miked, plangent, slightly bass-heavy piano sound and mostly quiet surfaces (a little crackle here and there). H.G.

LISZT: *Réminiscences de Don Juan*; *Réminiscences de Simon Boccanegra*—See Busoni: *Sonatina for Piano, No. 6 (Chamber Fantasy on Bizet's "Carmen")*.

MENDELSSOHN: Chamber Music

Sonatas for Cello and Piano: No. 1, in B flat, Op. 45; No. 2, in D, Op. 58. Variations concertantes for Cello and Piano, Op. 17. Song Without Words, in D, Op. 109. Trios for Piano, Violin, and Cello: No. 1, in D minor, Op. 49; No. 2, in C minor, Op. 66. Quartets for Strings: in E flat (Jugendquartett); No. 6, in F minor, Op. 80.

Joseph Schuster, cello; Artur Balsam, piano (in the works for cello and piano); Trio Bell'Arte; European String Quartet. Vox SVBX 582, \$9.95 (three discs).

Mendelssohn fans have been struggling for years to cut off the fatal "Felix" tag—that implication of the happy, pampered personality who sailed on smooth waters while the sun shone always overhead. Well, this set isn't going to help much, because the best things in it—the Trios—are just the kind of free-flowing fountains of melody that created the image. So too are the Cello Sonatas, though they are less convincing, being more predictable and more rhetorical. The fact is that Mendelssohn could pour out melody like a baroque composer whittling chord figurations, and we might as well enjoy it.

The Quartets, on the other hand, try to be learned and come off being dull. Of course the E flat ought to be exempt from criticism: it was composed when Mendelssohn was fourteen, and bows to Haydn (it is touching to hear the first violin undertake all that activity in the opening movement, and even more touching to reach the fugue finale, à la Papa's Opus 20). The No. 6 came much later, and many listeners hear in it a lamentation over the death of Mendelssohn's sister a few months before it was written. It is different, certainly, but the quartetish first subject strikes me as extremely unsettling, and the rest is more conscientious than interesting. Perhaps part of the poor impression here is the fault of the performance: the European Quartet is a rather lackluster group, and the first violinist slides into notes and phrases as if the bases were loaded at the top of the ninth.

Performances on the first two discs are better. The Trio Bell'Arte meets the big Brahmsian climaxes with a will and achieves an appropriately light touch in the fast movements; the appeal is occasionally marred, though, by the thin and rather querulous tone of the violin. The cello works are small-scaled and sometimes verge on the merely respectful, but they are fluid and musically sensitive. S.F.

MENDELSSOHN: *Symphonies: No. 1, in C minor, Op. 11; No. 2, in B flat, Op. 52 ("Lobgesang")*

Helen Donath, soprano; Rotraud Hansmann, soprano; Waldemar Kmentt, tenor; New Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra, Wolfgang Sawallisch, cond. PHILIPS PHS 2-904, \$11.58 (two discs).

In future centuries, critics will probably still continue comparing Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang (Hymn of Praise)* Symphony unfavorably to Beethoven's Ninth. The *Lobgesang* is, to be sure, a "choral" symphony whose first three movements are instrumental and whose finale contains parts for solo voices and chorus. Any similarity to Beethoven's Ninth stops here, however. Where the orientation of the Beethoven work is almost totally interior, that of Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise* is exterior and religious. This is not to imply that the *Lobgesang* is a flawless piece, even when considered purely on its own qualities. The work is a kind of hybrid symphony/cantata whose opening instrumental three movements (symphony) and concluding choral finale (cantata) do not form a particularly convincing whole, in spite of certain motives that show up in a rather perfunctory fashion throughout the work. The latter part of the first movement and the entire second movement, however, are more than worthy of anything in the last three symphonies, and occasionally Mendelssohn achieves some harmonic nuances of extraordinary subtlety and beauty. Both the third movement and much of the "cantata," on the other hand, seem lacking in inspiration—the aria where the tenor sings the question,

"Hüter, ist die Nacht bald hin?" is just about the only high point in a movement whose musical material otherwise remains on a fairly superficial level.

Like the *Lobgesang*, the First Symphony, written when Mendelssohn was only fifteen, is an uneven work. The transitions in particular seem rather gratuitous, as they are not handled skillfully enough to be entirely convincing nor poorly enough to be considered radical. But in its rhythmic vitality, its crystal-clear orchestration, and its original harmonic language, the work is unmistakably Mendelssohn, especially in the first and third movements. Even so, the composer was evidently unsure of the work and substituted an obvious showstopper—an orchestrated version of the Scherzo from the Octet, Op. 20—for the third movement when he conducted the work in London.

If much of the music on this set is gratifying, the recording of it is doubly so. This is the first stereo version of either work; the performances of the First by Desarzens on Concert Hall and Van Hoogstraten on Renaissance have been out of print for many years, as has the Adler version of the Second on Unicorn. The alert and precise playing, the well-balanced voicing, and the striking dynamic nuances that Sawallisch obtains from the New Philharmonia Orchestra are perfectly suited to the Mendelssohn works, while the recorded sound, neither overly reverberant nor uncomfortably close, does full justice to the efforts of Sawallisch and his forces, in spite of some noisy surfaces here and there. Only the chorus in the *Lobgesang* suffers from bad miking—one has the impression of a handful of men and women singing in a closed room somewhere off-stage. In

this respect only, I prefer the Adler performance of the Second, with its fuller choral sound (not to mention the superior German pronunciation). In every other way, however, the Sawallisch performances are far superior, and this current recording represents a valuable addition to the Mendelssohn listings. R.S.B.

MOZART: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 20, in D minor, K. 466; No. 21, in C, K. 467; No. 23, in A, K. 488; No. 26, in D, K. 537 ("Coronation")

Ingrid Haebler, piano; London Symphony Orchestra, Witold Rowicki, cond. (in Nos. 21, 23, and 26); Alceo Galliera, cond. (in No. 20). PHILIPS PHS 2-906, \$11.58 (two discs). Tape (Nos. 21 and 23 only): PC 8-900-203, \$6.95; PCR 4-900-203, \$5.95.

Music for Piano— But Not for Pianist

Conlon Nancarrow is one of those mavericks of twentieth-century music who has gone his own way and done his own thing to the total ignorance of almost everyone, including his own colleagues. The United States has had more than its share of such people, and in the past few years several of them have begun to emerge from obscurity. We seem to live in an age in which people who have bucked the system all the way are much admired, and it may well turn out that Nancarrow will—at least temporarily—become a hero for our time.

Nancarrow's "thing"—which he has been doing exclusively since 1948—is to write music for a player piano. This is not quite as ridiculous as it may at first sound. The degree of precision with which a piano roll can be punched and thus programmed for musical performance is remarkably high, and composers (notably Stravinsky) have long been aware that it is a valuable means of preserving one's musical conceptions in an audible form. But so far as I know, no one before Nancarrow ever seriously considered using the player piano itself as the final medium for the music's performance.

Readers who have seen Merce Cunningham's choreographic work *Crises* have heard Nancarrow's music—the score consists of a suite of his pieces arranged in order by John Cage. They will remember the striking rhythmic effects achieved and the truly dazzling virtuosity of the player piano (this instrument can play infinitely faster than any other manned by a human). There is an

almost total rhythmic independence to each part which is quite effective, particularly since the pieces employ a kind of jazzy pitch vocabulary that enables (indeed, forces) one to concentrate almost exclusively on the rhythmic relationships.

The main problem is the sound of the instrument itself. Despite an attempt to change the tone color through various kinds of alterations of the instrument itself, it all sounds much the same. This is particularly noticeable in these pieces, where the textural conception is almost always essentially the same: the combination of two or more voices moving in different tempos, note values, etc. This concept is, of course, not a new idea and has been used, as a matter of fact extensively, by Charles Ives and Elliott Carter, to name two other Americans, but in their case such compositional technique is almost indistinguishable from a more basic instrumental conception: the motion of different instruments—or groups of instruments—independently and in interaction with one another. But here, where everything takes place on the same instrument and in such an obviously mechanical manner, the effect is ultimately self-destructive.

Still, over a short span there is some fun to be had here. As Columbia says on its jacket: **Unbelievable Sounds!**

ROBERT P. MORGAN

Nancarrow: *Studies for Player Piano*

Ampico Player Piano. COLUMBIA MS 7222, \$5.98.

Virtually everything goes wrong with this set of Mozart piano concertos. Miss Haebler's pianism stands as an ideal definition of pedestrianism: her tonal palette is generally restricted to varying shades of gray, her phrasing is uncommonly literal and without much individuality or profile. And Philips has provided similarly undistinguished sound—the piano is presented as an instrument of middle tones only, lacking a sparkling top or clearly defined bass.

In the three concertos led by Rowicki the LSO plays with a modicum of precision and manages to convince the listener that they would like to care. No. 20, though, is a shapeless blob, from Galliera's flabby handling of the tension-filled opening measures of the first movement to his spiritless, somnambulatory finale. Appropriately, the sound in this concerto is the worst of the set (though it typifies the sonic ambience of the album as a whole). On top of everything else, there is the aggravating surface noise that seems to be afflicting many recent domestic Philips releases. In fact, the opening notes of the finale are rendered completely inaudible by violent, spluttering distortion.

If there is one performance which does approach relevance it is No. 21—the *Elvira Madigan* Concerto—where Miss Haebler experiences her first encounter with the kind of songful lyricism upon which her reputation has been established. Rowicki sets a comfortable gait in the opening *Allegro Maestoso*—not as virile as one would hope, but thankfully suggestive of movement. Miss Haebler achieves an occasional lovely legato in keeping with Rowicki's ideas and it all makes for a fairly convincing statement. The remaining movements are less successful.

The performances of Nos. 23 and 26 are fixed at some point between the partially successful 21 and the completely unsuccessful 20. Both are taken at middling tempos that fail to propel the music either in terms of strongly focused accents or by melodic suppleness. The prevailing characteristic is one of stolidity.

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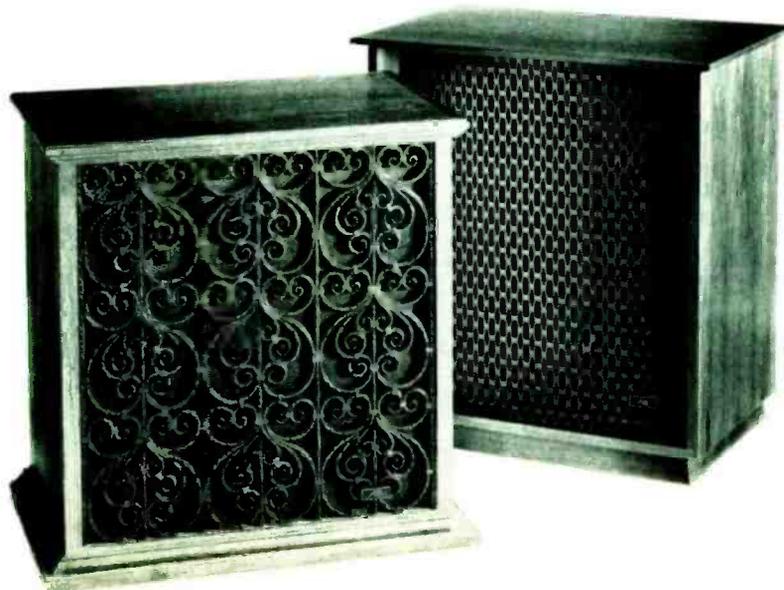
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an undistinguished box and erroneously lists Alceo Galliera's first name as Alec. A small point, perhaps, but one which reflects an across-the-board lack of attention and involvement in this disappointing album. S.L.

MOZART: *Exsultate jubilate*, K. 165; *Mass No. 18, in C minor*, K. 427; *Et incarnatus est*; *Il Re pastore*: *L'Amoro*; *Idomeneo*: *Se il padre*; *Padre, Germani, addio*

Erna Spoorenberg, soprano; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. ARGO ZRG 524, \$5.95.

Rare indeed has been the Roman Catholic church outside of Austria that would permit the first two of the pieces listed above to be sung within its sacred precincts. Both have been considered horrible examples of masquerading opera music that should not be allowed to enter God's house in disguise. Since Vatican II almost anything goes—rock-and-roll, guitar, and "folk" Masses—but Mozart's church music still is suspect. This is not the place to hold forth on the varying concepts of church music; suffice it to say that we should never judge Southern Latin Catholic church music of the eighteenth century by Northern Protestant standards of the nineteenth. Yes, in Mozart's time opera and church music were practically interchangeable, but it was not for the first time that sacred and secular music were intertwined—nor for the last; therefore let us just examine the music.

Mozart wrote *Exsultate jubilate*, called a motet but really a dramatic solo cantata, in 1773, when on an operatic junket to Italy. It was composed for the brilliant castrato who was to sing the lead role in his new opera, *Lucio Silla*. It is a fine piece, regardless of its composer's youth, showing the subtle selfishness of the artist and the unsubdued simplicity of his music. Erna Spoorenberg sings well, with a good open voice quite pleasant to listen to, but it is not a colorful voice, as is particularly evident in her *missa di voce*. She shows no abundance of temperament, but the coloraturas are neatly and accurately sung. This is refined but too genteel music making; what is missing is a little more involvement and excitement.

The "*Et incarnatus est*," from the great unfinished Mass in C minor, is one of Mozart's most elusive moments. There is in it an element of abandon amounting to a true surrender in Mozart's yielding to a vision of beauty. Or perhaps it is the calm and serenity of the expression, the Mediterranean—and hence "pagan"—roundedness and balance of form and content which troubles modern listeners to church music, but which created in the composer a blissful enchantment. Too bad that "sensuality," which used to be a good word, has become a nasty one, for this is exactly what is missing in Spoorenberg's delivery of this glorification of the singing human voice. Of the rest—and of the whole recording—the best performed is the recitative and aria

from *Idomeneo*, "*Padre, Germani, addio*." The recitative has a dramatic hue and the tender farewell song caught the soprano's sympathy. Neville Marriner's orchestral support is first-class, and the recorded sound excellent. P.H.L.

MUSSORGSKY: *Boris Godunov* (highlights)

Anna Leskaya (s), The Hostess; Ilya Tamarin (t), Shuisky; Alexander Kipnis (bs), Boris and Varlaam. Victor Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Nicolai Berezowsky, cond. RCA VICTROLA VIC 1396, \$2.50 (mono only, from originals recorded in 1945-46).

I am not sure that a service is rendered by the release of this disc. There are other highlights versions available in more up-to-date sound, and Kipnis, who was no doubt vocally stupendous in the title role a decade earlier, was past the point of doing himself or the music justice when these post-war recordings were made.

The basic caliber and color of the voice are present, and by intelligent manipulation he even renders the Monologue in the high key—a heavy demand on a true bass of Kipnis' sort. He is also extremely effective in the Varlaam sequence (both the *Town of Kazan* song and the succeeding scene), where he can just cut loose.

But elsewhere, we can only observe that the right type of voice is operating, to intermittent effect. The problems are particularly noticeable in the numerous passages demanding use of the *mezza-voce*, or controlled "line" singing. The sound produced is often beautiful, the phrasing poetic—but the pitch, alas, errant. There is nothing quite so destructive of even the most carefully conceived phrase as the sensation of the voice dragging and struggling to attain the proper altitude; it makes enjoyment and involvement almost impossible.

If the interpretation were of the intonation-be-damned, sock-it-to-'em variety, indulgence might be easier. But it has the singer's usual qualities: musicality, intelligence, care. In fact, it is somewhat calculated and lacking in spontaneity, so that the vocal problems are always to the fore.

Tamarin barely slips by as Shuisky, and certainly doesn't make a sound appropriate to Dimitri's lines in the Inn Scene. In addition to the standard sequence of Boris' scenes and the Varlaam excerpts, the disc includes the Shuisky/Boris interview and the opening chorus of the Prologue.

Altogether, I should say that if one wants *Boris* excerpts, one of the current highlights discs is the better bet. And if one wants vintage Kipnis, then Seraphim's excellent selection is the choice. C.L.O.

MUSSORGSKY: *Songs*

Songs and Dances of Death; *Where Are You, Little Star?*; *Old Man's Song*; *The Garden by the Don*; *Mephistopheles'*

Song of the Flea; *Is It Proper That a Young Man Weave Flax?*; *The Classicist*; *The Seminarist*.

Kim Borg, bass; Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, Alois Klima, cond. (in the *Songs and Dances of Death*); Prague National Theater Orchestra, Zdeněk Chalabala, cond.; Alfred Holeček, piano (in the last three songs). NONESUCH H 71215, \$2.98.

Since Mussorgsky is a composer whose musical style is predominantly lyrical in conception and vocal in essence, it is not surprising that his songs hold such a central position in his over-all output. What is surprising is that so little of this literature is available in recorded form. At one time Angel offered Boris Christoff singing the complete songs on four discs; one record has survived from this collection and it has been reissued by Seraphim. Netania Davrath also sang a generous selection on a Vanguard mono-only release, but it too has been deleted from the catalogue. In fact, the only stereo version of any of the songs is the Columbia recording of the *Songs and Dances of Death* with George London.

As you can see, it's a wide-open field, and all Mussorgsky enthusiasts should be grateful for this new Kim Borg recital from Prague. As to the quality of the disc itself, my reactions are generally, though not unqualifiedly, favorable. First of all, the choice is excellent, including as it does the *Songs and Dances of Death*—surely the composer's finest set of songs—as well as a wide variety of other songs. These latter range from the simple lyricism of *Where Are You, Little Star?*, Mussorgsky's earliest song (written when he was nineteen) to the parodistic style of *The Classicist* and the humorous setting of Mephistopheles' song from the cellar scene of Goethe's *Faust*. Thus the record serves as an excellent general introduction to this aspect of Mussorgsky's work and also makes for a nicely balanced program from the listener's point of view.

As to Borg's interpretations, a lot depends here on one's general views on vocal performance. There is certainly no question that Borg has a firm grasp of the material and knows exactly what to do with it. Nor is there any doubt that he achieves his aims. For my taste, however, he emphasizes the drama of the pieces to the detriment of their musical qualities (in this respect he is similar to Christoff). Such an approach often leads him into a literal misreading of Mussorgsky's pitches and rhythms. One wonders if he hasn't sung all of these works over too long a period without returning to restudy just what has been notated by the composer. The accompaniments are adequate, although one could wish for a bit more precision in the orchestral versions, particularly in the *Songs and Dances of Death*.

None of these songs was orchestrated by Mussorgsky himself (with the possible exception of *Where Are You, Little Star?*—there seems to be some disagreement on this), although the composer expressed the intention of orchestrating

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Modest Mussorgsky—a composer whose talents range from lyrical to parodistic

several of them. There is an oft-used orchestral version of the *Songs and Dances of Death* by Glazunov and Rimsky-Korsakov. Curiously, however, this is not the one used here, but no credit is given to the orchestrator, nor do the notes clarify where the other orchestral versions come from. English translations (but not the original Russian in which the songs are sung) are provided. R.P.M.

NIELSEN: *Quintet for Winds, Op. 43*

†Berwald: *Septet for Strings and Winds, in B flat*

The Melos Ensemble. ANGEL S 36538, \$5.79.

This is a good record, though not perhaps one of the outright winners we have come to expect from the Melos Ensemble.

R- The major work, Nielsen's witty and characterful Wind Quintet, is given a remarkably polished performance, with particularly notable contributions from flutist Richard Adeney and clarinetist Gervase de Peyer. At some points in the score, the Lark Wind Quintet's performance on Lyrichord L.L. 155/L.L.ST 7155 digs deeper below the surface of the music: one such moment is the variation for solo horn in the finale, where William Brown's playing is more atmospheric than Neill Sanders' on the new release. (I refuse, by the way, to slight the independence of the horn by talking about "woodwind" quintets.) But though I wouldn't want to be without the Lark performance, the Melos one has the advantage of even clearer textures, abetted by a recording of exemplary quality.

R- Even for Berwald addicts, among whom I count myself, the Septet on the other side of the disc will hardly come as a revelation. It is an early piece, written in 1828 when Berwald was thirty-two. This fact no doubt explains the comparatively unindividual nature of the music; it also casts a droll light on a judgment quoted in the rather messy liner notes: "For all its neglect,

the Berwald Septet is not inferior to the finest essays of the period." Well, maybe the man was speaking exclusively of septets, but this seems unlikely—and the Schubert Octet, you may recall, dates from just four years earlier.

Still, it would be unfair to beat Berwald with as big a stick as Schubert. This is an enjoyable if slightly humdrum piece, and it is beautifully played. The wind instruments again sound fine, but the recording of the strings on this side is a trifle harsh.

The second side of the Lyrichord record contains some agreeable but inconsequential Nielsen chamber pieces, so couplings are no great help. Over-all, I think I would probably go for the new Melos version of Nielsen's Quintet, but the ideal solution would be to own the Lark performance too. B.J.

PAISIELLO: *Nina, ovvero la pazza per amore*

Dora Gatta (s), Angiola Vercelli (s), Salvatore Gioia (t), Alfredo Nobile (t), Giuseppe Zecchillo (b), Agostino Ferrin (bs); Chorus and Orchestra of the Cetra Opera Company, Ennio Gerelli, cond. EVEREST S 467/3, \$8.94 (three discs, rechanneled stereo only).

It is hard for us to realize that Giovanni Paisiello (1740-1816) was, in the 1780s, a much more famous operatic composer than Mozart. Paisiello's comic operas held the stage throughout Europe, from London to Naples and from Vienna to St. Petersburg, where for many years he was the favorite of Catherine the Great (she called him her "sorcerer"). Rossini was thought presumptuous when he wrote the *Barber of Seville*, because Paisiello had written a smash hit on that subject. Indeed, when Paisiello passed through Vienna in the 1780s, Mozart arranged a chamber music party to honor the famous Italian composer.

Once a very popular opera, *Nina ovvero la pazza per amore* (*Nina or Mad for Love*) is now completely forgotten outside Italy, where it is occasionally revived. The overture used to be one of Beecham's "lollipops," though it is hard to understand why the great conductor should have attached his affections to such a dreary, conventional little piece (is there perhaps a significant story in the fact that so many Beecham "lollipops" are not quite first-quality music?). Altogether, unless you are a collector of eighteenth-century music or very interested in Italian *settecento* opera, it would be hard to recommend *Nina*; it is neither first-rate music nor is it the best that Paisiello can offer us. His *Barber of Seville*, magnificently recorded for the publishing firm of Ricordi under the direction of Renato Fasano, has recently been reissued (also by Everest), and that really is a treasure-trove.

This recording was first issued in Italy some twenty years ago by Cetra, an Italian firm, whose resuscitations of little-known Italian operas have often proved very rewarding. Cetra performances are not generally of top international quality, and the best one can say about both the

performance and the sound of *Nina* is that they are adequate. One is sorry to be unenthusiastic about such a release, but if we are going to have Paisiello operas, then we must have works of the stature of the *Barber of Seville* as scintillatingly performed as that Ricordi set was. Otherwise, the game is just not worth the candle. H.C.R.L.

PALESTRINA: *Missa sine nomine. Motets: Confitemini domino: Adoramus te; Gloriosi principes terrae; Alma redemptoris mater; Ave Regina; Salve Regina; Ave Maria; Sub tuum praesidium; Pueri hebraeorum; Surrexit pastor bonus; Haec dies*

Women's Choir of the Music High School, Győr, Miklós Szabó, cond. QUALITON LPX 11328, \$5.79.

PALESTRINA: *Missa Papae Marcelli* †Victoria: *Motets: Vere languores nostros; Ecce quomodo moritur; O magnum mysterium*

Roger Wagner Chorale, Roger Wagner, cond. ANGEL S 36022, \$5.79.

PALESTRINA: *Madrigals: Il tempo vola; Se fra quest'erbe in fiore; Abi che quest'occhi; Vestiva i colli; Il dolce sonno; Da così dotta man; Io son ferito. Ricercari ed esercizi*

Regensburger Domchor, Hans Schrems, cond. (in the Madrigals); Ensemble Musica Antiqua, René Clemenčič, cond. (in the Ricercari). ARCHIVE 198434, \$5.79.

Perhaps the best-known composer of his day—certainly the one figure from the late Renaissance to remain honored throughout the centuries after his death—Palestrina owes his eminence to the fact that he was unique among his contemporaries. His works follow patterns of perfect consonance so unvarying, that a whole doctrine of counterpoint can be derived from them. The beautiful tranquillity that emerges from the play of his ever-interlocking motives is like a Chinese puzzle made up of oddly shaped pieces, which, when assembled correctly, form a perfect sphere. The contradictory phenomenon of Palestrina, so apparently simple to the ear and yet so amazingly complex, is difficult to describe in words. Intellectually, of course, one can take apart the pieces and admire Palestrina's constructive skill; but the total effect is so highly polished that the ingenious joints reveal themselves only after the closest scrutiny.

Palestrina's classicism is particularly suited to the Mass, an unchanging liturgy whose dramatic elements have been smoothed out by centuries of daily repetition. It is no accident that Palestrina's greatest compositions are Masses and that some of the greatest Masses ever written are by Palestrina. Motets and madrigals, however, with texts that offer scope for contrasting and conflicting emotions, reach greater heights in the hands of a Victoria or a Monteverdi.

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Qualiton's new release of the *Missa sine nomine* coupled with a selection of the composer's motets for equal voices illustrates this point very well. The Mass—which is one of several *Sine nomine*s by the composer and, as far as I can ascertain, not previously recorded—is consistently fresh and interesting, while the motets, though lovely in themselves, begin to pall after a few hearings. Miklós Szabó, a choral conductor of considerable talent, leads the Women's Choir of the Music High School in Győr, Hungary, in an expressive and spirited performance on this disc. Both the Mass and the motets are scored for four voices: three high choral lines and a lower one which functions as a bass. Szabó has transposed a

number of the pieces, including the Mass, to suit his forces—the sopranos, who occasionally sing with that white, hard tone that I associate with bad boy sopranos, are apparently happiest in a middle range. Luckily the altos cope magnificently as surrogate basses.

I wore out the old Capitol recording of the *Pope Marcellus* Mass by the Roger Wagner Chorale many years ago. The new version, in stylish stereo and improved sound, is very similar to the old one: Mr. Wagner's concept of the piece hasn't changed much, nor has the sound of his Chorale. I remember the old sopranos as a little flutier, but perhaps modern recording techniques have simply given them a little more presence. Several

critics have called the Chorale's sound "dry," but I like their echo-free purity in this particular music. It makes the Chinese puzzle transparent, revealing the workmanship without sacrificing the beauty of the whole. The more dramatic Victoria motets that fill out the disc, however, don't fare as well when treated with such dry choral purity.

The madrigals on Archive's disc are performed by a chorus rather than soloists and this only emphasizes their status in Palestrina's *oeuvre* as second-class motets. The Regensburger Domchor's stilted interpretation and earnest tone hardly help to make them more exciting. As for the nine Ricercari on Side 2, a variety of weighty authorities question their very authenticity. Certainly these little contrapuntal exercises are of no particular interest in themselves. The sprightly performances on a variety of early baroque instruments, however, lend them surprising distinction. Decidedly un-Palestrinian, but fun. S.T.S.

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PROKOFIEV: *Symphony No. 2, in D minor, Op. 40; Lieutenant Kije: Suite*

David Clatworthy, baritone (in the *Lieutenant Kije*); Boston Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond.

PROKOFIEV: *Symphony No. 5, in B flat, Op. 100*

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond.

For a feature review of these recordings, see page 77.

RACHMANINOFF: *The Bells, Op. 35*

Soloists: Moscow State Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin, cond. EVEREST S 3251, \$4.98.

Sergei Rachmaninoff is no longer a popular composer in this country. No doubt, like a few other composers, he was best known for some of his second-rate works—the Prelude in C sharp minor and the Second Piano Concerto. But Rachmaninoff wrote many more profound and interesting compositions, not least among them such tone poems as the *Ile of the Dead* and *The Bells*. The composer himself said on several occasions that *The Bells* was his favorite, and indeed it is a work thoroughly representative not only of Rachmaninoff, but also of that extraordinary and heady period in Russia just prior to World War I—a similar ten-minutes-to-twelve-o'clock atmosphere has often been remarked in connection with the last years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; I believe it could be equally well applied to the last years of Tsarist Russia. Something of this opulent, degenerate, and fascinating period is certainly conjured up by *The Bells*, written in Rome in 1913, and first performed, with great success, in Moscow a year later.

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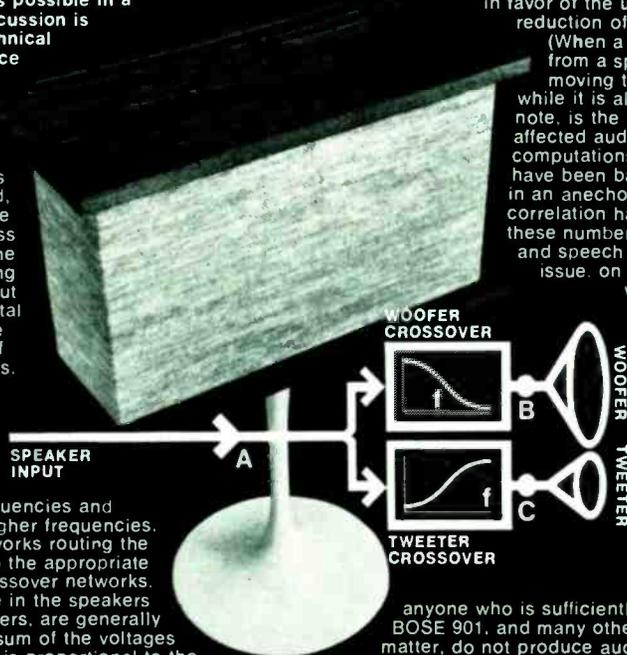
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*From 'ON THE DESIGN, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION OF LOUDSPEAKERS', Dr. A. G. Bose, a paper presented at the 1968 convention of the Audio Engineering Society. Copies of the complete paper are available from the Bose Corp. for fifty cents.

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If Rachmaninoff has been steadily losing popularity in this country, he has recently been returned to a state of grace in Soviet Russia after his spectacular fall there in 1931; and, interestingly enough, it was after a performance of *The Bells* in a Moscow concert during that latter year that *Pravda* launched the vicious attack on Rachmaninoff, which resulted in a virtual ban on his works in Soviet Russia. Can it be that they thought the luscious atmosphere of Tsarist Russia was too nostalgically, too faithfully, and especially too attractively portrayed in the drab land of Stalin's workers' paradise?

Thus it is welcome to have this new release of *The Bells*. It is a fine record-

ing and a useful reminder of Soviet Russia's gigantic strides in the technical aspects of recording during the last decade. For those of us brought up on the gritty surfaces of opaque Soviet recordings which flooded the Eastern European market ten or fifteen years ago, the sheer technical excellence of this stereo disc must come as a distinct surprise. The stereo balance is well achieved, and the recording, obviously made in a large hall, is realistic, with a wide dynamic range.

Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* is, of course, based on poems by America's famous horror-poet, Edgar Allan Poe. Rachmaninoff naturally wrote his score using a Russian translation, and they have

been recorded here in that language. The jacket gives Poe's original and it is not difficult to match up the Russian text with the English, even if you do not speak or understand Russian.

I would draw particular attention to the beautiful English horn playing at the beginning of the final movement (second half of Side 2). Altogether, this is a most enjoyable record and should win many friends for this now neglected Russian composer.
H.C.R.L.

SCHOENBERG: *Piano Pieces, Opp. 11, 19, 23*—See Berg: *Sonata for Piano, Op. 1*.

SHOSTAKOVICH: *Quintet in G minor, Op. 57*

†**Stravinsky:** *Three Pieces for String Quartet*

Lyubov Edlina, piano (in the Shostakovich); Borodin Quartet. MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40085, \$5.79.

Except for one reservation, I find this recording one of Melodiya/Angel's best efforts to date. The sensitive and beautifully balanced performance of the Shostakovich Quintet far surpasses other recordings of this work, including the version by the Beethoven Quartet with Shostakovich himself at the piano on a deleted Vanguard disc (this performance is now listed on Bruno). Particularly outstanding on this release is the playing of Lyubov Edlina. To begin with, her piano tone here is a perfect complement to the "sound" of the Borodin Quartet. This is partially due, of course, to the instrument itself and to the brilliantly clear sound obtained by the engineers. But a good deal of credit must also be given to Miss Edlina, who accomplishes the difficult task of giving individuality to her playing without ever destroying the balance of the ensemble. The many nuances that she brings to the shading and phrasing are quite remarkable and give the piano part a depth I have seldom heard in other performances. My one reservation concerns the Scherzo, which suffers somewhat from deliberate pacing and inner-groove distortion, although even here the lilt given to the piano part is marvelously suited to the movement.

If one considers only the musical elements, the Shostakovich Quintet might appear rather embarrassing when compared to the Stravinsky Three Pieces that fill out Side 2. In these vignettes, written more than twenty-five years before the Shostakovich work, Stravinsky takes some deliberately banal material and gives it profundity in an extraordinarily rich musical context. Conversely, Shostakovich tends to use profound ideas in a rather diaphanous musical setting that occasionally borders on banality. But, of course, the intentions are entirely different for each work. In the Stravinsky, utmost attention is paid at each instant to harmonic and rhythmic detail, and the sounds that the composer obtains from the string quartet are strikingly varied

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yet never gratuitous. Shostakovich, on the other hand, sacrifices painstaking detail to the over-all dramatic movement of the work. It can be argued that this sort of approach is not entirely suited to chamber music, but I find the Quintet one of Shostakovich's more effective pieces.

The Stravinsky Three Pieces are also excellently recorded and are played with great vitality by the Borodin group. I might add that, for some reason, the recording plays a bit sharp, although not enough to be particularly distracting.

R.S.B.

SIBELIUS: Symphonies: No. 3, in C, Op. 52; No. 4, in A minor, Op. 63; No. 6, in D minor, Op. 104; Tapiola, Op. 112

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Lorin Maazel, cond. LONDON CS 6591/92, \$5.79 (each of two discs).

With this pair of records, Maazel completes the third stereo cycle of the Seven Sibelius Symphonies. All the evidence now being in, I can say that he scores over his colleagues Bernstein (Columbia) and Watanabe (Epic) on two grounds. For one thing, while all three cycles are five-discs sets, Maazel's is the only one to provide a bonus to the symphonies: in addition to *Tapiola* (which shares the space left over from the Fourth Symphony), Maazel's earlier released Symphony No. 1 included the *Karelia* Suite for good measure. Secondly, with the exception of Bernstein's Fifth, Maazel's readings are the only ones available in single-disc format.

I am pleased to say that almost everything on these latest records is good—often, indeed, superb. The stylistic uncertainty, the theatrical heaving and hauling that marred some of Maazel's earlier Sibelius readings are nowhere to be found in these sober, ultrastructural interpretations. The only place where Maazel sounds even slightly mismatched with the Viennese Orchestra is in the Fourth Symphony, where a bland cello soloist slightly devitalizes the conductor's well-judged reading. In that work, by the way, Maazel takes the composer's "Glocken" instruction in the finale to mean little bells. Both Karajan and Watanabe shared his views on that matter; Ansermet favored chimes; Bernstein, both bells and chimes—which seems right to me.

Tapiola gets a stark, grim, ultradynamic statement from Maazel, something on the order of Karajan's but with the orchestral timbres dressed in chrome instead of copper. Though it's a very close contest, I prefer Maazel's version not only to Karajan's but also to Beecham's splendid but less monumental interpretation (Seraphim).

The two shorter symphonies receive tightly organized, undeviating performances, and both are structurally more cogent than any I have ever encountered. The first movement of No. 3, as Maazel does it, is bubbling, vivacious, and delightfully crisp in its articulation, while

the Scherzo of No. 6 is, for once, the *Poco Vivace* it ought to be. Perhaps a bit of repose and atmosphere vanish with the fast tempos, but on each rehearing I find myself more comfortable with Maazel's views.

London's reproduction has depth, razor-sharpness, and aurally soothing richness as well.

H.G.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40; Also sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30

Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta, cond. LONDON CS 6608/09, \$5.79 (each of two discs). Tape: ●● 80209, \$7.95, 7½ ips.

Those who rather like music "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" may well enjoy these Zubin Mehta readings of Strauss tone poems. In its exuberant drive, heedless of obstacles or subtleties (and finding its appropriate complement in London's brassy, bassy, and resonant recording), Mehta's approach to Strauss is the complete antithesis of that of Fritz Reiner and other conductors who have sought to clarify, balance, and bring into structural unity the composer's musical ideas.

In *Ein Heldenleben*, in particular, Mehta frequently lets the torrent of complex orchestral sound carry him along—or rather, more precisely, he propels this surging sound. But the force of this propulsion leaves little room for careful balance of instrumental lines or blending of timbres, moving from one passage to the next with little concern for their musical connection. In *Also sprach Zarathustra* Mehta provides more music and fewer sound effects, but even so the performance never rises above the intrinsic *Langweiligkeit* of the score. *Zarathustra* justifies itself only in the hands of a very dedicated Straussian of the order of a Reiner or Ormandy, surviving only because such conductors really put more into the score than is probably there.

Regretfully, I must report that neither Mehta nor his Los Angeles Philharmonic here produces in any consistent manner the kind of first-class orchestral performance that should be the *sine qua non* for these scores. Again, this is more apparent in *Ein Heldenleben* than in *Zarathustra*. In the former, there are a number of passages in which the attack of the lower strings, especially the basses, anticipates the beat, and the balance of timbre in the woodwinds is extremely variable in ways not called for by Strauss's detailed markings.

London's recording technique may be responsible for the frequently heavy sound of the horns, trombones, and tubas (or this may be simply the kind of sound Mehta likes in a Strauss performance). In any event, the tone spreads too much, frequently to the point of losing the distinctive quality of the instruments themselves. Having frequently lamented that the latest orchestral recordings sound less and less like real orchestras, I can only reiterate the complaint here.

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CIRCLE 45 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

STRAVINSKY: *Three Pieces for String Quartet*—See Shostakovich: *Quintet for Piano and Strings, in G minor, Op. 57.*

TAKEMITSU: *Coral Island; Water Music; Ai*

✓ Mutsumi Masuda, soprano (in *Coral Island*); Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Hiroshi Wakasugi, cond. RCA VICTROLA VICS 1334, \$2.50.

Move over, gentlemen, a genius! Toru Takemitsu is, to be sure, far from unknown to American audiences, but this is the most important recording of his music to reach our shores to date.

Coral Island is a short symphony in five movements. The first, third, and fifth are for orchestra alone and are called "accumulations." The second and fourth are songs based on the elegant, elusive lyric poems by Makoto Ohka. The idiom is very much of the Sixties: high, chiming, tingling sounds à la Boulez; a grand atomistic rush of string and wind sounds à la Xenakis; a tortuous, disjunctive vocal line à la everybody—but it all adds up to some of the most moving and instantly communicative music of recent years. The performance is superb and so is the recording.

Coral Island fills one side. The other side is filled with two tape pieces. *Water Music* is based entirely on sounds of water in various transformations: some of the sounds are percussive, some fricative, some just plain watery. There are dramatic silences in the music, and the whole has a solemn urgency and power much in the spirit of *gagaku*, the ancient, ceremonial court music of Japan. A major delight of the work is the way in which the sound volleys from speaker to speaker, and one can almost feel it falling into deep space as well.

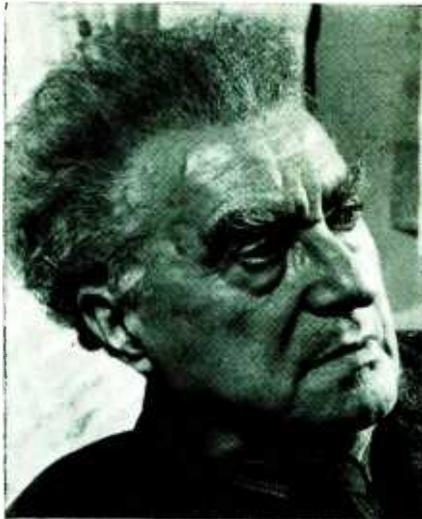
Ai is the Japanese word for love. Takemitsu's piece is based entirely on that word as spoken in various inflections by male and female voices. Some of their intonations convey a sense of utmost anxiety, not to say terror, but the transformations worked here are as remarkable as those in *Water Music*, if less extreme.

All in all, this disc brings us one of the most meaningfully inventive musical minds of the decade. It may well prove to be a major milestone in the musical history of our time. A.F.

VARESE: *Ecuatorial; Nocturnal*
†Lazarof: *Structures sonores*

Ariel Bybee, soprano (in *Nocturnal*); bass ensemble of the University-Civic Chorale, Salt Lake City (in both Varese works); Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel, cond. CARDINAL VCS 10047, \$3.50.

With this coupling, virtually all the extant music of Edgard Varèse is now on records, albeit in performances of varying degrees of effectiveness; only the 1947 *Etude pour espace* and the 1956



The late Edgard Varèse—his unfinished *Nocturnal* reaches disc by way of Utah.

Good Friday Procession in Verges (a tape sequence made for a film by Varèse's friend Thomas Bouchard) remain to be issued on discs. The importance of Varèse's music is immense, both for its own value and for its growing influence on contemporary music; if previous history is any guide, the proliferation of these recordings, whatever their inadequacies, will further increase the awareness, among musicians and listeners, of the possibilities that Varèse opened up.

It should also encourage the study and understanding of how Varèse's music "works"—for no comparable body of music from the first half of our century has been granted so little critical and analytical scrutiny. That the best of it does "work" is attested by its enormous influence and its increasing acceptance into the repertory—but an adequate language for its description has only begun to be developed. This music is like nothing else: its sounds, its techniques of continuity and relationship are unique, and they extend the range of what music can be, both for the composer and for the listener.

Ecuatorial falls between *Ionisation* and *Density 21.5* in the chronological sequence of Varèse's music; it was written in 1933–34, to a Spanish translation of a Mayan text, and is scored for bass voices, four trumpets, four trombones, piano, organ, fifteen percussion instruments, and two Theremins (later rewritten for two Ondes Martenots). The Ondes, which could fulfill Varèse's desire for continuous curves of sound, add a rather special color to the sound picture, which is full of shifting instrumental and choral doublings. The work's clean, hard-edged force is, unfortunately, not fully realized in this performance—most notably by the chorus, which is ragged in pitch and ensemble (it might have been preferable to use a solo voice, as has been done on past occasions, including the premiere).

Nocturnal is the composer's last, unfinished work. An incomplete version was performed in 1961, and the "performing edition" prepared by his disciple Chou Wen-chung includes that portion (as revised by Varèse after the perform-

ance) and continues with some of the sketched material not already used. The text is drawn from Anaïs Nin's *House of Incest*, and the forces called for include soprano solo, chorus of basses, piccolo, flute, oboe, two clarinets, bassoon, horn, two trumpets, three trombones, six percussion players, piano, and strings. In general, the performers are more successful here (especially the chorus), although I am not entirely convinced of Mr. Abravanel's control of tempos.

On the reverse, the adventurous Utah Symphony gives us the first recording of a large (nearly thirty minutes) orchestral work by the thirty-six-year-old Bulgarian-born Henri Lazarof, who has lived in the United States since 1957 and now teaches at UCLA. *Structures sonores*, completed in 1966 and first performed by Zubin Mehta in Los Angeles, is clearly the work of a proficient composer, very resourceful in handling his orchestral forces. This is not, perhaps, a work that seizes the imagination, but it follows clear lines of musical development as the several movements explore a variety of textural possibilities. The performance is proficient, although a couple of movements are somewhat below tempo; this is really a work for a virtuoso ensemble.

Everything is well recorded, save for some patches of distortion on the Varèse side. Texts and translations are provided. D.H.

VICTORIA: *Motets: Vere languores nostros; Ecce quomodo moritur; O magnum mysterium*—See Palestina: *Missa Papae Marcelli.*

WEBER: *Der Freischütz*

Claire Watson (s), Agathe; Lotte Schädle (s), Aennchen; Rudolf Schock (t), Max; Claudio Nicolai (b), Ottokar; Klaus Lang (b), Kilian; Gottlob Frick (bs), Caspar; Kurt Böhme (bs), Hermit; Fritz Ollendorff (bs), Cuno. Chorus and Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper, Berlin, Lovro von Matacic, cond. EVEREST S 468/3, \$8.94 (three discs).

Every country has its unexportable culture. While scarcely a week passes without a performance of *Der Freischütz* somewhere in Germany, the opera has never enjoyed wide international popularity (the Met's production next season will be that company's first in over forty years). This is a shame for *Freischütz* is one of early romanticism's freshest and most original expressions, containing page after page of spontaneous melody and superb musical craftsmanship. Perhaps the libretto's provincialism has turned off the rest of the world, for, unlike Wagner, Weber's intense Germanness is very localized and his characters add up to little more than a collection of generalized Teutonic types. Be that as it may, the opera is still good theater and its real protagonist—nature as both a sinister and benign force—has been brilliantly portrayed in music redolent with

the atmosphere of cool, green, pine-scented yet slightly threatening German forests.

Although *Freischütz* fans may have had little opportunity to see the opera in this country, recordings have always been plentiful. The early LPs gave us four performances albeit unsatisfactory: a drastically abridged rendition on DGG/Decca, a poorly sung edition by some major singers on London (recently reissued by Richmond), and two decent but rather routine readings on Remington and Urania. After the arrival of stereo, the quality improved with the near-simultaneous release of two recommendable versions from Odeon (now available domestically, but without the spoken dialogue, on Seraphim) and DGG. Everest has further complicated the choice by issuing the current very fine performance originating from the German Eurodisc label.

Not the least attractive feature of Everest's *Freischütz* is its completeness—only the imported Odeon recording (now virtually impossible to locate) offered as much dialogue—an important consideration if the opera is to make any dramatic sense. Furthermore, stereo has been used imaginatively and there is a real sense of a live performance—the devilish doings in the Wolf's Glen scene, for instance, are given the works: spooky echo effects, a pack of howling hounds, stamping horses, a braying wild boar, and some frenzied shrieks from Samiel. Unfortunately, the potentially full, rich sound itself is badly sabotaged by the bass-heavy, overreverberant acoustic.

The singers are basically respectable. Rudolf Schock repeats his Max from the Odeon/Seraphim set almost note for note: this is robust, forthright singing, but rather beefy at times and not terribly elegant. Frick is a swaggering, snarling villain—the role of Caspar suits his big black bass beautifully and he has enough flexibility for a reasonably clean articulation of the treacherous runs in the "*Schweig, schweig*," aria. The ladies are good, though not quite the equals of Odeon/Seraphim's Elisabeth Grümmer and Lisa Otto. Claire Watson, American though she may be, possesses precisely the kind of white, pure-toned soprano that Germans seem to find so attractive for their virginal operatic heroines; she brings a delicate femininity to Agathe and sings her two arias with much sensitivity and lovely tone. Lotte Schädle sounds like dozens of other rather thin-voiced Central-European soubrettes and she is neither one of the best nor the worst. Her brightly sung Aennchen underplays the cuteness of it all, which is at least a point in her favor. The other singers are competent, although one would like a more rock-steady basso than Kurt Böhme's for the Hermit's solemn pronouncements. Lovro von Matacic conducts leisurely but purposefully with special attention to Weber's atmospheric orchestral timbres.

Which *Freischütz* to buy? If money were no object, I would search out or special-order the Odeon, still the best-sounding, best-sung, and most complete of the entire lot. If the German dia-

logue is not a vital point, by all means pick up Seraphim's budget-priced abridgement of the Odeon performance which does contain all the music. For less exacting tastes, this Everest recording offers more than a reasonable compromise. P.G.D.

WEBERN: *Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 10; Four Songs, Op. 13; Concerto for Nine Instruments, Op. 24* †Amy: *Diaphonies; Invention*

Liliana Poli, soprano (in the Webern *Four Songs*); Domane Musical Ensemble, Gilbert Amy, cond. EVEREST 3232, \$4.98.

This selection of Webern works (of which only Op. 10 is otherwise available outside of the complete set, or in stereo) is an interesting one, illustrating three different phases of his development. The highly concentrated orchestral pieces (1911–13) exhibit maximum economy and disjunction of surface. With the songs of Opp. 12–15, composed in overlapping sequence during the years 1914–22, Webern—like Schoenberg before him—relied upon words to form the basis of larger (relatively speaking) forms. Finally, the Concerto of 1934, dedicated to Schoenberg on his sixtieth birthday, shows the special Webern approach to Schoenberg's method, here used in such a way as to constitute virtually a "three-note

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system." This last work has a bracing clarity far removed from the very tenuous progression of the earlier works.

Unfortunately, none of these performances represents any significant improvement on those in the Craft set; in fact, the Op. 13 songs are distinctly less good, both vocally and instrumentally. Op. 24 sounds somewhat offhand, and the climax of Op. 10, No. 2 is marred by ugly distortion. This music is drawn on such a small scale, and the place of every element is so crucial, that only the very best performances can do it justice. Despite the omission (at least in early pressings) of the opening notes of Op. 24, Craft's set remains indispensable.

So, for that matter, do its annotations and translations, a department that Everest often manages to botch up. No translations are given for the songs, which are listed as "Op. 14" in several prominent places on liner and label. And Op. 24 is a *Concerto*, not a "Concert"—obviously a result of slavish dictionary translation from the original French jacket. Most of the liner is given over to a 1968 *Time* story on Webern, complete with an asterisk presumably referring to an omitted footnote—and so on.

The two works by Gilbert Amy, who now conducts the Domaine Musical concerts founded by Boulez (from the latter's prominence on the liner and labels, you might suppose that he had something to do with this record, but this is sheer press-agentry), demonstrate a certain ear for pretty sonorities—especially the *Inventions*, for flute, piano and celesta, harp, vibraphone, and marimba. Like so much of the work of Boulez' epigones, however, it sounds as if composed by the yard, with little audible rationale for the succession of events; the *Inventions* have a couple of "movable" sections, but the whole affair would make just as much sense if the same procedure were applied throughout. And the double-orchestra set-up in *Diaphonies* sounds quite trivial by comparison with, say, Elliott Carter's use of such an arrangement in his Double Concerto.

These performances seem quite good; on several hearings with scores, I detected a few missing stitches but no major disasters. D.H.

WEBERN: *Variations for Piano, Op. 27*—See Berg: *Sonata for Piano, Op. 1*.

WOLPE: *Trio*

†Crumb: *Eleven Echoes of Autumn, 1965*

Trio of the Group for Contemporary Music at Columbia University (in the Wolpe); Aeolian Chamber Players (in the Crumb). COMPOSERS RECORDINGS CRI 233, \$5.95.

The paucity of works by Stefan Wolpe available on records may be on its way toward correction at last; certainly few composers of equivalent influence have been so poorly represented in Schwann. This is especially true with respect to

Wolpe's later style, of which the Trio, for flute, piano, and cello, composed in 1963, is a representative example.

Since there is nothing instrumentally spectacular about Wolpe's writing, it presents a decidedly austere surface. The progress of each movement is by discrete, generally brief gestures, their most immediately graspable continuity deriving from the rotation of groups of pitches. As these "cells" expand and change in content, the rhythmic configurations also vary, and the totality of the gestures becomes cumulatively more complex and intense. Wolpe's conception of musical movement is distinctly individual, and often very convincing; there is never any doubt about his command of this highly personal idiom. In the Trio, as in some of other pieces, I find the rhythmic aspect of his language less developed, and less interesting, than the pitch-and-interval structures, and this disparity prevents the work from being completely successful. However, CRI is to be commended for allowing us repeated hearings and closer acquaintance with this music, especially as so well performed by Harvey Sollberger, Charles Wuorinen, and Joel Krosnik.

George Crumb is another composer whose music presents an unmistakable surface: a sound of resonances, rustlings, knockings, harmonics, of faint vibrations and—as the title of this work (and others) suggests—of echoes. The present piece, composed in 1966, comprises eleven sections, each exploring different timbral effects from the ensemble of violin, flute, clarinet, and piano. A motto phrase (from García Lorca's *Gacela de la terrible presencia*) is whispered before the solo cadenzas that form the central sections. This is very accessible music if approached without preconceptions; while its composer is exploring a new range of possibilities, he is not carried away with novelty for its own sake, and there is a clear logic in his use of these very distinctive sonorities. The recording captures the clouds of sympathetic vibrations and the other timbral effects with great success. If you have not previously encountered Crumb's work (his *Night Music I* is on CRI 218), this is an excellent place to start. D.H.

XENAKIS: *Atrée, Hommage à Pascal: Morisma-Amorisma: St/4-1.080262: Nomos Alpha*

Various instrumentalists. ANGEL S 36560, \$5.79.

The music of Iannis Xenakis always comes with the same literary baggage: obscure titles and notes full of learned references to Probability Theory, the laws of great numbers, the theory of groups, and all such, with the implication that you haven't heard the half of it. Maybe Xenakis needs this kind of mumbo jumbo to stimulate his musical imagination; he actually does possess a first-rate musical imagination, as witness the four compositions on this record.

The most remarkable of them is the last one on the disc, *Nomos Alpha*, an

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eighteen-minute piece for solo cello that exploits every conceivable effect of color of which that most colorful of instruments is capable—bowed and struck, plucked and stroked; *sul ponticello*, *col legno*, and (this effect was invented by Charles Ives for his Second String Quartet) *confistiswatto*. You name it; if it can be played on a cello, it's in this piece, plus a grand passion and drive. The work leaves you exhausted but happy, thanks as much to the fabulous virtuosity of the performer, Pierre Penassou, as to the music itself.

Morisma-Amorisma, which seems to mean "the fated and the free," is a fine piece for piano, cello, and double bass, making much of the quiet, mysterious, detached tones that Morton Feldman manages to write so effectively in response only to the promptings of his erudite musical ear. *Atrées* is a somewhat similar work for ten instruments, including brass and woodwinds; it is full of wonderful sonorities, but for me it goes on a little too long. Both *Atrées* and *Morisma-Amorisma* are recorded (superbly) by the Paris Instrumental Ensemble for Contemporary Music under the direction of Konstantin Simonovich.

The title *St/4-1.080262* is partly explained in Harry Neville's jacket notes. *St* stands for "stochastic," which is Xenakis' favorite word. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it means "pertaining to chance" and was last heard of in 1662; Xenakis obviously means it to cover controlled chance of many kinds. The *4* means that the piece is a string quartet, the *1* that it is Xenakis' first work for that medium. The other numerals stand for February 8, 1962, the day on which Xenakis completed the computer calculations on which the music is based.

Like *Nomos Alpha*, the work is an all but exhaustive anthology of special effects for its medium; it is also very intense, aggressive, and concentrated in its thirteen minutes' playing time and it ought to make an enormous hit with the popular audience. It certainly must do so with the audiences of the Bernède Quartet, which has made the perfect recording. A.F.

RECITALS & MISCELLANY

BAROQUE CHRISTMAS CANTATAS

Tunder: *Hosianna dem Sohne David*. Ahle: *Merk auf mein Herz*. Buxtehude: *Das neugeborne Kindelein*. Erlebach: *Siehe, ich verkundige, euch grosse Freude*. Telemann: *Lobt Gott, ihr Christen allzugleich*.

Hedy Graf, soprano; Dorothea Brinkmann, contralto; Klaus Schmidt, tenor; Wilhelm Pommerien, bass; Freiburg Student Choir; instrumentalists, Klaus Knall, cond. CARDINAL VCS 10045, \$3.50.

This is one of the most enjoyable collections to come my way in quite a while. The works of the five composers represented here, whose lives span more than a century and a half, present a clear picture of the development of the church cantata or motet from the early seventeenth century to the time Bach assimilated the various trends and continued the development to its ultimate conclusion. It is interesting to note the specific ties between Bach and each of the composers on this disc: Buxtehude (1637-1707) was certainly one of the strongest influences on Bach's early organ works and his first few cantatas. Franz Tunder (1614-67) was Buxtehude's father-in-law and predecessor at St. Mary's Church in Lübeck. When Bach first came to St. Blasius Church in Mühlhausen, he succeeded Johann Georg Ahle, who in turn had succeeded his father, Johann Rudolf (1625-73); and while he was in Mühlhausen, he became acquainted with the *Kapellmeister* at the nearby court of Rudolstadt, Philipp Heinrich Erlebach (1657-1714). Bach was most closely associated with, but least influenced by, his long-time colleague in Leipzig, Telemann (1681-1767).

Aside from their musicological value in shedding light on Bach's early work, each of the compositions here is well worth hearing for its own sake. I was particularly attracted by the light-hearted and festive nature of Erlebach's cantata for soprano, alto, and tenor soloists, and four-part chorus, accompanied by two trumpets, bassoons, strings, and continuo. Ahle's delightful little work, whose six sections are each based on the familiar Luther chorale *Vom Himmel hoch*, should win instant acceptance. Perhaps the best work here, and the least obscure, is Buxtehude's modest cantata for four-part chorus accompanied only by strings and continuo. Least impressive is Telemann's rather routine work, *Lobt Gott*; however, the pure sonic grandeur of five trumpets and drums, with strings and continuo, and the spirited antiphonal singing from two four-part choruses should guarantee a welcome.

The first-rate performances are thoroughly satisfying—soloists, choir, and instrumentalists project an irresistibly infectious enthusiasm for the festive music.

Jacket notes include complete texts and translations, and the recorded sound is rich, full, and very clean. C.F.G.

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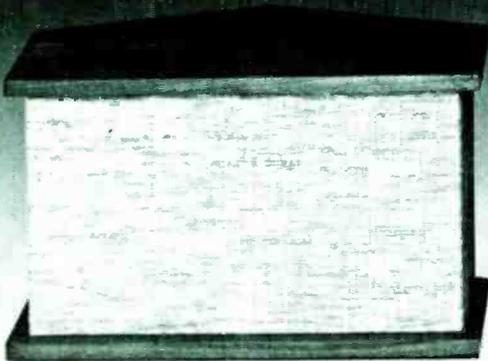
Schumann: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 54*. Grieg: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 16*. Liszt: *Totentanz for Piano and Orchestra*. Tchaikovsky: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in B Flat minor, Op. 23*.

Nelson Friere, piano; Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe, cond. COLUMBIA M2S 798, \$7.98 (two discs).

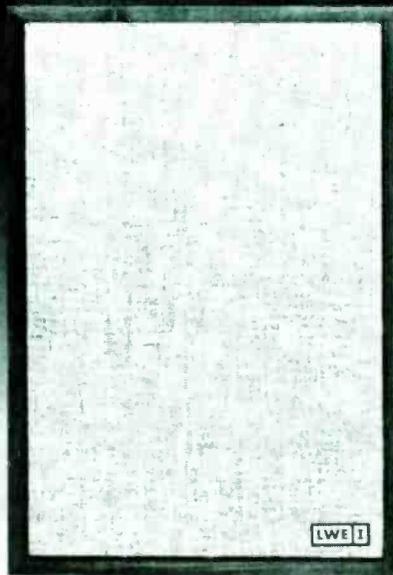
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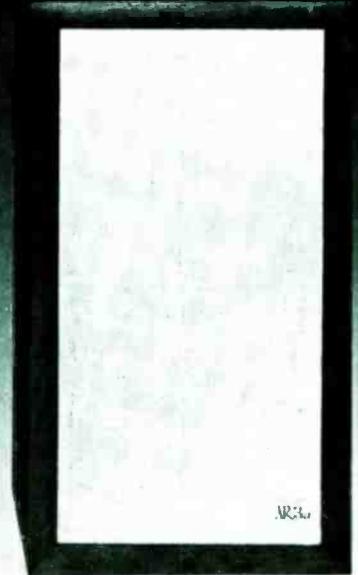
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CIRCLE 31 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

in the pianistic heaven" with more than the mere assurance that he is one, but *C'est la vie* with this groovy industry! A little luck and perseverance brought me the additional, though hardly extensive, information that Friere is South American and that he studied with Stefan Askenase. He has a pearly, nuanced tone, a big technique, and a relaxed, nonperceptive approach to his instrument.

He also, in the Grieg at least, is burdened with a "World Celebrity Conductor" whose intent is plainly to rule or ruin. Friere begins his opening flourish in that concerto with a refreshingly unaffected, straightforward feel for the phrasing, but as soon as Kempe gets his thumb into the pie, one is made aware of all sorts of dreadful little "significances" and this tug of war is, alas, the

pattern for the entire performance. The big *ritornello* at the end of the exposition section, for example, sounds like something dragged (literally) from Von Bülow's family attic, and the orchestral prelude to the slow movement is miserably replete with overfinicky details of phrasing and instrumental balance. At the least little excuse (and sometimes with no excuse at all) the music stops to sniff at some hydrant. In its pretentious way, it is excellently done, I guess—but give me a straight, artistic reading like Lipatti's (*Odyssey*) or Solomon's (*Pickwick*) any day, or at least the ham 'n eggs showmanship of the Cliburn and Rubinstein (RCA) versions.

In the Schumann, Kempe displays many of the same tendencies but somehow manages to make them less obtru-

sive. The only place where Kempe annoys me significantly in this work is that spot in the finale where the second theme enters. It is a conductor's Trap in the first place, and with Kempe so intent on "sophisticated" phrasing that it is next to impossible to determine what the rhythmic pulse is at this point. I must also say that the Munich Philharmonic's husky solo oboe and its rather boxy, leaden sonority in *tutti*s do not exactly win me over either. Otherwise, thanks to Friere, who plays nimbly and well, it is a fine performance.

The Liszt and Tchaikovsky, where the *echt Deutsch* approach might have been especially deleterious, are happily quite free of it. The Tchaikovsky benefits from rapid, tautly drawn tempos (in the tradition of Horowitz and Toscanini—but without quite so much vodka), while the Liszt warhorse flails and clatters through its course with impressive pyrotechnics.

Columbia is marketing these recordings as a two-disc album; in Great Britain, the Grieg and Tchaikovsky have just been released on a single record, with the other two works presumably still to come. H.G.

Satirical Condiments Prepared by the Berrys

MANY LIEDER SINGERS keep a collection of "light relief" items, songs with a funny or satirical situation, for use as condiments: applied sparingly they may help to season the texture of a recital or prevent its content from becoming too lugubrious. But what happens if you take all these change-of-pace items and devise a whole program from the mixture? Theoretically, such a protein deficiency meal should spell death. In practice, when served up by this resourceful and engaging trio of artists, it is both varied and satisfying. This record is a bargain and a delight.

Do not expect too violent a bout of comedy from the material—most of the songs will raise a smile rather than a laugh. In fact, the only item that regularly draws yocks in public performance is Rossini's backyard duet for two cats. It is here given with high feline breeding evident in every miaow. Haydn's *In Praise of Laziness* is a slim joke, overlong for its content. Beethoven's *Flea* is a setting of the same Goethe lines used in the Mussorgsky song that Chaliapin made famous.

The first two Brahms songs come from a folk song collection and each is intended to be sung in an appropriate regional dialect. My ear is inexpert in such matters, but Miss Ludwig seems to have caught splendidly the near-Dutch dialect of Cologne, which is where *Och Moder* comes from. Not so

idiomatic is her way with the Italian words of Rossini's Venetian lass: the pronunciation is accurate enough, but the vowels are stubbornly German and closed. So the trio of songs doesn't entirely come off, despite her verve and musicality.

Walter Berry enjoys his work thoroughly and does especially well in the closing Hugo Wolf group. Each song is a caper, a surrealist joke, a parody. And each complements the other.

You will have gathered that the singers are skilled and entirely assured. So is Gerald Moore, whose contribution draws a word not easily applied to music: this is *witty* piano playing, and as polished as can be.

The stereo is natural and the recording acoustic warm and clear. Seraphim has been very careful in past vocal issues to provide full texts in both the sung language and English. It is a pity to find on this occasion—when the words are so important—that they have chickened out. We get no sung language at all, and only sketchy prose summaries in English.

GEORGE MOVSHON

Christa Ludwig and Walter Berry: "A Most Unusual Song Recital"

Beethoven: *Der Kuss; Der Floh*. Haydn: *Lob der Faulheit*. Rossini: *La Regata Veneziana; Duetto buffo di due gatti*. Brahms: *We koom ich dann de Pooz erenn?*; *Och, Moder, ich well en Ding han; Vergebliches Ständchen*. Reger: *Der Brief; Wald-einsamkiet*. Strauss, R.: *Schlechtes Wetter; Ach, weh mir unglückhaftem Mann*. Wolf: *Zur Warnung; Auftrag; Bei einer Trauung; Selbstgeständnis; Abschied*.

Christa Ludwig, mezzo; Walter Berry, baritone; Gerald Moore, piano. SERAPHIM S 60087, \$2.49.

I MUSICI: *Music for String Orchestra*

Martin: *Etudes*. Hindemith: *Trauermusik for Viola and String Orchestra*. Roussel: *Sinfonietta, Op. 52*. Nielsen: *Little Suite, Op. 1*.

I Musici. PHILIPS PHS 900138, \$5.79.

The most substantial and rewarding work on this record, Frank Martin's *Etudes*, is also available in an Ansermet-conducted performance (London CS 6241), where it is coupled with a cracking account of the *Concerto for seven winds*. Comparison of Ansermet's reading with the new one by I Musici yields fascinating results. The music itself sounds quite different. This is most strikingly the case in the *pizzicato* study, where Ansermet's massed strings evoke an effect of controlled yet almost frightening power. With I Musici's eleven-man string band, the piece sounds much friendlier, with the power of the music subordinated to its equally distinguished wit. Both approaches seem to me legitimate, and I recommend every reader with an interest in performing style to explore for himself the contrast between Ansermet's broadly conceived dramatic effects and I Musici's pointed precision.

Nielsen's *Opus 1* is also very well done here, and, again, wit is emphasized rather than the romanticism brought out in Garaguly's more heavily accented performance on Turnabout 34149. The shorter works by Hindemith and Roussel add to the attractiveness of this well-engineered disc, and, in the Hindemith *Trauermusik*, Cino Ghedin is an eloquent *viola* soloist.

For once, Philips has provided decent pressings. The presentation of this record, on the other hand, is poor. The liner notes are badly written and full of questionable judgments—find me a "classi-



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cal key-scheme" in any of Nielsen's symphonies. No movement breakdown is given for the Martin work: purchasers may like to know that the five pieces are *Ouverture*; *Etude 1: Pour l'enchaînement des traits* ("connection of links," roughly speaking); *Etude 2: Pour le pizzicato*; *Etude 3: Pour l'expression et le "Sostenuto"*; *Etude 4: Pour le style fugué*. Finally, a record company really ought to understand the names of its performing groups. "I Musici" means simply "the musicians," so that the title "I Musici plays works by . . ." inevitably provokes the retort "Does they?"

But let me not end on a sour note. The record is splendid. B.J.

METAPHYSICAL TOBACCO: *Songs and Dances by Dowland, East, and Holborne*

Dowland: *Sorrow, sorrow stay; Pavan; What if I never speed; Gailliard "Can she excuse"; In this trembling shadow; Lasso vita mia; M. Thomas Collier his Galliard; Away with these self-loving lads; Pipers Galliard; Welcome black night. East: Poor is the Life; Weep not dear love; Your shining eyes; O Metaphysical Tobacco. Holborne: The Honie Suckle; Heigh Ho Holiday; The Fairie Round; Pavana Ploravit.*

Musica Reservata, Michael Morrow, cond.; Purcell Consort of Voices, Grayston Burgess, cond. ARGO ZRG 572, \$5.95.

All kinds of vocal and instrumental settings diversify this absorbing collection of late Elizabethan and early Jacobean music. The songs are performed by any combination from six voices to one voice and lute, and instrumental doubling is quite properly used in some numbers. The Dowland instrumental pieces are in some cases done in arrangements by his contemporaries: *Pipers Galliard*, for example (also known as the song *If my complaints could passions move*), is played here in John Bull's keyboard version, found in *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*.

This all serves to underline the delightful variety of timbres possible in an age before orchestration had become a more or less standardized procedure. The use of both viols and violins in the instrumental ensemble helps further.

The music itself is full of beauty. Dowland's *In this trembling shadow* (from *A Pilgrimes Solace*) may be singled out, by virtue both of its emotional intensity and of its general neglect. But every one of these eighteen pieces has something of its own to offer, whether it be moving, exhilarating, or just charming.

The performances are mostly very good. Morrow's Musica Reservata group has an excellent command of style, and plays with clean tone and lively rhythm. John Beckett's harpsichord playing is admirably crisp, though I am not sure whether his treatment of the ornamentation indicated by Bull in *Pipers Galliard* need have been as idiosyncratic as it

is—he plays a number of additional ornaments, which is fine, but leaves out some explicit ones, which seems odd.

The Purcell Consort is not quite what it was in the days when Barbara Elsy was its first soprano. The polyphonic lines are not always perfectly clear. And in Dowland's *Welcome black night* the members really ought to have come to some agreement on the pronunciation of the word "deity." Nevertheless, these performances are still above average. Among the solos, there is some firm singing by baritone Geoffrey Shaw, and a wonderfully fluent performance of *What if I never speed* by tenor Ian Partridge.

B.J.

NORMAN TREIGLE: *"Operatic Heroes and Villains"*

Offenbach: *Les Contes d'Hoffmann: C'est moi Coppélius. Massenet: Manon: Epouse quelque brave fille; Don Quichotte: Death Scene. Charpentier: Louise: Les pauvres gens. Rossini: Le Comte Ory: Vegliar mai sempre. Verdi: Attila: Mentre gonfiarsi l'anima; Ernani: Infelice! e tuo credevi. Boito: Mefistofele: Ave Signor; Ecco il mondo.*

Norman Treigle, bass-baritone; Vienna Akademie Chorus; Vienna Volksooper Orchestra, Jussi Jalas, cond. WESTMINSTER WST 17145, \$4.79.

Operagoing New Yorkers have good reason to be grateful to Norman Treigle for many remarkable evenings at the City Opera, where his elongated figure and high craftsmanship have enriched a long series of character roles, from Handel's Julius Caesar to Czar Boris, by way of Gianni Schicchi and Figaro. Treigle's voice is so strongly integrated within his total stage presence that it becomes something of a problem for a record reviewer to separate the singing from the man, to consider how the voice alone would work upon someone who had never seen him.

But even the forcible occlusion of the visual memory serves merely to confirm that Treigle is an actor first of all, and vocalist only after that. His mind is always at work on the character and the situation, his hand leads you strongly into the dramatic picture. Though the voice is firm and well placed, it is not the silk-and-steel instrument of, say, a Ghiaurov (whose Boito Mephistopheles must be preferred). But few artists are as convincing in projecting a father's concern as Treigle is in the arias of the Comte des Grieux and of Louise's father: these are both memorably and beautifully sung.

Treigle's "Infelice!" will not make you forget Pinza—for one thing, the voice lacks a true basso's blackness—but here again is a worthwhile journey through the contorted mind and the tacky morals of Donna Elvira's uncle and fiancé. Like the *Attila* aria (which is a good example of early Verdi) it is given complete, with recitative and cabaletta.

The Rossini aria is a rarity—the Tutor's aria from Act I—and this may well

be the first time it has ever been recorded, for it was omitted from the "complete" Glyndebourne set of 1958 (Angel 3565, mono, now deleted), presumably because it was so difficult to sing with accuracy. Treigle is accurate enough, but it is hard to understand why he chose to record in Italian this aria from an opera written to a French text—particularly when the other French-language items here show him to have an entirely adequate (if not faultless) command of the Gallic tongue.

Treigle is to sing his first *Don Quichotte* this year and it may well turn out to be a role tailor-made for him, vocally and physically. Certainly this recording of the death scene is most movingly conceived and recorded, and does not wilt even in comparison with the legacy of Vanni Marcoux and Chaliapin. Treigle also sings Sancho Panza's interpolated lamentations from the left channel—rather disturbing, this, for the voices sound too much alike—but the scene reminds us of the viability of this very worthwhile opera which has waited many years for a Treigle to restore it to activity.

If the foregoing has seemed to dwell on this artist's dramatic insight—rather than with phrasing and timbre—it is entirely because Treigle's art directs the listener in this way. The voice itself is not specially beautiful, often changes gear, sometimes loses accuracy of intonation on soft sustained notes. His diction is exemplary; so good indeed that one is often made aware of minor lapses in pronunciation. But a potent dramatic imagination compensates for these shortcomings and carries the listener firmly along.

Jussi Jalas just pads along for the most part, providing fairly characterless accompaniments. The orchestra sounds under strength, and the acoustic is boxy and sometimes overreverberant. G.M.

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The principles of selection behind these two potpourris escape me completely—perhaps they hung an old Victor catalogue on the wall and threw darts at it? I'm happy to note that none of the usual Victor chestnuts are included, and that the dubbings have not been unpleasantly "enhanced" by excessive filtering or resonance; alas, a few tracks are pitched wrongly, as noted below.

Given the grab-bag nature of these records, it's pretty hard to make any broad generalizations, so I'll list the con-

tents with capsule comments on each, and let you make your own balance sheet in the light of your own interests. First, the Italians.

Zinka Milanov: "*Casta diva*" from Bellini's *Norma* (1954). A previously unreleased version, complete with cabaletta, recorded not long after her last Metropolitan performances in this part. The sound is less sumptuous than it was ten years earlier (when she recorded only the cavatina), and the coloratura is smeared, especially in chromatic scales. Not very atmospheric, perhaps because of conductor Jonel Perlea's strict, slightly fast tempo.

Tito Schipa: "*Una furtiva lagrima*" from Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'amore* (1925). Dubbed a semitone high, this is a very personal, rhythmically free, but vocally elegant version; no breathing spectaculars, but some nice diminuendos on held notes.

Sigrid Onegin: *Brindisi* from Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* (1928). Although tossed off with a hardboiled élan more suitable to a beer hall, this shows off one of the great voices—a seamless scale and lots of flexibility (if not quite as much as Schumann-Heink had in her classic recording).

Marguerite Matzenauer: "*In grembo a me*" from Meyerbeer's *L'Africana* (1912). Another great mezzo—heavier in sound than Onegin, but also warmer; the musicianship is impeccable, even in this mechanically spun-out lullaby.

Lily Pons and Giuseppe de Luca: "*Il nome vostro ditemi*" from Verdi's *Rigoletto* (1940). Pons's brittle insecurity isn't very winning, but the sixty-four-year-old De Luca (who actually sang Rigoletto and other parts at the Met around this time) shows what phrasing can do even when power is gone.

Emmy Destinn: "*D'amor sull' ali*" from Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (1916). Another sharp dubbing, but the performance is a knockout, complete with trills and the high D flat. The phrasing is really powerful, always moving toward a goal, and the seamless vocal sound is wonderful to hear.

Johanna Gadschi and Pasquale Amato: "*Mira d'acerbe lagrime*" from Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (1913). The entire Leonora/Di Luna scene, set forth by two big, handsome, and reasonably skillful voices; it's all just a bit cautious, however.

Enrico Caruso: "*Celeste Aida*" from Verdi's *Aida* (1904). The first of his four tries at this aria for Victor, and piano-accompanied; despite a praiseworthy attempt to end softly, it's not very successful, for it preserves the eccentric phrasing of the 1902 G & T versions. At least in the studio, Verdi's Indian gift to tenors seems to have given Caruso a good deal of trouble.

Rosa Ponselle: "*Ritorna vincitor*" from Verdi's *Aida* (1923). Another major-league performance, lacking only the ultimate in declamatory intensity.

Florence Quartararo and Ramon Vinay: *Love Duet* from Puccini's *Tosca* (1947). I'm not sure what this is doing in such fast company. Florence Quartararo, a protégé of Bruno Walter, had some Metropolitan exposure in the late '40s; here she offers a pleasant sound

and some generalized temperament, but the tenor's unsubtle beefiness and the fast tempos (to fit the 78-rpm sides) hardly give her a chance.

The French contingent is somewhat more adventurous, even if the first side is almost threadbare in terms of musical value.

Alma Gluck: "*Rossignols amoureux*" from Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1911). Stylistically, of course, this is in left field, if not out of the ball park altogether; Gluck made more interesting records than this.

Emma Calvé: "*Charmant oiseau*" from David's *Perle du Brésil* (1908). If your only acquaintance with Emma Calvé is via that dreary *Habanera* that Victor usually circulates, here is an eye-opener—a fantastic silvery sound and all the virtuosity of the Marchesi tradition. Through some fluke, this is a startlingly realistic recording, and the soprano-

flute duetting is uncanny, so closely does she match the instrument's timbre.

Tita Ruffo: *Brindisi* from Thomas' *Hamlet* (1920). An improbably massive rendition of this already improbably bibulous moment in the life of the melancholy Dane. Ruffo's 1908 version (on Odeon QALP 10411) is less unrelievedly boisterous, more appropriate to the situation. The Victor dubbing is sharp.

Jeanne Gerville-Réache: "*Chanson du tigre*" from Massé's *Paul et Virginie* (1911). Minor French exoticism, with melismas that the rich-voiced mezzo finds awkward; she might have been better represented by something else.

Jan Peerce: *Passover Scene* from Halévy's *La Juive* (1941). The tenor's first Victor record is an honest piece of singing, the voice sounding freer than it later became. This is a dull scene,

Continued on page 111

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CIRCLE 19 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

John McCormack—Musical Raconteur

By David Hamilton



Culver

THE IMMENSE CATALOGUE of John McCormack's recordings is far from being exhausted by LP reissues, and this record makes a definite contribution, even if the jacket's claim of "Never Before Released on LP" turns out to be somewhat exaggerated. In point of fact, the arias from *Traviata*, *L'Elisir*, *Semele*, and *Lucia* ("Fra poco" only) have previously appeared on Victor LPs, as well as the Bantock song (which was never issued on 78s); on the other hand, this 1923 version of *Die Liebe hat gelogen* has never before been released at any speed (both this and the Donaudy song are different performances from those on Angel COLH 123), although the jacket nowhere points this out.

John McCormack was the possessor of one of history's great singing techniques—perfect intonation, incredible control of breath and dynamics, splendidly clear and forward diction—wedded to a voice of considerable sweetness, produced with openness and a lovely spin to the sound. He was also an exemplary musician, with a fine natural sense of phrasing: the only serious flaw I detect in these performances is a tendency toward inexact rhythmic detail, as in the *Lucia* arias where the dotted rhythms are often flattened out. As sheer singing, nearly all of these performances are a great delight—nowhere more so than in the *Semele* aria with its famous superlong phrase, and in the elegant Donizetti arias.

Unfortunately, projection of

character seems not to have been McCormack's strong suit, and some of the operatic selections are on the pallid side—e.g., the *Aida* finale, which is staid and studio-bound, with Marsh a placid *Aida*, singing Italian a bit oddly. And although the duets with Sammarco are pieces that do rely on making an effect through sheer vocal flow, the baritone is hardly in McCormack's class and the blend of sound fails to match that of the classically mellifluous Gigli/De Luca versions or (in the Bizet) the smooth power of Caruso and Ancona.

As a "musical raconteur," rather than an operatic singing actor, McCormack had few peers, and the songs, despite their variable musical quality, are more consistently convincing. To be sure, the German-language ones suffer from unidiomatic diction—it's crystal clear, but not really correct—and the little Lotti aria has some clumsy coloratura and unsatisfactory trills (compare the aged Patti's version—which, by the way, was supposed to have inspired McCormack to record the piece). However, the English-language pieces could never have been sung more perfectly; even the rather obvious Kramer song is absorbing when spun out this way.

Certainly there is enough extraordinary singing here to make this a recommendable record—even, for the vocal collector, an indispensable one. For this reason, I am sorry to report that the technical work on this reissue is of in-

ferior quality. The *Meistersinger* and *L'Elisir* arias are dubbed a semitone sharp, and so, perhaps, are some of the nonoperatic numbers, where it is difficult to be certain what keys were originally used. The last reissue of the *Semele* aria came out in E major (the original key), but this one is in F, while the Schubert and Donaudy songs are both a semitone sharp relative to the different but almost contemporary versions on the Angel disc—none of which inspires much confidence in the RCA dubbing department. I don't have the original 78s at hand for checking, but all of these nonoperatic numbers date from the 1920s, when there wasn't too much trouble about recording speed. Also on the debit side is the sound quality, which is inferior to previous Victor dubbings (and even the Bizet duet had more ring and presence in the very scratchy version once circulated on Asco A110); in the process of removing surface noise, most of the voice's vibrancy has been suppressed as well.

Like a cheap paperback reprint of a handsome book, this record is desirable because you can't get these selections any other way—but would it have been so much harder to do accurate transfers, thereby making it desirable in its own right?

John McCormack: "Arias, Duets, and Songs"

Verdi: *Traviata*: *De' miei bollenti spiriti*; *Rigoletto*: *Questa o quella*; *Aida*: *O terra addio*. Donizetti: *La Figlia del reggimento*: *Per viver vicino a Maria*; *Lucia di Lammermoor*: *Fra poco a me ricovero*; *Tu che a Dio spiegasti l'ali*; *L'Elisir d'Amore*: *Una furtiva lagrima*. Puccini: *La Bohème*: *O Mimì, tu più non torni*. Bizet: *I Pescatori di perle*: *Dal tempio al limitar*. Wagner: *Die Meistersinger*: *Preislied* (in English). Handel: *Semele*: *O sleep, why dost thou leave me?* Lotti: *Pur dicesti*. Kramer: *Swans*. Schubert: *Die Liebe hat gelogen*. Donaudy: *Luoghi sereni e cari*. Traditional (arr. Karg-Elert): *Minnelied*. Bantock: *Love's Secret*. Rachmaninoff: *To the Children*. Hopper: *By the short cut to the Rosses*.

John McCormack, tenor; Lucy Isabelle Marsh, soprano (in the *Aida* duet); Mario Sammarco, baritone (in the *La Bohème* and *I Pescatori* duets); Edwin Schneider, piano (in the songs); orchestras (in the operatic selections). RCA VICTROLA VIC 1393, \$2.50 (mono only).

Continued from page 109

however, one that even Martinelli's more fervent delivery never succeeded in putting across to me.

Louise Homer: *Prison Scene* from Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète* (1903). This is much abridged, and accompanied by a clumsy pianist; the display of voice and temperament is impressive, despite some minor accidents along the way.

Mabel Garrison: "*Je suis Titania*" from Thomas' *Mignon* (1916). Although not one of the well-remembered names of her day, Mabel Garrison was, on this evidence, a spirited, accurate, and musical singer; she really articulates the dotted rhythms here, and the intonation is remarkable.

Giacomo Lauri-Volpi: *Legend of Kleinzach* from Offenbach's *Les Contes D'Hoffmann* (1929). Surprisingly restrained for a Calaf/Radames/Pollione tenor, but hardly a model of dynamic subtlety, let alone French diction and style.

Bruna Castagna: *Seguidilla* from Bizet's *Carmen* (1938). Opulent if Italianate in sound, Brunna Castagna was considered a good Carmen in her day; this snippet provides little evidence one way or the other.

Gladys Swarthout: "*Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix*" from Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* (1936). The splendidly fresh voice is quite innocent of characterization; this Dalila's intentions would seem to be strictly tonsorial.

Mary Garden: "*Depuis le jour*" from

Charpentier's *Louise* (1927). I would have preferred the orchestral version of the year before to this piano-accompanied one (both are transposed down a tone, unlike the 1912 performance on Odyssey 32 16 0079). The tone is tremulous but true, and the fragrance is unmistakable. How in the world did Garden get away with her French pronunciation?

Dorothy Kirsten and Robert Merrill: *Death of Thaïs* from Massenet's *Thaïs* (1947). The "Meditation" set (as it were) to music, this scene is quite beautifully sung, with Kirsten ascending effortlessly to high Ds.

Well, there it is; you pay your money and you take your choice. And perhaps we can take up a little collection around the office to buy the folks at RCA a tuning fork, before they get to "Unforgettable Voices in Unforgotten Performances from the Spanish Zarzuela Repertoire." D.H.

JOHN WILLIAMS: "*Virtuoso Variations for Guitar*"

Bach: *Chaconne*. Dowland: *Queen Elizabeth Galliard*; *Earl of Essex Galliard*. Giuliani: *Variations on Handel's "The Harmonious Blacksmith."* Sor: *Variations on a Theme from Mozart's "The Magic Flute."* Paganini: *Caprice No. 24*. Batchelor: *Mounsiers Almaine*. John Williams, guitar. COLUMBIA MS 7195, \$5.98.

It's high time that John Williams, superb guitarist that he is, recorded the Bach *Chaconne* (this is in his own transcription, incidentally, in which certain chordal sections are broken into arpeggiated figuration, to good effect). I can't entirely swallow his rather feminizing approach—the rubato is sometimes *too* much, and some rhythms are taken so liltily that the skeleton of the music seems to disappear beneath the flesh. But on the broad scale, and taking the work as a whole, Williams makes marvelous sense of the structure thanks, in particular, to his powers of coloration.

For the rest of this recital, I am filled with admiration, well-nigh speechless. Only an intrepid spirit would have conceived of turning over Paganini's *Caprice No. 24* to the guitar. In terms of virtuosity—of Williams' virtuosity—it is an indubitable success, and the firefly finger-work leaves one gasping. In terms of aesthetic satisfaction there are, to be sure, a few rough edges; one misses the violin's sonority, and occasionally the guitar's dryness becomes bothersome. But I wouldn't have missed this performance for anything. The Dowland pieces are the essence of elegance, and the Batchelor—an increasingly elaborate set of variations—is wonderfully adept. As for the Giuliani and Sor variations (the first on a sober and immensely dignified theme, the second on "*Das klinget so herrlich*," one of Mozart's dinkier tunes), the word, I suppose, is perfection. S.F.

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IN BRIEF

AKUTAGAWA: Music for Symphony Orchestra; Triptych for String Orchestra. **MAYUZUMI:** Bacchanale; Phonologie Symphonique. Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Tadashi Mori, cond. Angel S 36577, \$5.79.

BEETHOVEN: Quartets for Strings: No. 4, in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4; No. 11, in F minor, Op. 95 ("Serioso"). Bartók Quartet (in No. 4); Weiner Quartet (in No. 11). Dover HCR 7280 or HCR-ST 5280, \$2.50.

BEETHOVEN: Sonatas for Violin and Piano: No. 4, in A minor, Op. 23; No. 9, in A, Op. 47 ("Kreutzer"). Dénes Kovács, violin; Mihály Bächer, piano. Dover HCR 5281 or HCR-ST 7281, \$2.50.

CHOPIN: Etudes, Opp. 10 and 25 (complete). Agustin Anievas, piano. Seraphim S 60081, \$2.49.

DAMASE: Sonate en Consort, Op. 17. **MARTINU:** Trio (1944). **ROREM:** Trio (1960). Tipton Trio. Westminster WST 17147, \$4.79.

GRANADOS: Goyescas. Rena Kyriakou, piano. Turnabout TV 34247, \$2.50.

KETELBEY: "An Evening with Albert Ketelbey." Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus, Fritz Mareczek, cond. Wing SRW 18090, \$2.89.

Yasushi Akutagawa writes fluffy, tuneful ballet music. The start of his *Music for Symphony Orchestra* is absolutely enchanting, and you think you've found an interesting new talent. Soon, however, you discover that the whole thing is totally and shamelessly based on Shostakovich and then the music's charm is considerably diminished. But give me Akutagawa any day compared to Mayuzumi, who has taken over the pretentious rhetoric of the West without any of its substance. A.F.

The performance of Op. 18, No. 4 is outstanding here. The Bartók Quartet has many of the qualities that remind me of the Budapest in the latter's best estate. Their rhythmic pulse is dynamic, their ensemble spirit remarkably integrated, and their general sonority, while basically honey-smooth and burnished, has just that necessary touch of acerbic linearity to avoid the accusation of overrefinement. The *Serioso* too gets good reproduction and musicianly care from the Weiner Quartet, though this group lacks the electrifying sense of continuity and timing so handsomely displayed by the Bartók team. H.G.

One hears some extremely sympathetic ensemble playing on this Qualiton-derived disc. Kovács and Bächer share a basically contained, classically oriented approach to what are probably Beethoven's most intense violin/piano sonatas. In the *Kreutzer* the tempos, while flexible enough, do not fluctuate with the quixotic magnetism of, say, Szigeti and Bartók in their Vanguard recital album, nor do these Hungarian artists screw the tension tighter and tighter as do Heifetz and Smith on RCA. In sum, this is perhaps the most *balanced* edition in the current catalogue. The big-hall sound is pleasing and natural. H.G.

Anievas' high-powered equipment mows these treacherous twisters right down to the ground, with only a note here and there left unconsumed. In terms of what this music contains, however, the pianist's effort, though sturdy and well intentioned, is woefully uncomplete. He plows through most of these miniature tone poems with the zeal of a hefty quarterback making his first touchdown of the season, and a great many niceties of melody, harmony, or sheer texture simply get bruised or mangled by such rough stuff. Seraphim's sound suffers from excessive surface noise and some not very clean room resonance. H.G.

These are all trios for flute, cello, and piano. One of them introduces Jean Michel Damase, who reveals himself here as a poor man's Poulenc. His trio is in a tuneful, false-naïve, eighteenth-century style and is so insubstantial as to make the Trio by Bohuslav Martinů which immediately follows seem weighty. The best thing on this record is the Trio by Ned Rorem, with its grand flute cadenza at the outset and its bitter, melancholy slow movement. Performances are excellent and so is the recording. A.F.

Seurat, rather than Goya, seems to be the chief influence behind these performances. Rena Kyriakou's French training shows itself in the patrician fingerwork and in the severity of her rhythms. She draws pungent, agreeable sonority from her instrument, but though she avoids any hint of percussiveness, her coloristic range (as well as her dynamics) tends to be a bit lacking in contrast. Alicia de Larrocha, who recently re-recorded the *Goyescas* for Epic, played with unique sophistication, a dry, biting delicacy, sharper linear values, and greater articulation. Moreover, she made wider use of dynamic contrasts and employed a much more luxurious rhythmic rubato. Still, as an economy proposition, the new Turnabout disc is not without solid merit. H.G.

Even England seems to have forgotten her onetime wizard of ersatz eroticism, Albert Ketelbey (1875-1959—not 1963 as the Wing jacket notes have it). The present Teutonic resuscitators are unauthoritative in their blandly polite, uninflated readings of *In a Persian Market*, *Chinese Temple Garden*, *Monastery Garden*, *Mystic Land of Egypt*, and the less familiar *Bells Across the Meadows* and *Blue Waters of Hawaii*. The rather coarse theater orchestra and the schmaltzy solo and choral vocalism are given bright, open sonics. But sneer if you will, once heard (however played), these juicy tunes are practically impossible to get out of one's mind! R.D.D.

MARTINON: Symphony No. 4 ("Altitudes").
MENNIN: Symphony No. 7 ("Variation Symphony").
Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Jean Martinon,
cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3043, \$5.98.

MOZART: Serenades for Orchestra: No. 4,
in D, K. 203; No. 5, in D, K. 204. Vienna Radio
Orchestra, Brian Priestman,
cond. Westminster WST 17149, \$4.79.

MOZART: Sonatas for Piano and Violin: in C, K.
296; in E flat, K. 302; in G, K. 379;
in G, K. 301; in F, K. 376; in B flat, K. 454.
Dénes Kovács, violin; Mihaly Bächer,
piano. Dover HCRST 7277 and HCRST 7279, \$2.50 each.

MUSSORGSKY: Pictures at an Exhibition (orch.
Ravel); A Night on Bald Mountain.
Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.
Columbia MS 7148, \$5.79.

RESPIGHI: Fontane di Roma; Pini di Roma.
STRAVINSKY: Fireworks; Circus Polka. New Philhar-
monia Orchestra, Rafael Frühbeck
de Burgos, cond. Angel S 36495, \$5.79.

SATIE: Gnosienne No. 1, Sarabande No. 1, Pièces
froides, Croquis et agaceries d'un gros
bonhomme en bois (for piano solo); Gymnopédie
No. 1, Embryons desséchés, Trois morceaux
en forme de poire (for piano four hands). Jacques
Fevrier, solo piano; Jacques Fevrier and Georges
Auric, piano four hands. Everest 3221, \$4.98.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy Overture.
MUSSORGSKY: A Night on Bald
Mountain. **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** Capriccio espagnol,
Op. 34. N.D.R. Symphony Orchestra of
Hamburg, Pierre Monteux, cond.
Vanguard Everyman SRV 257, \$2.50.

TCHEREPNIN: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra:
No. 2; No. 5. Alexander Tcherepnin,
piano; Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio, Rafael
Kubelik, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 139379, \$5.79.

Martinon's trashy symphony supports the contention that important conductors know too much of other people's music to create any convincingly on their own. Peter Mennin's piece, on the other hand, is a major achievement, very complex in form, very grand in sonority, and totally convincing as to the necessity and validity of both its involvements and the great scale of its conception. The whole work is constructed on the variations principle; it is in one movement subdivided into five sections, and it is the most mature and challenging work of Mennin it has so far been my pleasure to hear. Performances seem authoritative, and the recording is excellent. A.F.

Solid, respectable, brass-heavy performances here, with emphasis on bigness, sobriety, and general joylessness. Priestman secures clean playing from the orchestra but captures little of the serenades' pervasive buoyancy and melodic jauntiness. For a far more idiomatic and lively account of K. 203, I heartily recommend Nonesuch's fairly recent issue with the late Karl Ristenpart at the helm. S.L.

In almost every instance, these are top-ranking performances. Bächer always phrases with delicacy and nuances with tact and grace, while Kovács combines high-spirited dash, crisp articulation, and a Zigeuner-like tang to his pure, sweet tone. For me, the Szigeti/Horzowski/Szell versions of the Mozart Piano/Violin Sonatas constitute one of the greatest releases of modern times, but for those antipathetic to Szigeti's violinism the current catalogue offers much in the way of acceptable alternatives with Morini/Firkusny, Pauk/Frankl, and the present well-produced discs. H.G.

Ormandy's last years with Columbia were in part spent taping stereo replacements of earlier mono-only successes. The new *Pictures*, superseding the long-popular ML 4700 of 1953, gives the familiar bravura Ormandy/Philadelphia version the benefits of extremely robust and rich stereoism—yet the performance still retains what to some tastes is a too objective, humorless, and cold interpretative approach. The coupling is a reissue of the powerfully recorded *Night on Bald Mountain* first released nearly a decade ago yet still delivering exceptional sonic punch. R.D.D.

Another in this Spanish conductor's growing series of virtuoso show-piece releases. Here again he handles a fine British orchestra with both verve and authority, is strongly and vividly recorded, and provides stiff over-all competition for all but the top discographic choices—which remain, for the Respighi tone poems, the recent expansive, spectacularly engineered Phase-4 Munch versions and the more restrained, more poetic ones by Ansermet on the London label. R.D.D.

Satie has been the subject—one is tempted to say the victim—of a tremendous bandwagon-jump on the part of American recording companies in recent months. One wishes that this disc had appeared at the head of the procession instead of the tail, for it exemplifies the great tradition of Satie to perfection. Auric, of course, was a personal disciple of Satie, and Fevrier may also have been for all I know; anyhow, both have exactly the right limpidity of tone, the right clarity and precision of touch, and the right interpretative innocence to play Satie as Satie should be played. A.F.

This welcome, if highly belated, addition to the all too small discographic legacy left by the incomparable Pierre Monteux has been drawn from the Danish Tono catalogue. It is wisely released in Vanguard's low-priced Everyman series since it is no match in either orchestral virtuosity or engineering vividness for the best-known recorded versions of these familiar Russian showpieces. But what a pleasure it is to hear them played for once with gracious restraint, genuine tenderness, and consistent clarity of rhythmic articulation. Once again, Monteux makes most other interpreters seem melodramatic, if not even a bit hysterical, in comparison. R.D.D.

The Second Concerto, composed in 1924, is in five short, closely linked movements. It is racy, tuneful, brilliantly virtuosic in the finest sense of that phrase; and for once Tcherepnin's resemblance to Prokofiev seems a virtue rather than a tragedy. The Fifth Concerto, composed in 1963, is much more tenuous, more implicative, more individual in idiom, in every way a greater and more endearing piece. Both, however, confirm the major stature of Alexander Tcherepnin as composer and as pianistic interpreter of his own works. A.F.



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REPEAT PERFORMANCE

A SELECTIVE GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S REISSUES

BIZET: *Les Pêcheurs de perles*. Pierrette Alarie (s), Léopold Simoneau (t), René Bianco (b), Xavier Depraz (bs); Elisabeth Brasseur Choir; Lamoureux Orchestra, Jean Fournet, cond. World Series PHC 2-016, \$4.98 (two discs, rechanneled stereo only) [from Epic SC 6002, 1955].

Bizet was only twenty-four when he wrote the *Pearlfishers*—an appealing score full of fresh melodies and fine workmanship. Unfortunately it was all pretty much wasted on an impossible libretto, which probably accounts for the opera's relatively infrequent stage presentations. The phonograph, however, has been generous to the work in quantity if not in quality—of the four imperfect complete versions, three still survive in Schwann.

World Series' resuscitation is, to my mind, the qualified pick of the trio. Simoneau's honeyed tenor is well suited to Nadir's mellifluous music, and Pierrette Alarie performs prettily as the errant Leila. The work of the other soloists, the conducting, and the rechanneled sound are unremarkable but generally bearable (the noisy record surfaces, however, are not). Everest's budget competitor offers some very stylish singing from Mattiwilda Dobbs and really elegant conducting by René Leibowitz, but the abominable tenor (who has by far the best music in the opera) rules this set out. Angel's high-priced version has good sound in its favor but very little else. In sum, World Series walks off with the slightly wilted palm.

BRUCKNER: *Motets: Locus iste* (1896); *Ave Maria* (1861); *Tota pulchra es Maria* (1878); *Virga Jesse* (1885); *Ecce sacerdos* (1885); *Os justi* (1879); *Vexilla regis* (1892); *Christus factus est pro nobis* (1884); *150th Psalm*. Maria Stader (s) (in the 150th Psalm), Richard Holm (t) (in *Tota pulchra es Maria*); Chorus of the Bavarian Radio (in the Motets); Chorus of the Deutsche Oper, Berlin (in the 150th Psalm); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Eugen Jochum, cond. DGG 136552, \$5.79 [from DGG 139134/35 and 139137/38, 1967].

The performances on this disc originally appeared as filler material with the Fourth and Seventh Symphonies in Jochum's complete Bruckner series. Since many collectors might want to investigate this music but not necessarily own the symphonies that accompany them, DGG's handy recoupling is most welcome, especially since the choral singing is superb in every respect. Jochum's tempos are leisurely enough to allow Bruckner's spacious Austrian baroque choral style ample room to expand and luxuriate but sufficiently brisk to keep phrases from sagging before reaching cadential punctuation. Furthermore, the chorus projects

a marvelously rich, plump tone, which DGG has recorded with awesome fidelity.

FELDMAN: *Piece for Four Pianos* (1957); *Intersection 3 for Piano* (1953); *Extensions 4 for Three Pianos* (1952-1953); *Two Pieces for Two Pianos* (1954); *Projection 4 for Violin and Piano* (1951); *Structures for String Quartet* (1951); *Extensions 1 for Violin and Piano* (1951); *Three Pieces for String Quartet* (1954-1956). Various instrumentalists. Odyssey 32 16 0302, \$2.49 [from Columbia MS 6090, 1959].

You no longer hear much about Feldman, Brown, and lesser figures who devised the radical brand of aleatory music that had its brief vogue in avant-garde circles around 1963. In retrospect, to judge from some of today's free-wheeling "mixed media" happenings, these composers may have had a more dramatic impact than at first suspected. Feldman, especially, did a lot to loosen up some of the more tyrannical aspects of total serialism by allowing the performer many latitudes in the choice of register, dynamics, rhythms, and (in the case of his graph-notated music) of actual pitches. All of this is pretty much accepted as standard procedure nowadays, although few composers carry it to the particular lengths practiced by Feldman.

The music on this disc represents some of Feldman's earliest compositions and most of the scores played here were fully notated by the composer. It proves, to my ears at least, that Feldman the "conventional" composer is far more interesting than Feldman the graph maker: the subtle effects of the precisely written works convey a more convincing logic than the meandering of the amorphous, graph-written *Projection 4* or the "free durational composition," *Piece for Four Pianos*. Perhaps this is mere aural conditioning on my part—some people might find the aimless drifting of Feldman's sonic mobiles more aesthetically satisfying than I. At any rate, there is definitely an original mind at work here.

The performers, dominated by pianist David Tudor, are a dedicated lot. It is possible, however, that the graph-notated pieces might turn out to be more interesting in other performances. The sound is fine in general, but owing to the insistent *pianissimo* nature of the music, tape hiss and surface noise become more of a nuisance than usual.

GLIERE: *Symphony No. 3, in B minor, Op. 42 ("Ilya Murometz")*. Houston Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, cond. Seraphim S 60089, \$2.49 [from Capitol P 8402, 1957].

Stokowski has drastically pruned Glière's sprawling epic symphony down to about thirty-eight minutes—over forty minutes under Scherchen's complete account on Westminster! The work is hardly a mas-



THE LEES SIDE

MUSIC-BUSINESS MAVERICK

THERE ARE ONLY a few record producers I respect. Most are unimaginative and imitative in their thinking, and no longer give a damn about music. They turn out "product"—an industry term that makes me cringe. For that's precisely the trouble: to most artists and repertoire men in popular music, it's only a product, like detergent, axle grease, or deodorant.

The producer I respect most is Creed Taylor, who now is making records for Herb Alpert's A & M label. Creed is virtually a label unto himself. All his albums carry his CTI (for Creed Taylor, Inc.) logo on the cover and the label; it's written into his contract that the logo must be one half the size of the A & M logo. Creed joined A & M eighteen months ago, on a guarantee of \$1,000,000 over a five-year period. It seems likely that he will make more than that.

Creed is a music-business maverick. Even when he was running Verve records under the M-G-M banner, he operated virtually as a company unto himself; and he apparently has even more independence in his new deal.

Luis Eça, the brilliant Brazilian pianist of the Tamba 4, which Creed records, said to me recently, "All the best albums from the United States are made by Creed Taylor. I noticed that a long time ago, when I was still in Rio." That's pretty strong praise, but it is perhaps not excessive.

At the technical level, it's virtually indisputable. Most records are shoved through the production system as fast as possible. Creed spends approximately a month on each album (he makes only fifteen a year), with a week of that devoted to remixing alone. He always was that way. Once, when he was at Verve, he found that something was wrong with his records *after* he had approved the test pressings. He went to the factory, discovered some sloppy production practices, and raised sufficient hell that they were stopped—for his own records, at least. He's a nit-picker of sound. But the result is records with silent surfaces and a velvety kind of sound unlike any other in the industry. Creed's records have, in effect, a style.

"I once saw an engineer cutting a mas-

ter while reading the *Wall Street Journal*," he says. "He had the sound turned so low you could hardly hear it. If anything went wrong, he wouldn't know it." He criticizes one record company for its sandpaper surfaces. "They use filled vinyl," he says. "It's adulterated material." Another company, he said, still is using polystyrene, which deteriorates rapidly when the records are played.

Nor does he think highly of current packaging practices. To save money, RCA Victor, Columbia, Capitol, and other companies have turned to a cheap, thin paper album cover. I asked Creed why he too hadn't decided to save money that way. "Do you want the real reason? I can't stand shoddy merchandise. I think that kind of cover indicates that they have no real respect for the music inside. I make a special effort to make a special kind of record, and I feel it should look like that. Album covers lie around on coffee tables. I think people should be able to be proud of them."

Certainly Creed's album covers are attractive—probably the best-looking in the business, featuring color photography of high quality on white backgrounds. On this I have to fault him though: those white backgrounds get dirty very quickly if the album is handled much. All his covers are double-folds—he was one of the first, and some say *the* first, in the business to use double-folds. They cost more? So do Creed's albums: most A & M albums sell for \$4.98; Creed's go for \$5.98.

Creed has maintained a polite indifference to the rock fad. Perhaps alone among producers, he hasn't convinced himself that it's great music. "I think they're trying to play jazz. They improvise with sound. But the notes that come out are actually pretty boring. That and the total lack of dynamics is what I can't stand."

Most record men today take dim-witted and half-educated young musicians and try to do complicated things with them, which is why rock albums sometimes take months to make: simple incompetence. Creed does exactly the opposite: he takes brilliantly skilled musicians and has them do comparatively

simple things. He uses jazz musicians to play popular music. This has caused his records to be vaguely denigrated by the superhip, who miss the point that he's raising the level of pop music, not lowering that of jazz. And by making superior artists known to the public, he has both informed the younger generation of real musical values and made it possible for these musicians to make a good living, instead of leaving all the money to the long-haired squares. Creed built the late Wes Montgomery into a major name, and shortly will receive an RIAA gold record for selling \$1,000,000 of the Montgomery *A Day in the Life* album. His new-found popularity on records made it possible for Wes to sign a concert contract for \$10,000 a week. He put his signature on the paper just before he died at forty-four. (His widow and seven children will get the money from his still-growing record sales.)

Creed loves jazz and believes in it. He thinks, as I do, that it's on the verge of a big new explosion into popularity. He's more or less tuned out what the rest of the industry thinks. He simply doesn't read the trade papers, because he doesn't care what other producers are doing. He knows what he's doing, and that's it.

I found out recently that the slightly built and soft-spoken Creed is an ex-Marine, which is hard to believe. ("I find it hard to believe too!" he said.) He taught illiterate soldiers to read and write at Parris Island for a year before being shipped to Korea with a rifle company in 1951. He returned to his native Virginia (he has no southern accent) and enrolled at Duke University. He graduated as a psychology major. Meantime, he'd been playing trumpet in resort areas such as Virginia Beach. He has never practiced psychology, except in the recording studio. About one artist: "He always plays best when he's angry, so I try to annoy him a little." About another: "He has to have serenity in the studio." He stopped a recent Tamba 4 date and took the group to lunch, then for a walk in the country (meantime the studio clock was ticking) until they lost their tension and could play more freely.

People who don't know Creed very well often think he's a cold fish. Many have told me he makes them uncomfortable. He used to put me up tight, too, but I found the secret of him: he is very shy. Once you get past that, you discover a witty, warm, articulate if somewhat laconic person, who's devoted to his family, his home (his Manhattan town house is being remodeled) and his hobby.

His hobby? I was profoundly shocked when I discovered what Creed's hobby is. We'd been at the Village Vanguard together, listening to a group. We walked over to his house. Creed, who doesn't smoke and rarely drinks, gets a glow on after about two shots; and in a sudden fit of camaraderie, he took me into his basement to disclose his terrible secret.

It was spread all over the place. Creed Taylor, thirty-nine-year-old high-powered executive, ex-Marine, clever and successful producer, one of the hot-shots of the music business, who scares a lot of people, goes home and plays with his electric trains.

GENE LEES

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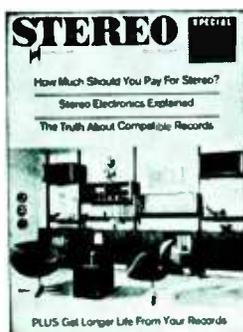
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STEREO
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THE LIGHTER SIDE

reviewed by MORGAN AMES • R. D. DARRELL • JOHN GABREE • GENE LEES • JOHN S. WILSON

SYMBOL * DENOTES AN EXCEPTIONAL RECORDING

* **NINA SIMONE: *And Piano.*** Nina Simone, piano and vocals. *Seems I'm Never Tired Lovin' You; Nobody's Fault but Mine; I Think It's Going to Rain Today;* seven more. RCA Victor LSP 4102, \$4.98. Tape: P8S 1424, \$6.95.

Nina Simone has a quality that is so personal, so strikingly individual that it can easily ruffle a listener who is most comfortable with the usual. Her pronounced vibrato, the dark shadings of her voice, the fire in her spirit, the forthright projection—these are all essential elements that make Nina Simone a unique performer. On her recordings, the feeling that she can produce in her concert and night club appearances has often been diluted both by choice of material and by manner of recording.

Not on this disc. Here is Nina close up, with only her piano as accompaniment. There is no group to come between the listener and the singer. She has your ear and, in this intimate setting, she makes herself known as she never has before on a record. The songs are varied—a setting for Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem *Compensation*; Jacques Brel's *The Desperate Ones*; a familiar ballad, *I Get Along Without You Very Well*; an affecting comment on the constant renewal of hope, *Another Spring*—adding up to an impressive portrait of Miss Simone as an artist.

She is that rare thing—an original—and this collection gives us the clearest recorded indication so far of her originality. J.S.W.

* **AL BOWLLY/RAY NOBLE.** Al Bowly, vocals; orchestra: Ray Noble, cond. *Love Is the Sweetest Thing; It's Bad for Me; It's All Forgotten Now; Good Night, Sweetheart;* twelve more. Monmouth-Evergreen 6816, \$4.79.

As time goes by, it becomes more and more evident that the greatest dance band of what might be described as the Dance Band Era—the Twenties, Thirties, and Forties—existed only in a recording studio: Ray Noble's English band. The tempos were, in general, beautifully designed for the dancing styles of its day (the early Thirties) and the arrangements were superb. Even today, when con-



RCA Records

Nina Simone: an intimate and unique performance by a talented and fiery spirit.

temporary arranging makes what was in vogue thirty and forty years ago seem almost ridiculously elemental, Noble's arrangements remain notable for their imagination and for the lustrous excitement he got from the sound of his orchestra.

One of the essential decorative elements of the Noble sound was the odd, slightly nasal, but utterly charming singing of Al Bowly. Bowly's phrasing and shading were in a class by themselves. He had subtlety that even as vaunted a contemporary as Bing Crosby never achieved. Although he was usually thrown by rhythm tunes, on ballad after ballad in this collection Bowly's vocals are a liberal education on the colors that a singer—and particularly a band vocalist—can bring out in a song (notice *This is Romance* in particular).

This collection supplements the two-disc set of Noble's English recordings released by Capitol in 1962. It does even more: it makes the Capitol set sound pretty shoddy. Producers Bill Borden and Steve Marvin have brought out the full quality of Noble's unique sound in a collection that gives this great band the kind of permanent showcase it deserves. J.S.W.

DICK HYMAN: *Moog.* Richard Hyman and Moog synthesizer, arr.; rhythm section. Command 938-S, \$5.79.

EMIL RICHARDS: *Journey to Bliss.* Orchestra; Emil Richards, marimba and other instruments. Impulse S 9166, \$5.79.

These two albums, so unlike in content and style—the one made on the East Coast, the other on the West—have one thing in common: total dedication to gimmickry for the sake of money. Putting it more bluntly, we hear two excellent musicians determinedly working the street of artistic prostitution. Dick Hyman goes to the Moog synthesizer and produces an outstanding collection of its clichés—wheezes, whistles, and clanks. Emil Richards—a fine vibraharpist—does the current West Coast thing by playing around with “odd” time signatures. The whole mess is performed by the “Micro-tonal Blues Band,” which is to say a variety of percussion instruments from the occult and the orient. It sounds like somebody with the twitch wandering drunk through a temple-block factory.

Music? Hell, no. Both albums are collections of noises, meant to catch the ear of the square young audience and sell records. Don't be surprised if the synthesizer becomes very “in” with the kids. Ah, good, kind, sincere Bob Moog, what sins are being committed in your name. G.L.

THE CITY. Carole King, vocals and keyboard; Daniel Kortchmar, guitars and vocals; Charles Larkey, bass; Jimmy Gordon, drums. *Snow Queen; I Wasn't Born to Follow; Lady;* nine more. Ode Z12 44 012, \$4.98.

I have yet to hear a good idea in rock music that was original. Rock grows precisely as fast as it steals from other musicians, including in some cases musicians it helped put out of work or forced into playing garbage.

Here is an album which is in substance boring, but it has one brief bright moment: a song called *Snow Queen*, of which singer and pianist Carole King was a co-author. It is a jazz waltz, given some of its push by drummer Jimmy Gordon, who's not a regular member of the group. I have examined lead sheets of some of Miss King's songs, and she's one

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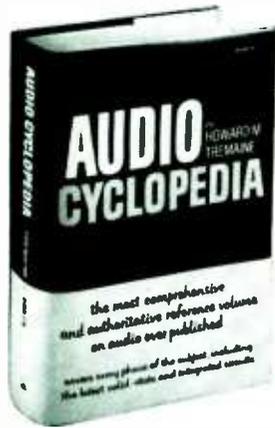
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of that small handful of people in the rock field with talent. The album yawns me, but that one track—the three voices are overdubbed to make six, and they're in tune—is an augury of where pop may be going: back to music. G.L.

PAT WILLIAMS: Think. Orchestra. Pat Williams, arr. and cond. *Like Always; Little Green Apples; Girl Talk*; seven more. Verve 6-5056, \$4.79.

Arranger and film composer Pat Williams originally had a certain amount of reluctance about getting into the current pops thing. That's ironic, because he has worked out the most charming and interesting amalgam of Old Pops-New Pops (with a liberal overlay of big-band jazz) of anybody in the business. This is his second album in the genre for Verve. It isn't possible to say that this one is better than its predecessor, because the other one (*Shades of Today*) was excellent. This one at least equals it.

Williams' voicings are always beautiful, sensitive, and thoughtful; his feeling for odd and off-beat rhythmic touches is unique. But perhaps his most distinguishing characteristic is wit—no, more than that: a kind of amused optimism. G.L.

ROSLYN KIND: Give Me You. Roslyn Kind, vocals; orchestra, Lee Holdridge, arr. and cond. *Give Me You; The Fool on the Hill; It's a Beautiful Day*; eight more. RCA Victor LSP 4138, \$4.98. Tape: P8S 1438, \$6.95.

The liner notes of this album say: "It's rare to find a girl of eighteen who has already made up her mind concerning the shape of her future. It's even rarer that this same girl already possesses, at the very dawn of her career, a talent as fully developed and mature as one would expect of a thoroughly seasoned and experienced professional. Nevertheless, here is such a girl. . . . Graduating from high school in June 1968, Roslyn quickly cleared her mind of matters academic to begin a singing career. . . ."

Oh sure. Just like that. Hundreds of kids know what they want to do at eighteen, but the bloody establishment won't let them do it. This business is full of tin-eared executives, men trying to project tomorrow's sales from yesterday's Hot-100 figures, men square and set in their ways. So Roslyn Kind gets out of high school and casually picks up a recording contract?

What they don't tell you in that gushing liner note is that Roslyn Kind is Barbra Streisand's half-sister. And the fact that she was paid a staggering advance by RCA is an open joke in the business. And when they say that her talent is as fully developed and mature "as one would expect of a thoroughly seasoned and experienced professional," they don't tell you how much trouble this album was to make. Said one RCA staff member: "They had to put it together eight bars at a time." Much, much money besides her advance was poured into Miss Kind by RCA.

But the fact is that Miss Kind doesn't sing badly. She sounds like her sister, to be sure. But then, half the lady singers in the business do these days. It is, of course, no secret that I con-

sider the Streisand sound ugly and phony—neo-Piaf without the substance or the point, and above all without heavy-weight material to justify so intense and hysterical a style. I like Roslyn Kind's sound better than that of Streisand. It lacks the pinched, nasal quality in the high notes. She sings rather well, in fact; although whether she can sustain a stage performance without the help of all that splicing remains to be seen.

The album, however, is a bit of a bore. It's like so much of the tedious product being poured on the market, an unimaginative assembly of New Pops, including the inevitable *Fool on the Hill* and that sort of thing.

We'll have to postpone judgment on Roslyn Kind. This album doesn't really tell it. G.L.

BOBBY DARIN: Born Walden Robert Cassotto. Bobby Darin, vocals and arr. *Long Line Rider; Questions; In Memoriam; Sunday*; five more. Direction 1936. \$4.98.

Bobby Darin is a man who goes all the way. Ten years ago, when the entertainment industry measured success in terms of Sy Devore suits, Las Vegas flash, and tunes like *You Make Me Feel So Young*, there was Darin, self-assured, showing off, polished to a gleam.

The image of success has altered. New stars tend to be shy, informal, highly personal in their outlooks. Each year the gap widens between seasoned pros of the old school, such as Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gormé, and new favorites, such as Simon and Garfunkel.

Bobby Darin is the first major old-line pro to switch his act to the new school, characteristically gambling everything in the process. Because he made the move sincerely as well as thoroughly, and because he's shrewd as a fox, Darin's new look works. This is his first album since making the change. Apparently the establishment balked because Darin has produced the album himself and put it out on his own label. All of the songs are originals, backed by his own rock group. His singing is sure, relaxed, warm, and direct.

Darin's most compelling vocal work occurs on a rather vague track called *I Can See the Wind*. The best single groove is set on *Long Line Rider*, a rhythmic song concerning the discovery of bodies on an Arkansas prison farm and the authorities' quick move to cover up the scandal. CBS recently refused to let Darin sing the song on the Jackie Gleason Show (though it passed the censors on NBC and ABC) and at last report, Darin planned to sue. Thus do networks put their feet in their mouths, straining to find controversy. Actually the song is one of Darin's best, melodically as well as structurally. Also interesting is *Bullfrog*, in which Darin explains to an inquisitive frog the history of money. Not all the songs are notable, but Darin hits on more than off.

There's a certain amount of future insurance going on here, a move to reach young money. Darin is an opportunist. That does not make the move less valid or sincere. You may or may not approve of Darin's talent and methods.

Personally, while I think most new-thing music is trash. I am also weary of performers who refuse to give it a chance and thereby improve it. I applaud Darin. M.A.

KAY STARR AND COUNT BASIE:

How About This? Kay Starr, vocals; Count Basie band, Dick Hyman, arr. and cond. *God Bless the Child; Ain't No Use; If I Could Be With You;* eight more. ABC Paramount PAS 5001. \$4.79.

What does someone such as Kay Starr think when she hears the singers who are making it today? Does she wonder: "What's the excitement about? I can sing better than that." In many ways she'd be right, but rightness serves only to emphasize a cruel twentieth-century joke: stylistic artistry becomes irrelevant in its own time. That's how fast styles change. What has happened to Kay Starr will happen in turn to most of today's big names—and even sooner. They'll look up a few years after Arrival and say, "Hey, I'm better than ever; where did everyone go?" All but the faithful few will have passed into the next phase, for better or worse, because life is movement.

Kay Starr is a warm, charming, gifted, seasoned singer. She sounds marvelous on this album, backed by Count Basie's dependable if no longer vital sense of what swings. The songs are all fine, familiar, safe standards. Who is to say that Miss Starr and Basie were wrong to stand still, to make an album devoted to the thing they do best? It will delight Miss Starr's fans.

One can hear how good this album is, and I applaud Miss Starr's supremacy in a style which didn't so much die as use itself up and pass into something else years ago. What I cannot do with this album is get involved. M.A.

DUSTY SPRINGFIELD: Dusty in Memphis. Dusty Springfield, vocals; orchestra; Sweet Inspirations, vocal support; Arif Mardin and Tom Dowd, arr. *I Don't Want to Hear It Anymore; Breakfast in Bed; Just One Smile; In the Land of Make-Believe; I Can't Make It Alone;* six more. Atlantic SD 8214 \$4.79.

Dusty Springfield doesn't have the greatest voice. She doesn't always pick the best material. She hasn't always had the best support. But she has been one of my favorite vocalists since her very first records with the Springfields.

I think it's because there is a basic seriousness about her, a determination to get across the meaning of a lyric no matter how silly it may be. She is straightforward and she avoids histrionics in favor of simple dramatic statement. Also, she often sounds so strangely vulnerable in the center of the full arrangements she uses to back her "big ballady things," that there seems to be a real and appealing person behind the voice.

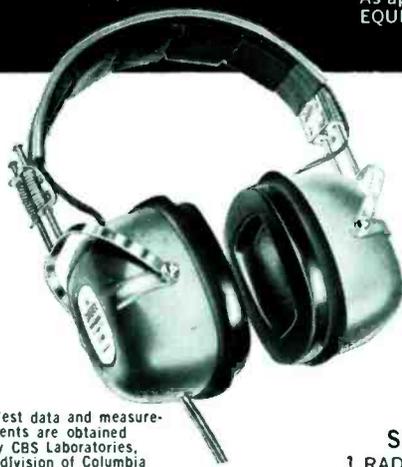
I had my doubts about the concept underlying *Dusty in Memphis*. Usually this sort of title means that a performer has been shoved into some currently fashionable bag not his own and left to fight his way out. Atlantic, after all, has already given us Aretha Franklin

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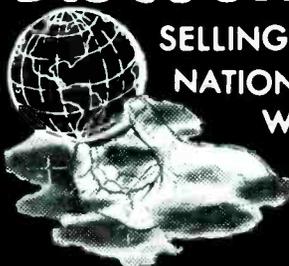
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singing *Gentle on My Mind*, Barbara Lewis with *A Taste of Honey*, Joe Tex and *Engine Engine Number Nine*, and the Sweet Inspirations' *Canadian Sunset*, to name only some of the more appalling. I had visions of Dusty Springfield belting out the Otis Redding Songbook to the accompaniment of Booker T and the MGs. Instead Memphis has been made to adapt to Dusty Springfield, and to good effect.

Dusty in Memphis is the singer's best album. All of the tunes suit her and most of them come from the pens of such successful teams as Goffin/King, Mann/Weil, and Bacharach/David. The record also includes *Son of a Preacher Man*, her most recent single. The rhythm section is excellent, especially bassist Tommy Cogbill, and the arrangements by Arif Mardin are apt. Springfield sounds more involved than she ever has before. This is a quiet, self-possessed statement by a foremost pop vocalist. J.G.

✻ **CHET BAKER: Plays and Sings.** Chet Baker, vocals and trumpet; Russ Freeman or Gerrard Gustin, piano; Carson Smith or Jimmy Bond, bass; Bob Neel, Larry Bunker, Bert Dale, or Lawrence Marable, drums. *My Buddy; Bea's Flat; Tenderly*; nine more. World Pacific ST 20138, \$4.79. In terms of vocal/instrumental small-group jazz of the '50s, there are few albums as fine as this reissue of Chet Baker singing and playing trumpet. Baker made his first dent on the public with Gerry Mulligan's quartet in 1952. Later

he formed a quartet with pianist Russ Freeman, with whom he made most of the famous tracks from which this reissue was culled.

Baker's choice of material is impeccable—*Look for the Silver Lining, But Not for Me, Tenderly*, and more. His voice is quiet, musicianly but bare, always tone-true. As the notes say, Baker "uncomplicates" a tune. Hearing him sing *I Fall in Love Too Easily*, one knows he is moved but doesn't know quite why. Such is the art of simplicity. Baker plays as well as he sings, for all the same reasons.

This Chet Baker album is for everyone. I've run into only two categories of response to it: blankness from those who haven't heard it and devotion from those who have.

If you don't know the album, buy it. If your old copy is scratched and worn like mine, take advantage of this reissue to buy a new copy. M.A.

✻ **DONOVAN! Greatest Hits.** Donovan Leitch, vocals; rhythm and orchestral accompaniment. *Hurdy Gurdy Man; Epistle to Dippy; Wear Your Love Like Heaven; Jennifer Juniper; Season of the Witch*; six more. Epic BXN 26439, \$4.98.

For all the jawing about serious rock and lasting contributions, the new pop era has really produced very few lasting personalities. Only a dozen or so have created what can be called a lasting body of work, either as performers or composers or both. Donovan is certainly among that dozen, as this interesting retrospective of the British singer/songwriter demonstrates.

Donovan started out as a Dylan imitator and has grown up to be one of the best jazz-flavored pop vocalists and a versatile composer of pop songs. Among the many excellent tunes here are favorites like *Mellow Yellow* and *Sunshine Superman*. Two of the singer's earliest hits, *Colours* and *Catch the Wind*, are given new readings on the album (probably because the originals were done for another label, and a comparison of the old versions with the new, especially of *Colours*, show how much he has accomplished in three years.

If you must own only one Donovan record, I suppose this is it, though, like Lays chips, I'll bet you can't stop at just one. For my part, the arrival of *Greatest Hits* sent me back into the earlier albums and I think that *Hurdy Gurdy Man, Wear Your Love Like Heaven, and Sunshine Superman* all belong in the basic library. And now, because of the new recordings of *Colours* and *Catch the Wind*, there are four. But surely Epic could have given us more than eleven songs. J.G.

THE BYRDS: Dr. Byrds and Mr. Hyde. The Byrds, rock quartet. *Old Blue; Nashville West; Candy; Bad Night at the Whiskey*; five more and a medley of three. Columbia CS 9755, \$4.98. Well, here are the Byrds again, sounding about like they always do. Actually a mite better than last time, I think, but then I never did warm up to their defer-

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ential excursions into pure c & w, on *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*, their last outing. On *Dr. Byrds & Mr. Hyde* they are back into more rocking things, although the country elements are still pretty stiff. They do have a distinctive sound—sort of a heavy, brooding cloud of Everly Brothers—and, if you dig it, listening to the Byrds is always a pleasure. *Child of the Universe* is the only bummer on the new album, and this can be excused since it comes from the sound track of *Candy*.

They have found an excellent new up-tempo, c & w lonesome-on-the-road love song, *Your Gentle Way of Loving Me*, and a tongue-in-cheek country song about a *Drug Store Truck Drivin' Man*. The group has always had an affinity for Bob Dylan's music and his *This Wheel's On Fire* opens the album, while *My Back Pages* is included in the medley at the end of Side 2. The Byrds' secret has always been their odd harmony combined with their oppressive intensity. For some reason I associate their sound with driving rain. They have achieved some distance from their c & w hang-up on the new LP, though *King Apathy III* seems to be meant as an apology, and the title indicates some ambivalence about where they are.

By and large this is a better, more relevant record than their last. But it is also one that will probably be more interesting to listeners already familiar with their music than to newcomers. J.G.

JEFFERSON AIRPLANE: Bless Its Pointed Little Head. Jefferson Airplane, rock sextet. *Somebody To Love; Fat Angel; It's No Secret; Plastic Fantastic; Bear Melt*; five more. RCA LSP 4133, \$4.98.

I think Jefferson Airplane is one of the two best groups in America (the other is the Beach Boys). I wish, therefore, that I could report that *Bless Its Pointed Little Head*, the sextet's first "live" recording, was as good as their studio jobs. It's not—expectedly, I guess.

The album has all the disadvantages of live concerts (the performance is less than perfect) and few of the advantages (there is very little excitement). There are long, meandering solos, the sound is strangely muffled, and there is an atrocious mauling of Fred Neil's frequently recorded *The Other Side of This Life*. Most of the tunes are available on previous albums, although mercifully they spared us more of *White Rabbit*, Grace Slick's greatest hit. As usual, there is too little of Miss Slick's co-lead singer, Marty Ballin.

In all probability, this album will please neither those who love the Airplane live, nor those who love their records. Approach it with care. J.G.

BOBBY VINTON: I Love How You Love Me. Bobby Vinton, vocals; Don Tweedy and Bill McElhiney, arr. *Shangri-La; It's No Sin; Till*; eight more. Epic BN 26437, \$4.79. Tape: ● EN 664, \$6.98, 7½ ips; ● N 1810 152, \$6.98; ● N 1410 152, \$5.98.

Bobby Vinton has been a teen-ager as long as I can remember, serving up

childish hit records to succeeding generations since the '50s. His face has that perpetual youthfulness which crumbles into surprised fatigue in middle age.

Vinton's latest mud pie is a thriller called *I Love How You Love Me*. You'd think that after all these years of being a child star, he'd at least learn how to sing. But Vinton's world never seems to change. And until time changes it for him, there is always a fresh generation of youth to buy his paeans to puppy love. M. A.

✻ **MELANIE: Born To Be.** Melanie Safka, vocals and guitar; instrumental accompaniment; Roger Kellaway, arr. *In the Hour; Mr. Tambourine Man; Momma Momma; Christopher Robin; Merry Christmas*; five more. Buddah BDS 5024, \$4.79. Tape: ● 1-5024, \$5.98; ● 1-5024, \$6.98.

I have been sitting at my typewriter to these many hours trying to think of superlatives with which to describe Melanie's *Born To Be* without sounding like I have completely lost my mind over it (even though I guess I have). This is only the first album from someone who wasn't even old enough to vote last November and here I keep wanting to compare her dramatic range to Edith Piaf's and say she writes like Brecht and Weill.

Well, dammit, she does. As a songwriter she is superb, tackling with ease topics as diverse as prostitution (*Bo Bo's Party*), promiscuity (*I Really Loved Harold*), commitment (*Close to It All and Animal Crackers*). She composes forceful, personal lyrics and houses them perfectly in simple, often hummable melodies.

But it is as a performer that she really triumphs. It will surprise no one who hears the album to find that the liner notes credit, as in plays and movies, both a producer (Peter Schekeryk) and a director (Artie Ripp), because Melanie is more of an actress than a singer. She is in turn sorrowful, jaded, gaily ironic, and childishly appealing as she renders these ten vignettes. In some ways she echoes Lotte Lenya, most strongly where her music resembles Weill's (*I'm Back in Town* might be straight out of *The Threepenny Opera* were it not that her wit has some funny little twists of its own). Not a little credit for the album's success goes to jazz pianist Roger Kellaway who provided perfect charts throughout.

I don't often say it, but run, don't walk, and buy this record. I wish I could shake the hand of everyone even remotely connected with it. J.G.

✻ **JACK JONES: L.A. Break Down.** Jack Jones, vocals; Pat Williams, arr. and cond. *You've Changed; Lost in the Stars; Goodbye*; eight more. RCA Victor LSP 4108, \$4.79. Watching the development of singer Jack Jones has been a heartening experience. This album is the culmination of that growth.

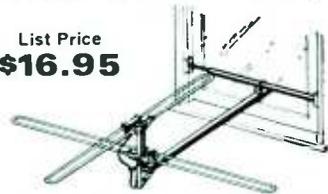
The title tune, *L.A. Break Down (And Take Me In)*, was written by composer/arranger/producer Larry Marks, who made a record of it. But it took Jones

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to "find" the song. Also included are three of Randy Newman's best songs, *Linda*, *Love Song*, and *I Think It's Going to Rain Today*. The best are mostly standards, but not tired ones. In fact, this is one of those rare albums with not one less-than-excellent choice. Jones has even performed Gordon Jenkins' unknown and magnificent *But I Loved You*.

The album displays an unheard aspect of arranger Pat Williams as well. He's best known for his big band albums, showy charts for singers such as Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorné, and countless television commercials. This all-ballad set makes it clear that Williams is also a superb ballad arranger.

Quality music, when it reaches this level, is instantly recognizable—if only for its rarity. Jack Jones, Pat Williams, and producer Ernie Altschuler have come up with one of those albums that will mean as much in ten years as it does today. M. A.

ARTHUR FIEDLER: Glenn Miller's Biggest Hits. Boston Pops Orchestra, Arthur Fiedler, cond. *St. Louis Blues March; Moonlight Serenade; Chattanooga Choo Choo*; nine more. RCA Red Seal LSC 3064, \$5.98.

Today's teen-agers probably will find these epiphanies of the legendary Glenn Miller hits strictly squared off in every dimension. But cubed though they may be, the music recorded here is sure to be treasured as a string of pearls by survivors of the Classes of 1939, 1940, and thereabouts.

Arranger Richard Hayman knows the letter of the original scores, yet isn't afraid to depart from it to exploit the more sonorously expanded resources of a full symphony orchestra; and Fiedler's crisp touch keeps the ever present threat of maudlin sentimentality well at bay—especially in the imaginative arrange-

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ments of *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, *Little Brown Jug*, *Song of the Volga Boatmen*, *In the Mood*, and *Tuxedo Junction*. Engineer Bernard Keville not only captures, undiminished, the impressively big sonics themselves, but places them in an appropriately expansive acoustical environment. R.D.D.

IN BRIEF

AL KOOPER: I Stand Alone. Columbia CS 9718, \$4.98. Tape: CQ 1095, \$7.95, 7½ ips; 1810 0596, \$6.98; 1410 0596, \$5.98. Alone! With two orchestras, the Blossoms, and half of Nashville. Kooper is one of the most boring people in rock. So's this album. J.G.

JERRY LEE LEWIS: She Still Comes Around. Smash SRS 67112, \$4.79. The material here is a perfect match for Lewis' country vocalizing and Nashville piano, but there is room for a lot more than eleven short songs. J.G.

NELSON RIDDLE: Contemporary Sound of Nelson Riddle. United Artists UAS 6670, \$4.79. What has all this computerized, drab, supermarket rock to do with one of our finest arrangers? Anyone who knows Riddle's work and buys the album on name value will hate it. M.A.

JOAN BAEZ: Any Day Now. Vanguard VSD 79306/07, \$9.58 (two discs). Tape: (2), 59306/7, \$5.95 each; 89307, \$9.95 (double play). Baez sings songs by Bob Dylan. Dylan fans probably won't favor this album; Baez fans probably will. J.G.

NINA SIMONE: 'Nuff Said. RCA Victor LSP 4065, \$4.98. Tape: P8S 1386, \$6.95. Simone in top form before a live audience; much better material than usual and well recorded. J.G.

COLWELL/WINFIELD BLUES BAND: Cold Wind Blues. Verve Forecast FTS 3056, \$4.79. Among white blues bands, Colwell/Winfield is the best I've heard. It honors the Negro tradition without arrogantly dismissing its own cultural heritage—and can play the Butterfield Blues Band out of town. M.A.

AUTRY INMAN: Ballad of Two Brothers. Epic BN 26428, \$4.98. Prowar, pro-domestic fascist sentiments from the hinterlands, seductively performed. Should get the Ayn Rand Realpolitik Award. Or at least the Victor Lasky Poor Taste Citation. J.G.

ASTRUD GILBERTO: Windy. Verve 6-8754, \$4.79. Periodically I dip into a new Astrud Gilberto album to see if she still sings like a robot. Surprise: her English has improved, her intonation is surer, and the whole album has charm. G.L.

THE 4 SEASONS: The Genuine Imitation Life Gazette. Philips PHS 600290, \$4.79. This is a thoroughly professional though unexceptional record (the pseudo-Beach Boys parts are better than the neo-

Jay and the Americans sections) which is receiving a truly exceptional promotion; Bob Crewe continues to sock it to us. J.G.

GRAHAME BOND: Love Is the Law. Pulsar AR 10604, \$4.79. Bond has an English bluesman's voice and plays reeds, organ, and bass—in short everything but drums. The tunes are all originals by a chap named Billy Gamble, who says nice things if not always very well. An interesting first outing for Bond. J.G.

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL. Bayou Country. Fantasy 8397, \$4.98. Fun hard rock at its best, including their hit *Proud Mary*. Not much food for thought, but a real toe-tapper. J.G.

THE FIRST EDITION: '69. Reprise RS 6328, \$4.79. The hit version of *But You Know I Love You* paces a trip to Nashville for one of the best, and least-known, of pop groups. J.G.

ARETHA FRANKLIN: Soul '69. Atlantic SD 8212, \$4.79. Hopefully this is mistitled, or it's going to be a bad year: even Columbia never gave her any tunes as silly as some of these. Buy any other album. J.G.

WILSON PICKETT: Hey Jude. Atlantic SD 8215, \$4.79. If you like one, you'll like 'em all, although the echo is getting a little obtrusive. J.G.

JERRY LEE LEWIS: All Country. Smash SRS 67071. \$4.79. Country artist Lewis seems to be dropping one a month; this one's the best yet. J.G.

ERIC BURDON AND THE ANIMALS. Greatest Hits. M-G-M SE 4602, \$4.79. Post-enlightenment rock; erratic, but the best of its kind. All the recent biggies. J.G.

RHETTA HUGHES: Re-Light My Fire. Tetragrammatron T 111, \$4.79. Tape: ● M 8111, \$6.95; ● X 5111, \$5.95. Miss Hughes, Tetra's first female vocal r & b artist, is as sparkling as anyone since Aretha Franklin. M.A.

JONATHAN KNIGHT: Lonely Harpsichord. Viva 36016, \$4.79. Tape: ● C 6016, \$7.95, 7½ ips; ● M 86016, \$6.95; ● X 56016, \$5.95. Here's how to turn a good idea into a yawn: tired songs and useless arrangements featuring harpsichord. There's so much treble in the mix that I thought one of my speakers had gone out. M.A.

SEEKERS: Live! Capitol ST 135, \$4.98. Australia's version of Peter, Paul, and Mary plus one. Not bad but ten years too late. M.A.

ISRAELI STRINGS: Jewish Rhapsodies for Those in Love. Bravo 35502. \$3.79. Tape: ● X 5502, \$7.95, 7½ ips; ● M 85502, \$6.95; ● X 45502, \$5.95; ● X 55502, \$5.95. You have to love this album for its title. The music is exactly what it sets out to be, romantic and quaint. M.A.

JAZZ

✻ **FATS WALLER: African Ripples.** Fats Waller, piano, and His Rhythm. *African Ripples: You Look Good to Me; If I Were You;* thirteen more. RCA Victor LPV 562, \$4.98.

RCA Victor's Vintage Series of reissues is one of the most valuable in the industry. Fortunately, Columbia too is engaged in a somewhat similar project with its Odyssey series and Decca has also recently reissued material from its old catalogue. What John S. Wilson and others have been demanding for years is coming to pass: some wonderful jazz recordings, long buried in the vaults, are being brought back to light.

This is the fifth, and last, in a series of Fats Waller reissues. If you've collected them all, you have a very broad representation of this remarkable musician's work. Mike Lipskin, who produced this album, has provided us with exceptionally interesting liner notes to guide us through the material. (Indeed, that's been one of the virtues of the Vintage series: informed and informative liner notes.)

Waller lived and worked in an era when the Negro musician almost had to be a clown. A few men rose above it, and he was one of them: there is a fierce satiric quality in his near-Tomming that puts the audience on and down—hard. When he had to do mediocre commercial songs, he was never hesitant to let his feelings about them be known: he could satirize a song more murderously than any performer I've ever heard. It's unfortunate that he had to do this—would that he'd always been able to play exactly what he felt like playing. But he couldn't, and I'm at least grateful that he was extensively recorded. His clowning cannot conceal the power and swing and facility of his playing.

Some of the tracks here present Waller in solo, some with his quintet, and a few in a big-band context. They are inevitably uneven, but they're there, and it's important to have them.

Don Miller remastered these tracks. He's done an incredible job of enhancing the sound without perverting it. G.L.

✻ **CLARE FISCHER: Thesaurus.** Clare Fischer Big Band; Clare Fischer and Stewart Fischer, arr. *The Duke: In Memoriam Calamus;* five more. Atlantic SD 1520, \$5.79.

Clare Fischer is an inordinately talented pianist and arranger whose name has been in the background for years, on other people's albums. He was responsible for some of the Hi-Lo's best work. Recently he has been writing and arranging for commercials, a field he thought he'd hate and found he loved "because it's fast and I'm an impatient man."

The most exciting of Fischer's projects, however, has been the formation of his own band. This is their first album, and it sizzles. The band is made up of both fresh and seasoned musicians, all of them superb. Fischer is especially



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happy with the effect of the diverse influences among the players, some favoring Bird, others Miles, Gerry Mulligan, or you-name-it.

Fischer arranged all the charts but one: his thinking is dense, full of complex patterns and unlikely chord substitutions, all blending into a fascinating whole. The outside chart was written and arranged by Clare's brother, Stewart, who plays trumpet with the band.

My favorite track is *Bitter Leaf*, a ballad written by Stewart Fischer, on which Clare plays a fragile and moving solo on a Fender Rhodes electric piano using full tremolo and backed only by acoustic bass (Chuck Domanico) and drums (Larry Bunker). The most inspired title is *Miles Behind*, a seven-minute study in 7/4 written by Clare and featuring Warne Marsh and Conti Condoli. On *Lennie's Pennies*, featuring Gary Foster and Lennie Tristano's ex-saxophonist Warne Marsh, the reed section builds to a dazzling block-chord final passage.

This is a more intellectual band than that of, say, Buddy Rich. It depends on your mood and tastes. For me, Clare Fischer's band represents the workings of one of our finest musical minds, and listening is a special pleasure. M.A.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG: V.S.O.P. (Very Special Old Phonography). *Georgia on My Mind; Chinatown My Chinatown; All of Me*; thirteen more. Epic 22019, \$5.79.

BENNY GOODMAN: Clarinet à la King. *Cherry; If I Had You; The Earl*; thirteen more. Epic 22025, \$5.79.

ARTIE SHAW: Free for All. *Blue Skies; The Chant; Just You Just Me*; thirteen more. Epic 22023, \$5.79.

EARL "FATHA" HINES: Hines Rhythm. *Rosetta; Cavernism; Honeysuckle Rose*; thirteen more. Epic 22021, \$5.79.

GENE KRUPA: That Drummer's Band. *Full Dress Hop; Kick It; Ball of Fire*; thirteen more. Epic 22027, \$5.79.

These five big band reissues come in a sudden burst of generosity from Epic which has, in the past, been erratic and generally undistinguished in presenting jazz reissues. Frank Driggs has shown a touch of genius in putting these discs together for he has managed to come up with five names of consequence, several of whom have been reissued to the point of no return, and yet these sets not only contain relatively fresh material (from a reissue point of view) but, in two cases, they represent vital high points in the musicians' careers.

Benny Goodman, for example, had what to my mind was his best band in 1941-42—a far better band than the mid- and late '30s group he led as King of Swing—plus the best repertory he ever had: all the old Fletcher Henderson and Jimmy Mundy scores plus superb new ones by Eddie Sauter and Mel Powell. That's the band and those are the arrangements you'll find on *Clarinet à la King*, a wonderfully refreshing view of a musician you may have thought you had grown tired of.

The other gem in this series is Louis Armstrong's *V. S. O. P.*, which is Louis

in 1931 and 1932, just starting out with a big band and bubbling with the high spirits that made him a brilliant entertainer (long before it all froze into gelatinous patterns). To pick these two out is not necessarily to denigrate the Hines, Krupa, and Shaw sets. Neither Hines nor Krupa ever rose to an equivalent level and Shaw's best band came after he had moved from Brunswick (from which these pieces are taken) to Victor. The Krupa set, incidentally, is a good addition to the earlier two-disc Columbia set (C2L 29) while the Hines and Shaw collections represent what might be termed improved rethinking of early, long out-of-print reissues by these two bands on Epic. J.S.W.

DUKE ELLINGTON: The Early Duke Ellington. *Harlem Speaks; Ain't Misbehavin'; Hyde Park; Tiger Rag; I'm Just Wild About Harry; After You've Gone.* Una Mae Carlisle: *I Would Do Anything for You.* Three more. Everest 221, \$5.79 (rechanneled stereo only).

BENNY CARTER. The Early Benny Carter. *Swingin' at Maida Vale; Just a Mood; When Lights Are Low*; seven more. Everest 225, \$5.79 (rechanneled stereo only).

GEORGE SHEARING: The Young George Shearing. *Stomp in F; Coquette; Rosetta*; seven more. Everest 223, \$5.79 (rechanneled stereo only).

Everest has found a hole in the increasingly tightly woven pattern of American jazz reissues and is proceeding to fill it. The label's reissue material is drawn from recordings made by English companies in the 1930s. These three releases are all interesting either because of basic merits (the Benny Carter disc), because of curiosity value (the Shearing set, made up of some of the pianist's earliest recordings, dating back to 1939), or because of a combination of disorder and excellence (the so-called Ellington collection).

The latter carries a small subheading noting that Jimmy Dorsey and Una Mae Carlisle appear as "guest artists." As any follower of devious labeling devices knows, this does *not* mean that Dorsey and/or Miss Carlisle are heard with the Ellington band. Once you understand that there are only four selections by Ellington along with three by Dorsey and three by Miss Carlisle, you are pre-

pared to accept the merits of the record because all three artists are in fine form. However, whoever put the second side of the disc together was not really paying attention. Duke Ellington is listed as playing *Hyde Park* and *Chicago* but only the first is heard. Dorsey is supposed to play *St. Louis Blues* but instead he plays *After You've Gone*—and plays it well. Miss Carlisle is listed for *I'm Crazy 'Bout My Baby* and *Don't Try Your Live on Me* but neither selection is on the disc. These two and the missing Ellington *Chicago* are replaced by three unidentified selections by an unidentified orchestra featuring an unidentified pianist (an equally unidentified male singer appears on one piece indicating that it might be called *Big Ben Blues*). J.S.W.

✻ **LUIZ HENRIQUE / WALTER WANDERLEY: Popcorn.** Luiz Henrique, guitar and vocals; Walter Wanderley, organ; Sivuca, accordion; Romeo Penque, flute; Affonso de Paula, percussion; James Kappes, Gary Chester, or Donald MacDonald, drums. *Happy Birthday; Cabaret; Popcorn*; eight more. Verve 8734, \$4.79 or 68734, \$5.79.

The freshest and most stimulating popular music of our time still comes from Brazil—or from Brazilians, some of them having relocated here. And, to me, the most satisfying singer to come here from Brazil since poor forgotten João Gilberto is Luiz Henrique.

This album features one of the most tasteful electric organists the instrument has yet known. Wanderley, who was a stalwart of the early bossa nova movement, uses stops that no other organist has explored (except Clare Fischer, who says he sat behind Wanderley all one evening, figuring out how he did it). He gets a warm, flutelike, non-vibrato sound that is utterly distinctive.

Henrique sings with roughhewn warmth. Like most of the Brazilians, he sounds better in his own Portuguese. But, at least, unlike Astrud Gilberto, he doesn't sound stupid when he ventures into English.

Bossa nova has evolved a great deal in the last few years. Wanderley and Henrique, like Sergio Mendes, are not deaf to North American rhythmic influences, and they make subtle use of them here and there in the course of this album.

Highly musical, intelligent, unpretentious, warm, honest, and delightful. G.L.

✻ **MAX ROACH: Members, Don't Get Weary.** Charles Tolliver, trumpet; Gary Bartz, alto saxophone; Stanley Cowell, piano; Jymie Merritt, bass; Max Roach, drums; Andy Bey, vocal. *Abstrutions; Libra; Effi*; three more. Atlantic 1510, \$4.98.

Stanley Cowell is a new name to me, both as pianist and composer. But after this album, I'll be all ears for him, particularly in his role as composer. He wrote three of the six numbers that Max Roach's group plays—*Abstrutions, Effi, and Equipoise*—and each, in a different way, is a gem.

Equipoise is a beautiful, singing theme,



exquisitely set out in solos by Charles Tolliver and Gary Bartz, who later recap the theme in a weaving, contrapuntal duet with Roach and Jymie Merritt giving them tremendously vital support. *Abstractions* is built on a punching, descending set of figures that are peaked with trumpet flares. Cowell plays a gently digging solo, accented by choice Roach drum figures as the piece rocks and jumps simultaneously. The third number, *Effi*, is a rolling bit that gives Tolliver and Bartz a chance to get into some ruggedly gutty solos which, like all the solos on the disc, are given added impact by the power and sensitivity of Roach's drumming and Merritt's bass lines.

The sense of virility that this group projects hits most strongly on Bartz' *Libra* and Merritt's *Absolutions*, both of which simply take off and go. This group and these performances are reminiscent of Roach's days with Clifford Brown and Sonny Rollins, except that everything is now more highly pointed and more positively expressed than ever before. The title tune, quite different from the rest of the set, is an invocation, well projected by Andy Bey over a percussive, discordant background, reflecting in its style Roach's *Freedom Now* suite with Abbey Lincoln. Roach's superb drumming all through the set makes one aware of how much a drummer can do for a group and, relatively, how little most drummers do. J.S.W.

MARIAN McPARTLAND: My Old Flame. Marian McPartland, piano; unidentified arranger and chorus. *Moon Song; Je Vous Adore; Thanks;* nine more. Dot DLP 25907, \$4.79. Tape: ●● X 5907, \$5.95, 7½ ips; ●● X 55907, \$5.95.

Certain pianists seem to have emerged, fully grown, sure and whole, from the wing of some magical piano. Marian McPartland is one. She has such an incurable case of impeccable taste that it's difficult to imagine her ever *learning* to play the piano, hitting wrong notes, fumbling through bad changes. One supposes only her mother knows for sure.

Miss McPartland is not flashy. Her playing is relaxed, warm, humorous, to the point. Whatever the mood or tempo, her melodic elaborations are just right.

This is an album of songs by composer Sam Coslow. Among the good ones are *My Old Flame, Beware My Heart,* and *Just One More Chance.* An inevitable

inclusion was *Cocktails for Two*: Miss McPartland tries valiantly to make the song more than the trivia it is—and succeeds on the opening. The album is filled out with Mr. Coslow's forgettable non-hits.

While Miss McPartland's rhythm section is nice, she is burdened with a vocal quartet who needed an extra hour to run down the charts, simple as they are. The voices sound uncertain and unstable. This too, Miss McPartland overcomes.

In all, this is a quiet and tasteful set from one of our few significant lady musicians. M.A.

NAT ADDERLEY: The Scavenger. Nat Adderley and Mel Lastie, cornets; Joe Henderson, tenor saxophone; Jeremy Steig, flute; Joe Zawinul, piano and electric piano; Victor Gaskin, bass; Roy McCurdy, drums; Bill Fischer, arr. and cond. *But Not for Me; Melnat; Sweet Emma;* four others. Milestone 9016, \$4.79.

Nat Adderley has taken a broad swing at variety and has come up with, in addition to varieties of material and instrumental groupings, a definite variety of results. Superficially, this might be called an uneven set. But this is not entirely true because, so far as each musician is concerned, it is quite consistent. Nat Adderley and Mel Lastie make a consistently strong and bristling cornet team. Bill Fischer's two arrangements, adding strings to the cornets and rhythm section—*Sweet Emma* and *Bittersweet*—are a pair of gems, the best pieces on the disc. But the usually prepossessive Joe Zawinul settles into a relatively bland attitude and stays there throughout the set. And while Joe Henderson appears on only three selections, he is consistent on all of them in the routine manner of his playing: he rambles through a succession of Coltrane-ish swirls and whirls with a hollow-sounding tone that is reminiscent of Sidney Bechet's early efforts on the sarrousaphone.

But this is where consistency ends. Piece by piece, the set moves like a roller coaster. There is a crisp, bristling attack on some pieces (*Rise, Sally, Rise* and *Melnat*) while *Unilateral* and *The Scavenger* limp along through long, listless lines despite the eruptive flares with which Adderley and Lastie try to agitate *The Scavenger*. What is good on this album is so good that it is doubly disappointing to find that the cream does not run very deep. J.S.W.

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THE TAPE DECK

BY R. D. DARRELL

Something New. No tape owner who read John McClure's account (HF, February 1968) of the difficulties in recording Giovanni Gabrieli's music in the Basilica of San Marco, Venice, will want to overlook the taped results on Columbia MQ 1080, 35 min., \$7.95. The massive sonorities, antiphonal effects, and the very long—yet miraculously nonblurring—reverberation period of the Basilica are impressively captured on this release. Two of the motets had been previously taped for Vanguard in the 1960 and 1964 Gabrieli programs conducted by Appia and Gillesberger respectively, but these are now out of print, and in any case the new performances under Vittorio Negri's direction include three motet and three Mass-movement tape firsts—to say nothing of the incomparable sound of the San Marco Basilica.

Two tape premieres from Deutsche Grammophon/Ampex have a more specialized appeal. Hans Pfitzner's *Cantata, Von deutscher Seele*, Op. 28, performed by the Bavarian Radio Chorus and Orchestra under Joseph Keilberth (DGK 9158, EX+, double-play, 91 min., \$11.95), is, for all its moments of genuine beauty, just too Teutonic for my taste. Schoenberg's First String Quartet, in D minor, Op. 7, is played with conviction by the New Vienna Quartet (DGC 9360, EX+, 46 min., \$7.95). In this early quartet, there is nothing atonal or even aurally difficult. The closely miked sonics are both attractive and admirable for their microscopic detail. But, unfortunately, every time I hear it, I can't help remembering Cecil Gray's quaint explanation (in his *Survey of Contemporary Music*) for the "curiously disconcerting" impression this quartet makes on some listeners: "A comparatively daring or unconventional passage will come to an end with an ordinary dominant/tonic cadence, giving one much the same disagreeable sensation that one experiences in falling out of bed onto the floor in the middle of the night."

One release I find particularly pleasurable is the first tape representation of



Rimsky-Korsakov: "swashes" are relished.

Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Mlada*: a set of mainly choral and orchestral highlights performed by Moscow Radio singers and players under Yevgeny Svetlanov (Melodiya/Angel Y1S 40012, 3¾ ips, 47 min., \$7.98; texts-and-notes leaflet on request). Conrad L. Osborne, in his disc review, stated that this music "is for listeners who are suckers for great daubs of chromaticized, late-Romantic harmony and indulgent swashes of orchestral color." I can't deny that the present performance and recording are somewhat rough and coarse. But I still unashamedly relish these bits of *Mlada*.

Something Different. One of the surprises this month is a release by RCA Red Seal (R8S 1115, \$6.95), in which Igor Buketoff attempts to rejuvenate Tchaikovsky's *1812* Overture by including not only the familiar band, cannon, and chimes, but adult and children's choruses as well. Von Karajan may have started a trend in giving the *1812*'s opening hymn to the Don Cossacks choir in his recent Deutsche Grammophon reel and cassette tapings, but Buketoff's St. Ambrose Cathedral Choir goes beyond this by joining the new Philharmonia Orchestra and Royal Air Force Band in the finale, while the St. Ambrose Children's Choir is heard in two folk song passages. The result makes for a pleasant change. Unfortunately the reading and performance lack punch and the recording has been too closely miked. Nonetheless it has merit if only for the inclusion of two unusual Rachmaninoff choral works: the relatively early (1902) *Spring Cantata*, Op. 20, for baritone (John Shaw), chorus, and orchestra, and the relatively late (1926) set of three Russian Folk Songs, Op. 41, for alto and bass voices with orchestra. Listeners who know Rachmaninoff only by his big piano and orchestral works will find these little pieces irresistible. Buketoff directs with obvious understanding and the sonics are fine.

The hodgepodge of selections from the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Columbia MQ 1067, 48 min., \$7.95; 8-track cartridge, 18 11 0090, \$7.95) contains, on one side, the Sunrise opening of the R. Strauss *Also sprach Zarathustra* and the complete J. Strauss II *Blue Danube* Waltzes (conducted by Ormandy); Ligeti's *Atmosphères* (conducted by Bernstein) and *Lux Aeterna* (Gregg Smith Singers), and the Adagio from Khachaturian's *Gayne* Suite No. 2 (conducted by Kurtz)—loosely linked by "electronic interludes" by Morton Subotnik. The other side of the reel is devoted to a reissued Suite from Blomdahl's space opera *Aniara* in the Janssen-led performance originally released (in disc format only) in 1961 and out of print in recent years. The last-named remains one of the most effective examples of orthodox and elec-

tronic instrumental combinations: the *2001* mélange may prove boring to those who have not seen the film but interminably fascinating to those who have.

Something Better. New processing techniques may tend to invalidate existing readings but only rarely is a good earlier version completely eclipsed. One of my prized possessions, the 1966 London taping of Bruckner's Ninth Symphony with Zubin Mehta conducting the Vienna Philharmonic, was taken off my shelves this month and replaced by Herbert von Karajan's new tape with the Berlin Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon/Ampex EX+ DGA 9011, 59 min., \$8.95). The Mehta version still holds an interest, especially because it shows so young and (at the time) inexperienced a conductor achieving success with a monumental work. But the first-rate London recording is admittedly overshadowed by DGG's more impressively broad, solid, and natural sonics. The Berliners far surpass the Viennese musicians and the conductor will surprise even his detractors by the depth of his involvement in this unfinished symphony. My immense respect for Von Karajan as a superb executant often has been counterbalanced by my annoyance over his interpretative quirks and mannerisms—none of which are in evidence here. This package would have been well-nigh perfect except for the exasperating side break between the second movement's Trio and the repetition of the Scherzo.

Something Wrong—Yet Well Worth While. Some months ago I wrote a review of a fine bargain-priced reel containing four multiple-harpsichord concertos of Bach's by German soloists with the Saar Chamber Orchestra under the late Karl Ristenpart (Nonesuch/Ampex EX+ NSE 1019, 3¾ ips, 66 min., \$4.95). The review was crowded out of print first by space exigencies and then by the appearance, on the same label, of a complete set of all the Bach harpsichord concertos by French soloists conducted by Roland Douatte (NSW 3001, reviewed December 1968). I was therefore delighted to be given a second chance to praise the Ristenpart program now that it is seemingly available in 8-track cartridge format as NEM 81019, \$6.95. But after listening to it first on auto trips, then at home, I find the tempos sound brisker, the strings less equably balanced with the soloists than I remembered from the reel. Direct A/B comparisons have proved to me that while the right Bach concertos are played here (S. 1062-3-4-5), the performances are *not* Ristenpart's but those included in the Douatte complete set. I hope my rectification of this artist-identification error will stimulate the release of the remainder of the set in 8-track format.

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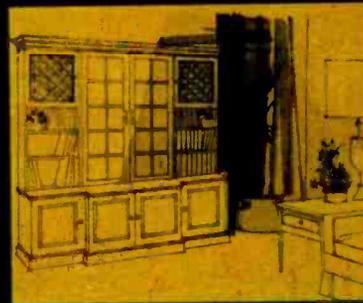
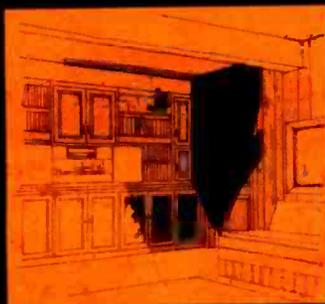
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