How To Upgrade Your TV Sound

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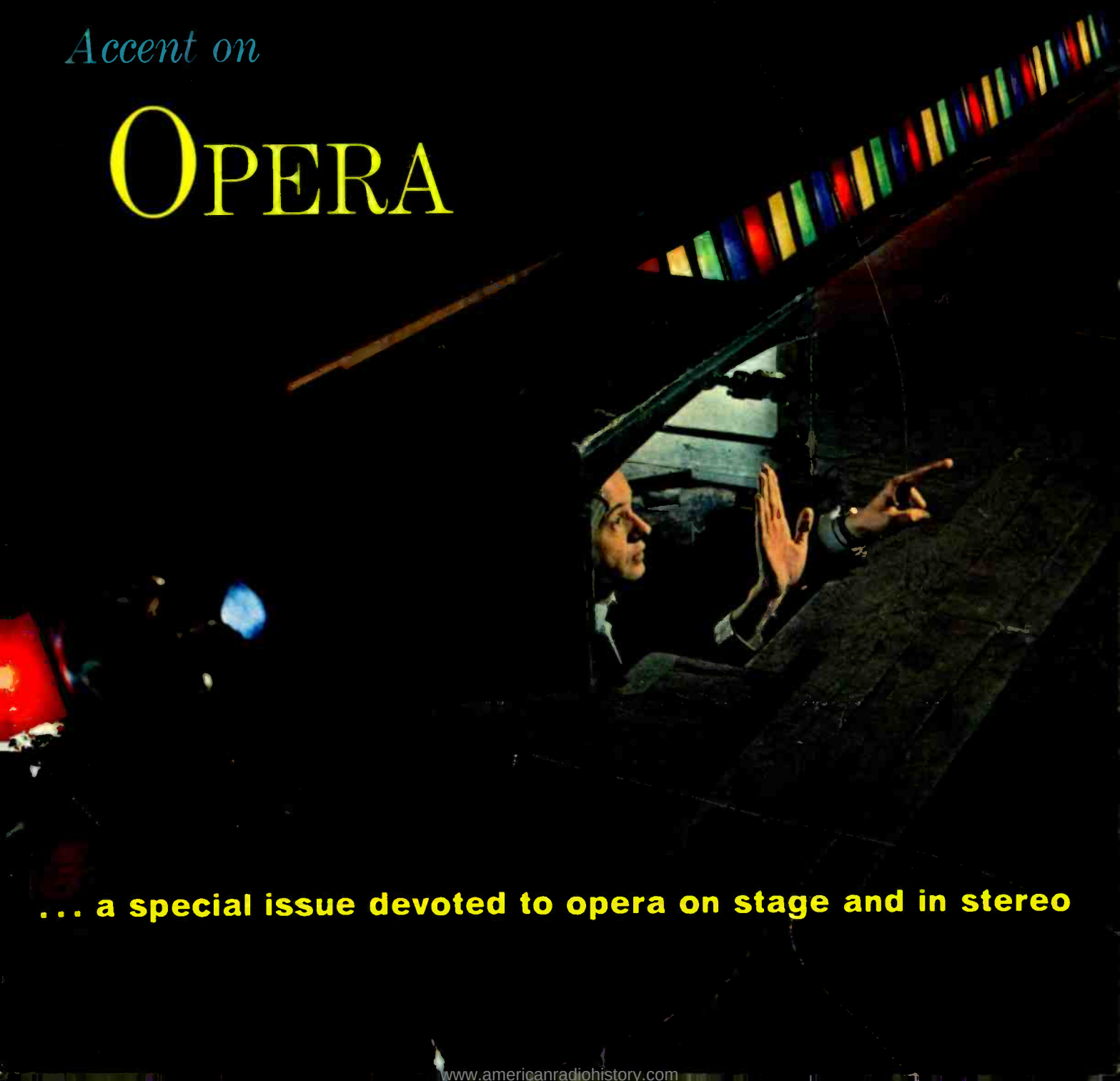
# high fidelity

NOVEMBER 1961

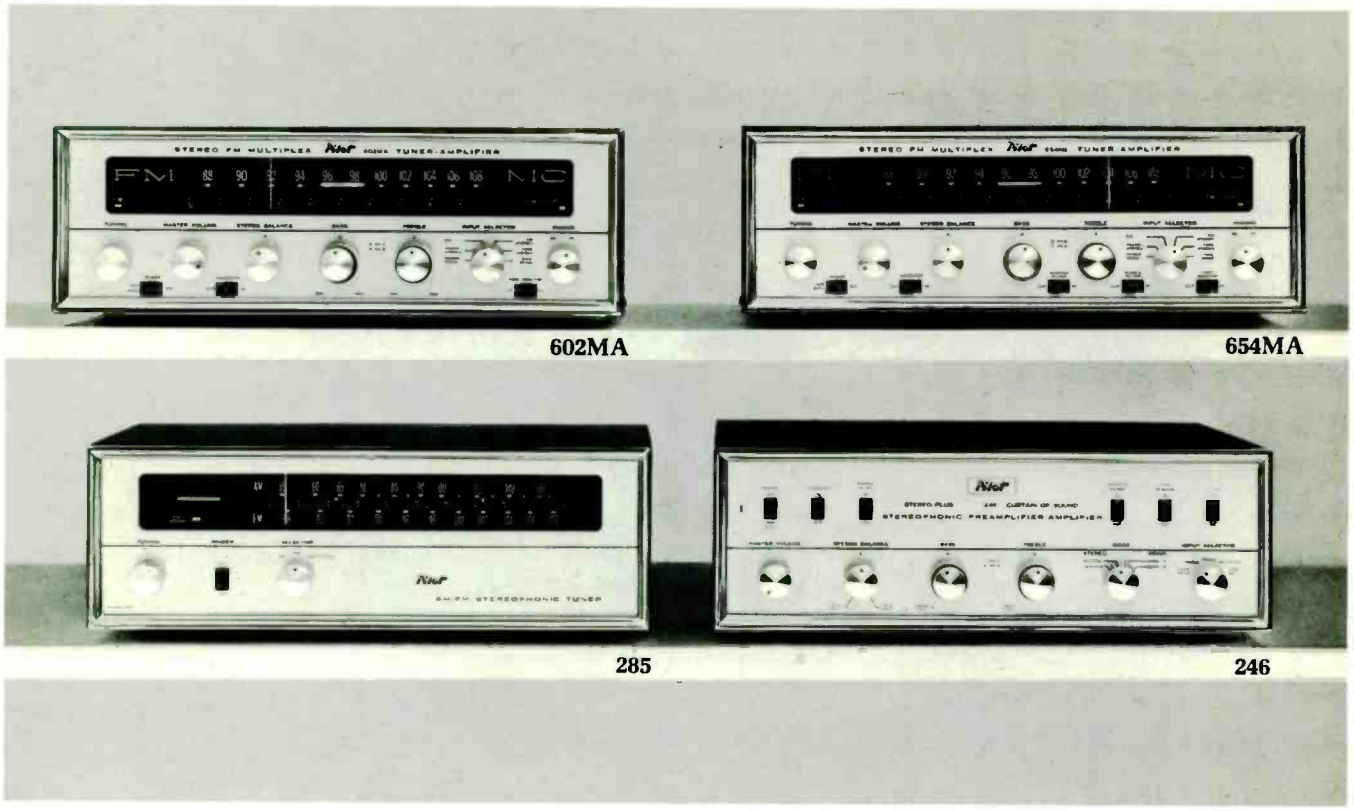
THE MAGAZINE FOR MUSIC LISTENERS®

*Accent on*

# OPERA



. . . a special issue devoted to opera on stage and in stereo



602MA 654MA

285 246

# Hear here.

Hear the astonishing new sound... the clean, rich, surrounding sound... the pure, simple, ear-catching sound ...of PILOT. Hear it reproduced with all the dimension and depth that characterize the very best in modern stereophonic high fidelity.

Hear your favorite music with the 30-watt **602MA FM Stereo Receiver,** which includes PILOT's unique Multiplex circuit (better than 30 db separation); automatic FM Stereo indicator; record changer, turntable, tape transport and recorder connections; and complete control versatility, including rumble and scratch filters—only 249.50 with cover. (The 602SA, with added AM, is just 299.50.)

Hear your music favorites with the 60-watt **654MA FM Stereo Receiver** (top-rated by HIFI/STEREO REVIEW), including FM Multiplex, automatic FM Stereo indicator light and 14 controls...for only 329.50 with cover.

Hear your favorite broadcasts with the **285 FM Multiplex-AM Tuner,** only 159.50...combined with the 60-watt **246 Integrated Stereo Amplifier,** top-rated by an independent consumers' laboratory—with 12 stereo inputs and 14 controls, 199.50.

Whichever PILOT component you happen to select, you're assured of a quality instrument that is second-to-none. And you're also assured of incomparable sound enjoyment that must be heard to be believed. Where? At your PILOT dealer, of course.

PILOT offers you a wide range of stereophonic components as well as a variety of three-way speaker systems. For complete literature, write:

PILOT RADIO CORPORATION, 37-20 36TH STREET, LONG ISLAND CITY 1, N. Y.

CIRCLE 75 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# 2000 notches...

# fast on the draw

**High Fidelity** magazine's equipment report said: "The Troubador... platter comes up to operating speed within half a revolution." PRETTY FAST ON THE DRAW. "Speed accuracy very good... the spring-loaded 12-inch 980 arm moves exceptionally freely about its pivot points." PRETTY WELL ARMED. "Wow, flutter and rumble completely inaudible." ■ The Troubador is a big hit with everyone, professionals and audiophiles alike. The high caliber cartridge in the Troubador shown above, for example, has some 2,000 "notches" under its belt. It belonged to Chief Warrant Officer James Evans, stationed in Japan. Evans stated: "I purchased the enclosed Empire cartridge about 18 months ago and have played it constantly. It has a little over 2,000 honest hours on it, and is still doing a top-notch job." □ We don't recommend that everyone carve notches into their Empire Troubador bases... but if you do, when you reach 2,000 we'll be happy to replace the base free of charge. □ **Shoot us a postcard for free color brochure.**

"...WORLD'S MOST PERFECT RECORD PLAYBACK SYSTEM"

**TROUBADOR**
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Empire 208 3-speed "silent" turntable... Empire 980 dynamically balanced playback arm with the sensational Dyna-Lift*... and the new Empire 880p mono-stereo cartridge featuring the virtually indestructible Dyna-Life* stylus ... Complete with handsome walnut base: $222.

EMPIRE
SCIENTIFIC CORP • 845 STEWART AVE • GARDEN CITY, L.I., N.Y.

*Patent Pending

EXPORT: CANADA. Empire Scientific Corp., Ltd., Toronto, Canada • EXPORT EXCEPT CANADA. EMEC, Plainview, L. I., N. Y.

CIRCLE 46 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

*Throughout the entire world... more people listen to stereo records reproduced by the STANTON Stereo Fluxvalve than any other magnetic pickup!


And now...new dimensions for stereo from the world's most experienced manufacturer of magnetic pickups–

## STANTON 481

Calibration Standard Stereo Fluxvalve*

**Model 481AA STANTON** Stereo Fluxvalve—an ultra-linear professional pickup for use with ultra-light-weight tone arms capable of tracking within the range from 1/4 to 3 grams. Supplied with the D4005AA V-GUARD diamond stylus assembly.
**AUDIOPHILE NET PRICE** $49.50

**Model 481A STANTON** Stereo Fluxvalve—an ultra-linear professional pickup for use with manual tone arms, recommended tracking force is from 2 to 5 grams. Supplied with the D4007A V-GUARD diamond stylus assembly.
**AUDIOPHILE NET PRICE** $48.00

**Model 481E STANTON** Stereo Fluxvalve Set—same as the Model 481A but includes two additional V-GUARD styli: the D4010A 1 mil for LP's and the D4027 2.7 mil for 78's.
**AUDIOPHILE NET PRICE** $60.00

## STANTON 400

Professional Stereo Fluxvalve*

**Model 400AA STANTON** Stereo Fluxvalve—an ultra-linear professional pickup for use with ultra-light-weight tone arms capable of tracking within the range from 1/4 to 3 grams. Supplied with D4005AA V-GUARD diamond stylus assembly.
**AUDIOPHILE NET PRICE** $40.50

**Model 400A STANTON** Stereo Fluxvalve—an ultra-linear professional pickup for use with manual tone arms, recommended tracking force is from 2 to 5 grams. Supplied with D4007A V-GUARD diamond stylus assembly.
**AUDIOPHILE NET PRICE** $39.00

**Model 400C STANTON** Stereo Fluxvalve—an ultra-linear professional pickup for use in automatic record changers, recommended tracking force is from 4 to 7 grams. Supplied with D4007C V-GUARD diamond stylus assembly.
**AUDIOPHILE NET PRICE** $33.00

*More stereo records are quality controlled and reviewed by professionals using STANTON Stereo Fluxvalves.

*More high quality phonograph consoles use STANTON Stereo Fluxvalves than any other magnetic pickup.

*More commercial background music systems use STANTON Stereo Fluxvalves than any other magnetic pickup.

*More automatic phonograph systems use STANTON Stereo Fluxvalves than any other magnetic pickup.

*"Fine audio components from the Professional Products Division of"*

Pickering

PICKERING & COMPANY, INC., Plainview, N. Y.

*The hermetically sealed STANTON Stereo Fluxvalve is warranted for a lifetime and is covered under the following patents: U.S. Patent No. 2,917,590; Great Britain No. 783,372; Commonwealth of Canada No. 605,673; Japan No. 261,203; and other patents are pending throughout the world.

CIRCLE 74 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

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# high fidelity




**NOVEMBER 1962 • VOLUME 12 NUMBER 11**

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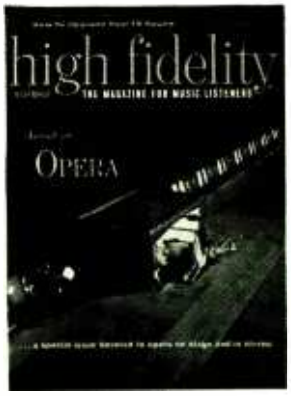


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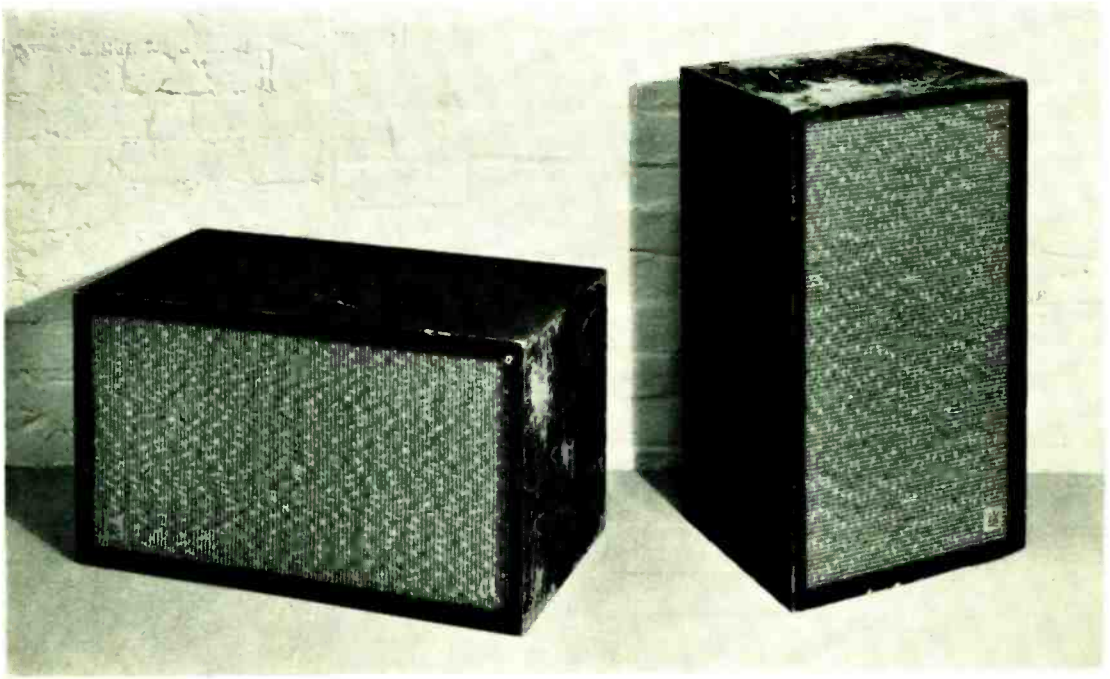
# AR INC. professional workhorses

These AR-2a speakers have been serving as portable monitors for recording sessions since 1959. They have been shipped, carried in taxis, and stowed in car trunks. They have worked in studios, in concert halls, and, propped up on logs, in the Kentucky woods. They have presided over the recordings of a variety of artists — pianist Ann Schein, bandleader Eddie Condon, folk singer Theodore Bikel.



David Jones, the recording engineer who owns them, brought them in to AR for a preventive maintenance checkup. We made a few minor repairs, replaced the grille cloths, and took a picture of them.

**AR loudspeakers are often used in professional applications because of their natural musical quality, but they are primarily designed for use in the home. AR-2a's are $109 to $128, depending on finish; other models are priced from $89 to $225. A five-year guarantee covers the full cost of any repairs, including reimbursement of freight charges.**

A catalog and list of AR dealers in your area are available on request.

**ACOUSTIC RESEARCH, INC.,** 24 Thorndike St., Cambridge 41, Mass.

CIRCLE 1 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# BOGEN's new stereo components receive highest praise from HIRSCH-HOUCK, leading independent consumer test laboratory.

## RP60 Receiver

"The stereo performance of the RP60 was exceptional. Separation was more uniform with frequency than we have ever seen on a multiplex tuner. In particular we were pleased to see that the separation was nearly 20db at 10KC and 17db at 15KC. This is substantially better than we measured on a number of quite expensive FM multiplex tuners.

"Also the frequency response was more uniform than that of any other FM tuner we have ever measured, being better than ± 0.5db from 20-20,000 cps. The hum level of the tuner was −59db, which approached the residual hum of our Boonton generator. We have never measured hum less than −60db.

"From a functional standpoint, the RP60 is well conceived and executed. The styling is attractive, and complete control facilities are obtained without excessive cluttering of the panel with controls. The phone jack on the front panel is an excellent idea and worked well. We particularly liked the fact that the listening volume with low impedance phones was comfortable, and the series resistors in the phone circuit eliminated the background hiss and hum which so often plague the user of phones with a power amplifier.

"The Stereo Minder works well. This, or some equivalent, is an absolute necessity in a stereo tuner or receiver, and some otherwise excellent tuners are rendered nearly useless for stereo broadcasting conditions by the lack of an indication of the presence of a stereo transmission.

"The RP60 (or RPF60) is a basically excellent unit."

HIRSCH-HOUCK REPORT #EFGMP-451-FF

$299.95

## TP250 Tuner

"The simplicity and functional design of the TP250 are exemplary. This is a tuner which any layman or housewife can operate without difficulty. It is difficult to criticize its performance, since it proved to be an exceptionally listenable tuner. It was noticeably superior in sound (on stereo broadcasts) to some much more pretentious and expensive tuners. This may be attributable to the low distortion, excellent separation and non-critical tuning.

"Stereo separation is excellent through the midrange, being 25db or better from 500cps to 9KC. It is better than average up to 10KC, where it is most needed."

HIRSCH-HOUCK REPORT #FG-450-FF

$159.95

Receivers, amplifiers, tuners from $99.95; Turntables from $59.95. Write for free BOGEN Stereo High Fidelity components catalog.

**BOGEN** LEAR SIEGLER, INC.
COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION
DESK H-11, PARAMUS, N. J.

PRICES SLIGHTLY HIGHER IN THE WEST

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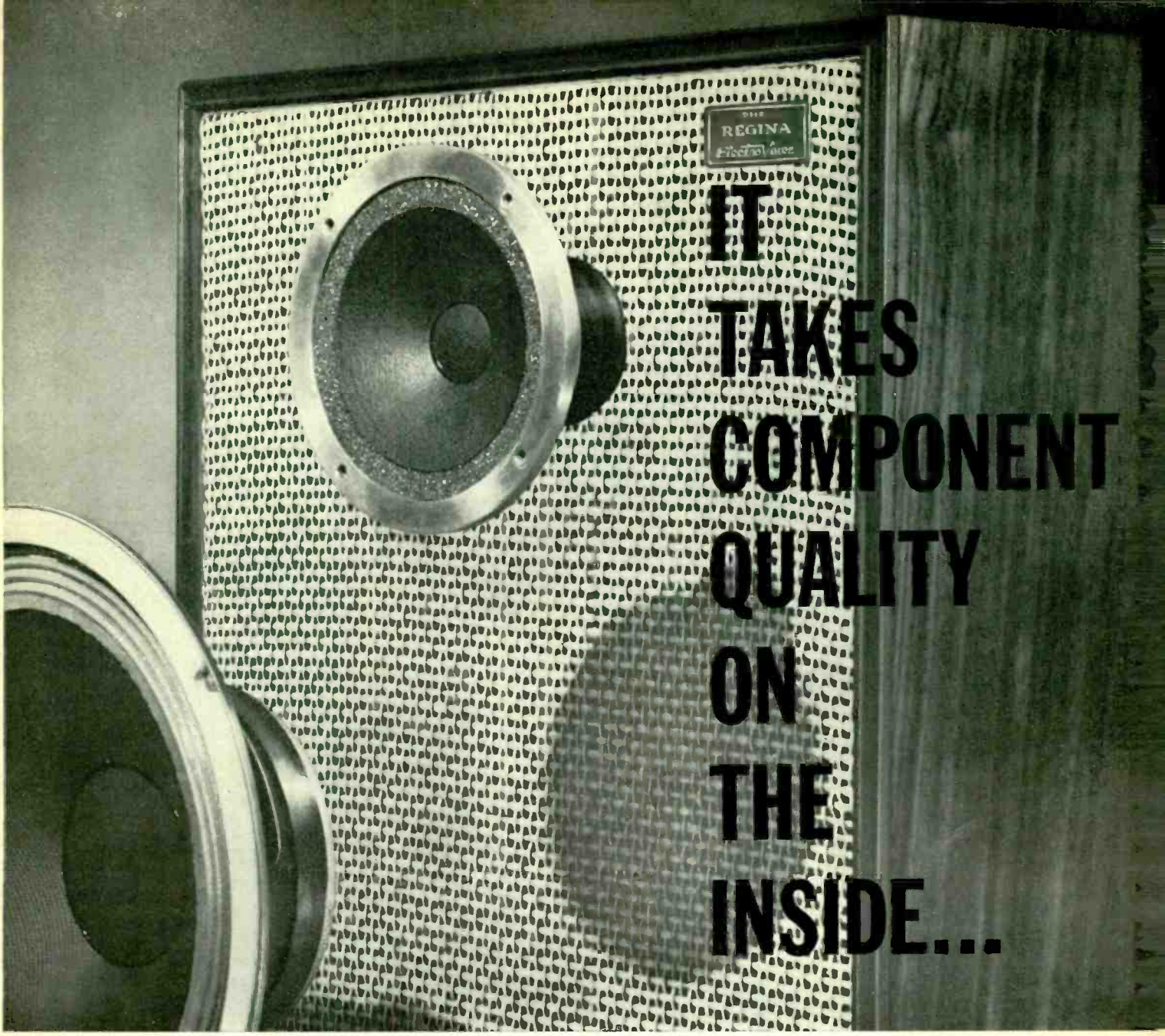


# to provide the biggest sound in slim-lines!

New Electro-Voice REGINA 200

Now! Enjoy a slim-line system that sounds as good as it looks! The new E-V Regina 200 with component-quality speakers expressly designed to meet the challenge of ultra-thin cabinetry!

In the woofer, for example, where some thin-speaker systems use light-weight "radio set" speakers, the new E-V Regina 200 employs a true 10-inch high fidelity speaker... with powerful 1 lb. 6 oz. ceramic magnet, precision edgewise-wound voice coil and specially-tailored low-resonance suspension. This combination guarantees solid response to 50 cps, plus minimum distortion and optimum efficiency — with even the lowest-powered stereo amplifiers!

Now, examine the tweeter! It has the look and sound of fine laboratory equipment! The heavy die-cast frame and jewel-like machining insures a lifetime of uniform response. And note the polyurethane suspension system that's years ahead of the rest! It's the secret of the remarkably smooth response to 15,000 cps! Note the handy level control on the back of the Regina 200 for exact personal control of tonal balance.

Measuring only 5-5/8 inches deep, 24-3/8 inches high, 16-3/8 inches wide, the new E-V Regina is a beautifully easy answer to your stereo speaker placement problems. And it's easy on the pocketbook, too . . . just $89.50 net with oiled walnut finish.

Hear the biggest sound in slim-lines... the new Electro-Voice Regina 200 at your E-V dealer's today!

**ELECTRO-VOICE, INC.**

*Commercial Products Division*
*Dept. 1124H, Buchanan, Michigan*

Electro-Voice®

**CIRCLE 45 ON READER-SERVICE CARD**

## AUTHORitatively Speaking

When we first read the typescript of "Kindling the Magic Spark," which leads off this issue on p. 44, we were tempted to call it "The Great Debate." Certainly among dedicated operaphiles, at least, the emergence of the operatic "stereo spectacular" has led to heated—on occasion, unduly heated—argument. We won't claim that the speakers who appear in these pages are quite all passion spent, either; but if there are rapier thrusts here, they are made with grace and style—as one would expect of such eminently civilized persons as **Harold Rosenthal, John Culshaw,** and **Charles Reid.**

Charles Reid is, of course, a familiar voice in this magazine, being our regular correspondent in London (see "Notes from Abroad") and a frequent contributor of feature articles. Mr. Reid, something of a specialist on conductors (his recent book on Sir Thomas Beecham has received notable acclaim), acts as moderator for the present proceedings. Of the disputants, Mr. Rosenthal is editor of the British journal *Opera*, and author of several volumes devoted to the art of opera and its practitioners; Mr. Culshaw is chief of classical recording activities for Decca-London (i.e., the man largely responsible for such albums as London's 1959 *Das Rheingold* and this year's *Salome*). Whether it is Mr. Rosenthal or Mr. Culshaw who is to be considered the devil's advocate, each reader will determine in view of his own preconceptions.

No music listener needs introduction to the celebrated baritone **George London.** Since his debut at the Metropolitan in 1951, Mr. London has appeared at all the major opera houses here and abroad (including Moscow's Bolshoi, where he sang, in Russian, Mussorgsky's Tsar Boris) and has accumulated an impressive list of recording credits. His recent appearances on television have still further broadened an audience appreciative of his versatility both as singer and as actor. Anyone unacquainted with Mr. London's gifts as a writer has only to turn to p. 48 and read "The Don and His Women."

Another baritone on our current roster of contributors is **Conrad L. Osborne,** author of "The Quest for Verismo," p. 51, and the guest editorial appearing on p. 43. Our identification of Mr. Osborne as a professional singer we know will not surprise the many readers who follow his penetrating critiques of vocal recordings in these pages every month; and they have probably guessed too that the initials C.L.O. stand for someone closely connected with the theatre—in which surmise they would be quite right: Mr. Osborne was once embarked on a stage career and is now taking an active interest in directing. About these arts, Mr. Osborne writes for various publications, including *Opera News* and the *New York Herald Tribune*; HIGH FIDELITY regards itself as having vested rights in his time and talents, however—we naturally think of our onetime Managing Editor as colleague and friend-of-the-family.

Televised opera may never be to every TV owner's taste, but for readers of this magazine to hear and see Puccini clear would surely mark some kind of millennium. With a view to this prospect, **Charles Tepfer** offers some advice on improving your television's sound: see "In Video Est Audio," p. 55.

# How to install

# (1) an FM stereo tuner with Multiplex, (2) an AM tuner with variable bandwidth, (3) a stereo master control center, and (4) a 65-watt stereo power amplifier, all in 20 seconds:

## Take a Fisher 800-B. Connect your speaker wires to it. Plug it in.

Yes. That's all it takes to get the Fisher 800-B ready to play. This famous integrated stereo receiver incorporates four of the world's finest stereo components – all on **one** superb chassis. The entire unit takes up only 17½ inches of shelf space and, most remarkable of all, it is only 13½ inches deep.

To include all the 'electronics' of a top-performance stereo system in a single unit is no small engineering feat. High quality combined with single-chassis construction is the exception rather than the rule, as many stereo enthusiasts have found out from experience. The fact is that **only** Fisher has been able to produce high-power integrated receivers of consistently first-rate performance – totally free from overheating or other life-expectancy problems and in every way comparable to separate-component systems. The 800-B has actually aroused as much enthusiasm among the most advanced audio perfectionists as among less technically-inclined music lovers.

Everything about the Fisher 800-B was conceived with today's most sophisticated engineering standards in mind. The wide-band FM section has been designed for Multiplex from the ground up, with the extra sensitivity and absolute stability required for genuinely distortion-free FM Stereo reception. The IHFM Standard sensitivity rating is 2.5 microvolts. The AM tuner is adjustable for either 'sharp' or 'broad' bandwidth and has a sensitivity of 5 microvolts for 2 watts output. The power amplifier is capable of 65 watts IHFM music power output at less than 0.8% harmonic distortion–32½ watts per stereo channel. FM Stereo reception is greatly facilitated by the exclusive STEREO BEAM, the ingenious Fisher invention that shows instantly whether or not an FM station is broadcasting in Multiplex.

Ask your nearest authorized Fisher dealer for a demonstration of the 800-B. See for yourself that it is the answer to the requirements of stereo in moderate space and at moderate cost, without the slightest compromise in quality. Price **$429.50***. The Fisher 500-B, virtually identical to the 800-B but with FM only, **$359.50***. Cabinets for either, in walnut or mahogany, **$24.95***.

**Free! $1.00 Value!**

**New, 1963 Edition of The Fisher Handbook**


This 1963 Fisher Handbook is packed with valuable information for the expert and novice alike. It contains an authoritative explanation of FM-Stereo, complete specifications on Fisher equipment, and many photos of custom installations for your inspiration and guidance. For your personal copy, mail the prepaid postcard opposite page 16.

# THE FISHER

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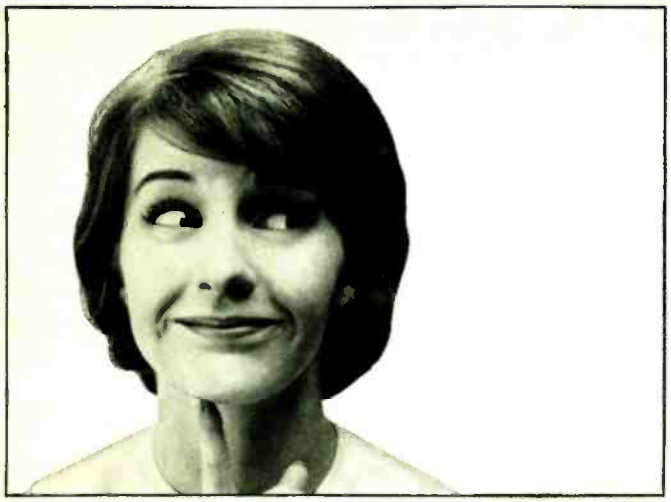


# SHE LOOKS

# HE LISTENS

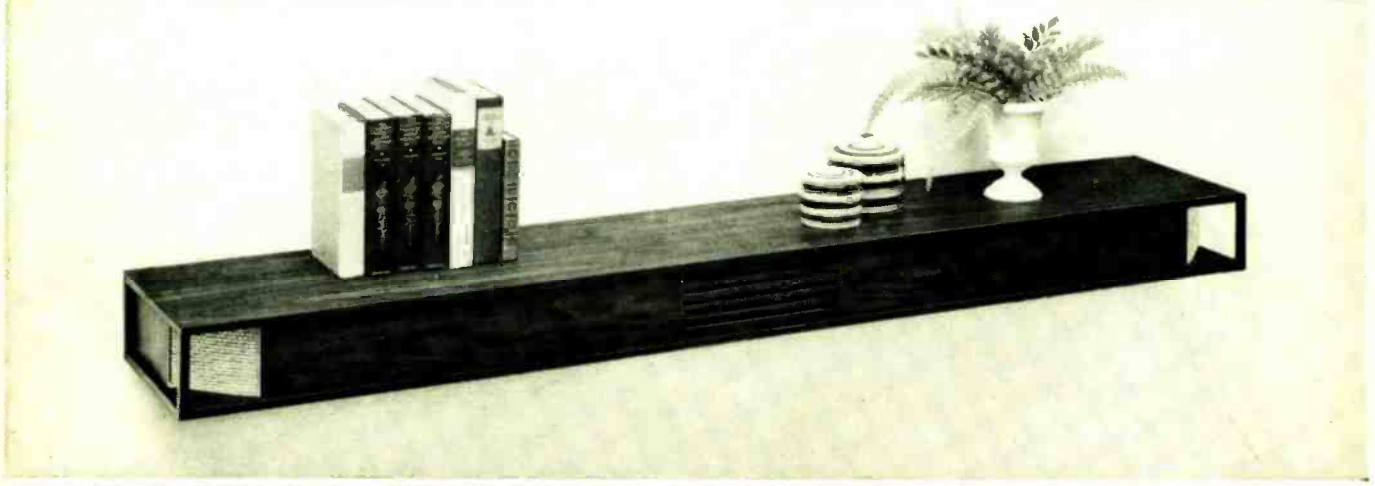
And says, "Hi-Fi? This is Hi-Fashion and I love it!" She doesn't see a speaker system at all. She sees a beautiful and versatile piece of furniture... its use limited only by her imagination. She's happy because SONORAMA doesn't fight her decor, but blends with it beautifully. She's delighted that SONORAMA is so compact... doesn't require any floor space at all. She's thrilled with the Contemporary style in oil-rubbed walnut (as shown). Also available in Early American in Maple and French Provincial in Fruitwood.

PAT. APPLIED FOR

**SONORAMA**
BY
REK·O·KUT

Never before has he heard one stereo speaker system that does the work of two. No matter where he places SONORAMA, no matter where he sits, he hears the same vivid, natural separation of tones... from its big bass through magnificent mid-range to highs of superb clarity. He senses a wide source of sound ...amazingly non-directional. How? An advanced configuration of SONORAMA'S four 8-inch woofers and two super tweeters. Response: 40-17,000 cps. High efficiency: operates from as little as 2 watts power up to 50 watts. SONORAMA ...just 5" x 12" x 67"... yours for only $149.95 net (as illustrated—other models slightly higher).

## NEW! THE FIRST COMPLETE STEREO SPEAKER SYSTEM IN ONE UNIT!



REK-O-KUT COMPANY, INC., DEPT. HF-11, 38-19 108th St., Corona 68, New York • EXPORT: Morhan Exporting Corp., 458 Broadway, N. Y. C.

**CIRCLE 83 ON READER-SERVICE CARD**

# This Fisher tuner outperforms all other makes regardless of price.

The Fisher FM-100-B FM Stereo Multiplex wide-band tuner, $249.50*

You don't have to buy the costliest Fisher model to obtain better FM tuner performance than any other high-fidelity component manufacturer can offer you.

The Fisher FM-100-B is just one step up in price from the **least** expensive Fisher FM Stereo Multiplex tuner, yet it yields to no other available brand in sophisticated Multiplex circuitry, nor in the ability to receive even the weakest and most distant broadcast signals with optimum noise suppression, interference rejection and audio fidelity.

The specifications achieved with the high-gain GOLDEN CASCODE front end (**three** tuned circuits), **five** wide-band IF stages and **four** wide-band limiters are nothing short of spectacular: 0.6 microvolt sensitivity for 20 db quieting at 72 ohms (1.8 microvolts IHFM); 70 db signal-to-noise ratio (100% modulation); 60 db alternate channel selectivity; 2.2 db capture ratio (IHFM); 0.4% harmonic distortion at 100% modulation. But the most remarkable feature of all is the exclusive STEREO BEACON, the ingenious Fisher invention that automatically lights a signal to show whether or not an FM station is broadcasting in Multiplex and automatically switches the tuner to the required mode of operation, Mono or Stereo.

# Then how good is this Fisher tuner for $50 more?

The Fisher FM-200-B FM Stereo Multiplex wide-band tuner, $299.50*

It took Fisher to improve on Fisher. The FM-200-B tuner is unquestionably an even more advanced instrument than the FM-100-B, well worth the price difference of $50.00 to the perfectionist. An additional tuned circuit (a total of **four**) plus two of the new Nuvistor tubes in the front end, one more limiter (5 instead of 4) and a specially designed cathode-follower audio output result in the following subtle improvements in specifications: 0.5 microvolt sensitivity for 20 db quieting at 72 ohms (1.6 microvolts IHFM); 74 db signal-to-noise ratio (100% modulation); 64 db alternate channel selectivity; 1.5 db capture ratio (IHFM); 0.3% harmonic distortion at 100% modulation.

In addition, the FM-200-B incorporates not only the STEREO BEACON feature but also the exclusive Fisher MICROTUNE automatic frequency control system.

To make up your mind between these two engineering prodigies, see and hear both of them demonstrated by an authorized Fisher dealer. You will come away convinced that nothing can surpass a Fisher – except another (and more elaborate) Fisher!


**FREE!** For your free copy of the new 1963 Fisher Handbook, use the insert card opposite page 16.

# The Fisher

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CIRCLE 50 ON READER-SERVICE CARD


# *hold the future in your hand with* SONY®

RESEARCH MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

THIS IS TELEVISION OF THE FUTURE. This is the personal set predicted for the decade of the Seventies. So light and compact you carry it with you like a book, wherever you go. Put it beside your bed, on your desk at the office, outdoors for picnicking on the patio, in the back of the car or on the boat. It plays anywhere on its own rechargeable battery pack, auto battery or AC, with a picture so bright and sharp ordinary sets pale by comparison. Weighing only 8 lbs., it is hardly larger than a telephone, yet it outperforms standard receivers in sensitivity and durability. Available only in limited quantities, SONY brings it to you today through its advanced research in the epitaxial transistor, so powerful and sensitive it is used only in computers and other advanced electronic equipment —and the new Micro-TV. See it today at selected dealers. SONY TV 5-303W list $229.50. Optional battery pack.

**TR-817**—8-transistor pocketable with RF stage and tone control, "on-off" switch button, tuning meter. In gray, with battery, earphone, carrying case, auxiliary antenna. List **$39.95.**

**TR-911**—9-transistor 3-band portable receives standard and 3-9 and 9-24 shortwave bands. Lighted dial, tuning meter for precise station selection. Complete with batteries and earphone, list **$99.95.** Leather case **$9.95** extra.

**SONY TFM-95**—9-transistor portable FM/AM receiver that doubles as a car radio with optional bracket. Complete with batteries, auto antenna jack. TFM-95 list **$79.95.** Auto. bracket **$12.95.**

**SONY CORPORATION OF AMERICA** 514 Broadway, New York 12, N.Y.

CIRCLE 98 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# Here's how a really advanced stereo control amplifier...


# becomes this simple to use!


**The new Fisher X-101-C: sophisticated stereo design with the new 'basic' look.**

Even without the dramatically new arrangement of controls, this would still be by far the most advanced single-chassis integrated stereo control-amplifier in its power class. That much is assured by its performance. Its Hinged Control Desk, however, makes it the first genuine all-family amplifier in high fidelity history.

For the audiophiles in the family, the X-101-C incorporates comprehensive controls of the utmost versatility. But for immediate enjoyment of stereo by even the least technically-inclined members of the family, only the 'basic' controls (Program Selector, Stereo/Mono Switch and Volume Control) are in view. The other controls – those that are not absolutely essential for instant use of the amplifier—are concealed behind an attractive, hinged cover. The result is the most uncluttered appearance and the most functional operation ever achieved in a stereo component – as well as the end of all uncertainty on the part of the non-technical music lover.

The X-101-C is rated at 60 watts IHFM Music Power (30 watts per channel) and features several important innovations in addition to its Hinged Control Desk. The exclusive Fisher Tape-Play System, for example, permits full use of all controls during tape playback and yet retains the convenience of monitoring while recording. A front-panel jack is available for the connection of headphones, and a special switch can silence the main speakers while the headphones are in use. A revolutionary new circuit development permits direct connection of a center-channel speaker without using an additional amplifier!

See and hear the new Fisher X-101-C at your nearest dealer. Even the briefest demonstration will convince you of its superb engineering logic and brilliant performance. Price: **$199.50***. The new X-100-B stereo control-amplifier, an improved 50-watt version of the famous X-100, **$169.50***.

The X-202-B, a highly advanced 80-watt stereo control-amplifier, **$249.50***.

The X-1000, world's most powerful single-chassis stereo control-amplifier (110 watts), **$339.50***.

**Free! $1.00 Value!**

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This 1963 Fisher Handbook is packed with valuable information for the expert and novice alike. It contains an authoritative explanation of FM-Stereo, complete specifications on Fisher equipment, and many photos of custom installations for your inspiration and guidance. For your personal copy, mail the prepaid postcard opposite page 16.

# THE FISHER

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CIRCLE 50 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

THIS MAN is *not* disturbing his wife while he listens to a stereo concert . . . and he's sitting out in the audience where he wants to be . . . *not* in the middle of the orchestra (where he'd be with ordinary headphone stereo). Right by his hand he can control volume; adjust left-right balance to suit the music source and the best hearing conditions for him; switch from mono to stereo, or stereo with SPACE-PERSPECTIVE*; individually select and/or reverse channels; switch speaker system. 'Phone jacks for two. All this in Jensen's new CC-1 Headphone Control Center with SPACE-PERSPECTIVE . . . an attractive, compact, versatile unit you can place anywhere . . . even hang on the wall.

What makes the *extra* difference is SPACE-PERSPECTIVE . . . the amazing headphone development which approximates more closely the sensation of listening to a stereo speaker system in a room. In ordinary headphone listening, left channel sound is confined to the left ear, and right channel sound to the right ear. In stereo speaker listening, sound from the left speaker reaches the left ear *and also* the right ear by means of the natural diffraction of sound waves around the head; and right speaker sound will reach the left ear in the same manner, thus resulting in what we all recognize as natural stereo sound in realistic perspective. SPACE-PERSPECTIVE adds this diffraction, which is missing in ordinary headphone listening, by electrically cross-feeding sound from one channel to the other to simulate the passage of sound waves around the head. You are now "in front of the speakers" via headphones . . . not in the middle where the sounds are isolated to each ear.

The CC-1 will operate with some other stereo headphones . . . but for best results the Jensen HS-1 'phones are recommended . . . the new professional stereo headphones which offer the most advanced features for top acoustical performance and comfort. The CC-1 Control Center sells for $39.95 . . . HS-1 Stereo Headphones for $24.95 . . . and a CFN-1 SPACE-PERSPECTIVE network only, with input jack, for $19.50. Write for Brochure MH. Jensen Manufacturing Company, Division of The Muter Company, 6601 S. Laramie Ave., Chicago 38, Illinois.

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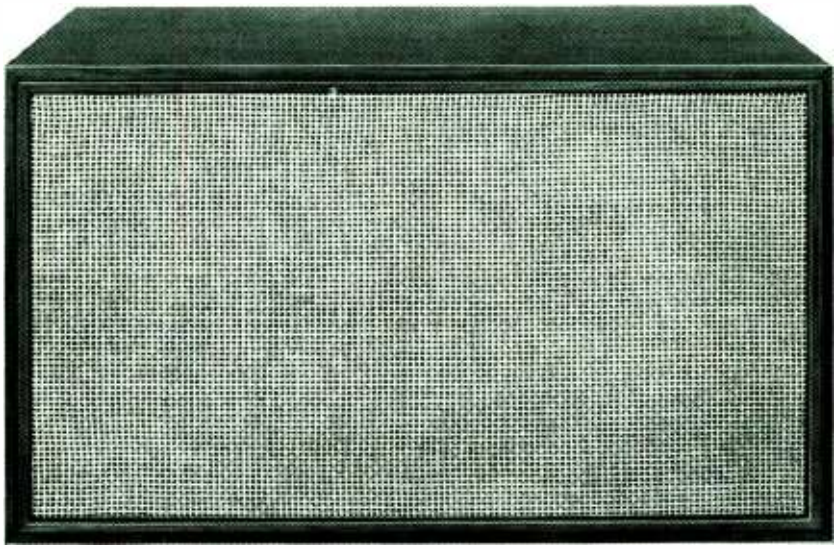
# Now you can tell whether it's the cellos playing low or the double basses playing high.



## The new Fisher XP-4A speaker system achieves an entirely new order of clarity in bass reproduction.

Totally clear, precisely differentiated, 'analytic' bass from a 2½-cubic-foot speaker system is a phenomenon of such novelty that it will undoubtedly be the first thing to strike you when you hear the XP-4A. Not that the mid-range and the treble are less remarkable. They retain the superbly natural quality first heard in the original Fisher XP-4 – since the two AcoustiGlas-packed 5-inch mid-range drivers and the 2-inch hemispherical tweeter have been left unchanged.

But the 12-inch woofer now incorporates a totally new concept: a 2-inch voice coil wound on **pure electrolytic copper.** This specially obtained copper is so highly conductive that unusually high eddy currents are generated in opposition to the voice coil movement. These eddy currents are linear over the entire frequency range and provide linear damping at **all** frequencies reproduced by the woofer. The result is a degree of bass definition and detail that will startle you on first hearing and delight you forever after.

This unique new Fisher development is a further refinement of the original XP-4 design –the first loudspeaker system with a 'basketless' woofer. The XP-4A continues, of course, to feature this entirely novel construction technique: the woofer has no metal frame, being supported by the massive walls of the speaker enclosure itself. Thus there is nothing left to cause undesirable reflections from the back of the woofer cone; all rearward radiation is absorbed by AcoustiGlas packing **directly** behind the cone, eliminating the last trace of bass coloration.

**The new Fisher XP-4A** is now at your Fisher dealer. Hear it. Whether or not you are fully aware of all its engineering features, you will instantly appreciate its amazingly **true** sound. Price, in oiled walnut or mahogany, **$199.50*.**

**The new Fisher XP-1A,** improved version of the original Free Piston 3-way speaker system, in oiled walnut or mahogany, **$129.50*.**

**The new Fisher XP-2A,** improved version of the first moderately priced Free Piston speaker system, in oiled walnut or mahogany, **$84.50*.**

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# NOTES FROM ABROAD

## LONDON

Dmitri Shostakovich came through customs at London Airport carrying over his heart a soft-brimmed hat which, like his well-used necktie, detachable soft collar, and clay-colored raincoat suggested the small-town public official.

I wanted to say to him: "The mysterious, beautiful, magical horn calls in the third movement of your Tenth Symphony are among the great symphonic truths. But don't you think they come over better from English players than from Russians? Don't you, on reflection, find Russian horn tone a bit dithery, saxophonic, and *vox humana*? And while we're on the subject of symphonies, what arrangements are being made for recording your latest, the No. 12? One of my friends at EMI has been beating around for a copy of the score from Upper Regent Street to Millionaires' Row, but agents, publishers, and Embassy officials alike are dumb; nobody knows a thing."

*Shostakovich: singularly reticent.*

I tried to get these points across to Shostakovich, who has no English, through his bilingual (at least) secretary, a smiling, evasive young brunette in a smart white knitted coat, but before the words were out of my mouth, Shostakovich had been piloted by the elbow to a roomy blue automobile with Corps Diplomatique plates fore and aft. I trailed the car through outer and inner suburbs to the Savoy Hotel and, after the visiting celebrity had checked in, did as all zealous reporters do—got into the lift with him. Between me and Shostakovich, however, stood a barrier of granitic young cultural counselors with silk suits, cameras, and switch-off smiles. Mr. Shostakovich, they said, was tired, had been traveling since 4 a.m., must go to bed, would perhaps throw a limited press conference—not a free-for-all, just a select party—when he reached Edinburgh [where the Earl of Harewood, cousin of the Queen and director of the annual arts festival, had billed him as guest of honor]. The last thing I wanted was to keep Shostakovich from his richly earned pillow. But the day was yet young. I was willing to wait. How about my coming round three hours, even six hours later?

Impossible, returned the granitic young men. From his corner of the lift, hat still over heart, Shostakovich watched me with what I can only describe as an expression of acute fear.

After he had been bodyguarded into his suite overlooking the Thames and safely shut away from Western pryers (and, for that matter, admirers), a message came down to the lobby that his son Maxim Shostakovich, pianist and aspirant-conductor, would see the press at 4 p.m. Reporters sat in the Savoy pressroom, smoked, sipped tea, nibbled cakes. At 4:15 p.m., the impresario's publicity man put his head round the door and said: "Sorry, boys. I've just been told by the hall porter that Maxim Shostakovich and others of the Russian party walked out of the hotel five minutes ago, leaving no message."

*Continued on page 20*


# The easiest FM Multiplex tuner kit to build...

# is the one you would choose for performance alone!

The Fisher KM-60 StrataKit is the inevitable choice of the kit builder who has considered the pros and cons of every FM Stereo Multiplex tuner available in kit form today. The KM-60 is by far the easiest to build—because it is a StrataKit. It is by far the finest performer—because it is a Fisher.

The StrataKit method of kit construction is a unique Fisher development. It makes kit building so easy that there is no longer a difference between the work of an experienced technician and of a totally unskilled novice. Assembly takes place by simple, error-proof stages (Strata). Each stage corresponds to a **separate** fold-out page in the instruction manual. Each stage is built from a **separate** transparent packet of parts (StrataPack). Major components come already mounted on the extra-heavy-gauge steel chassis. Wires are **pre-cut** for every stage—which means every page. All work can be checked stage-by-stage and page-by-page, before proceeding to the next stage.

In the KM-60 StrataKit, the front-end and Multiplex stages are assembled and prealigned. The other stages are already aligned and require a simple 'touch-up' adjustment by means of the tuner's laboratory-type d'Arsonval signal-strength meter.

When it comes to performance, the ultra-sophisticated wide-band Fisher circuitry of the KM-60 puts it in a spectacular class by itself. Its IHFM Standard sensitivity of 1.8 microvolts makes it the world's most sensitive FM tuner kit. Capture ratio is 2.5 db; signal-to-noise ratio 70 db. Enough said.

Another outstanding feature of the Multiplex section is the exclusive STEREO BEAM, the Fisher invention that shows instantly whether or not an FM station is broadcasting in stereo. It is in operation at all times and is completely independent of the tuning meter.

Everything considered, the Fisher KM-60 StrataKit is very close to the finest FM Stereo Multiplex tuner that money can buy and by far the finest that you can build. Price, **$169.50***.

**FREE! $1.00 VALUE!** Write for The Kit Builder's Manual, a new, illustrated guide to high fidelity kit construction.

The Kit Builder's Manual

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**Long Island City 1, N. Y.**

Please send me without charge The Kit Builder's Manual, complete with detailed specifications on all Fisher StrataKits.

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## NOTES FROM ABROAD

*Continued from page 16*

The reporters agreed to call it a day. In his Symphony No. 12 Shostakovich glorifies the memory of Lenin and, in one of his movement headings, the Bolshevik-controlled cruiser *Aurora* which, in October 1917, shelled the Winter Palace, Petrograd, headquarters of the moderate Kerensky regime. It was this act that ended Russian hopes of Western-style government. As ideological fire-eaters go, Shostakovich is singularly timorous when confronted by reporters' notebooks.

**EMI's Five Hundred Hours.** Attended by top-level conferences at which eight alternative designs for a new international label were mulled over, what appears to be the most intensive recording drive in history, launched by EMI last June, will have entered upon its last two months by the time these notes see print. By mid-December, if all goes according to schedule, EMI teams will have spent well over five hundred hours recording eight operas and one Requiem—

*De los Angeles and Fischer-Dieskau.*

at Kingsway Hall here at home, the Bamberg Kulturhaus, the Rome Opera, and two venues in Paris (the Eglise Saint-Roch and the Salle Wagram). The fruits of their toil, adorned with the new label (which is as yet a secret, although I understand it to be a highly gilded job), will be marketed in Europe and America as from February 1963. The nine items, already in the vaults or to come, are:

1. A new *Merry Widow*, sung in German, conducted by Lovro von Matacic, with cast headed by Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Hanny Steffek, Nicolai Gedda, and Eberhardt Wächter. This was done at Kingsway in July under the general supervision of Walter Legge. For the first time in EMI practice at this level, the Kingsway floor was squared off and numbered so that singers could make strategical movements vis-à-vis the microphones. As a result, the performance has more actuality and zing than we have expected from EMI recordings in the past. The sound is notably two-dimensional, alternately retreating and coming at the hearer, as well as moving from side to side at crucial points.

2. The Requiem of Fauré, with Victoria de los Angeles and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau as soloists, made at Saint-Roch, André Cluytens conducting.

*Continued on page 26*

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# Introduces Three Remarkable New Loudspeaker Systems

***ADC14. ADC-16. ADC-18. From now on, three names that must be reckoned with when high fidelity loudspeakers are the subject.***

The engineering assignment was as simple as the engineering was difficult: *"Create Audio Dynamics loudspeaker systems that will satisfy the most finicky audio engineer, the most discriminating lover of music, the most tasteful housewife."*

Now, after years of painstaking development, *Audio Dynamics Corporation*—creators of the unexcelled ADC stereophonic phonograph cartridges—feels that its speakers have met those criteria.

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All three of these loudspeaker systems feature a revolutionary rectangular woofer, developed especially for ADC by the British Engineer, Raymond Cooke of KEF Electronics.

High frequencies are handled by a unit of advanced design. A 1½" air stiffened mylar diaphragm is driven from a 1½" voice coil. The small size of the radiating surface gives very wide dispersion, while the low mass and high flux density insure remarkable transient response.

### *Exceptional High Fidelity*

No hyperbole could possibly do justice to the sound reproduction characteristics of these loudspeakers. Lack of cone breakup and doppler distortion and the very low and highly damped fundamental resonance combine to provide the "transparent," effortless, bass associated with a live performance. Treble response is smooth and has very fine dispersion. The excellent response to transients gives startingly faithful reproduction of the attack and decay characteristics of the various instruments.

As with other ADC products these systems remove yet another veil between the listener and the music.

### *Stunning Cabinetry*

The enclosure forms an integral part of the over-all speaker design.

Peter Quay Yang, the noted designer, was commissioned to create cabinetry to conform to ADC's strict engineering requirements and yet be attractive at the same time.

The results: shimmering walnut cabinetry that will be a point of attraction in any home. The ADC-14 cabinet measures 25" x 13½" x 12½" ; the ADC-16, 27½" x 17" x 12½" ; the ADC-18, 40" x 17" x 12½" . We know of no more handsome high fidelity speakers than these ADC's.

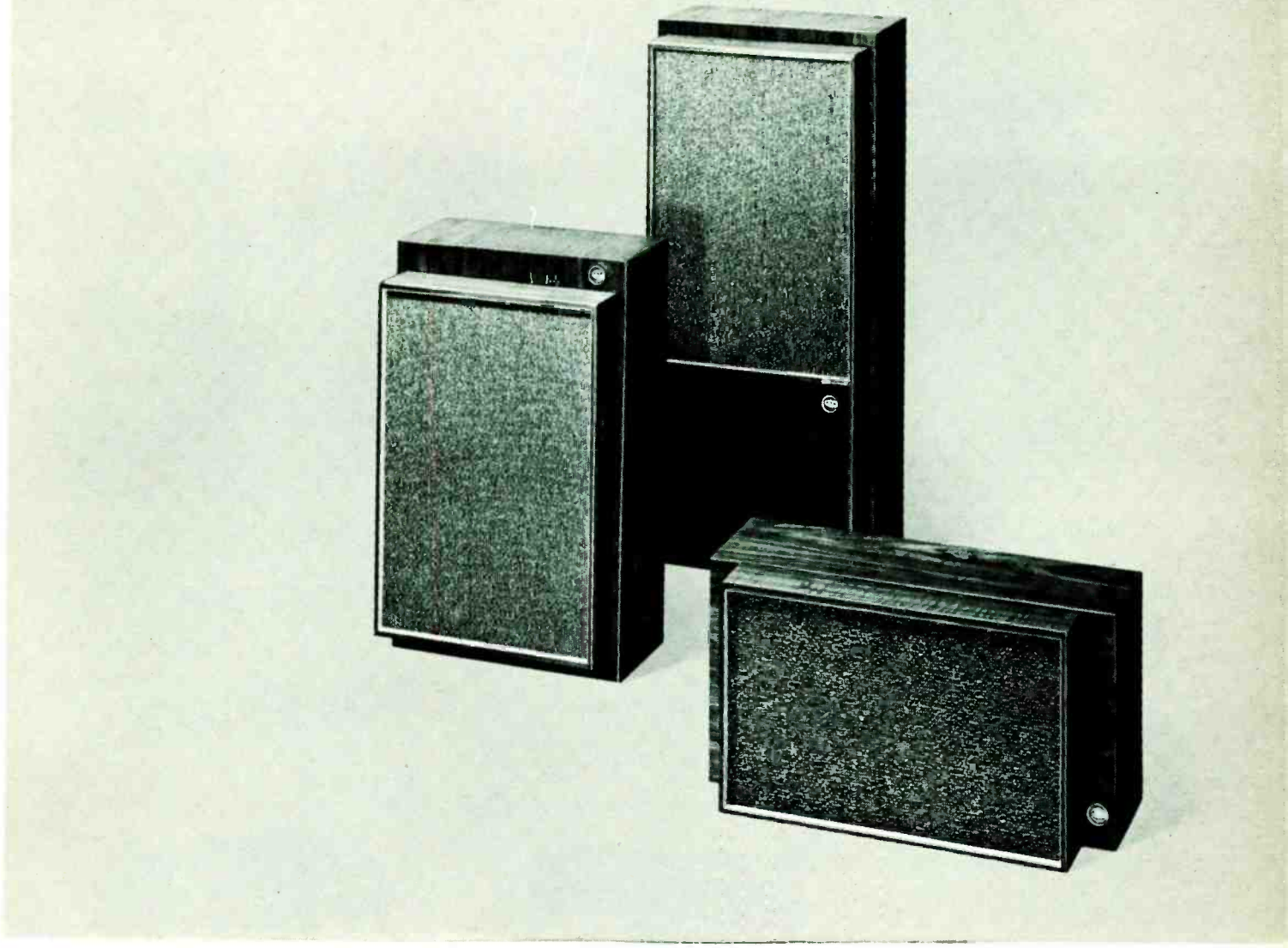
*The speakers are not inexpensive. The ADC-14 retails for $175. The ADC-16 retails for $220. The ADC-18, the largest in the group, retails for $250.*

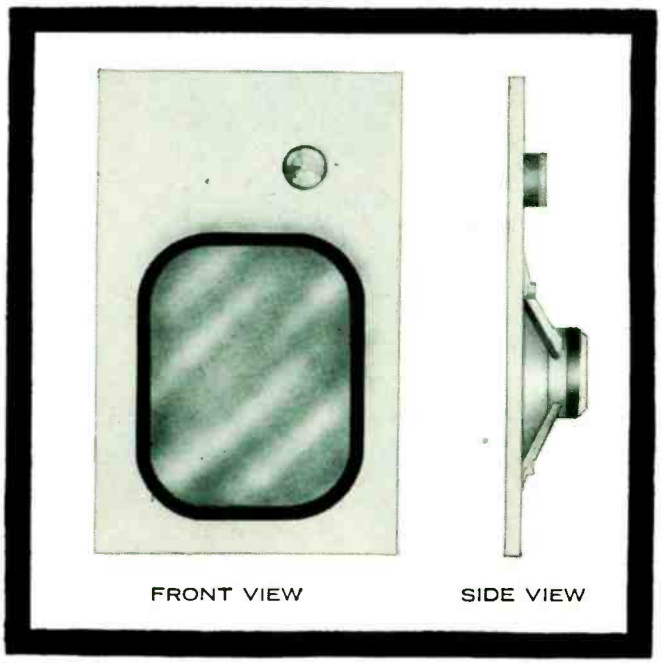
These remarkable loudspeakers are now in stock at leading high fidelity stores. We invite you to look at them, listen to them —and decide for yourself if what we claim is true.

ADC

**AUDIO DYNAMICS CORPORATION**

Pickett District Road, New Milford, Connecticut






***The rigid rectangular woofer diaphragm*** 16" x 12" in models ADC 16 & ADC 18 *(a slightly smaller woofer is used in the ADC 14)* is molded from feather light expanded plastic and is surfaced with aluminum. It has a radiating area twice that of a 12" woofer, resulting in very efficient coupling to the air. The rigidity of the diaphragm enables it to act as a perfect piston throughout its range. There is no cone breakup. An exclusive high compliance double surround of molded cambric cloth is used to terminate the outer edge. The construction gives positive centering combined with the renowned damping properties of a cloth surround. The 9 lb. ceramic magnet assembly provides a high flux density and by careful equalization of leakage fields extreme flux linearity is achieved.

### *Engineering Specifications*

Frequency Response ADC-18.....20-20,000 c.p.s.
Frequency Response ADC-16.....30-20,000 c.p.s.
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BASS UNIT MAGNET STRUCTURE

Flux Density 12,700 Oersteds
Total Flux 165,000 Maxwells

TREBLE UNIT MAGNET STRUCTURE

Flux density 15,000 Oersteds
Total Flux 53,500 Maxwells
Impedance.....Due to unusually smooth impedance curve these units will operate with any amplifier impedance from 8 to 16 ohms.

Power Requirements.....Due to their relatively high efficiency these speakers will perform under domestic listening conditions using an amplifier rated as low as 10 watts. They may, however, be used quite safely with amplifiers rated up to 65 watts, R.M.S.

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88 to 108 mc coverage; better than 1.25 microvolt sensitivity; AFC for drift-free FM reception; tone control. Factory-assembled tuning unit; easy circuit board assembly. 7 lbs.

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## NEW FM/FM Stereo Tuner

Stereo Indicator light; phase control for max. separation and lowest distortion; adjustable AFC for drift-free reception; bar-type tuning indicator; filtered outputs for stereo tape recording. Factory assembled tuning unit. 16 lbs.

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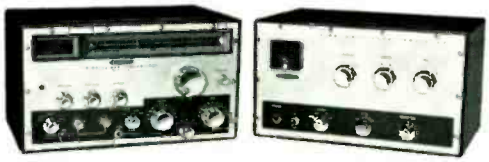

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**HA-20** Linear . . . . . **$99.95**

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Measures AC volts (RMS), AC volts (peak-to-peak), DC volts, Resistance and DB. Has 4½" 200 ua meter, precision 1% resistors and 11 megohm input. Slim, all-purpose test probe incl. 5 lbs.

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## NOTES FROM ABROAD

*Continued from page 20*

3. Smetana's *Bartered Bride*, from Bamberg [for details see "Notes from Abroad," September 1962].
4. *Boris Godunov*, with Boris Christoff, André Cluytens conducting, at Salle Wagram.
5. *Samson et Dalila*, with Rita Gorr, Jon Vickers, and Ernest Blanc, at Salle Wagram, Georges Prêtre conducting.
6. *Barbiere di Siviglia*, with De los Angeles and a Glyndebourne Festival cast, including Luigi Alva. Conductor: Vittorio Gui.
7. *Così fan tutte*, with Schwarzkopf and Alfredo Kraus (tenor), at Kingsway, Karl Böhm conducting.
8. *La Bohème*, with De los Angeles and Gedda, at the Rome Opera House, Thomas Schippers conducting.
9. *Lohengrin*, with Elisabeth Grümmer, Jon Vickers, Rita Gorr, and Fischer-Dieskau; Rudolf Kempe conducts.

CHARLES REID

*Christoff, with Cluytens conducting; Karl Böhm, with diva Schwarzkopf*

## ROME

As is usual when hot weather comes to Italy, music—like eating and other pleasures—moved outdoors last summer. Parks, courtyards, and ancient monuments were turned into alfresco concert halls or opera houses, and Italian theatres looked deserted. The buildings' appearance of abandonment was quite deceptive, however; inside, functioning as recording studios, they were steaming hives of activity.

In Milan, La Scala was the fief of Deutsche Grammophon, and in two weeks of sessions there in July the German firm added another pair of Verdi operas to its Italian list: *Il Trovatore*, conducted by veteran Tullio Serafin, with Antonietta Stella, Fiorenza Cossotto, Carlo Bergonzi, and Ettore Bastianini, and *La Traviata*, conducted by Antonino Votto, with Renata Scotto, tenor Gianni Raimondi, and Bastianini. In Rome, the Opera House was the scene of EMI's

*Continued on page 30*


**Perhaps two years from now the quality of this tape may be duplicated...perhaps never! Soundcraft Golden Tone—a physically perfect tape...a musically perfect sound.** A bold claim? Yes. Warranted? Yes. Here's why. Golden Tone is a very special tape... designed just for those who demand the finest performance from today's advanced recorders. Unless you have the discerning ear and the exacting equipment which ordinary tapes can't satisfy, there is no reason for you to buy Golden Tone.

A special magnetically-active FA-4 oxide formulation increases Golden Tone's high frequency output by 25%. Its signal-to-noise ratio is 7 db better than other brands, to give your recordings **the greatest dynamic range possible with a tape.** Precision-slit Golden Tone is free of edge burrs and skew. These physical defects can be cruelly exposed by the narrower tracks in 4-track recording. Microscopic burrs prevent the tracks on the edge of the tape from making intimate head contact, resulting in loss of "highs."

Skew, another hidden defect, produces cross-talk and loss of recording level. Golden Tone's oxide formulation and base are balanced to prevent cupping or curling, an effect which can also prevent tape to head intimacy. Golden Tone's oxide surface is Micropolished. This patented Soundcraft process removes any surface irregularity, prevents drop-outs, protects high frequency response and minimizes head wear.

From this physically perfect tape comes musically perfect sound. Golden Tone costs more, but it is worth more. It is produced in small quantities with infinite care and rigid quality control. It is the world's finest tape for those who demand the ultimate in sound reproduction. Offered for the first time anywhere—a long play Golden Tone tape on 1 mil Mylar*, TENSILIZED by DuPont—will not stretch or break. Also on ½ mil "Mylar" and 1½ mil Acetate Bases.


*DuPont T.M.

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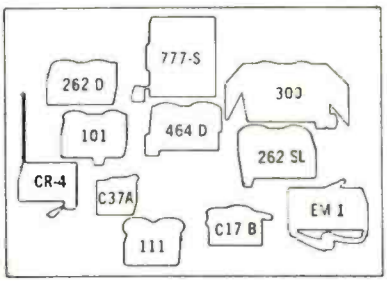
CIRCLE 82 ON READER-SERVICE CARD


▪ **Sony Stereo Tape Deck 262-D**—4 & 2 track stereo recording and playback tape transport to add tape to your existing hi fi system. $89.50. (Also available, not pictured, the new SRA-2 stereo recording amplifier for the 262 D. $89.50.) ▪ **Sony Sterecorder 777**—All transistorized professional stereo recorder featuring exclusive Sony Electro Bi-Lateral 4 & 2 track playback head. World's finest tape recorder. $595. ▪ **Sony Sterecorder 300**—A complete professional-quality hi fi stereo tape system with 4 & 2 track recording and playback in one portable unit. $399.50. ▪ **Sony Portable 101**—2 speed, dual-track, hi-fidelity recorder with 7" reel capacity. $99.50. ▪ **Sony Sterecorder 464-D**—Dual performance 4 track stereo tape deck with built-in recording & playback pre-amps for custom installations and portable use. $199.50. ▪ **Sony Wireless Microphone CR-4**—Pocket size mike and transmitter providing complete freedom from entangling microphone cables. $250. ▪ **Sony Condenser Microphone C-37 A**—For purity of sound reproduction, the unqualified choice of professional studios throughout the world. $295. ▪ **Sony Sound on Sound Recorder 262 SL**—The perfect recorder for language, music and drama students. With 4 track stereo playback. $199.50. ▪ **Sony Tapecorder 111**—A popularly priced, high quality bantam recorder for everyday family fun. $79.50. ▪ **Sony Condenser Microphone C-17 B**—Miniature size (3¾" x ⅝" diameter) and exceptional background isolation unidirectional cardioid pattern. $350. ▪ **Sony Newscaster Portable EM-1**—A professional on-the-spot battery powered portable recorder with precision spring wind constant speed motor. $495. ***All Sony Sterecorders are Multiplex ready!***




*For additional literature and name of nearest franchised dealer write Superscope, Inc., Dept. 1 Sun Valley, California*

**SUPERSCOPE** *The Tapeway to Stereo*

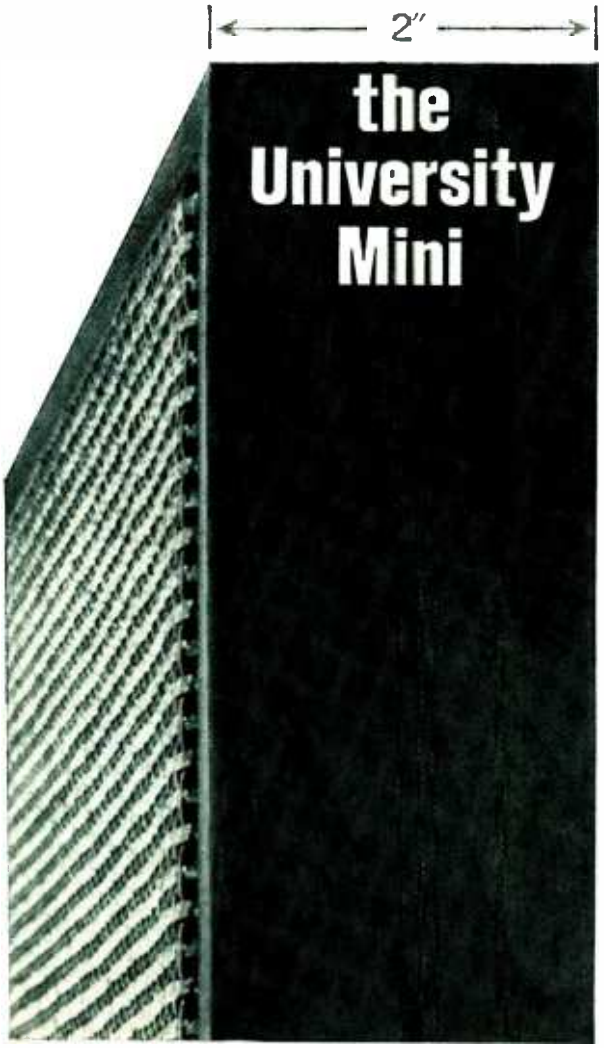
**CIRCLE 102 ON READER-SERVICE CARD**

We did it again! University created an entirely new sound reproducing system to produce the thinnest speaker system in existence capable of wide range high fidelity reproduction!

The new Mini is another University solution to the problem of maximum distortion-free bass in minimum space. It is only 2 inches thin, but its woofer diaphragm area is one of the largest available in any speaker system—188 square inches! How can so large a speaker fit into a two-inch thin enclosure? **University made the entire frontal area of the cabinet function as its bass and mid-range speakers,** by utilizing a thin, "piston-action" sheet of special veneered wood coupled to a newly designed, custom-matched voice coil!

How does it sound? It is an acoustic fact that, in general, the larger the diaphragm area, the lower will be a speaker's roll-off frequency (the point at which sound output begins to fall off). The Mini achieves bass response and output, therefore, far beyond the capacity of ordinary ultra-thin systems which use conventional cone speakers that, due to enclosure size, must be very small. The Mini also provides ideally balanced bass to mid-range, plus brilliant peak-free highs delivered by a superbly engineered, separate tweeter. In short—even if your space and budget requirements are extremely limited, you can still enjoy the pleasures of genuine high fidelity sound . . . traditional University sound—with the Mini! For floor or wall, shelf or table. Hear it at your hi-fi dealer. Response: 50-17,000 cps. 18" x 13⅜" x 2" deep. Oiled Walnut. Only $44.95.

## a speaker this thin required an entirely new system of reproducing sound!




For complete details and free 20-page Guide to Stereo High Fidelity, write: Desk P-11B.

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U-1B

CIRCLE 113 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## NOTES FROM ABROAD

*Continued from page 26*

1962 Italian recordings [for details see Charles Reid's report above].

Other major companies continued their practice of holding sessions in Italy, but with a change of locale. Decca-London, which in the past has customarily made its recordings in Rome's Sala Accademica with the Santa Cecilia Orchestra and Chorus, this year moved to Florence, where it used the orchestra and chorus of the Maggio Musicale. In July it recorded Puccini's *Trittico* in Florence's lovely, historic Teatro della Pergola (Verdi's *Macbeth* had its premiere in this theatre in 1847). As Charles Reid outlined the plans in these columns last month, Renata Tebaldi performed the unusual feat of singing in all three of the one-act operas: she was Giorgetta in *Il Tabarro*, Angelica in *Suor Angelica*, and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* (none of these being roles she sings in the theatre). In all three she was conducted by Lamberto Gardelli, a young Italian maestro making his recording debut. In *Il Tabarro*, Mario del Monaco and Robert Merrill sang the leading male roles; in *Suor Angelica*, Giulietta Simionato was the Zia Principessa; and in *Schicchi*, Fernando Corena sang the juicy title role.

In September, Decca-London's other prima donna, Joan Sutherland, arrived at La Pergola to record *La Sonnambula*, conducted by her husband, Richard Bonynge. And this month she is due to record *La Traviata* with Bergonzi and Merrill, conducted by John Pritchard. Miss Sutherland has recently renewed her contract with Decca-London for three years and will record two operas per year; future plans—according to rumor—include *Norma* and *Beatrice di Tenda*.

**From RCA's Rome Studios.** Probably the product of the summer's recording activities that is arousing the most curiosity on the part of the industry is the RCA *Madama Butterfly* made in July at the company's studios just outside Rome. Inaugurated last March with world-wide fanfare, the studios have been functioning full time ever since, but *Butterfly* is the first opera recorded there, and both RCA and other companies (who, RCA hopes, will be persuaded to lease the spacious, air-conditioned studios for their own opera recordings) are eager to hear final results.

For its part, RCA went to great pains to make this an exceptional recording. The cast is headed by Leontyne Price and Richard Tucker. The conductor is Erich Leinsdorf, who pronounced himself pleased with the especially assembled orchestra. It will probably be called something like the "Rome Symphony Orchestra," but in actual fact it is basically the excellent Rome Radio Orchestra, reinforced by picked men from Santa Cecilia and the Rome Opera. Richard Mohr, the engineer in charge of the recording, was all smiles during the ses-

*Continued on page 34*

# 1 ONE GOOD THING


## LEADS


## TO ANOTHER


FM stereo multiplex came first. Next came our "Astro." Good things were getting even better. The 708A "Astro" is an all-in-one stereo center with *five* integrated components in a compact 6" x 15" x 13½" package: FM, FM multiplex, AM, stereo preamp, stereo amp.

It's so advanced in concept, circuitry, features and facilities that we suspect it will remain current for the next ten years. For example, consider its circuitry. Transistors in the power stage *completely eliminate heat problems.* As a result, the "Astro" plays cool—more than 30% cooler than conventional units. In this respect, the "Astro" is the first truly practical stereo center because excessive heat generated by ordinary all-in-one units shortens life and effectiveness of the sub-components, causes drift, sets up noise and distortion.

As another example, consider its unique *binaural* headphone facilities that offer the privacy of *silent listening* at anytime, without disturbing others. For convenience, the headphones may be plugged in permanently; a separate switch on the front panel activates the headphones.

Or, consider the fully professional tape recording monitor. With it, you may monitor the source two ways *during* recording: the instant signal enters the record head or directly from tape, the moment it is recorded.

An automatic switching circuit electronically distributes mono and multiplex signals to their respective channels while a stereo light provides visual indication on type of reception. These examples are only a sampling of what the "Astro" has to offer. In this case, seeing *and hearing* is believing. Price: $597.00 including cabinet and excise tax.

One good thing leads to another. For the listener who prefers a separate tuner or needs only stereo FM to complete an existing system, there's the new 314A "Electra Emperor" Stereo Tuner. It is identical in quality and features to the FM and multiplex sections of the "Astro" and is styled to match perfectly with our newly improved "Electra" Stereo Amplifier. Among its distinctive features, it provides a "full-time" monophonic output for feeding an additional single-channel system on the patio or anywhere in the house. The "Emperor" is priced at $359.00 including cabinet and excise tax.

The new 315A "Electra Empress" Stereo Tuner is the moderately priced version of the "Emperor." An outstanding performer at $256.00 including cabinet and excise tax.


The 353B "Electra" Stereo Amplifier is recommended for use with either of these new stereo tuners. The resulting system will reward you with a quality of sound possible to achieve only with such perfectly matched and balanced components. The 353 is a dual channel power and control amplifier with 14 stereo or mono inputs, 6 outputs for all known sources, even microphones and tv. A matricing network is provided for center stereo speaker and for driving auxiliary speakers anywhere in the home. Price: $225.00.

*For complete information and specifications, see your Altec Distributor or write Dept. HF-11*

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## QUALITY

*For the audio perfectionist* the FM-Multiplex Dynatuner has set new standards of listening pleasure under the most difficult signal conditions, with lowest distortion, superior limiting, simple precise drift-free tuning, superior interference rejection, excellent selectivity, and lowest hum and noise. When you want FM stereo reception, add the $30 FMX-3 STEREOMATIC multiplex integrator. This unit, concealed within the Dynatuner, switches automatically from mono to stereo with maximum separation as you change stations, and it illuminates "STEREO" to indicate the presence of a stereo broadcast.

*FM-1 $79.95 kit, $119.95 assembled and tested.*

## ECONOMY

Easily the finest value in the high fidelity field, this "no distortion" preamp has won acclaim for impeccable performance, at just about the lowest price ever for a stereo preamplifier. Full control flexibility in a simple, modern arrangement makes it easy to build and a pleasure for the non-technical music lover to use. You'll revel in its near-perfect freedom from hum, noise, and distortion. Just $59.95 buys the most important improvement in your music system.

*PAS-2 $59.95 kit, $99.95 assembled and tested.*

## DEPENDABILITY

It's more than three years old, but we've never had to make a single change in the Stereo 70 amplifier. Patented Dynaco output transformers and circuitry, and the superior reliability of the finest etched circuit construction assure continued superiority of performance. In the words of Hirsch-Houck Laboratories (December 1959 issue of High Fidelity Magazine) *"This amplifier's components are operated more conservatively than those in any other commercial amplifier we have tested. . . . Its power and distortion ratings are completely conservative. Its listening quality is unsurpassed."* Could we say more?

*Stereo 70 $99.95 kit, $129.95 assembled and tested.*

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write for detailed literature **DYNACO, INC.** 3912 Powelton Ave., Phila. 4, Pa. Cable Address: Dynaco, Phila.

CIRCLE 42 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# bzzzz

When a very small boy has his hair cut, the clippers make a harsh buzz—a nervous, exciting sound. Yet the same machine gives off only a dull hum when it's used on a man.

The unfortunate part is that once you've heard the dull hum, you never get to hear that exciting buzz again. No matter what. Even Audiotape can't record it.

Audiotape can (and does) take care of everything else that adds to listening enjoyment. It gives you clarity and range, freedom from noise and distortion and unequaled uniformity, reel after reel. All you have to supply is the point of view. Audiotape does the rest, and does it superbly.

Whether you're taping a barbershop quartet or a hundred-voice choir, there's an Audiotape exactly suited to your needs. From Audio Devices, for 25 years a leader in the manufacture of sound recording media—Audiodiscs*, Audiofilm* and . . .


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*TRADE MARK

## NOTES FROM ABROAD

*Continued from page 30*

sions and seemed pleased with the acoustics of the vast Studio A, where the recording was made. ("The sound sort of floats up to the microphone," he said.) We will be able to hear for ourselves soon, since RCA promises to have the set available in the States by March.

WILLIAM WEAVER

## PARIS

Since the advent of microgroove the Véga firm has been prominent on the French recording scene for several reasons. It has been the only native company big enough to challenge the international giants. It has won a considerable number of Prix du Disque. Its catalogue has included such items as the music of Messiaen, Boulez, Berio, Nono, and Stockhausen, and the poetry of Nerval and Aragon. Its albums have been luxurious and scholarly.

The sequel might be guessed. About a year ago it became public knowledge that Véga was financially very sick. Negotiations for absorption by an American firm got under way and then collapsed. One day last summer my inquiry about a new release brought the reply that all production had been halted for a reorganization.

The company has now emerged with fresh capital (still French), a new administration, new marketing arrangements, and—most interesting from a record buyer's point of view—a new policy both in packaging and in repertoire.

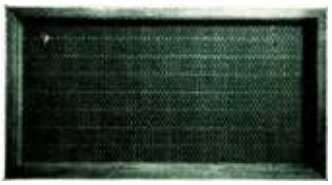
The president is now André Cornu, who has been Secretary for Fine Arts in several French cabinets. His principal assistants (leadership is to be collective) are Jean Ziegler, a brother of the head of the Breguet airplane works; Bernard Dupré, formerly with Odéon; Guy Dumazert, who has had a supervising role in nearly all the opera recording sessions in Paris since the war; and critic Jean-Louis Caussou, editor of the magazine *Opéra* (not to be confused with the British magazine of the same name edited by Harold Rosenthal). English Decca is to distribute Véga discs in Britain, Italy, and Germany. Mercury is to handle them in the United States (the question of labels was still being discussed as this was written).

The new policy? "We are deëmphasizing prestige," Caussou says, "if that means fancy albums and jackets. We shall sell many of our discs for 25 per cent less. We are building a commercial base

*Continued on page 38*

"Audio" confirms this is

# a dangerous



# loudspeaker

When we termed our loudspeaker "dangerous," we expected confirmation by experts. But we never expected everyone to agree. Always there is one dissenter. Who will it be?

It is not Audio Magazine. Quite the reverse. In their September issue, Audio said: "The EMI Model DLS-529 is a true 'bookshelf' speaker in size... and far from bookshelf in sound." As we said, the DLS-529 is dangerous because it demands reappraisal of previously-accepted standard of excellence. And please don't ask us to redesign it to make it sound like an ordinary bookshelf loudspeaker (even though it costs only $159.00*).

Too, we called our loudspeaker dangerous because its transient response reveals flaws in any equipment used with it. Audio Magazine calls the transient response "fine" and says, "(it) handles the frequency spectrum from 40 cps to 15,000 cps with realism and good precision, responding excellently to the attacks of some especially heavy piano passages." Heavy piano passages are a trial for everyone—from recording engineer to speaker designer. And the transient response must be exceedingly fine to "respond excellently" to fierce piano attack.

Audio also cites the DLS-529 for its bass, saying that the "bass reproduction is of the tight variety." Of course it is. But let Audio tell why we've designed it this way. "It avoids," the journal reports, "the overblown fullness which was characteristic of some speaker systems not many years ago."

A word to the stereo-minded about high frequency dispersion. This function is the way sound "fans out" from the drivers. If it's narrow, the stereo effect is poor. Audio Magazine noticed that the DLS-529's high frequency dispersion is "unusually smooth and rather wide." Audio also said, "As might be expected, a pair of (these units) provides really excellent stereo coverage."

And there you have it from the experts—unsolicited, unqualified, undeniable confirmation anew of the dangers of the dangerous loudspeaker.

For further information, write Scope Electronics Corporation, 10 Columbus Circle, New York 19, N.Y., exclusive distributors of EMI Loudspeakers and Integrated Tone Arms and Pickups.

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CIRCLE 92 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## NOTES FROM ABROAD

*Continued from page 34*

of internationally popular items—we have Ray Charles, for instance. We like folk music, for which there is a growing market. We are not dropping the avant-garde. But the main emphasis in the classical field will be on vocal music. We are signing up Rita Gorr, Régine Crespin, Guy Chauvet, Ernest Blanc, Albert Lance, Alain Vanzo—in addition to the Italian singers we have through our connection with Cetra. We have started a series called 'The Art of Singing,' with recitals so far by Jane Rhodes and Gabriel Bacquier. We are getting out a recorded 'dictionary' to help people appreciate fine singing. We believe in singing."

**Disciple of Segovia.** Sebastian Maroto is a big, balding, thirty-two-year-old native of Granada who has lived in Paris for the last ten years. He plays the guitar under the influence of Segovia, but with the addition of a controlled ferocity which I think most listeners will find both seductive and startling. His circle of Parisian enthusiasts includes Henri Sauguet, who has recently composed for him.

Maroto has just recorded, for Harmonia Mundi, a recital called *"La Guitare espagnole."* It is both a history in sound of the Spanish guitar and a demonstration of eclectic technique by a virtuoso. Included here are pieces written by the sixteenth-century Luis Milan, the seventeenth-century Gaspard Sanz, and the nineteenth-century Francisco Tárrega, as well as by such relatively recent composers as Joáquin Malats, Isaac Albéniz, Luis Sanchez Granada, and Maroto himself.

He refuses to take part in the great finger-nail-versus-finger-flesh controversy, which has divided Spaniards ever since the modern guitar renascence started. "The Spanish guitar," he says, "is a whole orchestra. It is also a very intimate instrument. You clasp it to you, it is part of you. Everything—the position of arms, legs, and head—counts. I use whatever is required, nails or flesh, to get the sound I want." ROY MCMULLEN

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**Model 200 Professional 30-watt Stereo Amplifier $139.95****

1. Massive, heavy-duty transformers provide full power throughout the usable audio range. Will drive all popular speaker systems to full room level.
2. Separate bass and treble controls for each channel give maximum flexibility in adjusting for all types of program material.
3. Stereo headphone output conveniently located on front panel.
4. Tape monitor switch and special inputs and outputs are included for the tape recording enthusiast.
5. Electrolytic aluminum chassis for maximum heat dissipation and minimum hum.
6. Derived center channel output to drive power amplifier for extension speakers.
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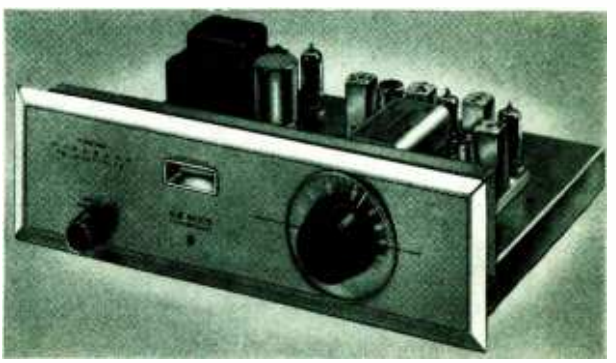
9. 15-Watts per channel (IHFM); IM Distortion 0.5%; Harmonic distortion 0.8%; −70 db hum and noise; Dimensions 15½w x 5¼h x 13¼d in accessory case.
10. Backed by Scott's famous Laboratory Standard Guarantee.



**Superb Model 370 Wide-Band FM Multiplex Tuner $169.95****

1. Famous Scott "Time-Switching" multiplex circuitry for maximum stereo separation and flawless off-the-air tape recording.
2. Unique Sonic Monitor* automatically signals you when stereo is on the air.
3. Three-ganged tuning condensor with tuned RF stage to insure high sensitivity and selectivity.
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To find FM stations broadcasting stereo multiplex simply turn the selector switch to "Monitor" and tune across the dial. When you hear the monitor tone from your speakers, you know positively that you have tuned to a stereo broadcast. Then simply switch back to "stereo" and enjoy FM stereo. The Scott Sonic-Monitor* provides a positive, reliable indication of FM stereo broadcasting. It is never activated by spurious signals.

*Patent Pending

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CIRCLE 93 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

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Garrard's Type A Automatic Turntable is proudly owned by a growing legion of highly critical people who, originally amazed at the $79.50 price, have come to realize this completely integrated precision instrument could have been developed only by the Garrard Laboratories.

*For illustrated literature, write Dept. GS-22, Garrard Sales Corp., Port Washington, N. Y.*

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**CIRCLE 26 ON READER-SERVICE CARD**

# *Opera's Stereo Spectaculars*

On page 44 of this issue High Fidelity—with Charles Reid acting as master of ceremonies—plays host to two respected figures in the world of opera, Harold Rosenthal and John Culshaw, who articulate the pros and cons of certain trends in the recording of operas. As one would expect, both these gentlemen offer illumination and perspective on many aspects of this subject.

Yet it may be that their discussion is nearly as interesting in its omissions as in its statements. Probably this is a result of certain assumptions which both speakers felt were safe enough for purposes of the argument, but which are nevertheless worth examining afresh. It would seem to me, for instance, that in all cases it is the quality of the performance itself that is of paramount importance. One of the less fortunate results of the development of high fidelity sound is the belief that high quality sound is in itself a justification for recording. There can be no doubt that it enriches a performance that is good to start with, as with London's *Das Rheingold*. But too many performances are not good to start with; too many cast listings represent the available singers from the company's stable, rather than a group of performers with something unusual to offer in a particular work; too many releases give one the feeling that glorious sound and ingenious "staging" are intended to disguise the mediocre contributions of the artists—that the album has been released solely because "we need a stereo version" (trans.—"the early bird gets the worm").

It is interesting that in the course of the talk about stereo opera vs. repertory opera, neither Mr. Rosenthal nor Mr. Culshaw makes any mention of visual values: perhaps it seemed too elementary for the aims of this debate. Yet Mr. Culshaw discusses this question at some length without making even a token concession to live opera's most obvious advantage over recorded opera—that of being *seen*. It is a bit like the old argument over the actability of *King Lear*. One can maintain that it is an "impossible" play in stage terms. One can study the text and the volumes of critical commentary available, and from them gain much insight—some of which would never come to light in the course of even a dozen different productions of the work. Yet many of the play's basic and important meanings will emerge only in the course of the live theatrical experience—however poorly realized. To read over that magnificent final scene between Lear and Cordelia is one (wonderful) thing; actually to see them enact it is quite another—the very *sight* of them together is heartbreaking. So it is when Isolde waves her scarf from the wall, or Iago stands over the prostrate Otello, or the merry wives actually, physically, stuff a living Sir John into that hamper. It does not matter quite so much if the horns are a bit late, or the sound balances are not quite right; we have a visual experience as well as an aural one.

True, many live productions are "abominably lit, filthily designed" (to quote Mr. Culshaw). But that is hardly an argument against live performance. Recording directors sometimes botch things, too—especially unfortunate is the common tendency to reduce performances to a level of perfection, to make it seem as if human beings were somehow unconnected with the whole enterprise. However, this is not an argument against stereophonic recording—only against certain means of handling it.

More territory yet remains to be explored. There is the matter, for example, of whether a recording should try to capture the atmosphere of a stage performance, or to create a "lifelike" illusion, or to be content with simply sounding good. But the essential thing to remember, I think, is that when we consider stereo opera, we consider only a segment of the work itself, artificially detached from its natural ambience. This process has the same advantages as the isolation of any one aspect of a subject for purposes of closer inspection. We will learn much from any good recording; we can be moved, excited, instructed by it. Happily, there is no question of forsaking live opera for the recorded sort, or vice versa, so long as we remember that each is a valuable complement to the other, rather than one a substitute for the other.

Conrad L. Osborne

AS high fidelity SEES IT

# Kindling the Magic Spark

**A debate on the operatic "stereo spectacular" — its ethical justification, its musical validity, its ultimate influence — between traditionalist Harold Rosenthal and innovator John Culshaw.**

Is STEREO OPERA a cheat? Lifeless? Overblown? A laborious patchwork quilt? Or has it established new standards to which "live" opera must conform or perish?

Controversy on these questions has long smoldered. In arranging the following debate between John Culshaw, director of classical recordings for Decca-London, and Harold Rosenthal, editor of the British journal *Opera* and former archivist of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, HIGH FIDELITY presents the case for each point of view. Interlocutor is Charles Reid, London correspondent for this magazine.

Mr. Rosenthal is committed to the following theses:

1. For all their technical imperfections, the off-the-stage recordings of *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Lohengrin*, *Die Meistersinger*, and *Parsifal*, all made during Bayreuth performances in the 1950s, mean far more musically than do the wonderfully engineered and cleverly calculated stereo operatic recordings of the 1960s.

2. Recorded opera will never capture the atmosphere of live theatre performances.

3. To concoct a complete performance of an opera from different studio tapes, eliminating bad top notes and replacing them by others recorded perhaps weeks later, is an immoral proceeding.

Mr. Culshaw's main propositions are:

1. In musical clarity, richness, truth of sound and perspective, good stereo opera equals live opera at its finest in the world's best opera houses.

2. Good stereo opera far outstrips average, run-of-the-mill repertory opera anywhere.

3. While stereo opera and repertory opera can and should coexist, the latter must put its house technically in order or inevitably lose its audience. Why should people tolerate shoddy repertory performances when they can hear first-rate performances at home?

REID: I'll start on you, Harold. These beloved "live" Bayreuth recordings of yours. What about the audience noises—all those coughs and rustlings? Don't you find them a snag?

ROSENTHAL: They're no snag to me. When I listen to these records I enjoy the feeling that I'm *there*, participating with these people—yes, even with the coughers—in actual Bayreuth performances.

REID: And you, John—how do you feel about the Bayreuth noises?

CULSHAW: Well, I worked on the Bayreuth *Parsifal* in 1951; also on *Lohengrin* two years later. There are, I know, some appalling noises in the Introduction to *Parsifal*, Act II; and for one of the interludes we had to use tape from a rehearsal because the scene-change noises were so colossal in the actual performance that the music was all but obliterated. The way the microphone is usually placed in opera houses—down in the footlights, because it has to be invisible—it not only gives you incorrect balance; it also picks up a lot of noise that the people out in front don't hear—footsteps, general tramping about, handling of props, etc. One thing I will risk mentioning because it's a curiosity and can't at this date harm the recording. If you listen carefully to the last side of the Bayreuth *Parsifal*, you'll hear the prompter before every entry.

REID: I'd like Harold to expatiate a bit further on the wonderful atmospheric feeling he gets from the Bayreuth recordings.

ROSENTHAL: Well, they enable me to relive marvelous experiences I've had in the theatre. They mean more musically than "engineered" recordings because they are from life: they have spontaneity, the magic spark. It's a sort of nostalgia.

CULSHAW: Nostalgia, yes. And all the larking that goes on as well.

ROSENTHAL: Yes, I know what you mean.

REID: Give me an example.

ROSENTHAL: Well, the cracks they exchange. In the *Götterdämmerung* Funeral March for instance, Siegfried or Hagen will mutter, "Don't drop the ruddy bier," or something like that.

CULSHAW: Quite. And such things are apt to get on to tape and have to be weeded out. But getting back to this question of "live" quality. Is there an intangible something about the Bayreuth records which you don't get from stereo?

ROSENTHAL: Well, here's a case. I seriously doubt that Ludwig Weber could ever have recaptured the mood and quality of his Bayreuth Gurnemanz in the cold conditions of the studio. . . . We have a parallel in Chaliapin. We can compare various *Boris* scenes that Chaliapin recorded in the studio with those he recorded in actual performance at Covent Garden. The Covent Garden recordings capture life. The studio recordings capture. . . .

REID: Sub-life?

ROSENTHAL: Exactly! As David Bicknell [international artists' manager, EMI] wrote in *The Gramophone* recently, some artists are at their best only in the theatre, in the presence of an audience and the atmosphere that goes along.

CULSHAW: I agree. *Some* artists—not many, I'm relieved to say!—are almost incapable of a good performance in the studio.

REID: Apart from extraneous noises, there's the question of relative artistic quality. One critic wrote of Astrid Varnay in the Bayreuth *Flying Dutchman* that she sounded as if she was singing with her head in a milk jug.

ROSENTHAL: I admit that Varnay has never been a perfect vocalist. I doubt whether even in ideal stereo circumstances she would satisfy all the critics and pundits. Still, I have always found her an exciting artist; and I feel that the Bayreuth recordings capture the essence of her middle register—even if she does sound elsewhere as if singing through a milk churn or whatever the thing was.

REID: But you would have hardly had the milk jug effect on stereo?

ROSENTHAL: I'd have thought not; I'll concede you that point. But would you have had her spontaneity, on the other hand? I very much doubt it.

REID: Over to another aspect. You object, Harold, to concocting opera recordings by splicing tapes made at different sessions held over a period of weeks. Is it not a fact that your beloved Bayreuth recordings were made precisely in that way?

ROSENTHAL: I admit that the Bayreuth records are made up of takes from more than one performance of the same opera. But the performances were living. They were alive, spontaneous; and that makes all the difference.

REID: In this matter of tape splicing, just what *did* happen at Bayreuth, John?

CULSHAW: Well, take *Parsifal*. There were 149 cross-splices in Act I, which runs for two hours. These are cross-edits made from seven different performances and one or two general rehearsals. I noted them down somewhere at the time, and they are all marked in the score. The purpose of these splicings was to cut out terrible fits of coughing, noises of people dropping things, bad orchestral ensemble, wrong words (this happens a lot in the theatre), out-of-tune notes, out-of-time notes, ragged pizzicato entries on the double basses—and so on.

ROSENTHAL: May I ask you a question, John? Have your techniques advanced so much in the last ten years that, if we were now to record Bayreuth "live," the weaknesses and disadvantages of your *Parsifal* and *Fliegende Holländer* would not appear at all, or to a much smaller extent?

CULSHAW: They wouldn't have disappeared; the discs would only be marginally better. I don't think you can do anything about the limitations imposed on you by theatre stage sets and theatre managements. I think I can say that "live" recording is a policy which Decca-London, generally speaking, does not intend to pursue. There must, of course, be exceptions for historical reasons. When a Melba retires, the microphone simply must be in on her farewell performance.

REID: Coming now to the stereo techniques of the 1960s. An article of yours, John, in *Records and Recording* [February 1962] lists five famous passages which you recorded in "single basic takes." These were: *Rheingold*—first eighteen minutes; *Otello*—from the opening bar to the end of Iago's drinking song; *Tristan und Isolde*—Tristan's long Act III monologue; *Aida*—the whole of the Triumphal Scene; and *Salome*—the long symphonic stretch from Jokanaan's emergence from the cistern through Salome's attempt to seduce him and his final cursing of her. Very impressive. But what about the rest of these recordings? Were they, apart from the sections you have mentioned, done by fits and starts and in penny numbers?

CULSHAW: Far from it. We are acutely aware of the need to build up and maintain dramatic tension. Our policy is therefore that of the long take. The length of one take at professional speed is between twenty-two and twenty-four minutes, although in special cases you can take more by having two tape machines, one across the other. Generally we carve an opera into twenty-minute sections. Having done a twenty-minute section, you don't necessarily say, "This is it." You may say, "This is marvelous—but it might be better. There's a wrong note on the trombone," or "Miss So-and-So missed her top A. Perhaps we'd better take these forty bars again and see if we can bring it off better." Now the interesting thing is that when you put the correction in, it sometimes happens that something undesirable happens dramatically; you don't get the tension up again. In these cases we leave the thing alone; we rely on the first take.

REID: Would you say that on the whole there is less cross-editing with typical stereo recordings than there was with "live" ones?

CULSHAW: Yes, quite a bit less—if only because in studios you aren't bothered by noises, which accounted for much of the Bayreuth editing.

REID: A question for you, Harold. I'm surprised to hear you say that this is a moral matter—as if, in the studio, at any rate—cross-editing was equivalent to telling fibs.

ROSENTHAL: I wouldn't have written like that, or something like that [in *Opera*, December 1961], if I didn't feel it. The thing worries me while listening to the stereo *Salome*. I let my hair down and accept it. I am staggered. I am bowled over. And yet I feel there is some element of cheating in that one has got something one would never get in the theatre.

CULSHAW: Good, good—that's just what we were trying for!

ROSENTHAL: I know you're getting an effect in this recording of which even Strauss *might* have approved. Or so it is claimed by some people. But such a claim is only a surmise. Strauss, after all, was a practical man of the theatre; he intimately knew and wrote for the theatre with all its acoustical limitations; he knew what he wanted to be heard as an over-all effect of orchestral and vocal textures. To use a technique to highlight something and then to assume the composer would have approved of it is, well, cheating; it is dishonest. . . . A certain sort of sound emerges. We are told this was the sort of sound Strauss had in mind. But how do we *know* that this was what Strauss wanted?

CULSHAW: We only have the evidence of his written score. Writing a complex score like this, the composer hears sounds in his head and puts them down as accurately as musical notation will permit. But when he comes to the theatre, there has to be a compromise. That is why you find composers, when they conduct their own works, altering the deployment of the orchestra as they go along. I think you would find, if you interviewed any one of them and tried to pin him down, that he would admit that almost always there was a lot wrong and that the sound was a sort of compromise a lot of the time.

REID: And yet for some of us, although we delight in stereo achievements. actual sound still has an edge on recorded sound, especially in loud tuttis, which the engineers never seem quite to have tamed.

CULSHAW: No one in his senses will disagree that a

fine orchestra in a fine concert hall, listened to on the spot, is preferable to the finest recording. But if you want me to compare this *Salome* recording (and I'm not out for publicity!) with the sort of sound that emerges in the average opera house performance, I must say that the recording, played on the right sort of equipment, is altogether nearer to Strauss's intentions.

ROSENTHAL: I come back to my point about Strauss as an experienced man of the theatre. I have a feeling that he imagined certain "webs" of sound for the theatre and believed they could be realized *in* the theatre.

CULSHAW: But so often in the theatre, these "webs" just don't work. The other night I had the misfortune to sit through *Tristan* on the side on which most of the brass was accommodated. Irrespective of what the conductor was doing, I heard little else all night. In some ways that *Tristan* performance—grotesquely underrehearsed, abominably lit, filthily designed—typified average repertory opera today. I am speaking mainly of the production and management side, of course. But even in what was basically a very good performance by the conductor and an exceptional one by Birgit Nilsson, there were very disturbing flaws in the orchestra, including a brass entry two bars out in the Act I finale.

ROSENTHAL: How odd! For me it was one of the most marvelous *Tristans* I have heard in twenty-five years—mainly, though not wholly, because of Birgit Nilsson's Isolde. Here again it was a matter of living presence, the magic spark. As I said to somebody at the end of Act I, "Nobody could call *this* a stereo performance!"

REID: You mean there was a unity, a wholeness about it that you, personally, don't get from stereo opera?

ROSENTHAL: Exactly. I am not suggesting for a moment, by the way, that John or any other recording expert ever claims that stereo operas are recorded in "one go," beginning to end, as in the case of a theatre performance. But I'm not convinced the great, wide public takes any notice of what the companies say or what they don't say on this subject. They kid themselves that when they put on stereo they're listening to whole and finished performances—which, in fact, they're not.

CULSHAW: But really they *are* listening to whole and finished performances. Take an aria with a difficult top C, say the Nile aria in *Aida*. Any soprano knows that in the theatre it may come off or may not come off. I always feel sorry for an artist when, at the end of a beautiful performance, something wretched happens to that top C. Another night she may make a mess of the aria as a whole and sing a top C straight out of heaven. If I'm in the studio when something like this goes wrong, all I say is, "You've had a tiring day. We'll do that phrase running up to top C again tomorrow." You splice one bit into the other, the two go perfectly well together, and everybody's happy—including the man who buys the record. What is there immoral about that?

ROSENTHAL: Don't you think it was immoral when Dorothy Bond sang the last "off" notes for Margherita Grandi in the Sleepwalking Scene from *Macbeth* or when Schwarzkopf interpolated a top note for Flagstad in Act II of *Tristan*?

CULSHAW: I don't see anything immoral in it at all.

ROSENTHAL: Then that's a vital point on which we differ.

CULSHAW: About Flagstad. For fifteen or twenty years she had been singing Isolde magnificently, with top Cs that were no trouble at all. Suddenly it was decided to record her Isolde late in her career, when she hadn't any top Cs left—although she had everything else. The recording company concerned was perfectly right in doing what it did, although the matter might have been better handled in a publicity sense. After all, the person who is being served here is Wagner, the man who wrote those top Cs. So long as the composer's intentions are observed, so long as his score is performed as nearly as possible as he wrote it, I don't see that anything else enters into the picture. *Continued on page 142*

*Vickers and Rysanek in RCA Victor's* Otello.

BY GEORGE LONDON

# The Don and His Women

WHAT TYPE OF A MAN was Don Giovanni? What was the nature of his problems and his conflicts? Who were the people who crossed his path, and how did they affect his life? What errors did he make, and how did they hasten his demise? Why, throughout the course of the entire opera, does this archetype of the libertine have no success with women? There may be no final answers, but Mozart and his librettist Lorenzo da Ponte have given us positive clues which open up infinite possibilities for conjecture. We take license for conjecture and submit to the reader the results of hours of fascinating speculation.

The opera begins with the invasion of Donna Anna's chamber in the dead of night. What prompted this frenzied adventure? We prefer not to believe that the Don tried to rape her. Such an action would reduce him to the level of a common masher, obviating the necessity for the final conflict with supernatural forces. (The masher would more likely end in an alley with a knife in his back.) Let us surmise that Anna was attracted to him, but her commitment to Don Ottavio combined with a clerically conditioned Spanish prudery causes her to suppress her feelings. Such a circumstance is rare in Giovanni's career, especially when he senses that his ardor is returned, however subtly. Disguised, he insinuates himself into her boudoir and tries to overpower her with the full intensity of his male passion and persuasiveness. He has underestimated the lady and the tenacity with which she guards her virtue. She raises the roof, and his only thought is to get the devil away from this fury. The noise of the struggle arouses her father who, in defense of his daughter's already extremely well-protected honor, proceeds to get himself run through by one of the best swordsmen in Spain.

The death of the Commendatore was never intended by Giovanni. It was a bitter event which he could not escape. Where he erred was in attempting to storm the Anna fortress in the first place. Here, by being untrue to himself and betraying his well-tested formula for female conquests, he was brought to the supreme idiocy of an act that was later to prove his downfall. Other characters in the opera constantly refer to him as the murderer of Anna's father; in truth, he was nothing of the kind. It was the old gentleman, bursting with outraged paternal pride, who forced the duel. The Don killed him in self-defense and only after being baited beyond endurance. He was not an assassin, and a proper conception of the character requires recognition of the distinction that should be made between murder and justifiable homicide.

WHAT SORT OF A WOMAN was it whose hauteur goaded the Don into making his first major misstep? Donna Anna might have lived in Spain today. She is proud, patrician, witheringly aloof to those not of her class. Her views of life are conditioned by an atmosphere of political and clerical reaction. Her code of ethics is unshakable, but she lacks compassion. And yet she is capable of wild passion which can rise to heights of shocking intensity. (Witness her first big recitative and aria upon discovering that Giovanni was the slayer of her father.) Her desire for revenge becomes her *raison d'être* to the exclusion of every other sentiment. Even Ottavio, her betrothed, must wait until the miscreant is brought to justice. In view of these facts, the theory that Anna is in love with Giovanni and that in the first scene of the opera they are conducting an affair would seem to be a pseudo-Freudian manipulation of logic. It may be

safely assumed that Anna was fascinated by Giovanni, perhaps even sexually attracted. But her whole character and mode of life would certainly have repressed any adventurous longings for the Don.

We are led next to Giovanni's unexpected encounter with Donna Elvira. In order to seduce her he had promised to marry her. The seduction accomplished, he had abandoned her three days later. Elvira was a Spanish lady of the type who demanded the cushion of legality before risking her precious virtue. When the matrimonial check bounced, she directed all her energies to finding and exposing her despoiler. Don was to learn the fury of a woman scorned, a proud Spanish woman at that, relentless, inexorable. She contributed much to his downfall, though she alone of the opera's heroines truly loved him, and to the very end.

Elvira is actually the most interesting female personality in the opera. Sensing the persistent quest of Giovanni for the one who would finally satisfy him, Elvira fancied that she could end the Don's search. In this fiction she joins the endless legions of women who naïvely imagine that they can make their men over. Here they take a calculated risk, and when the inevitable fiasco becomes evident they unreasonably pour recriminations on the heads of their congenitally faithless lovers. Actually, much of the blame lies within such women themselves, for with destructive passion they try to drag a man down, absorb him, smother him. They desire frantically to possess him completely, to render him useless to other women, and to punish him in advance for the betrayal they subconsciously know will come. Such a woman can be a perfect lady and can love deeply—as, indeed, Elvira did. But she wages ferociously and relentlessly the hot war of the sexes. In this she reverts to something primeval which, for all the façade of ladylike aloofness and polished manners, reveals her kinship with all the generations of scullery maids, fishwives, and prostitutes.

DON Giovanni proceeds next to his encounter with Zerlina, the adorable little peasant girl he sees at a merry pre-wedding celebration. He has his servant Leporello dispatch her protesting bridegroom and, in the loveliest of duets, promises to marry her and so overwhelms her with erotic power that she agrees to go with him to a summerhouse. At the critical moment he is interrupted by Elvira who, with righteous indignation, snatches the precious booty from under his nose. His final attempt to seduce Zerlina leads to the end of the first act, in which he is confronted by the other actors of the piece who have meanwhile convinced themselves that he was the slayer of Anna's father.

Zerlina is the least complicated of the women who cross the Don's path. Their mutual attraction is purely sexual. Giovanni's success in wooing her away from her fiancé on her wedding day is surely a *tour de force* of seduction. Regrettably, it also reveals Zerlina as possessing a very flexible sense of morality. We may be sure that, even after marriage, Masetto will have to watch her with unflagging vigilance. Zerlina is a true coquette—full of vitality, vivacity, and charm. She possesses a natural, healthy sexuality, common to her class, calculated to enflame the Don. It was his frantic and exaggerated preoccupation with this elusive sex-morsel that drove him to error and exposure. The great men are legion who have been defeated by women who were their moral and intellectual inferiors.

The second act brings Giovanni additional frustrations. His attempt to make contact with Elvira's chambermaid is inopportunely interrupted by Masetto and his cronies out for revenge. In the graveyard scene he gleefully tells of having met one of Leporello's sweethearts in the street, and—since he was disguised as his servant—of having seduced her. However, we choose to believe that the young lady would surely have known the difference between servant and master; that the story was merely a fiction intended to make Leporello jealous. The opera then moves swiftly to its conclusion, and the Don is dragged down into the inferno.

For three operatic hours the great lover has had no success with women whatever. Surely this is no mere coincidence on the part of Da Ponte. We must presume that he intended thus to symbolize the Don's decline and the end of his career. The opera shows him still at the height of his physical


Drawings by Elly Miltner

and mental powers. His resources and his vitality are limitless. He is necessarily (for the drama and the legend) still handsome, still agile, still gay. But the endless conquests are behind him. They had always come so easily—the mercurial action which swept a woman's breath and resistance away; the tender words breathed and the harsh ones; the change from little boy to grown man to persuade, in their varying proportions, the virgin and mother in all women; the tear so easily shed and the laugh; humility and pride swiftly interchanged—commanding, entreating; and always the handsome face, the lithe body, the resonant voice, the agile mind, the charm, the wit, all devastating to resistance and to will—a force of nature tamed and channeled by custom and culture and expediency.

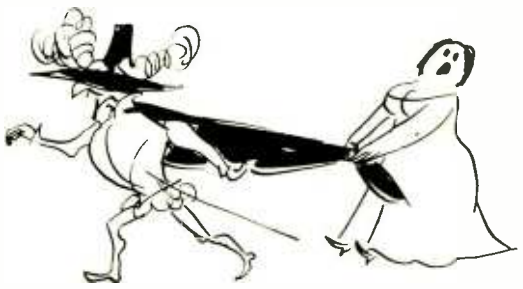
He thought it had cost him nothing, and in a physical sense it had but little. Yet somehow each time he gave of himself, not much, but now and then among many false tears a sincere one, a bit of his heart, a trace of his soul. Imperceptibly the inner man eroded. The physical image remains young; the sword still flickers like a snake's tongue; the leap is lithe and high, the smile sure and strong. But what was inspiration is now routine. And, tragically, he is unaware of what is happening to him. As Zerlina is snatched away by the vengeful Elvira he says, "It seems as though the Devil were diverting himself by opposing my most cherished plans."

THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN those who would moralize about the immorality of a Don Giovanni. Yet who can say with certitude that, exposed to the same concatenation of events, circumstances, talents, and temptations, he would have acted differently? The beautiful child and man would seem to be blessed, and in the rarest of cases they are. But more often they draw to themselves every vanity, temptation, and corruption so as to render a normal existence almost impossible. It is extremely rare that physical beauty is accompanied by the moral force to overcome the handicap of too much sex appeal. Thus, perversely, these blessings of beauty are, in disguise, the weapons of self-destruction. This is the key to the tragedy of all Giovannis.

More specifically, the Don's tragedy consisted in the fruitless search for one woman who could completely fulfill him. He could never find her, and he knew in his heart that she did not exist for him. Thus he drove himself from affair to affair in such profusion as to bring, in most cases, only disgust, remorse, and the agony of postcoital conversations with boring females. No purely sexual pleasure could compensate. With the power of his loins in limbo he could only muse mockingly at his own legend. The victimizer became the victim; the successful lover the defeated human being.

Don Giovanni was soon to go to his end, but it was a great and dramatic one reserved for a major personality. The inferno and the final conflict with supernatural forces as exemplified by the appearance of the stone guest were reserved for a big man, a Renaissance Spanish nobleman of culture and quality, proud and brave to the end. The panting popinjay, the superficial sex-crazed booby as he is often portrayed, would more likely decline, like Casanova, into querulous old age and the frantic search for nostrums and aphrodisiacs. Giovanni's sins required an early expiation. The flames burned cleanly leaving only the ephemeral ashes of his own legend. There is no sign of decay, no corpse to mourn over, nothing to abuse or reproach. Having been thus precipitately removed, he has avoided his own body's decline and is beyond reach of his detractors. The memory of his beauty is inviolate.

*Don Giovanni*, like every truly great work of art, permits a variety of interpretations. We discover, in a masterwork, meanings which its creator perhaps never consciously envisaged. The product of genius, nurtured in its creator's subconscious by spiritual forces of which he is not even aware, develops a scope that extends beyond his own will. Our interpretations of the Don today might have shocked Mozart and Da Ponte. The approach to the opera and its leading character has changed radically even in this writer's lifetime. We can scarcely guess what new concepts the future may bring. But it is a tribute to the immortality of *Don Giovanni* that the fascination is ever present and always contemporary.



by Conrad L. Osborne

# THE QUEST FOR VERISMO

*Despite raised critical eyebrows, the Cav-and-Pag school now draws larger audiences than ever.*

ONCE UPON A TIME (less than fifteen years ago, in fact) the majority of operas which could be counted on to sell out the Metropolitan, virtually irrespective of cast, were works of a grand, romantic nature. These included the Wagnerian repertory, a fair number of French operas (notably *Faust*), and a few works from the Italian romantic repertory.

Today, the Italian works (essentially, Verdi plus *Lucia di Lammermoor*) carry on as Metropolitan staples. The Wagnerian operas (even since the advent of Nilsson, Vickers, *et al.*) command little better than one half the proportion of the total performances they used to. (*Tannhäuser*, once regarded as almost sure-fire, is virtually a dead work at the Met.) *Faust*, in other days the Met's most popular opera (a distinction held now, and for some years, by *Aida*) has not been performed during the last two seasons, and is not scheduled for this one. *Roméo et Juliette*, *Mignon*, and *Lakmé*—formerly visitors of fair frequency—have disappeared entirely. *Samson et Dalila* and Massenet's *Manon* have, over the past decade, barely maintained status as repertory works, turning up every three seasons or so.

What sort of opera, then, has filled the considerable vacuum left by the exit of these erstwhile favorites? There are, of course, the early Verdi operas (*Macbeth*, *Ernani*, *Nabucco*) and the other nineteenth-century *bel canto* vehicles revived for specific artists (*Norma* for Callas, *La Sonnambula* for Sutherland this year). A close look will reveal, though, that this particular section of the repertory does not really account for a sizable number of performances. The operas of Mozart have been performed with increasing frequency, but by themselves they do not boast substantial totals either. Most of the slack has been taken up by a group of works commonly thought of as "verismo." *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci*, always popular, have maintained their standing.

Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*, considered safely buried a decade ago, has been revived and has rung up an impressive record of large, enthusiastic houses. This season the Metropolitan management is taking a flyer with Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur*, which even Caruso and Cavalieri couldn't sell in its only previous Met appearance. Puccini's operas have become such favorites that this composer now runs Verdi a close second in seasonal totals at the Met. (*Bohème* is now way ahead of *Faust*; *Tosca* has achieved a total of ninety performances since its 1952–53 revival; *Manon Lescaut* has become more popular than the Massenet work on the same subject; *Turandot* has been revived with great artistic and commercial success, and will probably be with us for some time.)

This trend is not restricted to the Metropolitan. The San Francisco, Chicago, and New York City Center companies have all trafficked very heavily in the Puccini operas. The City Center has even scored a fair success with the *Trittico*, as well as with *Turandot*. Montemezzi's *L'Amore dei tre re* was done recently in San Francisco, as well as on television. Chicago revived Giordano's *Fedora*. This fall, the City Center is resuscitating *Louise*, which might be termed the leading French verismo opera.

THERE ARE MANY REASONS for such a shift in popularity, and it is certainly true that the "Big Three" among Puccini's works have always done well at the box office in this country. Nowadays, though, a company can throw *Tosca* onto the stage and draw a good house with any sort of cast, whereas many of the romantic works which once commanded similar allegiance are today regarded as works that require interpreters of very specialized talents. In fact, those verismo works that have survived the natural winnowing process of the past several decades have now assumed the status of meat-and-potato operas, without which a management can hardly hope to plan a profitable season. Moreover, they have done this in the face of critical scorn. Puccini has attained respectability with most of the critics (Joseph Kerman always excepted), but no words are too harsh for *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci*, *Andrea Chénier*, or the other less familiar verismo works which show their faces from time to time. Some commentators even go so far as to blame the verismo movement for withering of the Italian operatic vine.

Yet there is no assurance that any two critics are referring to the same body of work when they speak of "verismo." Originally, the term had reference to certain types of characters represented on the stage, and to their motivations. The verismo movement was regarded as a reaction to the old romantic grand opera, and as a parallel to developing literary realism. It proposed to tell the "truth," to "tear the mask" from life, to represent people and their feelings as they really were. (This included portrayal of life among the socially lower classes, even in some of its more sordid aspects.) *Carmen* seems conventional and formalized enough to us today, but it was regarded as pure shocker when it was first produced, and the management of the Opéra-Comique protested bitterly to Bizet on the violent nature of the final scene. Here, after all, was a work taken from a novel by the "realist" Mérimée, a piece in which the heroine, a gypsy and a wanton, is stabbed in the belly by her insanely jealous lover, an army deserter—not the sort of thing for the stage of the Opéra-Comique!

The use of such material, and the wish to express emotions and situations in a direct, passionate way, soon led to certain changes in the compositional styles of the younger composers. Not surprisingly, the changes were in the direction of a less formal, less "sophisticated" method of composition. Ensembles and duets virtually disappeared, giving way to long stretches of dialogue set in a form approaching arioso. Gone were the tremendous multipart finales with which Mozart and Rossini ended their acts. Gone were the ensembles of confrontation through which Donizetti and the young Verdi articulated the most dramatic moments of their tragic operas. Gone were the "grand scenes," through which both Verdi and Wagner had pictured key emotional happenings against the formalized background of state occasion or ritual combat. There were important changes too in the format of the librettos. The verbal coin tended increasingly towards that of everyday life. The formal verse patterns of grand opera librettos gave way to an amorphous sort of blank (or even free) verse, often almost indistinguishable from prose.

These characteristics, coupled with changing attitudes towards harmony (particularly as exemplified in the mature works of Puccini and the later verists—though of course not originating with them) soon came to typify what was accepted as a "verismo style"; and the term verismo was now applied to just about any Italian opera falling chronologically between *La Gioconda* and *Turandot*, although many of these works were not verismo in the original sense of the term. (Nearly all displayed verismo qualities, though. *Turandot*, for example, is based on material that could well have been treated in a pure romantic or even epic fashion—but Puccini imposed on the story derived from Gozzi the figure of Liù, and the scenes of her torture and death, which are dyed-in-the-wool verismo.)

The description is thus a rather fuzzy one, but there is at least one common factor in all the operas that we usually think of as verismo. It is this: the leading protagonist, regardless of his or her station, behaves in an uncontrolled, unreasoned way, giving way entirely to a passion (usually lust), and thus precipitating the sad events of the denouement. In *Pagliacci*, all the leading characters heed only their most immediate impulses. In *Cavalleria*, Turiddu's heedless lustfulness is the beginning, middle, and end of the tragedy. In *Chénier*, Gerard's blind envy and lust lead to the deaths of Maddalena and Chénier. These are all people of low social station. But in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, the Principessa herself is shown to be an envious, even dishonorable person, using her official powers to try to hold Maurizio,

# Verismo Opera on Microgroove

## A SELECTIVE DISCOGRAPHY

FOR PURPOSES of this survey, I have omitted from consideration certain French operas—e.g., *Carmen, Louise*—that might be defined as verismo pieces. These works were included in the short discography of French operas in the January 1961 issue of HIGH FIDELITY. The Puccini operas too are omitted, inasmuch as they were the subject of a "Building Your Stereo Library" feature appearing here in November 1961. I have also decided against inclusion of what might be termed the post-verismo pieces of Zandonai. (See "The Imports," HIGH FIDELITY, August 1962.)

As with many of the early Verdi operas, a number of the verismo works have been recorded only once each. In fact, there is a wide choice of recordings only when it comes to the perennially popular double bill of Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*, each of which is represented by eight entries in the current catalogue. Five of these versions are available in single-package form, usually with both operas featuring the same leading singers. My own preference would be for separate purchase, allowing a choice of my favorites among the modern recordings—RCA Victor's *Cavalleria* with Tebaldi, Bjoerling, and Bastianini (LM 6059, LP; LSC 6059, SD) under Erede, and Angel's *Pagliacci* with Amara, Corelli, and Gobbi under Von Matacic (Angel 3618B/L, LP; S 3618B/L, SD). The only other stereo edition of either opera comes from London (OSA 1330, or A 4358 in mono). A good case can be made for the latter's *Pagliacci* vis-à-vis the Angel version; and surely London's Gabriella Tucci is a better Nedda than Lucine Amara. My choice of the Angel version rests largely on the brilliantly characterized Tonio of Gobbi (London's MacNeil sings beautifully, but his picture of the deformed clown pales beside Gobbi's) and the exciting Canio of Corelli, whose singing has a good deal more line than that of Del Monaco. But, though the London *Pagliacci* is quite acceptable, the *Cavalleria* on this three-disc set is something of a dud; Serafin takes things at much too slack a pace. Del Monaco and MacNeil are both below their vocal best, and Simionato's solidly sung Santuzza is much too ladylike.

Among modern mono versions, I like the Victor presentations under Cellini (*Cavalleria* with Milanov, Bjoerling, and Merrill; *Pagliacci* with De los Angeles, Bjoerling, Warren, and Merrill—both on LM 6106). In both cases, the music is richly sung, but the performances lack the final dramatic thrust needed to bring them completely alive. For those who like the convenience of both operas in a single album, this set would be the pick. From here, the quality of recorded performances declines quickly, and only the Angel *Cavalleria*, with Callas' interesting Santuzza and a generally idiomatic performance, has much to recommend it in the crowded field.

The historically minded should also consider the older monophonic recordings now available on the Electrola label. Out-and-out Gigli fans must own both, since he is the Turiddu in *Cavalleria* (80474/5S) and the Canio in *Pagliacci* (80476/7S). Mascagni himself is the conductor of the *Cavalleria*; unfortunately, the aged composer turns in what must be the slowest reading ever accorded his opera. It should also be noted that the supporting cast of the *Pagliacci* is by no means exemplary, and of course the sound of both sets is considerably below present standards. However, both operas boast fine leading baritones (Gino Bechi as Alfio in *Cavalleria*, Mario Basiola as Tonio in *Pagliacci*), and the stature of Gigli's Canio makes the *Pagliacci* a near-necessity.

Two other Italian verismo operas are available in more than one version—Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* and Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur*. Since its Metropolitan revival of the mid-Fifties, *Chénier* has become a great favorite in this country, and London made it the subject of one of its first complete-opera stereo recordings (OSA 1303, or A 4332 in mono). All the stops were pulled, and this is certainly one of the loudest performances available on records. Tebaldi is in characteristically good form, and Bastianini turns in one of his finest recorded performances as Gerard. I myself must confess an affection amounting to preference for the wartime La Scala recording (Pathé-Marconi FJLP 5040/1, import only). True, Caniglia was here past her prime, and Gigli past his. Still, when the chips are down, both are decidedly major-league, and in the last act Gigli approaches his peak form; even at his worst, he commands a legato which eludes the stentorian Del Monaco. In addition, Gino Bechi pours out his open dramatic baritone in the role of Gerard, and the smaller parts are taken by a constellation of singers who were to become the operatic giants of postwar Italy—Simionato, Taddei, and Tajo are among them.

Clearly, the Messrs. London are hoping that *Adriana Lecouvreur* will, like *Chénier*, become a staple of the Met repertory. (It is being revived this year as a vehicle for Tebaldi.) Tebaldi sounds lush indeed as the heroine of London's version (A 4359, LP; OSA 1331, SD) and could well justify the work's revival, though her recitation of the speech from *Phaedra* is not going to win her a Tony. The sound is excellent, and the work of the supporting singers quite good. Still, for those who would like to hear Maurizio's music sung at less than an unremitting *fortissimo*, the Cetra album (1218) offers Giacinto Prandelli, whose fresh lyric voice was at its very best when this performance was recorded (around 1950). He outpoints Del Monaco in all but a few of the violently climactic passages. Otherwise, the Cetra performance is adequate (Saturno Meletti's Michonnet, in fact, is more sharply characterized than Fioravanti's for London) without being at all extraordinary: the great difference in the quality of sound, plus the vocalism of Tebaldi and the presence of Simionato as the Princess, will decide most collectors in favor of London.

The remaining verismo operas in the catalogue are accorded just one recording each, in all cases on the Cetra label. Among these, I must put in a strong vote for Montemezzi's little masterpiece, *L'Amore dei tre re* (1212). The level of inventiveness in this score is extremely high, and the libretto by Sem Benelli, which contains certain elements reminiscent of *Tristan* and *Pelléas*, is of unusual subtlety. The leading character, the blind old barbarian king Archibaldo, can, in the hands of a topflight bass, become a truly great theatrical figure. Cetra's performance is a reasonably good one, not outstanding vocally, but really weak in only one of its cast members (the tenor, Amedeo Berdini). The others (Sesto Bruscantini, Clara Petrella, and Renato Capecchi) offer work that is at least intelligent and dramatically knowing. The sound, unhappily, is not very good, and since the orchestration is unusually rich, a modern stereo version would be most welcome.

The other three works Cetra has made available (Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz*, Cilea's *L'Arlesiana*, and Giordano's *Fedora*, in my own order of descending merit) all suffer from weaknesses which will make them of small interest to collectors who are not genuine Italian opera *aficionados*. All of them, though, have moments of strength and charm, and I have come rather to enjoy the unpretentious *L'Amico Fritz* (1203). The recordings themselves are technically dated, though not frightfully so. Tassinari and Tagliavini are both in above-average form for *L'Amico Fritz* and *L'Arlesiana* (1255); Tassinari, singing as a mezzo in *L'Arlesiana*, has moments of real incandescence, particularly in her big solo scene, "*Esser madre è un inferno.*" An additional point of interest in *L'Amico Fritz* is the composer's presence as conductor—to much better effect, in my opinion, than in the case of *Cavalleria*.

*Fedora* (1222), a rather empty and bombastic opera with a few telling passages (the Loris/Fedora scene in Act II; the concluding scene; the exquisite little tenor aria, "*Amor ti vieta*"), benefits from the presence of the young Prandelli, who again turns in some lovely singing. Caniglia is, sadly, much past her best—her intonation uncertain and her quality of tone badly frayed.

practicing cruel deceptions, and finally murdering her rival, Adriana. In *Fedora*, both protagonists operate on the principle that personal passions, if they are strong enough, justify any behavior, including murder. Similar patterns emerge in *L'Amore dei tre re, L'Arlesiana, Tosca, Il Tabarro.* In all these cases, the work seems to say: "You see, breeding and education don't count for much. We are all creatures of elemental impulse, and when our passions are touched we will think of nothing else. That's how it *really* is." It is the characters' lack of introspection and of any rational check on emotion that sets off verismo pieces from other operas of the same period.

Sometimes, of course, the personae of these works will come to a point of recognition or realization, as in Turiddu's farewell to his mother, or Gerard's eventual resolve to aid Maddalena and Chénier—too late, in both instances, to avert the tragedy. But in general, these characters deny the existence of strictures on the rights that are theirs by force of passion. Contrast, for example, the attitude of Di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, whose every effort is directed towards obtaining Leonora's *consent*. He is ecstatic when he thinks Leonora loves him; downcast and furious when he realizes she does not. He denies Manrico's rights by reason of the latter's supposed low birth—the accepted attitude of his society, after all. But it is important to him that Leonora love him, and submit by consent—even consent obtained through duress; whereas to Scarpia or even Tonio consent could hardly matter less—both these gentlemen actually try to rape the ladies in question.

But we misapprehend verismo if we conclude that it points the way towards an increasingly literal representation of life. This is a misapprehension which seems to have affected some of the composers themselves, who soon began setting librettos that were simply slightly condensed naturalistic plays, and settling for scores that were little more than a continuous incidental music, more or less skillful according to the composer's technical facility. We tend to think of the successful verismo works as being much less formalized than the operas of Donizetti or Verdi, and in the sense that many conventions of romantic opera are done away with in verismo works, this is true. This hardly means, however, that the best verismo works are true-to-life in a literal way.

IN THIS RESPECT *Pagliacci* provides an interesting study. It is the quintessence of verismo opera, and in my mind is the one verismo work that really deserves a place in a repertory composed of masterworks. The first thing to note about *Pagliacci's* structure is that it is a play within a play; in fact, it is a play within a play within another play, by virtue of the appearance of the Prologue. The Prologue, moreover, is not a character created specifically for this function—it is Tonio, the misshapen half-wit clown whose rage at Nedda's rejection leads him to spur Canio to murder. He is dressed as the traditional *commedia dell' arte* buffoon, Taddeo. What he sings might be taken for a verismo creed; the very fact that he sings it explicates the opera's structure. This is what he says:

"If I may? Ladies and gentlemen, pardon me for appearing alone. I am the Prologue. Since our author is placing once more on stage the ancient masks, he wishes in part to restore the old usages, and so sends me to you anew. But not to tell you, as before, 'The tears we are shedding are false ones!' No, no. The author has rather sought to depict for you a slice of life. His maxim is only that the artist is a man, and that he must write for men. And that truth inspires him.

"Long-nested memories sang in the depths of his soul one day, and he, with true tears, wrote; sighs beat time for him! And so you will see how humans love one another, and you will see the sad fruits of hate, spasms of grief—you will hear howls of rage, and cynical laughter.

"As for you, instead of considering our poor garb of pretense, consider our souls—for we are men, of flesh and bone, and like you, we breathe the air of this orphan world! I've told you our concept; now hear how it's realized. Come on. Begin!"

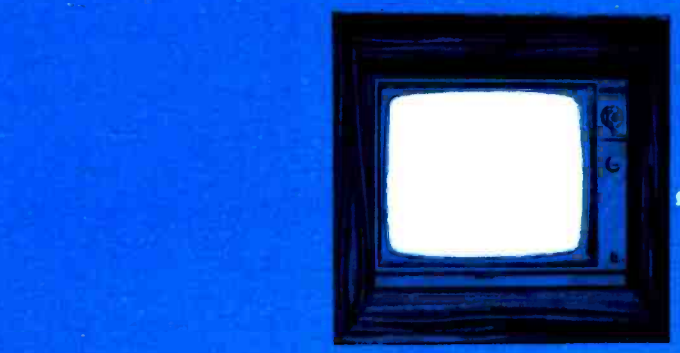
(I have inflicted my own rather literal translation on the reader because the translations in scores necessarily take considerable license with meaning in order to fit themselves to the music.)

Tonio, then, appears to us as Taddeo to tell us to look through the customs of theatre at the underlying reality. But his very presence as Prologue constitutes an ancient theatrical device, and a sure way of reminding the audience that this is, after all, a theatrical performance (Tonio himself says that the author "wishes in part to restore the old usages"). The fact that it is one of the characters in the drama who steps out to say all this to us further places the play in perspective.

The curtain rises to the beating of an off-stage drum and the blowing of a trumpet, signaling the arrival of the strolling players. The villagers greet the players in a formal six-part chorus. Following Canio's invitation to that evening's performance is the little incident in which Canio boxes Tonio's ear for trying to help Nedda down from the cart; then, as Canio prepares to leave for the tavern with the men, the mocking suggestion from one of the villagers that Tonio should not be left behind with Nedda. This leads directly to Canio's first aria, "*Un tal gioco.*" This is essentially an arioso passage, though the repetition of the opening phrase at the end, with the return to the first tempo, makes it into a sort of sketch of the old A-B-A aria. This aria contains the first direct reference to the stage-life/real-life comparison which gives the opera so much of its impact: "The theatre and life," sings Canio, "are not the same thing, no—are not the same thing! Up there, Pagliaccio surprises his wife in her bedroom with a handsome gallant, delivers a comic sermon, then calms himself, bending to the blows of the stick. And the public applauds and laughs heartily. But if Nedda *Continued on page 146*

BY CHARLES TEPFER

*The sound from TV may at last be worth hearing on your high fidelity equipment.*



# IN VIDEO EST AUDIO

LISTENERS WHO DEMAND the highest fidelity of their records, tapes, and FM radio often have tolerated extremely low fidelity sound from their television sets. The reason for this double standard is obvious: with few exceptions, TV programming to date simply hasn't called for high fidelity treatment. To bestow the refinements of wide-range audio reproduction on the likes of *Gunsmoke* would seem a waste of effort. In such entertainments, the picture plainly is the thing, and whether or not the good marshal's voice or the beat of his horse's hoofs is reproduced with ultimate clarity never has seemed really vital. More to the point, acoustically and aesthetically, has been such fare as the NBC Opera or the Leonard Bernstein-New York Philharmonic sessions—but programs like these have been few.

Now, however, there are unmistakable signs that television is beginning to merit serious sonic attention. Last season's "Festival of the Performing Arts" presented by independent stations WNEW-TV in New York City and WTTG in Washington, D. C., suggested what well may become an awakening to the full potentialities of video, fostered partly by the FCC's drive to upgrade the medium and partly by a growing public acceptance of good music, drama, and art. The roster of luminaries who appeared on the "Festival" (including Paul Scofield, Rudolf Serkin, the Budapest Quartet, Isaac Stern, Pablo Casals, among others) reads like a partial *Who's Who* in the performing arts. Significant too is the fact that these programs were shown at "prime" TV evening hours, twice weekly; and while they were

commercially sponsored, the commercials were distinctly of a low-pressure sort. WNEW has no definite plans for future "Festivals," but the station now is presenting the Boston Symphony, taped in Symphony Hall and telecast on Sunday evenings. In all, thirteen programs are planned for the season, including two under the orchestra's newly appointed conductor, Erich Leinsdorf.

As for the major networks, whose influence still dominates the character of television, CBS is expanding its coverage of the New York Philharmonic. In addition to four "Young People's Concerts," the network will present films of the orchestra's tours abroad. The "American Musical Theatre" (not on the CBS national network, but shown in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, St. Louis, and Philadelphia) will continue to examine musical shows with the help of the CBS Symphony and guest stars. One of CBS's oldest and most intriguing programs, "Camera 3," this season plans to devote more of its time to musical personalities, such as classical guitarist Rey de la Torre and the late Billie Holiday—the latter presented as a "portrait in words, music, and pictures" with recordings made by the singer.

From ABC, we can expect more opera and oratorio performances on its "Direction 62" series, while "Editor's Choice" probably will broadcast the auditions for the Metropolitan Opera. The returned "Voice of Firestone" has announced such guests as Mischa Elman, Risë Stevens, and Cesare Siepi, as well as at least one ballet program with Maria Tallchief. Arthur Fiedler conducts the orchestra. At NBC the opera series will continue, including a new work commissioned by the network from Gian-Carlo Menotti. NBC will also present, in two two-hour programs, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. Westinghouse's WBC network (stations in Boston, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Baltimore) will telecast a series of performances by the Cleveland Symphony and the Robert Shaw Chorale, as well as an off-Broadway play called *Black Nativity*.

Another hopeful sign is the reinvigorated ultra high frequency (UHF) television band, which can provide new TV channel space for small stations catering to special tastes. Congress has just passed a bill that will eventually require television manufacturers to include in every new TV set made the facility to tune in to UHF's channels 14 to 83. Many of the non-network UHF stations that are expected to go on the air in metropolitan areas will probably emulate FM broadcasters in offering an interesting variety of unusual programs as a means of capturing a segment of the economically important "class" market. Some of the UHF stations will be noncommercial, such as New York City's WUHF-TV (Channel 31, UHF), which plans extensive telecasting of orchestral and chamber music groups.

IF THERE SEEMS to be a decided move towards upgrading the program content of television, what about its sound quality? Live sound, of course, begins with a microphone, and TV studio men use giraffe-necked booms to suspend their microphones over the heads of performers, out of view of the camera. As a result the mike is often in a position that is not the best for sound pickup. And whether live or recorded, television sound often is somewhat limited for technical reasons. While it is an FM signal, the signal deviation (the extent to which the carrier is modulated by the audio) generally is held to a lower limit than that used in radio. FM radio employs a 75-kc deviation; TV sound, a 25-kc deviation. The greater the deviation, the stronger the signal, the more favorable the signal-to-noise ratio, and the greater the chance for a clean signal at the receiver end. Unfortunately, in television the maximum deviation could produce some interference in the picture, particularly in those TV sets that have less than adequate "sound traps" or filters. It would therefore take some daring for a TV audio-man to "open up" the signal to the full 75-kc deviation possible; many feel, in fact, that there is little incentive to do so because of the danger of interference as well as the limited ability of most TV sets to take advantage of a full, uncompromised audio signal.

Aside from this deviation problem, most television engineers allow that the sound transmitted with a picture is, or at least can be, as high in quality as that broadcast by most FM stations. The signal's dynamic range and frequency response is as wide, and its distortion is as low. At one TV station I visited, equipment-generated noise is never greater than 65 to 75 db below the signal level; many FM stations do not do so well.

What appears to be a fairly good audio signal unfortunately gets treated very badly in the average TV receiver, and even the more expensive consoles can be notoriously poor-sounding. The first source of distortion in a typical television set is its tuner. Wideband though it be, the TV tuner must be so adjusted that it centers on the video and audio portions of the transmitted signal. These signals are 4.5 megacycles apart, and making the tuner that broad is a difficult job; at any rate the tuners furnished in most TV sets fall short of that bandwidth. As a result, the point at which the tuner must be adjusted for optimum picture clarity is not necessarily the point for best sound—while the picture may be very clear, the audio may suffer from distortion and limited frequency range. If the viewer adjusts his fine tuning control to improve the sound, he may at the same time degrade the picture.

The noise and interference that piggybacks into the TV set via the FM sound signal is clipped off at the limiter stage, in much the same way as in an FM tuner. The high quality FM tuner, however, uses two or even three stages of limiting to eliminate all vestiges of noise and interference gradually, thus preserving the sound's true waveform. The TV set is more abrupt, doing most of its limiting in one stage and a little more in a pentode detector, and as a consequence producing a less clean audio signal than that available from the finest FM tuners. Even so, the signal is quite acceptable, and when the audio

## HOW TO WIRE A TV SOUND TAKE-OFF

BEFORE DOING ANYTHING in the innards of a TV receiver, you should protect yourself against electrical shock. Even when the set is turned off, and the line cord unplugged, remnants of high voltages may remain in the set. Under certain conditions, they can be lethal. *The guiding rule must be: if in doubt, stay out!* Call in a professional service technician. Too, if your set has not been operating correctly, now is the time to have it serviced professionally—before *you* do any work on it. What you may have been tolerating as a "minor defect" may be caused by a short circuit or a shorted component in the power supply which could put a dangerously high voltage on the chassis.

Therefore, take the following precautions. First, turn off the set and unplug the line cord from the wall socket. Next, remove the back of the set; a built-in prong connector to the power line will come off with the back. Do not attempt to bypass this safety interlock by using a makeshift or "cheater" line cord; only an experienced professional can do so with safety. Next, remove any residual voltage from the set by using an insulated (wood or plastic handle) screw driver that has a long heavy shaft. Holding the screw driver only by its handle, allow the shaft to contact an exposed part of the cap on the horizontal output tube, and a nearby portion of the chassis (often, the housing of the "cage" will serve for chassis contact). If a spark occurs, repeat the contact until no further sparks develop. Do the same contacting across both prongs of the safety interlock.

Be especially careful in the vicinity of the picture tube, since often a slight jarring may upset its delicate adjustments. Additionally, there may be some residual voltage on the tube; play safe and discharge it by using an insulated wire. Hold the wire by its insulation and allow one end of the exposed portion of the wire to contact the chassis while the other exposed end gently contacts the coated surface along the bell of the tube.

If you must remove the chassis to get at the speaker (which will be involved in making the new hookup), call in a service technician, or—if you feel competent to do it—do so with great care. Consult the set's service manual for exact instructions on the removal. Carefully label all wires that may be disconnected in the process.

Some TV sets—the AC-DC type—do not use power transformers, and the chassis is connected directly to one side of the main power line. Such a set should not be modified for sound take-off unless, after the modification, its power line is permanently connected to the power outlet through an isolating transformer. Such a transformer is available at most radio supply houses for less than $20; whatever model you get, make sure it is capable of handling at least 150 watts. To determine whether your set is or is not the AC-DC type, consult the legend printed on its back, or study its instruction manual, or ask your dealer.

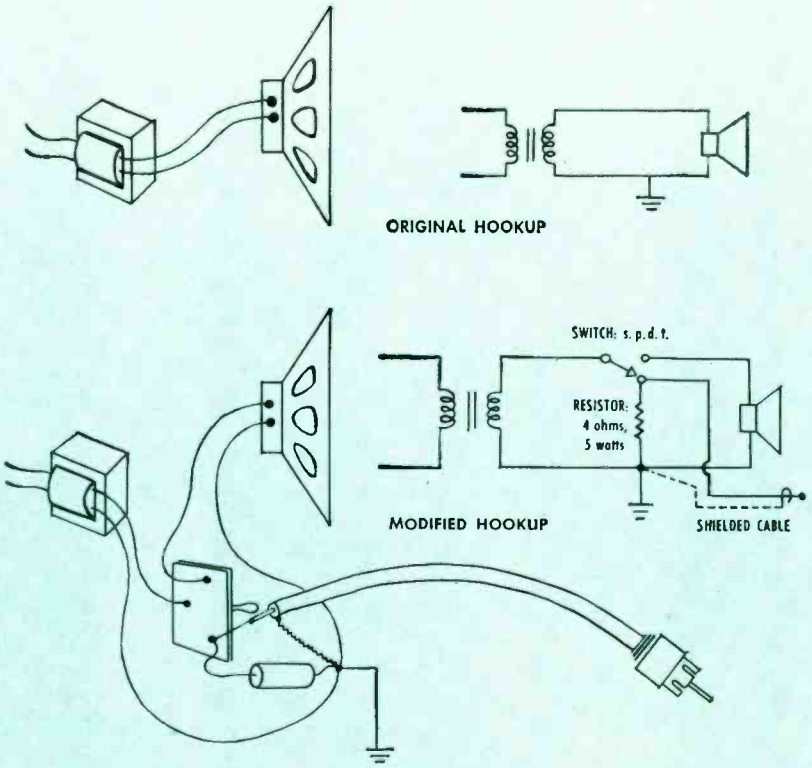
As for the hookup itself, the simplest method is to tap the audio from the TV set's own speaker—that is, the output from the TV audio transformer. This signal then may be fed to an external high fidelity system in either of two ways. The most direct is to use lamp cord or twin lead and connect it between the TV speaker terminals and the high fidelity speaker terminals. While this connection will work in some instances, it may not be completely satisfactory in others. For instance, it may significantly upset impedance matching between the output transformer and its load, causing signal loss. Then too, if your high fidelity speaker is a low efficiency type, the signal level from the television set may not be high enough to energize it fully. In this instance, an alternative hookup would be to feed the TV sound, via a shielded cable (the same kind used for interconnecting between audio components), to an auxiliary or other high level input on the preamplifier or integrated amplifier. This hookup provides the additional gain that may be required, and also permits the use of volume and tone controls to adjust the sound to your taste. However, if this hookup is used, the polarity between the TV set and the external amplifier must be maintained, or hum and loss of signal may develop. The "ground" or "negative" side of the TV set's own output transformer should be connected to the outer shield of the interconnecting cable, while the "hot" or "signal" or "plus" side of the TV transformer is connected to the inner conductor of that cable. To determine which side is which, consult the wiring diagram for your TV set. Alternately, you can determine it by simple trial and error.

A further refinement of this hookup is to disconnect the leads going to the TV set's own speaker and connect—in its place—a 4-ohm, 5-watt resistor. Then, the cable that carries the TV signal away is connected across this resistor. Again, polarity must be observed.

As a final touch for versatility and convenience, you might wire a switch to select either the TV speaker or the external system. Use a single-pole, double-throw switch, as shown in the accompanying diagram. Note that one end of the resistor, the shield of the audio cable, and the negative lead to the speaker all form one connection to the TV set's ground, or chassis. The switch, once wired, may be mounted wherever convenient and accessible.

It should be pointed out that, because of the design of some TV sets, *any* attempt to feed the sound to an external component may produce hum. Just how much hum, and with which sets, it is impossible to predict. Clearly, this is a matter that involves a certain degree of calculated risk and—from the standpoint of individual installations—must be regarded as largely experimental.

There are other methods for tapping the TV sound, such as running a cable from the TV set's volume control or from its detector tube, or using a Vector socket, or building a cathode follower circuit. These methods may or may not provide better acoustic results than the relatively simple hookups described above. In any case, they are best left to a professional technician who can relate the specific circuitry of your TV set to your other components.



finally is peeled off its carrier in the detector stage, it can be reasonably good sound. At this point, however, enters the problem of the audio amplifier and speaker system. In virtually all television sets the audio amplifier is a single-tube circuit with myriad distortions. Its output transformer is small and of poor quality, and the minimal type of speaker employed serves almost as a suppressor, rather than a reproducer, of sound. Even a new, fairly expensive color TV receiver typically has a 4- by 6-inch oval speaker of the type used in automobile radios. This unit is bolted to the metal cabinet, but one needn't worry about cabinet resonances or bass boom—the speaker is quite incapable of encouraging either. The most expensive color TV console I have seen does offer multiple speakers—one 12-inch unit and two 3½-inch tweeters. But, although the cabinet is made of wood, the speakers are, by high fidelity standards, inadequately baffled.

FACED WITH SUCH EQUIPMENT, the sound-conscious TV viewer has three alternatives. First, he can get a "custom" TV chassis that is designed for integration into an existing high fidelity system. Second, he can buy one of the TV sets that offer supposedly "high fidelity reproduction" within a self-contained console. And third, he can take the audio from his present television receiver and feed it to his high fidelity system.

Equal results do not follow from these alternatives. Of the three, it would seem that the first alternative—buying a custom TV chassis and feeding the audio to a components high fidelity system—should prove the most satisfying. This method merely extends to television the logic that makes the assembly of a high fidelity system from components the best choice for music reproduction in the home. The television chassis (which constitutes the "insides" of a TV set, sans speaker and audio amplifier but with picture tube and, if desired, cabinet) is treated as just another signal source for the high fidelity system. All the advantages of superior speakers properly baffled and of adequately powered, low distortion preamplifier and power amplifier accompany this technique.

The custom TV chassis has been relatively costly, and of recent years regular-line TV sets have been improved in picture quality to lessen the margin of difference between them and the more expensive models. Accordingly, the present roster of custom sets is very small, but there are hints that new models may appear. Two mail-order brands—Transvision and Conar—are now available. The Transvision "Professional" chassis features the option of a 10-watt push-pull audio amplifier with a 6- by 9-inch woofer and 3½-inch tweeter, or a cathode-follower output for feeding the audio signal to the "auxiliary" (or "tuner") input of a high fidelity preamplifier. Special mounting panels and accessories are available. Conar's model is a conventional TV set supplied in kit form only, in four packages that may be bought individually as the kit-assembly work progresses. A metal table-model cabinet is included, but of course the chassis may be installed in any cabinet desired. According to Conar, this kit can be assembled in twenty-five hours with only the most basic tools. No technical knowledge is needed. My own experience suggests that if the kit builder can put in only two or three uninterrupted working hours at a time he will need considerably more than twenty-five hours to complete the job, particularly since the Conar chassis includes only one printed wiring board. The Transvision kit has no printed wiring boards, but the IF strip is furnished completely wired and tested. Both kits feature wired and tested tuners.

(One other TV manufacturer, Andrea, furnishes a chassis for custom installation, but it appears to be a TV set without cabinet, since the unit is otherwise identical to receivers in Andrea's regular line.)

What about buying a complete TV console? This class of equipment may be subject to the same drawback that has often prevailed in console music systems. The emphasis generally is placed on cabinetry, but the attractive exterior is no guarantee that the sound system within has been designed to high fidelity standards. In examining some recent TV consoles, I found, for instance, that the speakers were improperly baffled, that the "tone control" was a simple treble-cut device and often not very effective, and that the audio output transformer was rather on the small side. It is possible, of course, to acquire a console made up of high fidelity components plus a TV chassis. Such consoles are assembled, on special order, by some high fidelity dealers or by custom cabinetmakers who also handle audio components, and they are, as one would expect, relatively expensive.

Fortunately, the person who owns a conventional TV set and does not want to replace it can effect a startling improvement in its sound by taking the audio signal from the set before it enters the TV speaker and feeding it directly to a high fidelity amplifier and speaker system. The instructions accompanying this article explain how to do this, but it must be emphasized that the work, while not very difficult, can be very dangerous. A television chassis, even turned off or unplugged, can be a source of a nasty, even lethal, electrical shock. For this reason, the job is not recommended for the amateur do-it-yourselfer; leave it to an experienced technician.

As to the future, rumor has it that stereo sound for television will be offered—as it was in films—as a means of renewing interest in the medium. Inasmuch as the new system of FM stereo was developed by two of the leading manufacturers of TV sets—General Electric and Zenith—this possibility seems a very real one. Whether stereo sound will actually do much for small screen television is, of course, open to question; in any case, those who want it probably will be able to use some sort of adapter with their present sets. Then, for the final improvement, both channels of sound could be fed to a stereo high fidelity system—which should present the ultimate in home viewing to all audiophiles.

*The consumer's guide to new and important high fidelity equipment*

# high fidelity

# EQUIPMENT REPORTS

## Sonotone Model 9TA

## Stereo Cartridge

**AT A GLANCE:** The Model 9TA is an improved version of the ceramic pickup introduced by Sonotone some time ago, featuring higher compliance and more convenient installation than the earlier model. The 9TA is available in different combinations of turnover stylus assembly, as well as with an optional pair of plug-in equalizers for connecting to magnetic phono inputs. The model tested by United States Testing Company, Inc., for this report was fitted with a 0.7-mil diamond stylus for stereo and monophonic discs, and a 3.0-mil sapphire stylus for 78-rpm discs. With the equalizers, it is designated as the 9TA-SDV or the "Velocitone Mark II" and is priced at $19.25. Without the equalizers, it is known as the 9TA-SD and sells for $13. (The letters "SD" refer to the sapphire and diamond styli.) Manufacturer: Sonotone Corporation, Electronic Applications Division, Elmsford, N. Y.

**IN DETAIL:** A versatile and relatively low-priced pickup, the Sonotone 9TA may be used in many different applications. To begin with, it has a turnover stylus assembly, which is available in combinations other than the one used for this report—for instance, with two 0.7-mil diamond styli. Too, once the basic cartridge body is owned, the alternate stylus assemblies can be added as required; removal and replacement of the stylus assembly is a relatively simple job and requires no tools.

The cartridge itself furnishes a signal that is suitable for direct connection to a "ceramic" input on a preamplifier or integrated amplifier, as the case may be. This same signal can be fed into any high level input, or even directly into a basic amplifier that has a level control—but its high frequency response may be affected by the resistive load into which it feeds, with a brighter top end resulting from higher resistances. Alternately, the pair of plug-in equalizers that is available will tailor the cartridge's output so that it can be fed into the magnetic phono inputs on a preamp or integrated amplifier. The networks simply convert the constant-amplitude characteristic of the cartridge to a constant-velocity characteristic (hence the name "Velocitone"). The former hookup is suitable for greater convenience or economy in setting up a "quickie" type of system, while the plug-in equalizer hookup is designed for greater accuracy of reproduction. Not to be overlooked in this regard is the fact that the basic 9TA, without the equalizers but with a diamond tip for stereo or monophonic microgrooves and a sapphire tip for older 78s, is priced at only $13—a figure that will not buy the finest sound available today, but will enable the playing of all records through whatever amplifying facilities are at hand and without damaging old or new

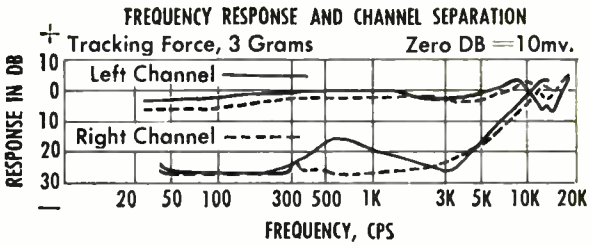
**REPORT POLICY**

Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and listening tests. Data for the reports, on equipment other than loudspeakers, is obtained by the United States Testing Company, Inc., of Hoboken, New Jersey, a completely independent organization which, since 1880, has been a leader in product evaluation. Speaker reports are based on controlled listening tests. Occasionally, a supplementary agency may be invited to contribute to the testing program. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. 

records. The plug-in equalizers can be ordered later if the owner decides to upgrade the system with a new amplifier.

The 9TA has a rated compliance of 5.5 x $10^{-6}$ cm/dyne and is designed to track at a vertical force of 2 to 4 grams. In place of the presoldered wires that came on the former 9T model, and which had to be cut and then soldered to sleeve-tips for installing in a tone arm, the new model features a "universal" terminal plug that greatly facilitates installation. The turnover stylus assembly has a midway detent position for safeguarding the styli when not in use, as well as a plastic slip-on cover for further protection. The cartridge is relatively immune to induced hum pickup, has low needle-talk, and is far from being a "dust gatherer" around the stylus tip.

A vertical force of 3 grams was used for measurements made at USTC. The resultant curves indicate that the cartridge has response characteristics generally similar to its model 9T predecessor, which is to say it is clean and smooth through a good portion of the audio range, and exhibits a typical peak-and-dip effect in the frequency region of 9 kc and above. Stereo separation is fine up to about 5 kc, but lessens as the response approaches 10 kc. The signal level measured, with the equalizer output feeding a 47K load, was 10 millivolts per channel at 5 cm/sec peak velocity and 1,000 cps. Channel balance was maintained within 1.5 db at 1,000




cps; left-channel response was uniform within ±3 db from 60 cps to 11 kc. Over-all response was checked from 30 cps to just above 18 kc. The peaks observed at 9 kc (and at the second harmonic of 18 kc) were attributed to stylus resonance, a condition observed in varying degree on many piezoelectric cartridges.

While the general consensus of the measurements and subsequent listening tests indicates that the 9TA is not quite the equal of the best magnetic types available today, it does have much to recommend it for use in a budget system, or for the collector who requires a low-cost and convenient device for playing 78-rpm discs. It also would make a fine replacement cartridge in many package players, possibly providing a step upward in playback quality over the cartridge originally furnished in such sets.

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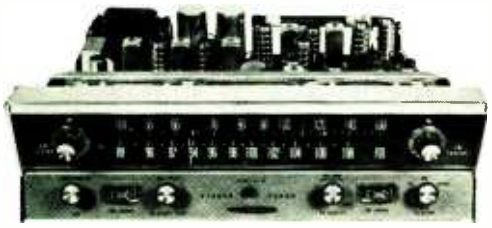


## Heathkit AJ-41

## AM-FM-MPX Stereo Tuner

**AT A GLANCE:** One of Heath's newest and most attractive units is the AJ-41 tuner, which provides for FM stereo, as well as monophonic FM or AM reception. It is available as a kit for $119.95, or factory-wired (as Model AJW-41) for $189.95. The unit described by United States Testing Company, Inc., in this report was one constructed from a kit. Manufacturer: Heath Company, Benton Harbor, Mich.

**IN DETAIL:** The term "stereo tuner" now refers to the FM-multiplex type and not, as in former days, to the set that could receive simultaneous AM and FM signals. Thus, while the AJ-41 receives monophonic or stereo FM (multiplex) as well as AM, the AM section cannot be used simultaneously with the FM section.

The tuner has a number of de luxe features and operating conveniences, of the kind usually associated with costlier equipment. For instance, there are separate AM and FM tuning indicators, a variable AFC control, an adjustable FM SQUELCH (interstation muting) control, and an FM STEREO PHASE control which is designed to serve as a fine tuning adjustment for best stereo reception. The front panel also features a neon lamp that lights up when the set is receiving a stereo signal. For AM use, an AM FIDELITY switch—to regulate the bandwidth of the AM tuning circuits—is incorporated on the squelch control. The power ON-OFF switch is part of the AFC control. The output circuits use cathode follower stages, each with its own level control located on the rear of the chassis. A total of sixteen tubes is used. The multiplex section is basically of the "matrixing" design, and is quite similar to the Heathkit ACW-11 adapter reported on here in July 1962. The tuning scale is a full-size "slide-rule" type that is softly illuminated during use. AM and FM tuning is accomplished by separate, smooth-running flywheels.

As shown on the accompanying chart, USTC's measurement of audio response on monophonic FM was flat within +0, -1 db from 40 cps to 12.5 kc, and was down 2.4 db at 20 cps, and 4 db at 15 kc. Effectively, then, this response could be characterized as ±2 db, 20 cps to 15 kc.

In the "as built" condition, USTC measured the tuner's IHFM sensitivity to be 15 microvolts at 98 mc, with a total harmonic distortion at 400 cps of 2.15%. Curious to learn if higher performance could be obtained by further adjustments, USTC realigned the set, and found that peak performance could readily be obtained. After alignment, the IHFM sensitivity rose to 2.5 microvolts at 98 mc, 3.5 microvolts at 106 mc, and 2.5 microvolts at 90 mc, indicating very good sensitivity all across the FM band. The tuner's distortion too was improved, and had dropped to only 0.7% at 400 cps, 1.2% at 1,000 cps, and 1.3% at 40 cps. The set's signal-to-noise ratio on FM was 49.5 db; intermodulation distortion was 0.2%, capture ratio was 11.5 db; and the signal output level, 1.65 volts.

During FM stereo operation, USTC found that the tuner's distortion rose. The left channel showed 3.3% distortion at 400 cps, 2.6% at 1,000 cps, and 4.4% at 40 cps. The right channel measured 4% at 400 cps, 3.2% at 1,000 cps, and 5.4% at 40 cps. Frequency response on stereo remained flat within ±1 db from 30 cps to 13.7 kc on the left channel, and within +2.4,

−1 db from 30 cps to 14.5 kc on the right channel. Both channels were down by about 2 db at 20 cps and at 15 kc. Channel separation was generally adequate, remaining better than 18 db from 100 cps up to 10 kc. Separation in both channels lessened at the very low and very high ends of the audio band.

The output signal level on stereo was measured to be 2.45 volts on the left channel, and 2.75 volts on the right channel. Inasmuch as these signals are a few decibels higher than the monophonic output level, the tuner may sound the least bit louder when the mode switch is moved from the mono to the stereo position. High frequency filtering in the AJ-41 was found to be very good: the 19-kc pilot and the 38-kc subcarrier signals both were well suppressed (65 db and 50 db, respectively, below the 400-cps output level with 100% modulation). The tuning indicators were found to be helpful on stereo as well as mono.

In USTC's sample, the channels turned out to be reversed when the tuner had been completed. This was corrected by adjusting the oscillator coil in the multiplex circuits. According to reports, the likelihood of such reversal in multiplex circuitry is not uncommon and is—in any case—fairly readily corrected.

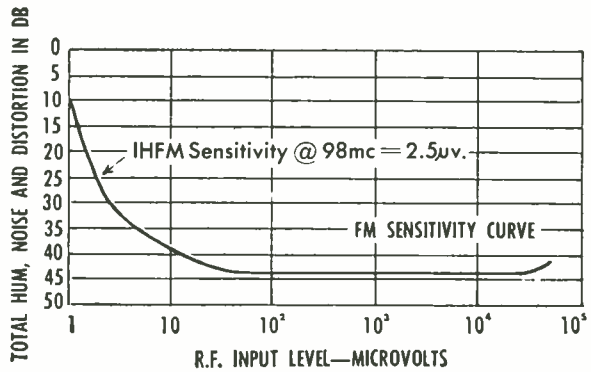
AM sensitivity was somewhat low, and distortion at 400 cps was measured as 6.7%. With the AM fidelity switch in its ON (pulled out) position, AM frequency response rolled off to −3 db at 4.2 kc, and was down −10 db at 6.2 kc.

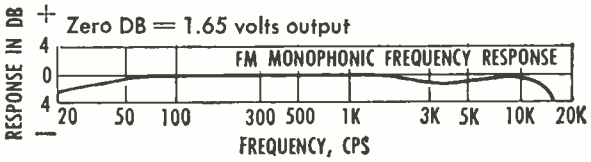
Listening tests generally confirmed the measurements. On FM—mono and stereo—the tuner performed satisfactorily; on AM, many of the weaker stations did not come in as clearly as the stronger stations.

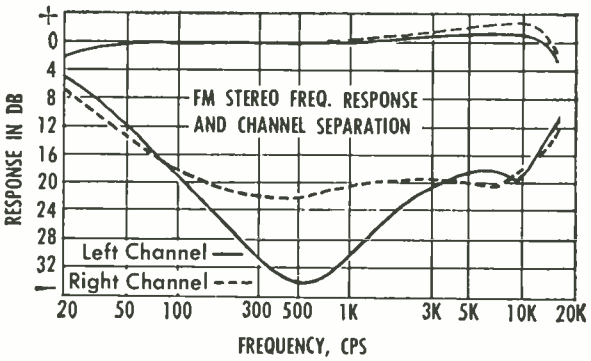
### How It Went Together

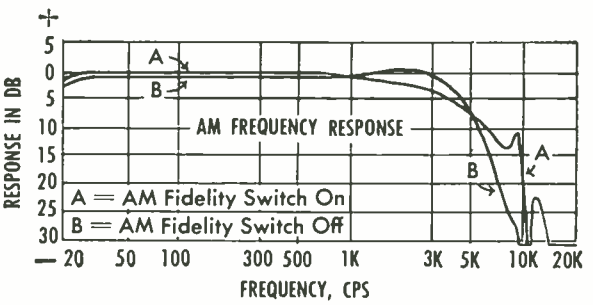
*In general, the instructions and procedures provided for the assembly of the Heathkit Stereo Tuner Model AJ-41 were clear and direct. One "trick" the builder had to improvise during assembly was to place two of the control knobs on their shafts temporarily to hold the control panel in position while soldering to the tuning meters. Since the control panel is not retained permanently until the bottom cover is in place, this action is almost a must at this stage of assembly. Some difficulty was met in trying to place lockwashers on the rather short screws that secure the printed circuit boards. The wiring itself went smoothly, with the usual slowdown in the area of the controls where connections are numerous and working space is small.*

*The pre-cut and laced wiring harness provided by Heath saves the kit builder much time and effort and is quite easy to work with. It also assures correct lead lengths. The plastic nut starter provided is a real boon, especially where top to bottom chassis assembly is required and in cramped work areas. The kit took approximately sixteen hours to build.*




## Dynaco Model FMX-3

## Multiplex Integrator

**AT A GLANCE:** Dynaco's new Model FMX-3 is a multiplex adapter for adding to an existing Dynatuner to enable it to receive FM stereo broadcasts. It is available as a kit for $29.95, or as a "semi-kit" (in which the unit is furnished with most of the wiring already done) for $39.95. Tests of a kit-built model, conducted by United States Testing Company, Inc., indicate that the FMX-3 works better with the Dynatuner than any other

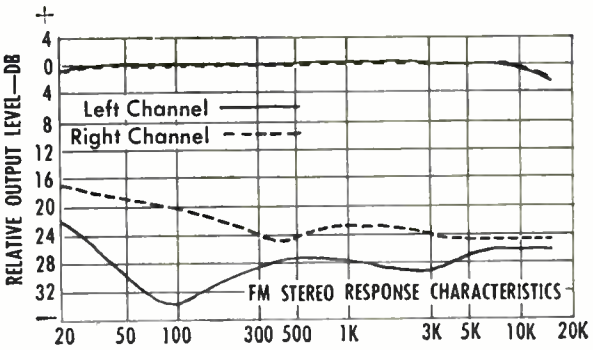
multiplex adapter previously tried. The resultant stereo Dynatuner provides excellent performance on both stereo and mono broadcasts. Note: a factory-wired stereo Dynatuner—which incorporates the original FM-1 tuner and the new adapter—is designated as Model FM-3/A and sells for $169.95. Manufacturer: Dynaco, Inc., 3912 Powelton Ave., Philadelphia 4, Pa.

**IN DETAIL:** As with the Dynatuner itself, the new multiplex adapter is disarmingly simple and compact, yet provides first-rate performance. The FMX-3 has no operating controls, and the audio signal path in the tuner is the same for either mono or stereo programs. The front-panel appearance of the stereo version of the Dynatuner is identical to that of the original mono tuner except for the tuning indicator. The original indicating tube is replaced with a dual-beam tube, the bottom half of which functions in the same way as the old tuning eye, but the top half of which lights when tuned to a stereo station to illuminate the word STEREO.

The FMX-3 in operation is essentially a "time-division" adapter. It amplifies the 19-kc pilot signal and doubles it to 38 kc in a 6BL8 pentode-triode. The regenerated 38-kc subcarrier is combined with the detected FM composite signal in a balanced transformer. The characteristic of the mixed signal is such that an envelope is formed on which one side is the left channel and the other side is the right channel. Each channel is detected by one half of a balanced bridge (containing four 1N541 matched diodes) detector circuit, the outputs of which are deëmphasized, passed through the volume controls, and are amplified in 12AX7 feedback stages. A 67-kc notch filter is used at the input of the adapter to prevent any interference from an SCA broadcast, and low pass filters are used in the audio output sections to attenuate the 38-kc subcarrier and its harmonics. The 38-kc doubler circuit in the FMX-3 also feeds a signal to the dual-beam tuning indicator.

As did the mono Dynatuner, the stereo adapter comes prealigned for near-peak performance. Whatever touch-up adjustments may be required can be done by following the instructions in the manual, and without the need for instruments or professional help. What's more, should the need ever arise for future readjustment, due perhaps to the changing of a tube or other circuit part, the touch-up can be repeated just as readily by the owner.

On FM stereo USTC measured the unit's frequency response as flat within +0.3 and −2 db from 8 cps to 14 kc on each channel, dropping off to −2.5 db at 15 kc.




Channel separation was excellent, and was maintained better than 20 db above 100 cps, and better than 24 db above 3 kc.

The tuner's output level was 0.94 volts rms per channel. Harmonic distortion was very low. On the left channel, the distortion was 0.63% at 40 cps, 1.0% at 400 cps, and 0.54% at 1,000 cps, while on the right channel the distortion was 0.57% at 40 cps, 0.7% at 400 cps, and 0.41% at 1,000 cps. The 38-kc subcarrier signal was suppressed 34 db below the level of the 400-cps output at full modulation, which is low enough to assure that the subcarrier will not cause spurious beats with tape recorder bias frequencies during off-the-air recording on stereo or mono.

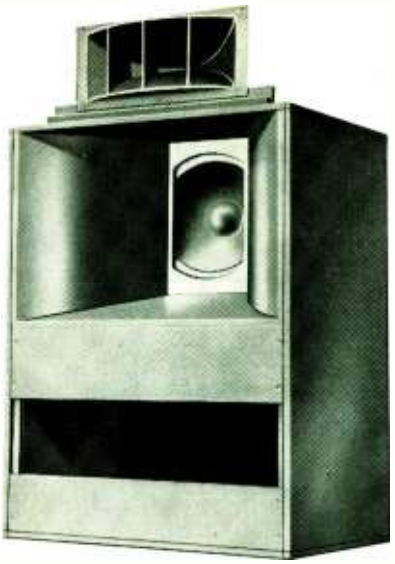
Listening tests confirmed the measurements. On both mono and stereo programs the stereo-converted Dynatuner provided no apparent change in frequency response, distortion, or sensitivity from the excellent results previously obtained with the mono version. The sound is clean and full, and the set still pulls in and holds onto relatively distant stations. There is just one point regarding the use of the stereo Dynatuner. It has no STEREO DEFEAT switch, which means that the set is always "open" to whatever comes in on the subcarrier channel. When this channel provides stereo, fine. However, some mono stations, for a number of reasons, may sound "dirty" when their subchannel signals are audible. To remedy this, the user is advised simply to move the mode switch on his control amplifier to the "A+B" or "monophonic" position. This cancels out the offending noise on the unused subchannel and effectively makes the Dynatuner a monophonic tuner for such signals.

### How It Went Together

*Installing the FMX-3 in a previously wired Dynatuner involves five basic steps. 1. Replacement of the present tuning eye and socket with a new dual-beam unit, and a few component changes on the existing circuit board. 2. Replacement of the present volume control with a dual-volume control for the two stereo channels. 3. Assembly of the new multiplex integrator circuit board. (Note: the FMX-3 can be purchased in "semi-kit" form, in which case step three is omitted, since the circuit board comes completely assembled.) 4. Interconnection of the FMX-3 and the FM-1 tuner. 5. Alignment of the FMX-3 as explained in the manual.*

*Builders of the FM-1 tuner should find that the assembly of the FMX-3 is relatively simple. The instructions furnished with the kit are quite clear, and the entire job should take five to six hours for an average builder, working at a leisurely pace. The alignment procedure for the FMX-3, as for the FM-1 Dynatuner, obviates the use of special test equipment, and a very precise alignment can be accomplished using the built-in tuning eye as an indicator.*

## Altec Lansing Model A-7 Speaker System



**AT A GLANCE:** The Model A-7, smallest of Altec Lansing's "Voice of the Theatre" speaker systems, is essentially a two-way reproducer. The low frequency section consists of a Model 803B (15-inch) woofer installed in its own enclosure. The midrange and highs are handled by a specialized driver connected to its own exponential horn. Crossover at 800 cps is provided by an external network that has five positions for adjusting the level of tweeter response. With the tweeter assembly sitting atop the bass horn, total height is 52¼ inches. The bass enclosure itself is 42 inches high, 30 inches wide, and 24 inches deep. The A-7 is not furniture-finished but is supplied in a neutral gray tint. Price is $299. A similar system, installed in a contemporary cabinet, in walnut or mahogany, and known as the "Capistrano," also is available for $399. Dimensions are 30 inches high, 47 inches wide, and 23½ inches deep. Manufacturer: Altec Lansing Corp., 1515 S. Manchester Ave., Anaheim, Calif.

**IN DETAIL:** It is apparent, from the dimensions of the A-7, that this "smallest" of the Voice of the Theatre systems is far from petite and is definitely in the class of floor-standing speakers. It also becomes apparent, on listening to the A-7, that the Voice of the Theatre can serve very nicely too as the "Voice of the Listening Room"—assuming that its rather utilitarian appearance will blend with the room's décor. If the sound of the A-7 appeals but the sight does not, one can, of course, choose the handsome—and costlier—"Capistrano."

In acoustic design, the A-7 is something of a hybrid. Its high frequency section, which reproduces sounds above 800 cps, consists of a Model 802D driver unit connected to a die-cast exponential horn that flares upward and outward into four sections. Tones below 800 cps are reproduced by a sturdy 15-inch woofer that "looks" into a short exponential horn, but which additionally has bass reflex loading on its rear. The over-all acoustic effect is solid, smooth, and highly listenable. The system's power rating is 30 watts. Most of our listening tests employed a stereo amplifier that could supply more than 60 watts per channel; we found that with the volume control turned just past the "12 o'clock" position, the sound level in a 28- by 18-foot room was overwhelming, but not distorted. Plainly, the A-7 can be driven adequately by a clean amplifier of almost any power rating. Nominal impedance is 16 ohms.

The A-7's response was estimated to extend from beyond audibility at the high end to just below 35 cps at the low end. A gentle roll-off seems to begin at about 50 cps, but response continues for the better part of an octave below that frequency. Bass doubling may occur somewhere below 40 cps, depending on how hard the woofer is driven. For instance, at moderate to high power levels, the speaker responded cleanly to 33 cps. At lower power levels, response held up cleanly to 30 cps, which exceeds the manufacturer's claim for this unit. Whatever the exact lower limit, the A-7 does produce a healthy amount of solid clean bass, which is best appreciated after balancing the high end of the system. The crossover network has a five-step attenuator for high frequencies. In our tests, the most pleasing tonal balance was realized by setting this network for maximum attenuation and then—interestingly enough—turning the tweeters around so that they "faced" the wall behind the enclosures. This arrangement produced, at least in our situation, the most satisfying sound on both mono and stereo. It took some of the edge off the tweeter's "brightness" and helped spread the midrange and highs throughout the room. It should be pointed out that the two physically independent woofer and tweeter sections of the A-7 lend themselves to considerable variety of installation and relative placement; between this versatility and the five-step attenuator, it should be possible to adjust the system to a number of listening needs and tastes. In any case, this system is not one you would snuggle up to; it does demand space about it and especially between it and the listener. We found that from a listening position of ten feet from the speakers, we began to perceive a very satisfying tonal blend.

Once set up to our taste, the A-7 acquitted itself very nicely on a variety of program material. Most impressive was its handling of brass and woodwinds. The human voice, too, sounded very natural. Mono sound was nicely centered between the speakers. On stereo, the pair of A-7's, spaced about eight feet apart and heard from about fifteen feet toward the opposite end of the room, provided a realistic sense of depth and breadth and yet focused nicely on soloists. The stereo was "stereo" in the literal sense—"solid." The components of this system seemed extremely well made; with normal use the system should last indefinitely. All told, a very "big sound" (and clean sound) type of system going at a not-so-big price.

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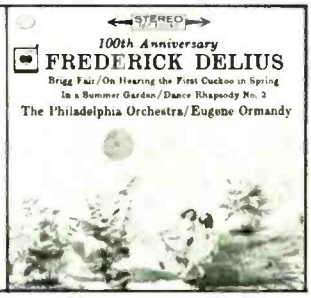


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# Music Makers

REGINA RESNIK'S year of silence, 1955, gave rise to a variety of presentiments among operagoers, some of whom may have had a good idea of what the singer was up to, but few of whom could have predicted how triumphantly she would emerge from her retreat. Then, on February 15, 1956, the secret was out. Miss Resnik, after a year of study, had turned the corner from soprano to mezzo, and on that date she stepped forth for a brand-new debut at the Metropolitan, in the role of Marina in *Boris Godunov*. Probably only another singer—and an American-born and -trained one, at that—can fully appreciate the resolution required for such a turning, and evaluate the hazard Miss Resnik ran in withdrawing from the stage and public attention. But her daring paid off, and she negotiated the tricky change of direction with quite unprecedented success.

Last spring, her singing of Klytemnestra (in Strauss's *Elektra*) set New York critics aglow. With this culmination of six flourishing years as a mezzo (and before her next appearance at the Met, this March), the time seemed ripe for us to draw Miss Resnik out on the subject of her new career. "Changing to a mezzo from a soprano," said she, getting right to the point, "involves much more than simply singing lower notes. I haven't added or subtracted a single note in my range. Being a mezzo is a matter of color. Singing involves two physical things—breathing, and the support of the tone on the breath. The rest is in the mind and the imagination, which you must use to create the sound you want.

"One of the most difficult things I had to do was convince managers and the public that the change was right and that the color was right—that there was no question of losing top notes or something of the kind. And in addition to that, it was very hard to contemplate learning some forty new roles when the time for learning roles should have been over."

How did Miss Resnik go about learning roles? "I used to learn the words before the music, but I changed, and I'll tell you why: the composer's character is often only a glimpse of the author's character, and the author may have had literary forebears too. Hofmannsthal's Klytemnestra, in the play from which Strauss worked, is, for example, quite a different person from the Klytemnestra of Aeschylus and Sophocles. If I tried to bring in both composer and librettist, I'd be working at cross purposes. So I learn the music first and let the music shape the role.

*Regina Resnik: a singer of daring.*

"The Klytemnestra I sang at the Met last spring was really a bombshell for me. It was quite different from the way I sang it there two years before. I had worked with Wieland Wagner at Stuttgart in between, and for the first time I saw the role in a different light. Wieland evolved a mad, mad portrait of me as Klytemnestra, a woman descending to total degradation. She is symbolic, studied, profound, searching. This is poles apart from Michael Manuel's conception at the Met—he sees her as light, whimsical, humorous. I learned from both, combined something from both. But I have sung in four different productions of *Elektra*—the Metropolitan, Vienna, Berlin, and Stuttgart—and Stuttgart has had the greatest effect on me."

WHILE WE WERE on the subject of interpretations I asked Miss Resnik about another role which is possibly her most famous—or was, until the "bombshell" at the Met. How about Carmen? Any changes there? "I've sung Carmen one hundred and thirty times, and I haven't even tapped her yet. Most singers think of Carmen as a big, vulgar, passionate, wonderful gypsy, and I used to sing her that way. I felt that there was an immediate passion between her and José. But now it seems to me that she isn't attracted to him until he shows an interest in her. 'Who is that face?' she asks, but he's just part of the scenery at that point. She uses him as a foil at first; she's more interested in the captain of the guard—whom she knows better at the inn at night. All this affects the way she sings the Habanera."

When pressed for facts about her recording plans, Miss Resnik acknowledged the strong possibility of a stereo Carmen for Westminster in the spring of 1963. In the meantime the company had kept her occupied during the summer with two quite different scores, Beethoven's Ninth and Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet*, both under Monteux (and the Berlioz in the stores this month).

"Berlioz writes gratefully for the voice," Miss Resnik commented. "There's no problem with the orchestra as there is in Strauss, because Berlioz doesn't create such a collision of instrumental colors. He uses a big orchestra, but the scoring is often very transparent. Strauss, of course, will set the full brass section going against the voice in its middle range." But brass sections are an occupational hazard which, as six years have proved, this mezzo takes quite in her stride.

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# Records in Review

**by Conrad L. Osborne**

## In Schubert's Songs— Fischer-Dieskau Re-recorded And Schumann Restored

*Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau: his miller's hand is no stripling.*

WITHOUT actually taking a count, I should guess that the artist with the most recordings of Lieder to his credit would not be one of the great singers of the Twenties and Thirties, or even the ubiquitous Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, but Gerald Moore, that accompanist of no shame. In the microgroove era, he has repeatedly partnered such artists as Fischer-Dieskau, Hotter, Schwarzkopf, Ludwig, and De los Angeles, and re-releases of earlier recordings with such singers as McCormack, Kipnis, and Schumann serve to remind us that Moore has been engraving Lieder performances since very early in recording history.

Moore has become something in the way of an institution. This is partly due to the quality of his accompanying, which is, on the whole, demonstrably better than anyone else's. But it is also due to the position he has carved for himself and his fellow accompanists in the musical universe—a position which he defends with such candor and wit in his lecture-recitals and his writings. Certainly, the days are over when (as Moore narrates in his latest book, *Am I Too Loud?*) a Frieda Hempel could request that piano postludes to her songs be omitted so as not to spoil "her" applause; and the demise of those days is very largely Moore's doing.

By my figuring, Moore has now recorded the complete *Die schöne Müllerin* three times: once with Aksel Schiøtz in 1945, once with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau in 1954, and once again with Fischer-Dieskau during the past summer. This latest version is not only the best of the three—it is easily the finest *Schöne Müllerin* ever put on records. As a total statement of the cycle, it is going to be hard to beat. I can understand the view of those who feel that these songs are most suited for a lyric tenor voice—it is this sort of instrument that would seem best able to convey the youth and the ingenuousness of the miller's helper. Moreover, only a light voice is likely to be capable of the flexible articulation required by *Mein!* or *Der Jäger*. And of course the songs were originally written in a high key—generally about a full tone or tone-and-a-half above those used here. But by the time Fischer-Dieskau and Moore have laid out for us the opening verse of *Das Wandern*, we know that this is the voice we have all along really wished to hear.

Fischer-Dieskau's miller's hand is no callow stripling; he is a husky, vigorous fellow, glorying in the brightness of the sun, the gurgling of the brook, the steady turn of the mill wheel. As he strides along, he throws his head back and sings—in a lusty baritone, of course. This very first song gives us an excellent idea of what is to come. It is the strophic song to end all strophic songs: five verses with no musical variation whatever. (This is really rather rare. The cycle's twentieth and final song, *Des Baches Wiegenlied*, at first hearing appears to be identical in its five verses, but the vocal part actually varies slightly in entrances and note values with each verse, to accommodate the poetry and to insert certain emphases.) Yet *Das Wandern* is over almost before we know it, without any feeling of repetitiveness;

its rhythm has swept us right into the young miller's world, and Fischer-Dieskau's dead-center intonation, crisp articulation, and uncanny command of color and dynamic variation (a touch of weight in the fourth verse, which speaks of the "stones themselves, as heavy as they are, dancing"; a mite of enthusiasm and extra volume kept in reserve for the last verse—*"O Wandern, Wandern, meine Lust, O Wandern!"*) assures us that the singer will surmount every challenge of this demanding work.

There is no surer test of a performer's taste, sense, and imagination than a Schubert song. So many of them are deceptively simple in structure (of the twenty in *Die schöne Müllerin*, nine are strophic with little or no variation among verses, and most of the rest are A-B-A or even A-A, with perhaps a bar or two of "bridge" and a change from major to minor as the only variation), and Schubert's markings as to tempo and dynamics are about as numerous as Shakespeare's as to setting and stage directions. The performers, therefore, are left either to re-create or ruin the songs pretty much on their own. Clearly, Schubert did not intend an entire four- or five-verse strophic song to be sung with a metronomic inflexibility—but he leaves to singer and pianist the matter of deciding just where to accelerate or retard the tempo, just where to increase or diminish the volume. Fischer-Dieskau and Moore are extremely flexible in their handling of the songs, yet never lose the underlying pulse of a section or an entire song, nor the sense of progress from one song to the next. There is no single "right" way of treating any given passage; one need not take the ritardandos used here, nor forego those unused (a favorite of mine that has not attracted Fischer-Dieskau and Moore is a slight hitch on the leap of a minor seventh to high F on *"es gehn ja Mühlenräder in jedem klaren Bach"* in *Wohin?*—one gets the picture of the turn of the mill wheel, a paddle slowing almost to a stop as it nears the top, then plunging down into the water again). The point is that the variations chosen by the artists, as well as the tempos themselves, are made to seem the "right" ones in the context of their performance.

With Fischer-Dieskau, Moore can allow himself an extra dash of color and incisiveness—and he has plenty on hand. There are, for example, two innocent-looking bars of tremolando in *Halt!*, marked only *"cresc."* in the Peters edition; these under Moore's hands become a bounding, leaping springboard from which the singer's *"und die Sonne, wie helle vom Himmel sie scheint"* jumps as if it were the most natural thing in the world. Yet almost any vocalist would disappear in the brilliant glare of Moore's execution; it takes a voice of this color and resource, and a rhythmic ability of this sharpness, to fill out such a frame. That is the wonderful thing about this collaboration; each of the partners is a thoroughgoing virtuoso, utterly in command of his instrument and intimately attuned to the other's way with a song. Like Caruso and Ruffo in the *Otello* Oath Duet, they both can put up a full head of steam without risk of throwing the balance or snapping the frame.

In general, Fischer-Dieskau has tightened his interpretation of the cycle since the recording of his earlier version. The self-pity of the 1954 reading has been reduced, and the tendency to exaggerate effects has been quashed. *Der Jäger* no longer has the tinge of infantile tantrum; its jealous spite is now of a darker order. And the instruction to the brook in *Eifersucht und Stolz* retains its air of affected placidity, but drops the hint of caricaturing which it used to have. The changes are all for the better, and the voice itself sounds even more beautiful and flexible now than it did then. The recording is beautifully paced too—a long pause after the ecstatic *tour de force* of *Mein!*, which represents the climax of the "happy" part of the cycle (the apprentice thinks he has won the miller's maid; after the reflective mood of the next song, *Pause*, the mood darkens quickly—only seven songs separate the young man's joy of possession from his decision to end his life); then shorter spaces between songs as the singer's gathering jealousy and despair are pictured, until the outburst of *Der Jäger* is followed almost without division by the restless introduction to *Eifersucht und Stolz*.

The sound (to judge by monophonic advance pressings) is as close to perfect as a disc can get. The performance of the cycle itself is preceded and followed by Fischer-Dieskau's recitation of a prologue and epilogue written by Müller but not set by Schubert—rather precious verses rendered in a rather precious manner. I understand that the final pressing will sport dividing bands so that one will at least not be compelled to play these sections every time the cycle itself is listened to. Otherwise, this album couldn't be better.

"She sang with a smile," remarks Moore of Elisabeth Schumann. It would probably be too much to claim that Schumann's was a great voice, although its silvery purity made it as consistently lovely to listen to as any (this judgment is made strictly on the basis of her recordings, for I had the poor taste to come along about a decade too late to hear her in person). But its user was assuredly one of this century's most intelligent and sensitive vocal artists, and it is a pleasure to report that Angel has restored no fewer than forty-three of her Schubert interpretations on two microgroove discs in its "Great Recordings of the Century" series. (A previous record in the series includes her performances of Wolf and Strauss songs.)

Schumann was mistress of an irresistible effect, the soft thread of tone that floats over the music in the state of seeming suspension and that seems to the listener to be the only thing in existence at that moment. In a hushed auditorium, this kind of singing can create moments of pure magic, and Schumann's recitals must have been full of such moments. The effect can be heard even on these aging records in such songs as *Im Abendroth, Du bist die Ruh'*, or the *Ave Maria*. Other songs given incomparable performances here are *Litanei* (the whole thing is close to perfect, but listen to the entry on the final *"alle Seelen, ruhn in Frieden,"* magnificently carried over from the preceding hold, for an example of true greatness in Lieder singing); the beautifully sustained *Nacht und Träume*; *Der Jüngling und der Tod* (she could be dramatic, even within a relatively small framework); and *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*, which in this performance seems to me for the first time the equal of Wolf's setting of the same text. In the lighter numbers, such as *Der Einsame*, *Auf dem Wasser zu singen*, or *Fischerweise*, she sings with that smile of which Moore speaks, and is thoroughly disarming.

Perhaps Volume 2 is the more valuable, for the songs contained therein are largely unfamiliar, while those of Volume 1 are nearly all oft-performed ones. However, the insights of Schumann's performances ought to more than make up for any duplication; certainly I would not want to forego many of the Volume 1 songs. Moore is the accompanist for roughly half these numbers—more in Volume 2 than in Volume 1—but his colleagues are thoroughly competent, especially George Reeves, and he especially in a gorgeously shaped version of *Der Schmetterling*.

That two such distinctively different singers as Schumann and Fischer-Dieskau could find the ideal partner in one accompanist is a source of amazement; that we can continue to listen to the results is a source of satisfaction.

SCHUBERT: *Die schöne Müllerin, Op. 25*

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Gerald Moore, piano.
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Vol. 2: *Nacht und Träume; Seligkeit; Nähe des Geliebten: Lachen und Weinen; Frühlingstraum; Der Einsame; Nachtviolen; An die Geliebte; Wiegenlied; Der Schmetterling; Des Baches Wiegenlied; Der Jüngling und der Tod; Das Heimweh: Hin und wieder fliegen Pfeile; Liebe schwärmt auf allen Wegen; Dass sie hier gewesen!; Rosamunde: Der Vollmond strahlt aus Bergeshöhen; Das Mädchen: An mein Clavier; Lied der Mignon: Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt; Lied der Mignon: So lasst mich scheinen.*

Elisabeth Schumann, soprano; Gerald Moore *et al.*, piano.
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by Robert C. Marsh

# After Nine Years of Neglect, Two New *Romeo and Juliets*

*Monteux, with Westminster cohorts.*

On the evening of September 11, 1827 a twenty-three-year-old French composer fell in love with all the intensity and bravura appropriate to an age of emotional emancipation. It was the start of the "grand drama" of his life, he later wrote, and it gave music some of its most sublimely romantic pages. The man was Hector Berlioz, the lady an Irish actress named Harriet Smithson. And perhaps the real tragedy of the affair was that Berlioz married her, in 1833, and lived the romance through to a dreary end.

What is important for our present purpose is that this passion for a Shakespearean actress fired Berlioz with a fervor for the British bard which was to find its fullest realization in seven months of 1839 when he composed the dramatic symphony *Romeo and Juliet*. The immediate motivation for the work came from Paganini, who in December of the previous year had liberated Berlioz from hack work with a gift of 20,000 francs. Berlioz decided that with such an opportunity he must "write a masterpiece, on a grand new plan, a splendid work, full of passion and imagination, and worthy to be dedicated to the illustrious artist to whom I owe so much." *Romeo and Juliet* was the result. Paris—and the world—first heard it on November 24, 1839.

Contemplating the finished score, Berlioz pondered on its fate. "As regards execution," he wrote in his *Autobiography*, "it presents immense difficulties of all sorts inherent to its form and style, and only to be overcome by long, patient, and *well-directed* study. To interpret it properly the artists—conductor, singers, and orchestra—must all be first-rate, and prepared to study it as a new opera is studied in good lyrical theatres, that is, very nearly as though it were to be played by heart." In fact, *Romeo and Juliet* is not even as close to the operatic stage as *The Damnation of Faust*. It is what it claims to be, a dramatic symphony. It is dramatic (there is even, in the strictest Aristotelian sense, a beginning, middle, and end), and assuredly it is symphonic. Those who wish a more detailed analysis can read Jacques Barzun's admirable discourse on the form of the work in the first volume of his *Berlioz and the Romantic Century*. For most listeners, the formal problem ceases to exist once the work has become familiar. There is a Prologue setting the theme of the action and three "acts" in which the drama runs its course. Everything is in the music: you need only surrender to it to become convinced that all is right and all is well—and questions of form be hanged.

The only real trouble with *Romeo and Juliet* is that in far too many of the 123 years since its completion it was known only to a minute segment of the international musical audience. For most of us, the man who brought it back from the oblivion of textbooks was Arturo Toscanini. In October 1942 he gave three performances of the work with the New York Philharmonic, the first presentation of the score in New York during the present century. In effect, it was new music. Tremendous excitement followed the revival and was renewed, four and a half years later, when the Maestro produced the work for the second and final time during two broadcasts with the NBC Symphony in February of 1947. There was justification then for a complete recording of the score, but Victor chose to preserve only the two big orchestral scenes of the second part. The first complete recording came six years later when Victor did the work with Charles Munch in Boston. With the usual ironies of the record business, nine years of neglect followed, after which we are now given two stereo editions in the same month.

Each of the new *Romeo and Juliets* has its merits, but some of us know of a greater recorded performance than either of them—a special set of pressings edited from NBC's reference recording and rehearsals of the 1947 Toscanini production. This set has never been released to the general public and, in fact, is still being allowed to remain in limbo. It is, however, the standard by which other readings of the Berlioz work must be judged, and the public has the right to be made aware of its existence and potential availability. The discs present the familiar sound of Studio 8-H, Radio City, except in the *Queen Mab* scherzo where material from a 1951 Carnegie Hall broadcast has been included (this section of the score has been released in RCA Victor LM 6026), and there is no point in pretending that the sonics are equal to high fidelity standards or that the quality is consistent—there are some particularly disagreeable passages for the strings. Yet, for all its age, this version possesses the three best soloists and the most dramatic effects; and, if given an opportunity, listeners might well choose its assets over stereophony as represented in the Munch and Monteux editions.

It is difficult to make direct comparisons among the three sets because each of them represents a different engineering technique. The Toscanini offers a dry, clear studio sound, with limitations at the extremes of the frequency range, but a strong, undistorted midrange that even today provides very satisfactory presence. The transparency of the ensemble is well preserved, along with the fine degrees of nuance and color which the Maestro gave the performance. The chorus and vocal soloists are well balanced and well recorded. The real test comes when comparison is made with the monophonic versions of the newer sets, and I was surprised to find how readily the ear adjusted to the Toscanini. If a monophonic recording is what is wanted, the Maestro's would certainly be preferable to either of the newer ones.

Monteux also seems to be located in a studio, or, at least, a very dry hall, and the reverberation in his set is minimal. This—plus stereo and wide frequency recording—makes at best for a bright, clear sound with great ensemble transparency and a strong sense of contact with the performers. It also, on occasion, introduces a somewhat cramped quality, and in those moments one would gladly sacrifice some clarity to a little more resonant space around the proceedings. The Munch, on the other hand, is an extraordinarily resonant set, with the vast spaces of Boston's Symphony Hall reverberating on the slightest crescendo. One immediate consequence of this is that Munch really cannot reproduce the exact dynamic markings of the score. Berlioz's *pppp*s would be lost under such circumstances and must be raised to a higher level to achieve audibility. If the Monteux gives the listener the impression of being too close, the Munch provides the opposite effect—one wants to hear the singers better, to hear a heavily scored passage without the blur

of excessive resonance. Stereo here improves clarity by defining perspective more closely but the problem is common to both versions of the set.

Thus as you hear the Monteux version of *Grande Fête chez Capulet* you may wince at the compression of the sound, and the spaciousness of the Munch seems welcome in contrast. But a few pages later when Berlioz writes *Réunion des deux Thèmes, du Larghetto et de l'Allegro*, the effect of the synthesis is clear and forceful in the Monteux and obscure in the Munch. And since clarity is essential to Berlioz, in the long run the sound of the Monteux set fits the score better than that of Symphony Hall.

Vocally, as mentioned earlier, the Toscanini remains unsurpassed. Swarthout's mezzo provides both beautiful sound and good enunciation, a combination lacking elsewhere. Elias, in the Munch set, has a fresh, beautiful voice and uses it with notable sensitivity and expression, but the text is frequently unintelligible. Resnik's diction, for dramatic puposes, could hardly be clearer, but she uses fewer chest tones than the other two singers, and her voice lacks the color and characteristically warm, mezzo quality they bring to this music. Garris seems exactly right in the Toscanini version of the tenor solo, and neither of the other gentlemen match his ease. Valletti comes closer to it than Turp, and Munch's mercurial accompaniment in this section is one of the finest things in the Victor set. However, the quick pace seems at times more than the soloist can manage comfortably. Among the basses, Moscona sings for Toscanini with the emphasis on dramatic qualities that one would expect on the operatic stage. Neither of the others appears quite so deeply involved, yet both are entirely acceptable in the role. My choice is Tozzi in the Boston edition.

All three choruses are good, but the Londoners seem at times less at ease in the French text than either of the others. They do some fine singing, however, and more than sustain their end of the performance.

By and large, there are few extreme variations among the three conductors in matters of pace. The most interesting differences are in the *Queen Mab* scherzo. Munch is plainly too fast, and you can hear the ensemble suffer for it, while Monteux is just plainly too slow. Toscanini is just right.

It's obvious that we still lack a *Romeo and Juliet* that can be all things to all men. If quality of vocal and instrumental performance is uppermost in your considerations, the proper move is to write Victor and ask for the release of the Toscanini. If you place emphasis on stereo, beautiful singing, and a big orchestral sound, the Munch version is the natural choice. On the other hand, if you want to hear Berlioz's writing with maximum clarity and strength of line, the Monteux is the answer. None of the three performances, regarded as a whole, is unworthy of your attention. All three recordings are, in some way, grievously disappointing. But the one that I am among the few fortunates to own and that I shall continue to play most often is the one most people can't have—the Toscanini.

BERLIOZ: *Roméo et Juliette, Op. 17*

Gladys Swarthout, mezzo; John Garris, tenor; Nicola Moscona, bass; Chorus; NBC Symphony, Arturo Toscanini, cond.
• RCA VICTOR (unreleased).

Rosalind Elias, mezzo; Cesare Valletti, tenor; Giorgio Tozzi, bass; New England Conservatory Chorus; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond.
• RCA VICTOR LD 6098. Two LP. $10.98.
• • RCA VICTOR LDS 6098. Two SD. $12.98.

Regina Resnik, contralto; André Turp, tenor; David Ward, bass; London Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Pierre Monteux, cond.
• WESTMINSTER XWN 2233. Two LP. $9.96.
• • WESTMINSTER WST 233. Two SD. $11.96.

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*Primrose*

*Heifetz*

*Piatigorsky*

# Chamber Music from Virtuosos Assembled Together

**by Shirley Fleming**

THERE ONCE WAS a rumor adrift that the most distinguished virtuosos did not make the best chamber music players. Even the example of a Joachim, who reached his best form as a quartet leader, did not dispel the superstition more than temporarily, and some celebrated violinists closer to home have reinforced it. Mischa Elman, for instance, is said to have perfected his first-fiddle technique to an almost unprecedented degree but to have overwhelmed his colleagues in the process. Since then, of course, the dark supposition concerning virtuosos assembled in groups of four or more (trios are another matter) has been given the lie repeatedly—by Oistrakh, by Stern, and, with possibly the greatest degree of commitment, by Heifetz.

In the late 1930s the renowned (and sometimes crotchety) violin teacher Carl Flesch observed that Heifetz's "general musicality has reached an unusually high degree of development, which is particularly manifest when he sits at the second desk in a string quartet." We may (after musing fondly for a moment over the image of Heifetz at a second desk) admire Flesch's prophetic insight. When Heifetz joined forces with Piatigorsky and Primrose at the Institute for Special Musical Studies over a year ago (under the auspices of the University of Southern California), lovers of chamber music envisioned wonderful things to come. In August 1961, the wonderful things did come, in the form of four concerts in Hollywood's Pilgrimage Theater, in which various guest musicians participated. RCA Victor has commemorated those occasions with a set of chamber music that will inevitably stand as a landmark among such collections.

There are none of the more usual titles here—no quartets, not even a trio—but only such works as are heard rarely on the concert stage, and whose appearance on records is hardly an everyday affair. The solitary pianist present is Leonard Pennario, performing in the Franck Piano Quintet. For the rest, the strings have it; in two of the great quin-

tets, the Mozart G minor, K. 516, and the Schubert C major, Op. posth. 163; in the seldom played Brahms Sextet in G, Op. 36; and in the Mendelssohn Octet in E flat, Op. 20.

Everything on these discs will not, of course, please every listener. (Even a landmark may be viewed from different sides.) One simple fact you may take for granted at the outset: each movement, without exception, is played faster than on other recordings. In some cases, this seems an injustice to the music, as in the first movement of the Mozart and in Schubert's Trio section; in other cases, you are apt to find yourself protesting at first and eventually won over; in still others (especially the allegros and prestos) the result is an excitement that is almost dizzying. Only occasionally, in spite of the stepped-up tempos, do Heifetz and his friends sound intellectual (can you imagine an intellectual Franck Quintet?)—and even when they do, they are intellectual with a purposefulness and style which demand a hearing. They are never, on the other hand, really sensuous; but if they apparently scorn the rich ensemble sonorities some string groups revel in, they are capable nevertheless of the most melting tenderness. The best word for them, I think, is aristocratic. Most important of all, beneath the breath-taking technique, one cannot miss the imaginativeness and sense of freedom enlightening every phrase.

The Mozart, as I have indicated, raises some questions. Heifetz's group sweeps through the first movement with the high maneuverability of a sports car in fourth gear, touching every point lightly, deftly, swiftly. There is not a ragged edge anywhere, not an oversight, not a single ill-shaped phrase. But at this speed, the changes of harmony are emphasized and the melodic line is to some extent underplayed. You find yourself hearing vertically, missing the insinuations of the chromatic subject—which, in fact, is not insinuating here. The Budapest Quartet holds views of this work almost sentimental by comparison, but not too much so for my taste; the Amadeus seems sober and very careful. The Griller, more sonorous and sound-conscious than any of the others, approaches Heifetz's tempo in a more thoughtful frame of mind, but its version is practically disqualified by recorded sound that suggests the ambience of the Grand Canyon.

Whatever reservations you may have about the first movement, they will melt into nothing when you hear the Adagio, which is, to fall back on an old Jamesian term, simply sublime. I would pay the price of the set for this movement alone. The *ma non troppo* attached to the tempo marking is taken to heart, of course, but there is no sense of hurry, and ample time for exquisite ensemble playing. Characteristically, there is bite, even here. Both the Budapest and the Griller group shy away from the sforzandos in the score; not so Heifetz, who sets the air athrob with them, more by the quality of his vibrato than by his bow alone. The finale belongs, more or less, to the first violin. Heifetz doesn't mind scooping ever so slightly on his fast upward shifts here, and if he doesn't mind, neither do I.

The Schubert Quintet is, in a nutshell, the most electric, incisive, and, in the finale, scintillant version among the better-known ones on records. The staccato arpeggios in the first movement, for example, are cutting, and the accents have the force of driven nails. I miss the relative mellowness of the Budapest a bit; and once again, the speed doesn't allow Piatigorsky and Rejto time to treat the famous theme for the cellos as expansively as they might have. Still—it is beautiful. The turbulent F minor section of the second movement is, in keeping with the general temper of Heifetz's ensemble, one of the *most* turbulent I've heard, and the Scherzo is almost ferocious. But the Trio section is a disappointment. The dark, foreboding winter spirit here simply loses its significance at this tempo, and Heifetz demonstrates a somewhat perverse lesson in relativity: a fast dotted eighth rest among fast notes does *not* accomplish the same thing as a longer dotted eighth rest at a slower pace!

The Brahms Sextet, Op. 36, has no competitive version on the market, and there's very little need of one at the moment. The cellos lean easily into Brahms's generous, youthful, broad-flung theme in the first movement, the light textures (unusually light for Brahms) are graceful and clear as crystal, and the thicker substance of the last movement never verges on coarseness. This work is full of unpretentious counterpoint, which the players take cheerfully, just as they do the syncopated, country dance trio—maintaining all the while just a degree of urbanity.

At the age of sixteen, an adventurous Mendelssohn did what no other composer had done before him: namely, wrote an octet for strings in which all eight instruments—or more accurately, seven instruments plus *concertante* violin—participated on an equal footing. Spohr had experimented with string octets, to be sure, but relegated the second quartet to an accompaniment role. But Mendelssohn was very particular on the point of each player's responsibility, and prefaced his work with a warning: "This octet must be played by all instruments in symphonic style. *Pianos* and *fortes* must be strictly observed and more sharply emphasized than is usual in pieces of this character." No such instruction is needed here. The Heifetz performance is as lithe and athletic and clearly terraced as if there were no possible danger of cumbersomeness in an ensemble of this size. The general tone is quite different from other versions; the Vienna Octet has a less salon-like air and a weightier rhythmic pulse, while the Janáček-Smetana performance conveys a sort of ruddy jolliness. But the Heifetz Scherzo (which has so much of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* music in it) is really incomparable; shimmering, as delicate as needlework, as fragile as a butterfly on a leaf. I can't quite make up my mind about the finale. Turn Heifetz & Co. loose on an honest-to-goodness presto and you will hear a display of virtuosity such as you probably never dreamed of. There is a sunburst of glorious instrumental sound here, but through it all I found myself thinking as much of the string playing as of Mendelssohn, if not a little more.

The Franck Piano Quintet is, of course, the most lavish piece of music in this set, and a marked change of pace from the other more or less "classical" chamber works. It plunges heart and soul into the ripest romanticism and makes its point, often, in broad sweeps of rhetoric. It sometimes demands more of the strings than they can reasonably give: even at a triple *forte* they can only approximate the symphonic support for the piano that Franck seems to expect from them. There is often a good bit to be seen on paper that one cannot hear, but this is not the fault of the recording, nor of the players.

It is interesting to find that Pennario and his colleagues are closer to Curzon and the Vienna Quartet than to Richter and his Russian ensemble. Richter views the work through a magnifying glass; everything is bigger than lifesize. The piano theme is articulated emphatically, the pauses are abrupt, the huge climax of the first movement is projected on a grander scale than one would have thought possible.

The rhythmic intensity of the strings, with these aspects, makes this performance the most large-scaled, even monumental, on records. In comparison, Pennario's is gentler and more legato, though only by comparison would these adjectives occur to one, for there is nothing in the least slack or pale, here. The concept is simply more singing and a bit more benevolent. The agreement between the pianist and his four cohorts is complete, right down to the last double-dotted quarter note.

Victor's sound is all that one could ask. The instruments are cleanly articulated in both mono and stereo, and are closely miked but not artificially so. The stereo version is not one of those that calls attention to itself; the violins are left, and the others comfortably spread without being highly directionalized. In short, entirely lifelike.

JASCHA HEIFETZ: *"The Heifetz-Piatigorsky Concerts, with Primrose, Pennario, and Guests"*

Mozart: *Quintet for Strings, in G minor, K. 516.* Mendelssohn: *Octet for Strings, in E flat, Op. 20.* Brahms: *Sextet for Strings, No. 2, in G, Op. 36.* Franck: *Quintet for Piano and Strings, in F minor.* Schubert: *Quintet for Strings, in C, Op. posth. 163.*

Jascha Heifetz, Israel Baker, violins; Arnold Belnick, Joseph Stepansky, violins (in the Mendelssohn and Brahms); William Primrose, viola; Virginia Majewski, viola (in the Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Brahms); Gregor Piatigorsky, cello; Gabor Rejto, cello (in the Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Schubert); Leonard Pennario, piano (in the Franck).

• RCA VICTOR LD 6159. Three LP. $15.98.

• • RCA VICTOR LDS 6159. Three SD. $18.98.

# CLASSICAL

**BABBITT:** *Composition for Twelve Instruments; Du, Song Cycle for Soprano and Piano*
**†Powell:** *Haiku Settings for Voice and Piano; Electronic Setting; Filigree Setting for String Quartet*

Bethany Beardslee, soprano, Robert Helps, piano (in *Du* and *Haiku Settings*). Claremont String Quartet; Hartt Chamber Players, Ralph Shapey, cond. (in Composition for Twelve Instruments and *Filigree Setting*).
• SON NOVA 1. LP. $4.98.

This important release on a new label pairs two very different musical personalities. Milton Babbitt writes tight, precisely conceived music; Mel Powell works towards inventiveness and flexibility. Babbitt looks for freedom within order; Powell finds order in freedom. Both have produced original and significant music.

Babbitt's Composition for Twelve Instruments has, among other notable qualities, historic importance. Along with another work by the same composer, it has the distinction of being the first "totally organized" piece of music, preceding more publicized European attempts. Babbitt extends the twelve-tone idea into every aspect of the composition: rhythm, dynamics, color, etc. For example, even the number and choice of instruments playing at any given moment is under strict control. In a sense, this is a work of very small scope and ambition; it is simple and spare in sound, following closely on the Webern point of view. But it succeeds in doing exactly what it sets out to do, and one realizes that the point is not merely to "organize" but to make the organization—the thought process, if you will—into something perfectly clear, audible, and musical.

*Du* is a still more interesting, mature, and original work. This piece has a German text by August Stramm that organizes complex word sounds and textures much in the same way that Babbitt uses notes. The text, in effect, adds a new counterpoint to an already rich web of melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, dynamic, and textural patterns. Musically, there is a striking command of changing texture, rhythmic variety, and motion that is fascinating. The twelve-instrument work is essentially static; *Du* has a beautifully expressive motion of shape and phrase that goes beyond mere perfection of abstract pattern.

Mel Powell is the former jazz pianist who has become a "far-out" composer of elegance and imagination. Both the *Haiku* settings and the String Quartet break away from the idea that every aspect of music must be exactly indicated but without sacrificing the essential composer-control over the final results. Thus, in the *Haiku* settings, the voice and piano are not always precisely coördinated in rhythm. The voice part itself ranges in character from precisely notated pitches to indications of general pitch level to actual speech. A fascinating variety of elegant vocal and piano sounds make up a work of great imagination and charm, its aphoristic, miniature style corresponding to that of the Japanese texts. This is clever music of a high order, a little precious perhaps, but always attractive and engaging. The work for string quartet begins and ends in rhythmic freedom with the players rapping on the bodies of their instruments and flicking off an incredible variety of bowed, rapped, and tapped color effects. These sections frame a precisely coördinated middle section of (relatively) more conventional aspect. The resulting tension between the free and the strict sections gives the piece a good deal of power and, once again, the quality of imagination and elegant invention is very high. The electronic work is, unfortunately, of much less interest. Compared to the instrumental works, it seems primitive and awkward; and its funny, fast, running, bloopy sounds are not even very convincing judged purely as electronic music.

Part of the impressive effect of the music on this record is undoubtedly due to the remarkable performances. Both works for voice and piano are performed by Miss Beardslee with incredible precision, beauty of tone, and musical understanding. One would hardly know how extremely difficult this music is. Her amazing performances are aided no little by the excellent and sensitive piano playing of Mr. Helps. The Composition for Twelve Instruments is performed with exceptional skill and comprehension by the Hartt Chamber Players (inexplicably unidentified on the jacket) under the fine leadership of Mr. Shapey. The Claremont Quartet's contribution is no less impressive and admirable. Recorded sound is good. E.S.

**BACH:** *Cantata No. 51, Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*
**†Rameau:** *Le Berger fidèle*

Eleanor Steber, soprano; Igor Kipnis Baroque Ensemble, Igor Kipnis, cond.
• ST/AND 416. LP. $4.98.
• • ST/AND 7416. SD. $5.98.

This is one of two St/And albums based on programs given by Miss Steber at the Syracuse Music Festival. The soprano's admirable musicianship gives her a head start in this kind of music. Unfortunately, though, she is not in good voice: her singing is breathy and driven-sounding, particularly in the demanding end arias of the cantata, both of which are taken at a clip that would make graceful execution problematic for a voice of this weight even in the best of circumstances. She seems more at ease in the Rameau, and has improved her French diction almost beyond recognition over the past decade. However, this little pastoral cantata (it is based on Guarini's *Il Pastor fido*) is of limited interest—nice and rational and dull.

The instrumentalists are competent, but Mr. Kipnis' playing of the continuo is much too prominent for my taste, in some places thrusting the strings well into the background. The engineering is acceptable, without offering the sense of space and naturalness of the best monophonic recordings. C.L.O.

*Soprano Bethany Beardslee.*

**BACH:** *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 2, in E, S. 1042*—See Mozart: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 5, in A, K. 219.*

**BACH:** *Easter Oratorio, S. 249*

Friederike Sailer, soprano; Margarete Bence, contralto; Werner S. Braun, tenor; August Messthaler, bass; Baroque Chorus and Ensemble of Stuttgart, Marcel Couraud, cond.
• EPIC LC 3844. LP. $4.98.
• • EPIC BC 1244. SD. $5.98.

Although this is the first two-channel edition of a work that profits from stereo's added separation and spaciousness, owners of the older Vox or Vanguard versions need not rush out to replace them. The present release is, unfortunately, a real loser.

To begin with, there is the extremely crude instrumental playing in the Sinfonia. The trumpeting there is truly nasty. Then for the Adagio, where an oboe d'amore is used, we have to put up with a performer who does not breathe in the right places and does not know how to mold a phrase with any sort of conviction. None of the singers, for that matter, seems to know how to breathe and phrase correctly either, and the ladies, in particular, are frequently unable to sustain a line, musical or textual, without having to gulp for more air. Indeed, it is this basic lack of *musicality* rather than the lack of tonal allure that constitutes my chief complaint here.

The recorded sound itself is excellent though a mite "toppy." The stridency, however, is probably attributable to the live tone of the ensemble. This work, I reiterate, really needs stereo, and I advise waiting until another dual-channel version appears. H.G.

**BACH:** *Orchestral Transcriptions*

*Prelude and Fugue in E flat, S. 552 ("St. Anne"); Choral Prelude, "Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele," S. 654; Choral Prelude, "Komm, Gott Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist," S. 650* (trans. Schoenberg). *Ein musikalische Opfer, S. 1079: Ricercare* (trans. Webern). *Choral Variations on "Vom Himmel hoch"* (trans. Stravinsky).

University of Utah Chorus; Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel, cond.
• VANGUARD VRS 1092. LP. $4.98.
• • VANGUARD VSD 2120. SD. $5.98.

Transcriptions are so much out of favor that one feels one must begin a favorable review of this record with an apology—or rather an explanation. Nothing in art is valid except insofar as it justifies itself; and each of these transcriptions does just that. The fact that Bach himself was a great transcriber of other people's music and that the art of transcription has a long and reasonably honorable history does not justify a bad or misguided transcription any more than the honorable history of sonata form justifies a shallow and pretentious attempt to give substance to hollow musical ideas by draping them in the "form" of a pseudo-sonata.

What Schoenberg, Webern, and Stra-

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*Kirkpatrick: full justice to Bach.*

vinsky knew is that good transcription is a matter of re-creation. The Schoenberg *St. Anne* transcription is an excellent case in point, a complete rethinking of Bach's notes into a monumental instrumental conception of symphonic weight, shape, and grandeur. Schoenberg treats the instrumental sounds as symphonic themes to be worked into the web of contrapuntal relationships. They have an organization of their own that parallels and illuminates Bach's notes, making associations, underlinings, and connections.

Webern's orchestration is the most extraordinary and original conception on this disc for he applies his personal pointillist techniques to achieve sound textures of notable transparency and clarity. He actually goes so far as to distribute portions of a single phrase among several instruments; but somehow the effect is never capricious and always to the musical point. Actually, this is fundamentally the same approach as that of Schoenberg, for the basis of the technique is motivic and organizational.

Stravinsky's attitude is quite something else. He is concerned with the extension of Bach's contrapuntal ideas into Stravinskyan areas of instrumental and harmonic sound as well as of rhythmic and dynamic accent. To these ends, Stravinsky actually adds musical parts to the Bach original. The brilliant and effective results—only a Stravinky could have carried it off—might be described as the sort of music that Bach might have written if he were Stravinsky. If this sounds wildly improbable, I can only recommend verification by audition; in other words, listen to the remarkable results. With the exception of some weak solo cello work in one of the Schoenberg Choral-Prelude transcriptions performances are good—as is the sound. E.S.

**BACH:** *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin, No. 1, in G minor, S. 1001*
—See Bartók: *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin (1944).*

**BACH:** *Toccatas: in F sharp minor, S. 910; in C minor, S. 911; in D, S. 912; in G minor, S. 915*

Ralph Kirkpatrick, harpsichord.
• Archive ARC 3184. LP. $5.98.
• • Archive ARC 73184. SD. $6.98.

Although these Toccatas seldom appear on recital programs nowadays, they represent an important aspect of Bach both as composer and as performer. As we listen to them in the present authoritative and imaginative playing, we may fancy ourselves listening to the young clavier virtuoso dazzling his hearers in Weimar or Köthen with his remarkable improvisations. Free, rhapsodic effusions or poetic adagios alternate in each work with fugal sections or full-fledged fugues. Technical display and logical construction are set off against each other in music that seizes and holds the attention. Kirkpatrick and the Archive engineers do full justice to it. N.B.

**BACH:** *Trio Sonatas: in C, S. 1037; in G, S. 1038; in D minor, S. 1036; in G, S. 1039*

Baroque Trio (Montreal).
• Vox DL 920. LP. $4.98.
• • Vox STDL 500920. SD. $4.98.

By several degrees the most attractive of these works is S. 1039. It also happens to be the only one of the four whose authenticity has not been questioned. Readers may be familiar with it in its later guise as the first of the three sonatas for gamba and harpsichord (S. 1027). Whether the other three are by Bach or not, they are pleasant, medium-grade "church sonatas." S. 1036 and 1037 are originally for two violins and continuo; 1038 for flute, violin, and continuo; and 1039 for two flutes and continuo. All are well played here by flute (Mario Duschenes), oboe (Melvin Berman), and harpsichord (Kelsey Jones). The sound is good. N.B.

**BARTOK:** *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin (1944)*
**†Bach:** *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin, No. 1, in G minor, S. 1001*

Joseph Silverstein, violin.
• Columbia ML 5745. LP. $4.98.
• • Columbia MS 6345. SD. $5.98.

Joseph Silverstein, who won the Naumberg Foundation Award in 1961, has been recently ensconced as the new concertmaster of the Boston Symphony. His record debut, in a program that could hardly be more uncompromising, introduces a violinist to whom, in matters of technique, literally nothing seems to be impossible. He negotiates the acute difficulties of the Bartók Solo Sonata with a composure that is awesome; in the low register his tone is full, rich, rather dark, and very firmly rooted, while even in the high reaches of the E string he manages to retain a certain solidity, never thinning out to that piercing edge of sound which can, particularly in a recording, become disagreeable. Between the two extremes he is supple and well controlled. In short, this is beautiful violin playing.

A comparison of Silverstein's performance with that of Menuhin, who commissioned the work in 1944, brings out some interesting points. To begin with, Silverstein makes the piece sound easier to play than Menuhin, and he is noticeably more articulate when the going gets rough. A certain demonic intensity may be lost in this less frenetic approach, but in the long run I think Silverstein wins out. When a ruthlessly driving rhythmic outburst gives way to a moment of lyric peace, Silverstein slips more graciously into the lyricism and the resulting contrast means more to the listener than Menuhin's consistent relentlessness. Silverstein picks his way with uncanny accuracy through veritable thickets of double stops, always succeeds in keeping two independent melodic lines beautifully untangled, and, in the exposition of the fugue movement, tailors each small phrase so smoothly and expertly that the listener is led from voice to voice with a minimum of jolting. All this is over a living but unshakable rhythmic pulse. One is less conscious in Silverstein's performance than in Menuhin's of the player's own imprint, but the music emerges lucidly and jubilantly.

Bartók's is probably the only solo sonata in existence which could make Bach's No. 1 seem easy. Curiously enough, however, Silverstein's performance of the latter work is disappointing—dutiful, clean, extremely sensible, but not very exciting. He seems to me far too plodding in the Siciliano; the other movements offer nothing to quarrel with, but for my taste they lack an element of conviction.

Columbia's sound could serve as a model for solo string recording: it is bright, focused, and absolutely clean.

Shirley Fleming



**BEETHOVEN:** *Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 1, in C, Op. 15; No. 2, in B flat, Op. 19; No. 3, in C, Op. 37; No. 4, in G, Op. 58; No. 5, in E flat, Op. 73 ("Emperor")*

Wilhelm Kempff, piano; Berlin Philharmonic, Ferdinand Leitner, cond.
• Deutsche Grammophon LPM 18770/73. Four LP. $23.92.
• • Deutsche Grammophon SLPM 138770/73. Four SD. $27.92.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 5, in E flat, Op. 73 ("Emperor")*

Rudolf Serkin, piano; New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond.
• Columbia ML 5766. LP. $4.98.
• • Columbia MS 6366. SD. $5.98.

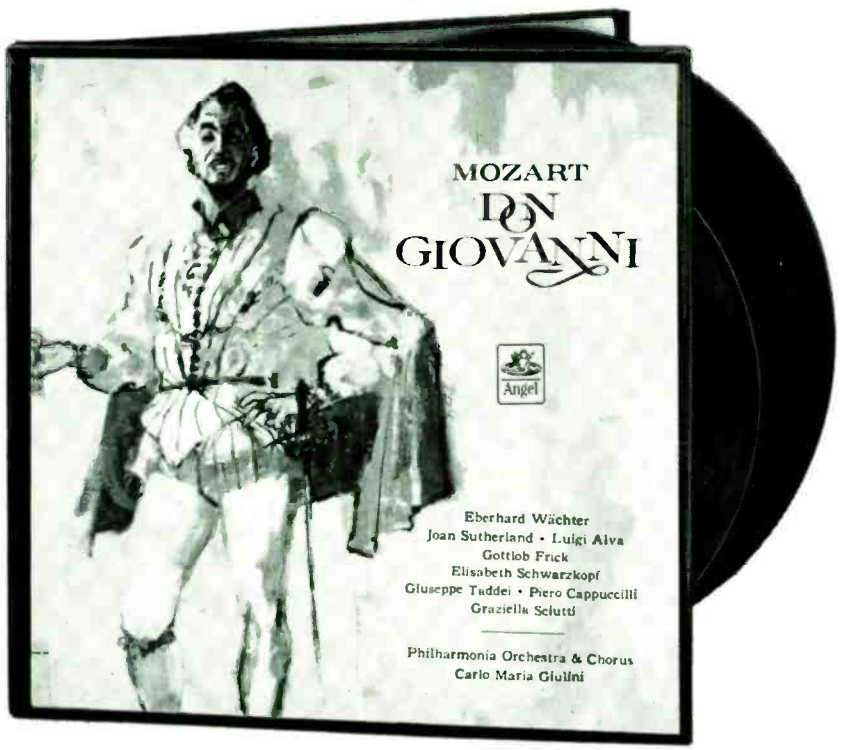
There is something quixotic about trying to sell the Kempff album in the United

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf

Joan Sutherland

Graziella Sciutti

# 3 out of 2,065




(S)3605 D/L

# 1 in a million

According to legend, Don Giovanni was extremely well acquainted with 2,065 women. In Mozart's opera, we meet only three – Donna Elvira, Donna Anna and Zerlina. As important as they are to the opera, it's the exception rather than the rule that these three parts are ideally cast in the same recording. It has been said that Angel's full-length recording of "Don Giovanni" is one of those rare occasions when each role is sung with equal brilliance. Hear the splendid performances of Mmes. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Joan Sutherland and Graziella Sciutti matched with Eberhard Wächter's spirited Don Giovanni. We think you may agree that this recording is one in a million.

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*Foldes: no romantic excess.*

States. Neither the soloist nor the conductor is well enough known here to have any significant following, the recorded sound is not up to the highest standards, and a premium price is asked. In fairness to Kempff it should be stressed that he is a distinguished artist, whose playing—especially in the three early concertos—is musically sensitive and repeatedly marked by lovely variations in nuance and touch. But there are fine domestic editions of this music, including notably the Fleisher-Szell collaboration.

The first four concertos include Kempff's own cadenzas (Beethoven's being condemned here as "incomplete" and unrevised), which, since I do not prefer them to those of the composer, would further deter me from purchasing this version. But even when cadenzas are no issue, as in the final concerto, the competition appears devastating. Contrast the opening bars in the Kempff and Serkin versions and it is immediately apparent that the American set is much better recorded in every sense, both technical and musical. The sound is closer to life, the dynamics are those called for in the score, and the balance is that of a good concert hall.

The new Serkin *Emperor* is, of course, the mature work of one of the world's most eminent pianists. Furthermore, it represents one of Bernstein's most effective recordings with a soloist and (like last season's *Missa Solemnis*) testifies to his growing skill as a Beethoven conductor. Although those who want an edition of great refinement and are not concerned about orchestral presence may well find DGG's set a source of satisfaction, the Columbia disc has everything necessary to be a best seller, from strong musical worth to exceptional sound. R.C.M.

**BEETHOVEN:** ***Sonatas for Piano: No. 15, in D, Op. 28 ("Pastoral"); No. 17, in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2 ("Tempest"); No. 26, in E flat, Op. 81a ("Les Adieux")***

Andor Foldes, piano.
• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON LPM 18784. LP. $5.98.
• • DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON SLPM 138784. SD. $6.98.

Foldes has established himself as a pianist of sensitivity and taste, whose affection for melody is obvious but is governed always by a feeling of reserve that controls any impulse to romantic excesses. Thus *Les Adieux* is heard in a somewhat cooler than usual statement. the *Tempest* is always Shakespeare rather than nature. and the *Pastoral* is treated as an eighteenth-century landscape of classic dignity.

This performer is an artist. and this record is as good a collection as any to define the principles on which his artistry is based. I particularly wish that people would listen to Foldes' *Tempest*, rather than Richter's. because I think the Hungarian-born pianist's is more to Beethoven's point. R.C.M.

**BEETHOVEN:** ***Wellingtons Sieg, Op. 91 ("Battle Symphony")***—See Orff: *Entrata.*

**BERLIOZ:** ***Harold en Italie, Op. 16***

William Lincer, viola; New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond.
• COLUMBIA ML 5758. LP. $4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6358. SD. $5.98.

It is four years since the only other stereo recording of *Harold in Italy* was released. That turned out to be an altogether excellent job by violist William Primrose but a most disappointing one by conductor Charles Munch, usually regarded as a Berlioz specialist. To judge from this new version of *Harold*, it appears as if Leonard Berntsein is contending for honors as a prime Berlioz interpreter. His reading, beautifully paced, presents a most commendable combination of poetry and fire, possibly the equal of Sir Thomas Beecham's earlier recorded performance for Columbia, and far better reproduced.

Whereas Primrose has been made to stand out as a soloist apart from the orchestra in both the Munch and Beecham recordings, the Philharmonic's first violist, William Lincer, blends ideally with the rest of the orchestra, emerging only when he has something important to say. What he says in his solos makes a great deal of musical sense—sensitive comments that contrast fittingly with the bigger orchestral utterances. Lincer's tone is somewhat darker than Primrose's, giving him a more masculine voice. This, then, is the first really satisfying disc presentation of Berlioz's second symphony, treated—as it should be—as a symphony with viola obbligato, not—as the composer was asked to write it for Paganini—as a concerto for viola and orchestra. P.A.

**BERLIOZ:** ***Roméo et Juliette, Op. 17***

Gladys Swarthout, mezzo; John Garris, tenor; Nicola Moscona, bass; Chorus; NBC Symphony, Arturo Toscanini, cond.
• RCA VICTOR (unreleased).

Rosalind Elias, mezzo; Cesare Valletti, tenor; Giorgio Tozzi, bass; New England Conservatory Chorus; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond.
• RCA VICTOR LD 6098. Two LP. $10.98.
• • RCA VICTOR LDS 6098. Two SD. $12.98.

Regina Resnik, contralto; André Turp, tenor; David Ward, bass; London Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Pierre Monteux, cond.
• WESTMINSTER XWN 2233. Two LP. $9.96.
• • WESTMINSTER WST 233. Two SD. $11.96.

For a feature review of these recordings, see page 69.

**BRAHMS:** ***Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80***—See Dvořák: *Symphony No. 4, in G, Op. 88.*

**BRAHMS:** ***Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, Op. 77***

David Oistrakh, violin; French National Radio Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond.
• ANGEL 35836. LP. $4.98.
• • ANGEL S 35836. SD. $5.98.

It does not always happen that artists record music to which they are ideally attuned. but this is the case with the teaming of David Oistrakh and Otto Klemperer to perform the Brahms Concerto. There is much of ravishing beauty in this, one of the greatest of all works for violin and orchestra. At the same time, however, Brahms's classic lines must be adhered to. Both the violinist and conductor understand and execute perfectly the true spirit of the music, never either over- or underplaying any passage. Careful proportion and balance are maintained throughout, yet Oistrakh allows us to enjoy his smooth, rich tone without letting a hint of dryness creep in. There is even a neat rhythmic elasticity in the gypsylike finale that is most appropriate. Obviously, this was a carefully worked out collaboration between two artists who understand their responsibility towards a composition of this magnitude. The result is an honest performance. marked additionally by first-rate orchestral playing and fine engineering in both mono and stereo. P.A.

**BRAHMS:** ***Sextet for Strings, No. 2, in G, Op. 36***—**For a feature review of an album including a recording of this work, see page 70.**

**BRUCH:** ***Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1, in G minor, Op. 26***
**†Mendelssohn:** ***Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in E minor, Op. 64***

Zino Francescatti, violin; New York Philharmonic, Thomas Schippers, cond. (in the Bruch); Columbia Symphony Orchestra, George Szell, cond. (in the Mendelssohn).
• COLUMBIA ML 5751. LP. $4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6351. SD. $5.98.

Francescatti's temperament and tone, the latter colored by a fairly wide, fast vibrato, are best suited to the repertoire of the romantic school. His silky-smooth, warm-hearted interpretation of the Mendelssohn Concerto is thus nearly ideal. The same qualities are to be noted in his performance of the Bruch too; but some listeners may cavil with his use of rubato in a number of passages. These tempo variations are also carried out in the orchestral accompaniment. The recorded sound in both concertos is faithful and well balanced. P.A.

**DVORAK:** ***Symphony No. 4, in G, Op. 88***
**†Brahms:** ***Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80***

Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond.
• COLUMBIA ML 5761. LP. $4.98.
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only put on the third movement of the Dvořák Fourth and hear the way in which the late conductor, with a single phrase, evokes the century of the waltz kings with a nostalgia and beauty that are quite overwhelming.

This is but one of many fabulous achievements in this performance. Like Walter's magnificent version of the *New World*, the sound of the orchestra is full and roundly radiant, while the themes are so paced, and so miraculously interwoven, that each melody seems to fall precisely into its proper tempo and sing with full freedom. The Brahms, released earlier with that composer's symphonies, further reflects Walter's noble lyricism.

Both performances are well recorded and should retain their interest indefinitely. In my book, the Dvořák is a classic now. R.C.M.

FRANCK: *Quintet for Piano and Strings, in F minor*—For a feature review of an album including a recording of this work, see page 70.

GABRIELI, GIOVANNI: *Canzon del primi toni, No. 1*—See Orff: *Entrata.*

GOLDBERG: *Concerto for Harpsichord and Strings, in D minor; Sonata for Two Violins and Continuo, No. 4, in A minor*

Eliza Hansen, harpsichord; Strings of the Pfalz Orchestra (Ludwigshafen), Christoph Stepp, cond.; Camerata Instrumentale of the Hamburg Telemann Society.
• ARCHIVE ARC 3195. LP. $5.98.
• • ARCHIVE ARC 73195. SD. $6.98.

The name of Johann Gottlieb Goldberg (1727–1756) is known to those who do know it because it was to him that Bach dedicated the Aria with 30 Variations. Goldberg was then only fifteen, but already a virtuoso harpsichordist. The two works here recorded give us some idea of his skill as a composer. They show the influence of both Sebastian and Friedemann Bach, both of whom seem to have been his teachers. The Sonata is a medium-grade late baroque church sonata, but the Concerto is considerably better. It consists of an impassioned first movement, a Largo with expressive moments, and a lively finale. There is perhaps too much reliance on sequential progressions, but the material itself has character and feeling. Both works are competently performed and well recorded. N.B.

HANDEL: *The Water Music: Suite* (arr. Harty). *Music for the Royal Fireworks: Suite* (arr. Harty). *Il Pastor fido: Minuet* (arr. Beecham). *Xerxes: Largo* (arr. Reinhard)

London Symphony Orchestra, George Szell, cond.
• LONDON CM 9305. LP. $4.98.
• • LONDON CS 6236. SD. $5.98.

This album provides highly polished performances, magnificently recorded. Those who like Sir Hamilton Harty's beauty-salon treatment of Handel's creations, complete with henna rinse and false eyelashes, will surely not mind Szell's addition of nail polish. What a wonderful job this conductor could do with the real Handel if he wanted to! N.B.

*Continued on page 80*

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**Wagner: DIE WALKURE, Act II**
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Stereo OS 25206 Mono 5568

**Puccini: TOSCA**
Renata Tebaldi, Mario del Monaco, George London and other soloists with Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome conducted by Molinari-Pradelli
Stereo OS 25218 Mono 5584

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D'Oyly Carte Mono 5088

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D'Oyly Carte Mono 5089

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D'Oyly Carte Mono 5091

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CIRCLE 66 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

HAYDN: *Symphonies: No. 56, in C; No. 12, in E; No. 40, in F; No. 13, in D*

Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Max Goberman, cond.
● or ● ● LIBRARY OF RECORDED MASTERPIECES HS 5/6. Two LP or Two SD. $8.50 each, on subscription; $10 each, nonsubscription.

Haydn's No. 56 is one of the grandest works of his middle period. In the master's "festival key," it contains the expected virtuosity in its writing for brass, but here the trumpets and drums in no sense dominate the scheme. Many a fine touch is found in the string parts. The first movement is exceptionally powerful, and the finale is one of the composer's best, prior to his London years.

The other three works (No. 12 here coupled with No. 56 on HS 5, Nos. 40 and 13 on HS 6) all come from 1763—the score in F being numbered way out of the proper chronology; and although one cannot regard them as a unity such as the *Morning*, *Noon*, and *Night* cycle (Nos. 6, 7, and 8), all three are charming examples of the young Haydn and his winning ways. The slow movement of No. 13 is really a miniature concerto for the cello, a lovely Adagio cantabile that shouts for general discovery, and the finale of that work (sometimes called "The Jupiter") anticipates by twenty-five years a theme familiar from the last movement of Mozart's final symphony. Haydn's treatment of the material is quite interesting—and naturally quite different.

All four works have been recorded previously, but this is their stereo debut. (Beecham's account of No. 40 is the only one of the older sets of any permanent interest.) Goberman's performances and engineering again fulfill the high expectations of the first releases in this distinguished series. R.C.M.

LISZT: *Faust Symphony; Les Préludes*

Alfonz Bartha, tenor; Budapest State Chorus and Orchestra, Janos Ferencsik, cond. (in the *Faust Symphony*); Berlin Radio Symphony, Ferenc Fricsay, cond. (in *Les Préludes*).
● DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON LPM 18647/48. Two LP. $11.96.
● ● DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON SLPM 138647/48. Two SD. $13.96.

Liszt's masterful *Faust Symphony* has already been recorded superlatively by the late Sir Thomas Beecham, whose Capitol album remains the finest statement the score has received on disc. The new Ferencsik edition, aided by gorgeous sonics from Hungarian Qualiton's recording staff, is, however, a first-class performance and it makes a strong case for a different but equally valid interpretative approach.

Although the Budapest State Orchestra is not the virtuoso body that Beecham led, it plays well throughout, with clean chording and precise ensemble. Indeed, much of the solo instrumental playing has real distinction and sensitivity. The group is well able to respond to the patently first-rate musicianship of its conductor, who shares with Beecham a disdain for the flashy and pompous. Thus, both performances have a great dignity which serves the music well. Ferencsik, however, offers a soberer rendition—very Weingartnerian, both in its virtues and defects. The beneficial qualities can be found in Ferencsik's sturdy breadth that focuses one's attention on the deeply spiritual, intellectual values of Liszt's writing and helps to clarify the frequently ingenious harmonic scheme of the composition. I also note with approval the conscientious adherence to the phrase, tempo, and dynamic indications in the score. (Beecham occasionally departs from these to follow his own flights of fancy.) As for the drawbacks of Ferencsik's approach: he shares with Weingartner (I am speaking in general, for the late conductor never recorded this particular score) a certain excess of caution and a lack of rhythmic swirl. His statement of the first movement, for example, sounds timid in comparison with Beecham's galvanic and headlong sprint there.

The two conductors are heard at their best in the second movement, where Beecham spins a ravishing strand of sensuous cantabile sonority at a deliberate *Adagio con moto* pace, while Ferencsik's account, moving at a brisker Andante, unfolds with more earthly naturalness. In the long final movement, Beecham's brilliancy and sardonic wit paints far more convincing a portrait of Mephistopheles, but Ferencsik's tenor soloist, Alfonz Bartha, sings with somewhat more vibrancy than Beecham's Alexander Young and is allowed more prominence by the recording microphone. Both choruses are satisfying, and one might feel that the Hungarian performance plumbs the depths of the music more in this closing section. In totality, though, I find that the attractions of Beecham's virtuoso playing, his thrilling sense of drama, and almost astonishing wealth of tonal coloring are impossible to resist. Ferencsik, nevertheless, has

made a brave effort at conquering the unconquerable.

Fricsay's account of *Les Préludes* has already been issued in an orchestral collection conducted entirely by him. His approach is in the broad Teutonic tradition of Furtwängler and Mengelberg, with darkly sonorous playing and great leeway of tempo. As such, it is one of the outstanding editions in the catalogue, although it contains a little too much blackstrap molasses for my taste. My favorite *Les Préludes* remains the deleted Monteux-Boston edition for RCA Victor, which moves at an altogether more mercurial clip. H.G.

MacDOWELL: *Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 1, in A minor, Op. 15; No. 2, in D minor, Op. 23*

Eugene List, piano; Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Carlos Chávez, cond.
• WESTMINSTER XWN 19012. LP. $4.98.
• • WESTMINSTER WST 17012. SD. $5.98.

These are forceful, large-scaled, but not very subtle readings. Since the pieces themselves are far from subtle, one could suppose that the present interpretative approach is eminently appropriate. To a large extent it is, but there are moments, especially the *Presto giocoso* movement of No. 2, where a lighter hand and a suaver dexterity are called for. These qualities are forthcoming from Van Cliburn and Walter Hendl who perform the D minor Concerto with finesse and altogether nimbler rhythmic bounce on an RCA Victor release, whereas List merely belts away at the notes in a tempo that is both too fast for the music and too fast for him. (Even his virtuoso fingers have trouble negotiating the difficult passage work at this spanking pace, with the result that the articulation sometimes gets swallowed up.) On the other hand, the pianist is very impressive indeed in the billowing octave cascades that abound in the outer movements of both works, and Chávez obtains a very stark, interestingly detailed texture from the orchestration even though his ensemble lacks the opulence of the Chicago Symphony which backs Cliburn.

Westminster's sound is clean, and a bit raw. Since my stereo review copy arrived in a badly warped condition, I am basing my review on the monophonic pressing. As a logical coupling, this disc is a bit superior to the older Westminster edition by Vivian Rivkin and Dean Dixon, but RCA's disc of the Second Concerto (coupled with a weak Prokofiev Third) is the outstanding version of that work. H.G.

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 4, in G*

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano; Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond.
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*Continued on page 97*


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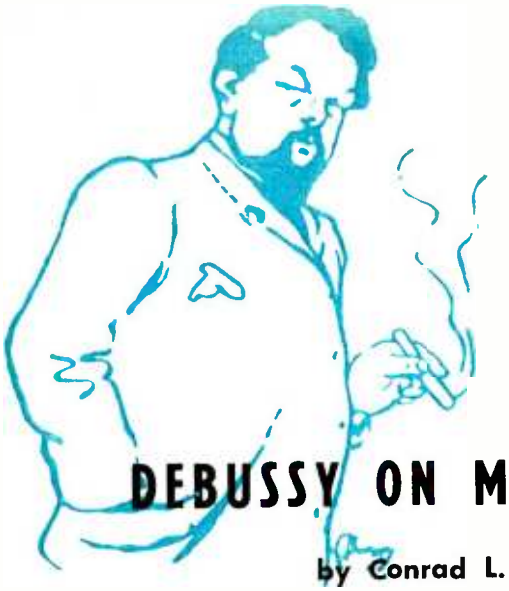

Part III
Vocal Music

# DEBUSSY ON MICROGROOVE

by Conrad L. Osborne

### Cantatas and Choral Works

*L'Enfant prodigue* (1884)

No recorded version of this work, which won Debussy the Prix de Rome in 1884, is currently in the domestic catalogue. This is a shame, for while the score may not rank as major Debussy, it is by no means an unequivocal failure; and even if it were, it would still be of interest to students of the composer's development. Fortunately, a French recording is available and can be obtained as an import.

The influence of Massenet is very strongly felt in *L'Enfant prodigue*; much of it would not surprise one in the context of *Thaïs*. Debussy had not yet evolved his characteristic way of handling harmonies, and had not yet entirely forsaken the lyrical arioso for the melodic-line-as-spoken-inflection concept which later took over. The first half of the score holds up quite well. This includes Lia's justly famed opening aria; a pleasant, *Lakmé*-like aria for the returning Prodigal; and the procession and dance of the villagers. When the cantata's basic dramatic action—the reunion of the Prodigal and his mother—occurs, Debussy's inspiration flags; this key scene is unimaginatively written, with a saccharine duet as its focal point. The concluding hymn is also stock. Debussy was still taking the easy way out, yet none of this is really meretricious music; had Delibes written it, we might say, "Not bad, not bad at all."

The Ducretet-Thomson edition was once issued domestically as Westminster WL 5336. Stray copies of the Westminster may still be around, but the French pressing offers somewhat better sound. The performance is a worthy one, with Madeleine Gorge doing well as Lia, and Henry Legay competently as the Prodigal, Azaël. The engineering is good, and the spirit of the score nicely projected by the orchestral forces under Inghelbrecht. This record also includes the only orchestrated recording of the "*Noël des enfants qui n'ont pas de maisons*," well sung by Mlle. Gorge, and a version of *La Damoiselle élue*.

—Madeleine Gorge, soprano; Henry Legay, tenor; Bernard Cottret, bass; Orchestre National de la RTF, D. Inghelbrecht, cond. (with *Damoiselle; Noël des enfants*). Ducretet-Thomson, 320C154, LP (Import).

*La Damoiselle élue* (1888)

This work followed *L'Enfant prodigue* by only four years—yet it brings us very close, in terms of style, to the fully matured Debussy. There are similarities to *Le Martyre*, written twenty-three years after, but they are, for the most part, on the surface. The score seems to me to reflect quite directly the studiously simple beauty of Rossetti's poem without trying to swell the significance of the sweet, fragrant vision that is its subject; it is nowhere near as sophisticated or aware as *Le Martyre*, and this is what saves it. We find here the use of the female chorus in progressions of open intervals that later turned up in *Le Martyre* and in the choral writing of the *Sirènes* nocturne. Massenet is nowhere to be found; Wagner (alas for the classification-compilers) is quite in evidence.

The only recording now in the domestic catalogue is the RCA Victor one featuring De los Angeles and the BSO under Munch. Since it is perfectly satisfactory in most respects, most collectors will probably settle for it and be happy, especially in view of the lovely De los Angeles performance of the Berlioz *Nuits d'été* which takes up the rest of the record. However, I have a personal preference for the performance contained on the imported Ducretet-Thomson disc (cited above in connection with *L'Enfant prodigue*). For one thing, the participants are all French. And Inghelbrecht seems to me to tie the work together more convincingly than Munch; particularly fine is his handling of the Damozel's long solo—it glows to a climax that justifies the framework of the whole work. The Victor choristers are more precise in their intonation than Ducretet's, but they also feature a pallid high-school tone, and don't begin to phrase as feelingly as the French group. Carol Smith, the Victor narrator, is a fine singer, but I like Jacqueline Joly's lighter mezzo in this music, and again—she's French. Of course, De los Angeles' soprano is a lush organ, far more beautiful than that of her counterpart, Madeleine Gorge, and she sings the Damozel winningly. Victor also has an edge in the sound (mono only); and in spite of my preference for Inghelbrecht, I feel sure that few will complain of Munch's leadership in this music.

—Victoria de los Angeles, soprano; Carol Smith, contralto; Radcliffe Choral Society; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond. (with Berlioz: *Les Nuits d'été*). RCA Victor LM 1907, LP.

—Madeleine Gorge, soprano; Jacqueline Joly, mezzo; Orchestre National de la RTF, D. Inghelbrecht, cond. (with *L'Enfant: Noël des enfants*). Ducretet-Thomson 320C154 (Import).

### Opera

*Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902)

This is not the place for an extended discussion of the stature of *Pelléas*. It is indisputably a great opera, and one of the very few successful efforts at literally "setting a play to music." It breaks all the rules, yet succeeds. It is also wonderfully suited for listening at home, where one can follow the text, and let the imagination take care of the visual side of things. There is no good reason for the fact that *Pelléas* is hardly ever convincingly staged—but that is the case. Producers seem unable to break away from the literal, which is certainly ridiculous in a work that is all symbol, image, and shadow. Mélisande's hair streaming about Pelléas' shoulders, then becoming tangled in the branches on Golaud's approach, is a beautiful, dramatic idea for a scene—but it is merely silly when it becomes a soprano's flaxen wig snagged on the scene designer's latest papier-mâché masterpiece while some tenor pantomimes nervousness. At home, the idea is also the reality.

Strangely enough (the work is an extremely demanding one), all the recorded versions of *Pelléas* are of high quality, and one will get an adequate representation of the opera with any of them. None, I think, attains the level reached by the inspired wartime recording under Désormière, which was once available in Victor's LCT series, and which should certainly be restored in Angel's "Great Recordings" series. My own pick among the current editions is the Epic production. Fournet keeps sight of the over-all structure, never becoming bogged down in the admittedly fascinating detail of the work. Micheau and Roux are top-flight (the latter, though his voice is of moderate proportions, sets forth a magnificently strong, pointed Golaud); Depraz, though not imaginative, is vocally rich. Most importantly, Mauranne is a fresh, young-sounding Pelléas. The sound, unfortunately, is not all that could be desired. My copy is particularly edgy on Side 1; this is no doubt a proc-

*Continued on page 90*

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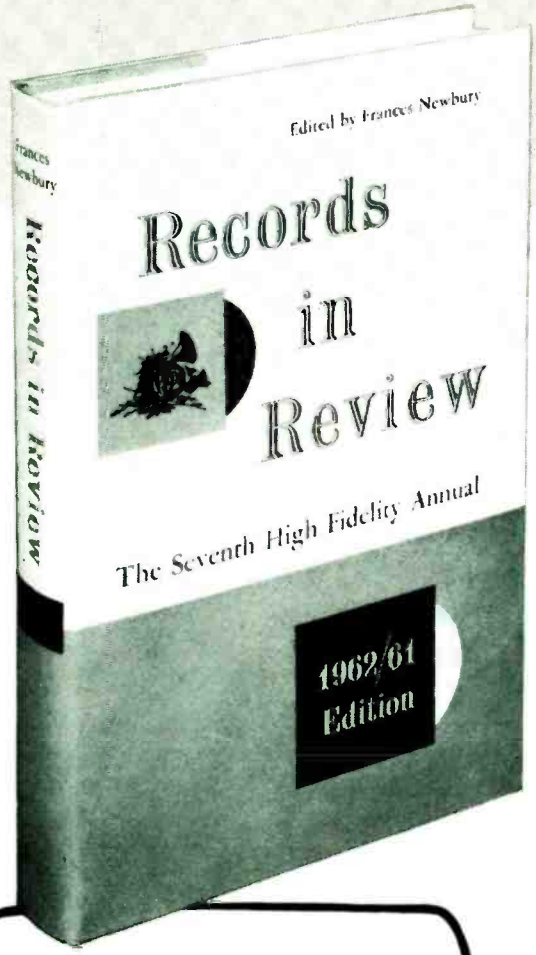


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## DEBUSSY ON MICROGROOVE

*Continued from page 84*

essing fault, though, and other copies may be perfectly acceptable. Check.

The London performance seems to me second choice. Ansermet's way with the work is rightly admired—extremely clear, light, and strong. There is also a wonderfully sensitive Mélisande by Danco—her finest recorded achievement. Rehfuss and Vessières are both solid, though they hardly run away from the competition; Mollet, though, is a nondescript, dry-sounding baritone/tenor, very hard-pressed on top. His sensitivity does not make up for a basically gray sound.

I place Angel's version last, but it is still an estimable performance. De los Angeles and Souzay both sing beautifully, though the former could use a bit more lightness and pointedness in her work, and Souzay could do better by the strong side of Golaud—there is not much here of the savage huntsman. Froumenty is a competent Arkël; vocally, he is sometimes insecure, but that is not inappropriate. Jansen, who was the splendid Pelléas of the aforementioned Désormière version, is here fifteen years older, and sounds it. Tasteful and intelligent to a degree, he still sounds like the elder of the two brothers by quite a span. My chief objection to this performance is that all these excellent singers do not always sound correct in relation to the others, whereas the Epic singers, less gifted for the most part, are better matched. Cluytens' leadership is considered, but not as dynamic as Fournet's, not as lucid as Ansermet's. The Angel sound is superb, and gives this album the edge in that respect.

—Janine Micheau, soprano; Camille Mauranne, baritone; Michel Roux, baritone; Xavier Depraz, bass; Orchestre des Concerts Lamoureux, Jean Fournet, cond. Epic SC 6003, Three LP.

—Suzanne Danco, soprano; Pierre Mollet, baritone; Heinz Rehfuss, bass-baritone; André Vessières, bass; Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. London A 4401, Four LP.

—Victoria de los Angeles, soprano; Jacques Jansen, baritone; Gerard Souzay, baritone; Pierre Froumenty, bass-baritone; Orchestre de la Radiodiffusion Française, André Cluytens, cond. Angel 3561 C/L, Three LP.

*Le Martyre de Saint-Sébastien* (1911)

This work happens to be my candidate in the category of "Major Work by Major Composer Without Which the World Would Be Better Off." There is no point in my concealing my own revulsion for the bloated, pretentious verse of D'Annunzio; this is a "mystery play" on the intellectual and psychological level of *King of Kings*, with the added burden of taking itself terribly seriously. Although my reaction may be somewhat extreme and irrational (I find myself taking sides most enthusiastically with the Romans—let's clear the fanatics out and get back to running the Empire), I have small doubt that it is essentially right, for the dramatic poem lacks the basic virtue of sincerity and is utterly devoid of intellectual perspective.

Debussy's score really consists of incidental music for the stage presentation, and takes up, at most, a third of the work's duration. All sorts of rearrangements have been made—as reflected in the available recordings—but it is hard to extract the music from the speech, which it accompanies at certain points, and the resulting composition has no shape, any more than the average film score. Perhaps the solution will lie in the creation of a *Martyre* Suite for orchestra and chorus. Nearly all the score is ingenious and evocative of the corresponding moments in the play. I am particularly fond of the Hymn to the False Gods, the Introduction to the Magic Chamber scene, and the opening duet for the Twins. Certain sections, notably of the trumpet flourishes that introduce the Council of the False Gods, have been appropriated intact by Hollywood to such effect as to have, I fear, humorous associations.

If one wants *Le Martyre* in a form that has some dramatic cohesion, he should try to get hold of the three-disc French Columbia set (import only). This presents the play with a full cast of characters (the adaptation is by Vera Korène, who plays the role of the Saint), and in a more or less complete form. The actors—particularly Mme. Korène and Jean Marchat, who plays Caesar (Diocletian, in case you're not up on your martyrs)—are excellent, and they are seconded by good orchestral and choral work under Cluytens. The soloists—none of whom is really important in the context of the entire play—are a name group, and Gorr, Michel, and Angelici are all very fine. Miss Dobbs, though, sounds thin and brittle, and Jacqueline Brumaire, who sings the solo of Sebastian's soul, has a penetrating, unattractive voice. The big drawback to this set is, to my mind, its completeness—the less of *Martyre*, the better. For those who disagree, however, this album is the pick, and it at least gives the full work a chance to make its effect. The sound is very good.

American Columbia's version is a concert adaptation made by Germaine Inghelbrecht. It deletes a large number of characters and episodes (The Mourning Mother, the Feverish Girl, the Caesar/Sébastien scene, among others) but retains nearly all the music and the general structure of the Saint's progression to martyrdom. Zorina is quite fine, the sound (this is the only edition available in stereo) excellent, and the orchestra altogether brilliant in its plush way. Gueden, though, has been heard to better effect, and the choristers are guilty of the sin of not being French.

The Ducretet-Thomson treatment is similar to that of American Columbia, except that the title role is assumed by a man, André Falcon. He is thoroughly satisfactory, though the role was conceived for a woman (Ida Rubinstein) and somehow sounds best in female hands. Inghelbrecht leads his forces through an idiomatic performance of the music, but the sound of this recording is not up to that of the other two versions.

—Vera Korène, Jacques Eyser, Maria Casarès, Henriette Barreau, Jean Marchat, Paul Guers, actors; Martha Angelici, soprano; Jacqueline Brumaire, soprano; Mattiwilda Dobbs, soprano; Rita Gorr, mezzo; Solange Michel, mezzo; Louis Noguera, bass; Choeurs Raymond St.-Paul; Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française, André Cluytens, cond. Columbia (French) FCX 338/340, Three LP (Import).

—Vera Zorina, narrator; Hilde Gueden, soprano; Philadelphia Orchestra Chorus and Musical Art Society of Camden; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia M2L 266, Two LP; M2S 609, Two SD.

—André Falcon, narrator; Claudine Collart, soprano; Christiane Gayraud, soprano; Janine Collard, mezzo; Choeur de la RTF; Orchestre National de la RTF, D. Inghelbrecht, cond. Ducretet-Thomson 320C155 (Import).

### SONGS

I suppose that if art song devotees were asked to name the greatest French composer of songs, a majority would select Fauré. My own candidate would, I think, be Duparc; he wrote only fourteen songs, but in them he achieved a consistency of expressive potency worthy of a Schubert or a Wolf. The *mélodies* of Debussy cannot be appreciated by quite the same set of perceptions as the work of Fauré or Duparc. They are more difficult to apprehend. We do not have to look far for reasons. There are the technical matters of unprepared leaps into distant keys, of sudden and frequent rhythmic alterations, that tend to make the songs sound "formless," in a purely musical sense; and much more importantly, there is Debussy's firm rejection of practically all the points of reference established by the "classical" song composers, who happened to be German.

Most of us in this country come to our interest in art songs through the German composers, who imposed upon their songs musical plans which make purely musical sense independent of the text. We learn to think of songs in terms of easily recognizable forms, such as the strophic song of Schubert. A large number of songs by Fauré hew to an immediately grasped melodic layout, a musical skeleton, but the French art song has tended gradually away from this concept, and has finally arrived at the point of satirizing it repeatedly (in the work of Poulenc). It is Debussy who took this swing farthest in another direction. Compare the settings of *Mandoline* by Debussy and Fauré (and this is really one of Debussy's more firmly structured songs—hence its relative popularity), and the difference will be clear.

*Continued on page 144*


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In "Notes from Abroad" (HIGH FIDELITY, August 1962) Kurt Blaukopf announced the then forthcoming Amadeo release of Robert Stolz's latest operetta *Die Trauminsel*, recorded at the Vienna Konzerthaus with the octogenarian composer conducting. The first live performance took place at last summer's Bregenz Festival, in an open-air theatre with a stage built out into Lake Constance. Whatever the effectiveness of this "Dream Island" may have been on the Swiss-border lake, the opening moments of the recording (AVRS 9037, now present and accounted for) make a startling impression. Set vaguely in the Mexican peninsula of Yucatan, the operetta begins with Latinesque rhythms and instruments, the musical content of which suggests a cast that should include Jeannette MacDonald and Carmen Miranda. In no time at all, however, the vocal style reverts to the Viennese idiom of the Strausses and Lehár; the familiar masquerade is back with us once more, this time at a Mexican ball. Effective stereo sound, Stolz's expert conducting, and the singers—who give good genre performances, though not in a class with Schwarzkopf, Gueden, and Kunz—combine to make this production a tasty *Schlagober*. Regrettably, the album notes written by librettist Robert Gilbert are sentimentally devoid of any real information, and no text is available.

*Robert Stolz: at eighty, recording.*

The 1935 Glyndebourne Festival performance of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, with the late Fritz Busch conducting, was first reissued on microgroove by RCA Victor in 1952. During its brief stay in the catalogue it was considered to be easily the best available version. Now it has appeared once more on three Electrola LPs (E 80681/3). It may seem reactionary of me to place a vintage recording at the head of a list, however short, that includes Von Karajan's excellent modern recording for Angel—certainly that conductor's best Mozartean effort to date. But Busch's *Così* was his best among all the revered Glyndebourne performances, recorded with a most congenial, well-balanced set of mature artists—Ina Souez, Luise Helletsgruber, Heddle Nash, Willi Domgraf-Fassbänder, and John Brownlee. Busch's pacing and graceful phrasing seem ideal for what may very well be the most perfect comic opera ever written. The new Electrola pressing, far better than the decade-old Victor, reveals no surface noise (there was none to begin with) and very clear, if not really bright, sound. The accompanying illustrated booklet contains notes and a libretto in Italian and German only.

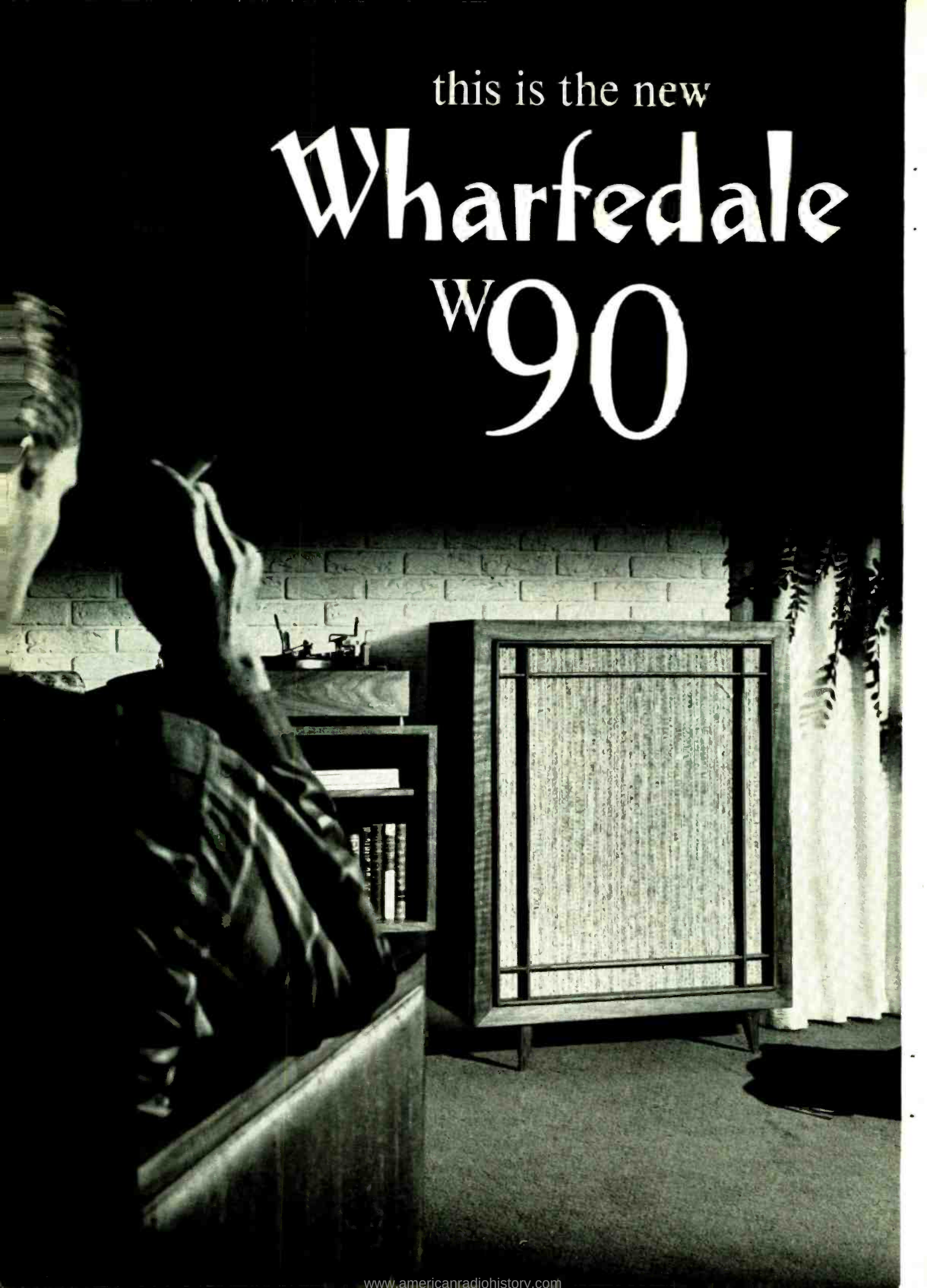
IN A SHORT WHILE, publications both here and abroad will burst forth with compilations of awards for "The Best of the Year" in almost every field of endeavor. Just in time Harmonia Mundi has issued an aptly anachronistic record entitled *Die Besten Schlager der Jahres 1762* (HM 30616), rather cutely translated on the cover as "The Top Hits of 1762." Judging from this delightful production, I would say that the sixteen best "popular" songs of two hundred years ago are at least that many times superior to current candidates.

Inasmuch as the *Schlager* and the Lied differed comparatively little in musical style, the level of published popular music was high. Significantly, the texts discarded classical allegories and fables and dealt directly, in a mildly risqué fashion, with common and royal foibles. The composers represented here include such as Telemann, Rousseau, Johann Philipp Krieger, and Johann Valentin Görner, and the songs include two in French and one in Italian. The subjects embrace kissing, money, marriage, and intrigue. A spoken commentary precedes each category, ordinarily a serious handicap for continuous listening, especially on an unbanded record. However, the commentator, one Karl Wesseler, resembles a sly Mort Sahl in his satiric deflation of the great events of 1762, against which the songs are contrasted. For those who don't understand German, Wesseler's soft speech, with harpsichord accompaniment, soon fades into the background, very much like spoken recitative. The songs themselves—some of which translate easily as "The Art of Kissing," "The Bluestocking Song," and "Money"—are charmingly performed by Edith Mathis, soprano, and bass-baritone Benno Kusche (the excellent Beckmesser of Angel's complete *Meistersinger*). Fritz Neumeyer, harpsichord, and Reinhold Johannes Buhl, cello, provide the modest accompaniments, recorded with remarkable transparency. There are no texts or notes included—only the juxtaposition of such 1762 highlights as the murder of Tsar Peter III and Louis XV's biting his own finger in a rage over a difference of opinion with Madame Pompadour.

GENE BRUCK

*The late Fritz Busch:* Così *reissued.*

*Imported labels are now being stocked by an increasing number of dealers in this country. A list giving the names and addresses of the principal U. S. importers will be sent on request. Address Dept. RD,* HIGH FIDELITY *Magazine, Publishing House, Great Barrington, Mass.*



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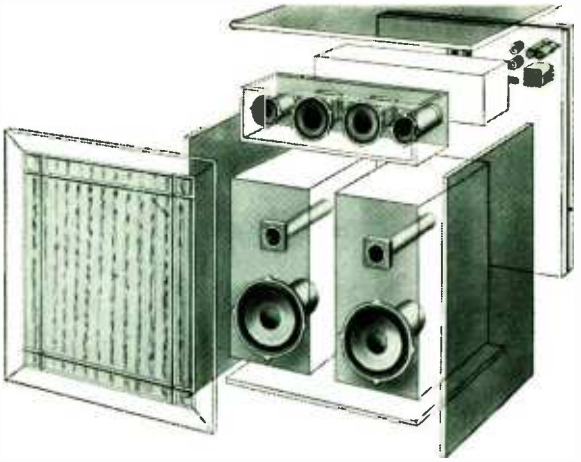

**THE W90** is destined to restore the legendary sound of former years...the sound of the great Wharfedale systems used by G. A. Briggs in his concert demonstrations at Carnegie Hall, Royal Festival Hall and others throughout the Western world. The Wharfedale systems he used to re-create the full symphony orchestra, single instruments from triangle to organ, and the voice...all at correct volume, and without coloration or distortion...were compared by the thousands in his audiences to simultaneous live performances on the same stages. Imperfect as such experiments had to be, the natural, realistic quality achieved by these homely but wonderful Wharfedale speaker systems accounts for the unassailable loyalty of those who heard Mr. Brigg's concert demonstrations or heard about them. And as musically-oriented people have grown more sophisticated in listening to stereo, there has been an increasing demand for the restoration of the full authority of these large, earlier Wharfedales. Unfortunately, this kind of sound, up to the present, has been the exclusive province of systems too cumbersome for most living rooms, especially when used in pairs for stereo. Now, benefiting from the advancements developed for its compact Achromatic series, Wharfedale has successfully designed a new size and format. It is a special sand-filled system, proportioned specifically to accommodate the components required today to accomplish this ambitious purpose. Measurements are 32¼"x27¾"x13⅛".

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**The chassis (baskets)** are exceptionally heavy and manufactured by casting. The purpose is to preserve absolute rigidity, maintaining the critical relationship between the moving voice coil and the fixed magnet. The stamped baskets found in ordinary loudspeakers are also designed to be rigid. However, this rigidity is often lost as soon as the speaker is mounted firmly against an inexact wooden front baffle. Some speaker designers have even eliminated the basket, weakening the entire speaker structure. Wharfedale baskets are of cast metal. They hold their shape perfectly in mounting, and are strong enough to permit sufficient openings to maintain absolutely correct airloading, essential for the full response of the speaker.

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**With its six speakers, the W90 is actually a dual 3-way system with all units designed for each other and crossover settings calibrated for undistorted response throughout the audio spectrum. The support effect of the tandem speaker systems results in a sound of exceptional authority, yet in balance over the entire range.**

**LOW RANGE.** Two 12½" low frequency drivers handle the sound from 20 to 1,500 cycles. The listener can expect to enjoy the true, fundamental bass notes, so often masked. The two drivers total a cone area of 94 square inches...thus the W90 tandem idea yields the same result as a single low frequency driver of such massive size and weight as to be impractical in the home.

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**TREBLE.** Two 3" treble speakers are the well-established Super 3's, much admired for their ability to present the clear treble without stridency...making them eminently listenable, unusual for tweeters. This is no accident. It is the result of cone-type rather than horn-type construction, and refinements such as low-mass aluminum voice coils ultrasonically tinned, powered by magnets so large that they are seldom found even in speakers four times the diameter!

**THE W90** is the latest of the Achromatic speaker systems. The literal meaning of "achromatic" is: "Pure sound, uncolored by extraneous modulations." Such modulations, common even in luxury speaker systems, tend to alter the natural sound of music. The W90 enclosure has been designed to preserve the integrity of the speakers' performance, through certain constructional features. Chief characteristic of the Achromatic construction is the sand-filled technique, which consists of packing white sand densely between layers of hardwood. This creates an inert mass, incapable of resonating no matter how deep or strong the bass backwave projected against it. This technique, exclusive to Wharfedale, is the result of years of development by G. A. Briggs. While it costs considerably more than standard construction, it has proven so effective in preventing bass distortion that all Wharfedale Achromatic systems incorporate it. Each woofer is mounted in an individual tuned chamber for its own maximum effect, and isolated from the mid-range and tweeter arrays. Therefore, mechanical coupling, so disastrous in ordinary systems, is eliminated. The high and mid-range speakers are mounted from the rear, isolated from the face of the cabinet with front free-floating. This important feature helps to eliminate phase distortion. As a final measure, to insure compatability with the acoustics of the room, the W90 system incorporates a full control panel. Each range of speakers may be balanced and adjusted to the ear of the listener, the requirements of the particular listening area and the other components in the music system.

**DECOR.** The Wharfedale W90 is housed in a meticulously crafted cabinet built to meet every requirement of perfection in sound...yet it will fit with ease into the living room, and is elegant enough to join the most distinctive furnishings. Its acoustic design adds versatility...permitting horizontal or vertical use as desired. The Wharfedale Universal Mounting Base makes it a superb free-standing unit. In oiled or polished Walnut hardwood, $259.50. Utility model in sanded birch hardwood, without curved molding or dividers, $244.50. Universal mounting base to match $9.95.

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**CIRCLE 27 ON READER-SERVICE CARD**

# EVEN PUCCINI


Young, beautiful, shy, tender and yet a bit of a coquette that's how Puccini portrayed Mimi in La Bohème. The charming young woman on the stage of the Rome Opera House, her lilting soprano lifted in the lovely aria Mi chiamano Mimi (I'm known as Mimi), seemed to embody perfectly Puccini's vision of the adorable Mimi. She's known as Anna. Anna Moffo, and she is, as one of her colleagues at the Metropolitan Opera says, "the most exquisite Mimi in memory."

Completely staged for realistic sound, a bed was even brought on stage to record Mimi's delicately tragic death scene. The producer couldn't see the stage from the control room, but at one point said over the intercom, "Anna, you're not lying down." And indeed, she had been sitting on the bed. You will sense she was reclining for the final recording when you listen to this tender, poignant scene at home.

Recorded exactly as Puccini wrote it, Conductor Erich Leinsdorf keeps the whole production lively, young, quickly-paced. Richard Tucker and Robert Merrill as Rodolfo and Marcello are wonderfully spirited opposite Miss Moffo's Mimi and the Musetta of Mary Costa, whose voice suits the role of the volatile vixen to perfection. Together, they all breathe the wonderful spirit of youth into this delightful new La Bohème—its smiles are youthful; so are its tears—and that's how Puccini wrote it 66 years ago.

# WOULD ADORE MOFFO AS MIMI

# RCA VICTOR
## RED SEAL RECORDS

CIRCLE 79 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

*Continued from page 82*

remarkably light orchestral textures, make his version my preference, but the Klemperer, with its firmer registration (especially in the lower lines) and warmth, is obviously going to win admirers, and deservedly.

It is no surprise that Schwarzkopf sings the solo in the final movement very well, but the voice is obviously that of a mature woman and lacks the magical, childlike qualities of Solti's soloist, Sylvia Stahlman, whose high soprano has the exact timbre to match the text. Solti places great emphasis on nuance and achieves very expressive results. Klemperer pays less attention to this aspect of the music and sometimes produces a feeling of too much rigidity in dynamics and line. Solti's Amsterdam players are thoroughly familiar with a great local Mahler tradition; Klemperer's London musicians have no such heritage. The Reiner, incidentally, lies somewhat midway between these two approaches. Some may find it a welcome compromise.

The monophonic edition of the Klemperer is quite different in its frequency emphasis from the stereo. The former is very bright, too much so at times, and the latter has the softer glow which comes from more flattering acoustical perspective. R.C.M.

**MENDELSSOHN: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in E minor, Op. 64*—See Bruch: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1, in G minor, Op. 26.***

**MENDELSSOHN: *Octet for Strings, in E flat, Op. 20*—For a feature review of an album including a recording of this work, see page 70.**

**MILHAUD: *La Création du monde; Suite provençale***

Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond.
• RCA VICTOR LD 2625. LP. $5.98.
• • RCA VICTOR LDS 2625. SD. $6.98.

*La Création du monde* capped the rage for "African art" that swept Europe after the First World War. The 1923 ballet was designed by Léger and had the benefit of the cleverness and evocative power of what was possibly the first important European score to make extensive use of jazz. There is no real jazz as such; but there are saxophone wails, plenty of old familiar riffs, and even a fugue on a jazz subject. As the composer himself says, he was trying to use jazz to convey something purely classical. Yet this neo-jazz is often low-down and basic in its 1920s way. There is a kind of cosmic hilarity about it that would be sidesplitting if it were not for the extraordinarily serious impact lying just below the clever and amusing surface. I know of no music by Milhaud—with the possible exception of parts of *Christophe Colomb*—that makes a greater impression.

The *Suite provençale* is almost as different from *La Création* as Provence is from Harlem. This good-humored score is partly based on music by the French baroque composer André Campra, like Milhaud a native of Provence. It is the

*Munch: in Milhaud, he smiles.*

sort of piece about which critics and blurb writers are fond of saying, "This is music making at its most joyous" and that, in fact, is just what it is. Everything is done with the best of good wit, taste, and skillful charm. The sun over Provence smiles, André Campra smiles. Darius Milhaud smiles, Charles Munch smiles, the music critic smiles, we all smile.

The performances are fine. At first, I was slightly disturbed by Munch's inability to swing—as if he missed the jazz point in *La Création*. But, on second thought, it occurs to me that here is probably the classical cream of the jest. Still, one can't help wishing occasionally that Munch could stoop to digging in with a real, low-down swinging sound. Recorded sound is excellent. E.S.

**MONTEVERDI: *Lagrime d'amante al sepolcro dell'amata; Arie, Conzonetti, Recitativi***

Petit Ensemble Vocal (Montreal), George Little, cond.
• VOX DL 910. LP. $4.98.
• • VOX STDL 500910. SD. $4.98.

Monteverdi's very beautiful cycle of six madrigals, "Tears of a Lover at the Tomb of the Beloved," is sung here by a quintet that has clearly been carefully chosen and well rehearsed. The individual voices are pure and steady, they blend together perfectly, and their intonation in this *a cappella* performance is accurate almost throughout. With the clean and finely balanced recording achieved by the Vox engineers, the result is a lovely sound. From the standpoint of interpretation, however, one has the impression of a rather cool, passionless treatment of these dramatic pieces, mostly because of a limited dynamic range in the performance and a lack of variation in the basic pulse rate from madrigal to madrigal. Hindemith's recording on Overtone uses a larger group of singers (perhaps too large), but in its greater warmth and vivacity seems to me to represent the spirit of this music better.

The other side presents interesting pieces for solo voice and accompaniment (a spinet here), as well as the complete *scena* that is all that survives of Monteverdi's opera *Arianna*. Each of these works is well sung. N.B.

**MOZART: *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, in A, K. 622*—See Strauss, Richard: *Concerto for Horn and Orchestra, No. 1, in E flat, Op. 11.***

*Continued on next page*

*Erica Morini: Mozart never dull.*

MOZART: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 5, in A, K. 219*
†Bach: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 2, in E, S. 1042*

Erica Morini, violin; Aeterna Chamber Orchestra, Frederic Waldman, cond.
• DECCA DL 10053. LP. $4.98.
• • DECCA DL 710053. SD. $5.98.

Miss Morini brings out the playful quality in the Mozart, and keeps her strong temperament well under control. One may not agree with every one of her ideas, but she is never dull. She does not make a fetish of consistency. If she chooses not to fill in the space between the Adagio and the return of the Allegro in the first movement, she does improvise in similar places in the finale. In part of the "Turkish" section of the latter movement she plays the appoggiaturas short the first time and long in the repetition—an interesting effect. Her interpretation of some of the other grace notes seems questionable, but the trills are done correctly. One of the many subtle touches in this performance is the careful distinction made between *fp* in allegro and in adagio. The second and third movements are taken rather deliberately, so that the finale is broken in the middle and has to be finished on the other side. Except for a moment in the second movement when the basses are weak, the sound is well balanced and clear.

The Bach is an excellent performance throughout, with an especially eloquent Adagio. N.B.

MOZART: *Quintet for Strings, in G minor, K. 516*—For a feature review of an album including a recording of this work, see page 70.

MOZART: *Symphonies: No. 33, in B flat, K. 319; No. 36, in C, K. 425 ("Linz")*

English Chamber Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond.
• OISEAU-LYRE OL 50218. LP. $4.98.
• • OISEAU-LYRE SOL 60049. SD. $5.98.

These are, on the whole, commendable performances. The orchestra seems excellent, and Mr. Davis and the Oiseau-Lyre engineers combine to convey clearly every one of the many felicitous details, such as the dialogue between oboes and bassoons in the finale of K. 319. In fact that Symphony is as well played and recorded here as on any recording of it that I have heard. The *Linz*, however, is another matter. There the competition includes the magnificent Bruno Walter reading on Columbia, and the present version is not in that class. The sound of the orchestra here tends to turn a bit coarse in *forte* passages, but whether that is a fault of the players or of the recording I cannot tell. N.B.

ORFF: *Entrata*
†Beethoven: *Wellingtons Sieg, Op. 91 ("Battle Symphony")*
†Gabrieli, Giovanni: *Canzon del primi toni, No. 1*

Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Hermann Scherchen, cond.
• WESTMINSTER XWN 19013. LP. $4.98.
• • WESTMINSTER WST 17013. SD. $5.98.

Westminster's inspired notion of grouping (under the program rubric "Music for Multiple Orchestras") stereogenic compositions drawn from widely spaced historical eras *should* have resulted in a much more successful release than this turns out to be. Scherchen is partly to blame—for his stiffly vehement performance of the *Battle Symphony* and his overmethodical Gabrieli and Orff readings. But the major responsibility is the engineers': their markedly stereoistic recording is characterized by hard, cold, and indeed often harshly spotlighted sonics which neither do justice to the Viennese players nor provide any real competition to those of the Dorati or Gould versions of *Wellington's Victory*. (The tonal qualities themselves are somewhat less unnatural in the LP edition, but for works which depend so heavily on antiphonal effects monophony is of course inadequate.)

Nevertheless, the Gabrieli and Orff pieces are extremely interesting musically. The former, an 8-part Canzona in the first Church mode (done before on records only, I think, in a now withdrawn double-string-choir version by Münchinger for London), is one of the great Venetian's major compositions for two orchestras. Here it is played in an unaccredited arrangement for present-day brass, woodwind, and string instruments, which, however unauthentic, achieves considerable brilliance at times; unfortunately, it conveys a lethargic wheeziness at others. The Orff *Entrata* based on themes by William Byrd is an early composition (1928) by the German composer. Although he revised it in 1940 (after the celebrated *Carmina Burana*), its hynotic use of a *basso ostinato* motto figure becomes even more tiresome than the similarly obsessive patterns of *Carmina* and its most thunderous climaxes never quite match the dramatic impact of the better-known work. This is apparently the first recorded appearance of the *Entrata*, which makes more regrettable the failure of the otherwise informative jacket notes to specify the exact constitution of each of its five panoramically spread "orchestras." R.D.D.

PAGANINI: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1, in D, Op. 6*
†Saint-Saëns: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 3, in B minor, Op. 61*

Zino Francescatti, violin; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. (in the Paganini); New York Philharmonic, Dimitri Mitropoulos, cond. (in the Saint-Saëns).
• • COLUMBIA MS 6268. SD. $5.98.

If memory serves correctly, this recording, in its original monophonic form,

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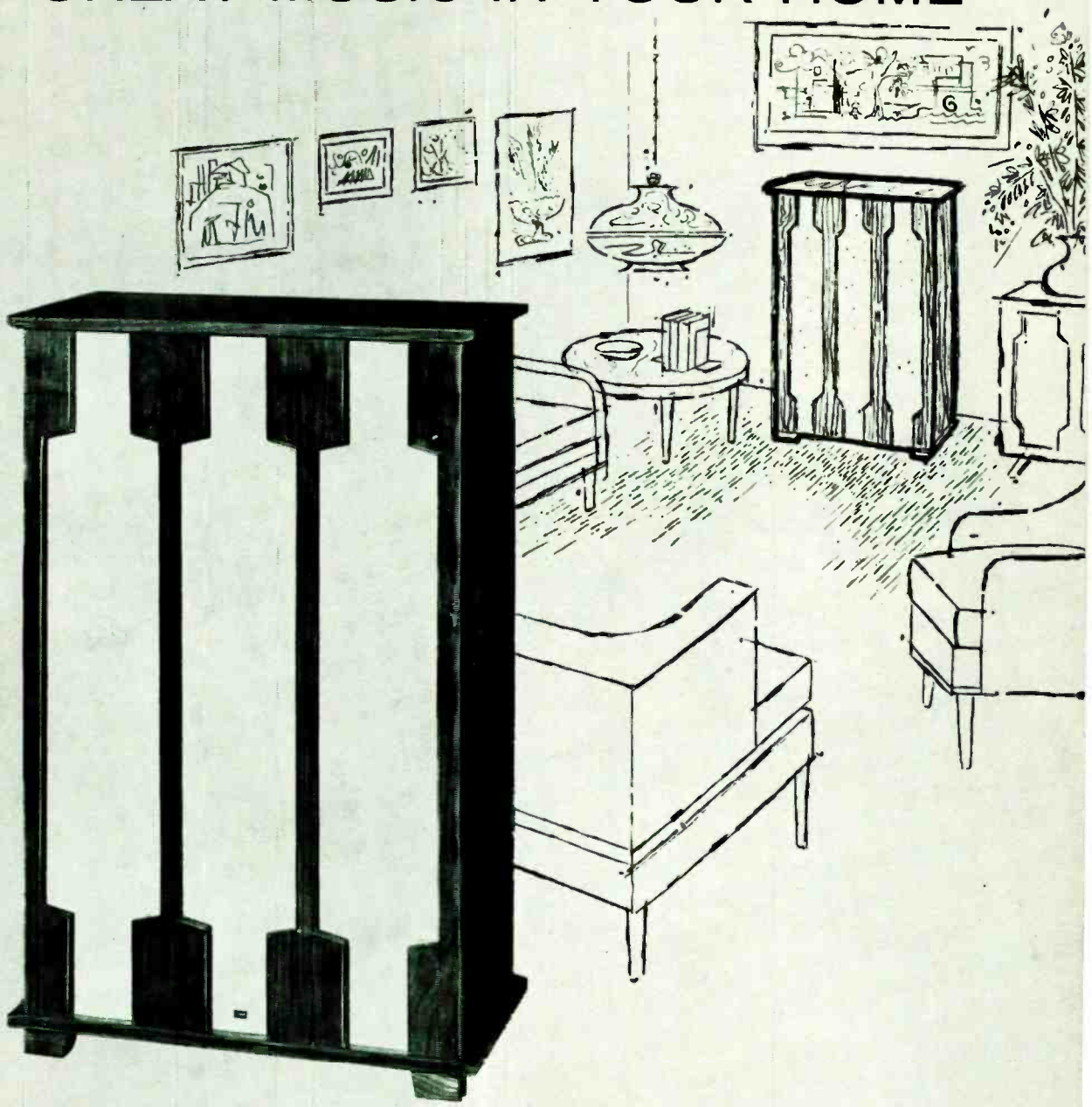

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CIRCLE 25 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## RECORDS IN REVIEW

*Continued from page 98*

marked Zino Francescatti's disc debut in this country. Few violinists today can approach the command and brilliance he brings to the Paganini First Concerto or the suavity with which he delivers the melodic Saint-Saëns Concerto.

However the prospective purchaser should be advised that the present disc is not a recently recorded performance but the eleven-or-twelve-year-old performance subjected to Columbia's "electronic re-channeling" to create a pseudo-stereo effect. It seems to me that this process has been considerably more successful with small jazz combos, where instrumental groups can be shifted from one channel to the other without harming the music. All that has happened here is that the over-all sound has been cleaned up a bit; there is really no greater spread than in the original monophonic recording. P.A.

POWELL: *Haiku Settings for Voice and Piano; Electronic Setting; Filigree Setting for String Quartet*—See Babbitt: *Composition for Twelve Instruments; Du, Song Cycle for Soprano and Piano.*

RAMEAU: *Le Berger fidèle*—See BACH: *Cantata No. 51, Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen.*

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Scheherazade, Op. 35*

Anshel Brusilow, violin; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.
• COLUMBIA ML 5765. LP. $4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6365. SD. $5.98.

Since Ormandy hasn't tackled the popular Russian showpiece for some seven years, every effort has been strained to make his belated stereo version as sensationally sumptuous by current standards as his earlier "magnificent adventure in hi-fidelity sound" was by those of 1955. The new edition undoubtedly will enrapture a mass public, but there will be at least some dissenters: those who know the score well enough to spot the inexcusable cut (pp. 138-49 of the Eulenberg miniature score) near the end of the third movement . . . those who cherish the unique interpretative magic of the Beecham/Angel version . . . those who admire the better-integrated, less heavy-handed Chicagoan performance by Reiner for RCA Victor . . . and above all those who have heard the recent supremely transparent and natural London dual-channel recording conducted by Ansermet. R.D.D.

SAINT-SAENS: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 3, in B minor, Op. 61*—See Paganini: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1, in D, Op. 6.*

SCHUBERT: *Quintet for Strings, in C, Op. posth. 163*—For a feature review of an album including a recording of this work, see page 70.

SCHUBERT: *Die schöne Müllerin, Op. 25*

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Gerald Moore, piano.
• ANGEL 3628. Two LP. $9.96.
• • ANGEL S 3628. Two SD. $11.96.

For a feature review including this recording, see page 67.

SCHUBERT: *Songs, Vols. 1 and 2*

Elisabeth Schumann, soprano; Gerald Moore *et al.*, piano.
• ANGEL COLH 130/31. Two LP. $5.98 each.

For a feature review including these recordings, see page 67.

STRAUSS, JOHANN II: *"Carnival in Vienna"*

*Polkas: Annen, Op. 117; Auf der Jagd, Op. 373; Explosions, Op. 43; Leichtes Blut, Op. 319; Neue Pizzicato, Op. 449; Tritsch-Tratsch, Op. 214; Unter Donner und Blitz, Op. 324. Waltzes: Roses from the South, Op. 388; 1001 Nights, Op. 346; Wine, Women, and Song, Op. 333.*

Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.
• COLUMBIA ML 5752. LP. $4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6352. SD. $5.98.

STRAUSS FAMILY: *"1001 Nights"*

Johann Strauss I: *Loreley-Rheinklänge Waltz, Op. 154.* Johann Strauss II: *Napoleon March, Op. 156. Jokey Polka, Op. 278. Fledermaus Quadrille, Op. 363. Waltzes: Emperor, Op. 437; 1001 Nights, Op. 346; Where the Citrons Bloom, Op. 364.* Josef Strauss: *Feuerfest Polka, Op. 269.* Ziehrer: *Fächerpolonaise.*

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Willi Boskovsky, cond.
• LONDON CM 9299. LP. $4.98.
• • LONDON CS 6232. SD. $5.98.

Each of these long and varied programs begins with Josef Strauss's *Feuerfest* Polka (the one non-Johann II piece on the Columbia disc) and includes the *1001 Nacht* Waltz, but even in these duplications there is a world of difference—in which that between the *Feuerfest* fire engine bells (a single big clangorous American one vs. two tinnier, more insistent Viennese ones in amusing stereo antiphony) is by no means the most striking. Ormandy's readings are nervously high-tensioned and stiffly rhythmed; the Philadelphia performances methodically energetic; and the powerful Columbia recording immensely broad-spread in stereo—darkly colored, with the crispest of transients, and sharp-edged high strings in both editions. Boskovsky is far more relaxed, yet always alert and elastic; the Vienna Philharmonic plays with a glowing warmth which is enhanced by less strenuous and markedly stereoistic yet brighter and more natural recording.

Indeed, one couldn't ask for more convincing proof than these records provide of the claim that this music, like the best French wines, never travels well. I can give Ormandy no more than due credit for venturing into a fresher Straussian repertory than that of the best-known waltzes to which he has confined himself previously. Yet even in

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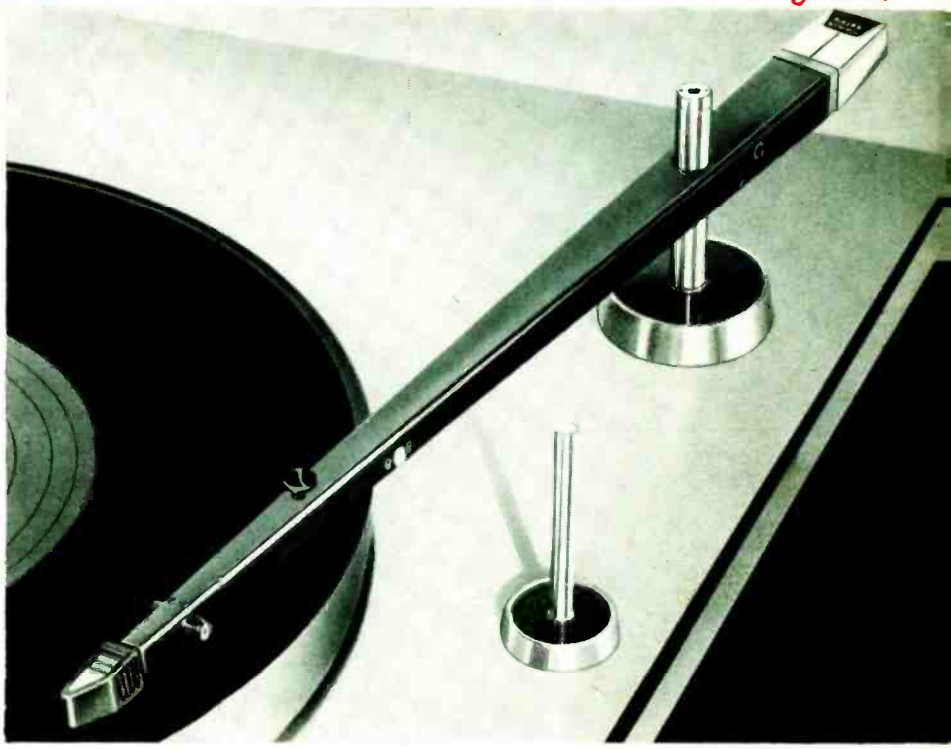

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LITERATURE: SHURE BROTHERS, INC., 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, Illinois, DEPT. HF-K

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this respect Boskovsky ranges farther, even to the inclusion of what is (to the best of my knowledge) a rare recording "first"—the festive *Napoleon* March. More importantly, his performances are not only in the authentic tradition but made all the more endearing by his players' as well as his own personal relish and grace. R.D.D.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Concerto for Horn and Orchestra, No. 1, in E flat, Op. 11*
†Mozart: *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra, in A, K. 622*

Myron Bloom, French horn; Robert Marcellus, clarinet; Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond.
• EPIC LC 3841. LP. $4.98.
• • EPIC BC 1241. SD. $5.98.

If you fancy concertos for instruments other than the familiar piano and strings, this is one of the most attractive couplings to appear in some months. Both performances are competitive with the best these works have received to date. In the case of the Strauss, the standard comes from the late Dennis Brain's version, which retains its interest because of his fine performance of both this and the Second Concerto, two works that almost serve to define the span of Strauss's career. As for the Mozart, my previous favorite account of this score was Beecham's, but lovely as his accompaniment is, there's no doubt that Szell's soloist is the finer artist.

Regarded as a sequel to the recent "Music for a Golden Flute," this would seem the second part of an Epic series featuring the first-chair Clevelanders. It seems a very good idea, since few first chairs are better filled. And listening to the Strauss, which here makes its first appearance in stereo, should provide conviction enough that there is a large and attractive literature to be displayed in such showcases. R.C.M.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Also sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30*

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond.
• RCA VICTOR LM 2609. LP. $4.98.
• • RCA VICTOR LSC 2609. SD. $5.98.

The Chicago Symphony has recorded this work four times—under Frederick Stock, under Artur Rodzinski, and twice under Fritz Reiner. Appropriately, Reiner's two versions date from the first and last of the nine seasons in which he was music director of the ensemble. The first, made in March of 1954, was a classic and still deserves respect. The second, made at the close of the season last spring, represents eight years of progress in stereophonic engineering techniques. It is the finest *Zarathustra* available, and it is likely to hold that distinction for a considerable time.

The score has been a Reiner specialty since he first emerged on the international scene in the 1920s, and over the years his performance of it has grown in stature. No other conductor makes Strauss's loosely knit structure seem more logical or unified in its design, and no other conductor carries the surging lyricism of the work's great pages to a higher sense of fulfillment. *Zarathustra* is no masterpiece, even in the Strauss canon, but a vehicle for a conductor of exceptional theatrical skills. Reiner is the man.

*Reiner:* Zarathustra *long a specialty.*

One can complain about the ill-tuned Orchestra Hall organ, and the solo violin of John Weicher in the first Reiner version is clearly superior to the Elman-like sounds of Sidney Harth in the second. The progress in engineering, however, outweighs this consideration. The stereo meets the highest standards of our day, the monophonic sound is as good as can be expected in music that calls for multichannel reproduction.

At this writing it looks as if this may be the last disc produced by Reiner and the great ensemble he trained in his Chicago years. My heart breaks to think that this should be; but if it turns out that this disc is indeed a memorial, no conductor could want a finer monument to his skill as a builder of orchestras. R.C.M.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in B flat minor, Op. 23*

Philippe Entremont, piano; New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond.
• COLUMBIA ML 5759. LP. $4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6359. SD. $5.98.

The indifferent performances Bernstein gives Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff warhorses as compared with his readings of more "highbrow" works—and a like state of affairs in the case of Entremont (can the clean-fingered, admirably reserved sonata partner to Maurice Gendron on ML 5465 really be the one and same performer as the pianist who performs the Rachmaninoff Second on ML 5481?)—continue to be a source of astonishment. A truly exciting performance of even the most popular work has to have moments of real delicacy and a sense of controlled equilibrium. This one merely reels about in a brutish, "King-Kong" fashion, and is basically without tonal finesse, rhythmic exactitude, and romantic ardor. Indeed, the lack of the last-named quality is all the more obvious because both pianist and orchestra attempt to simulate it: with all the grotesquely overpedaled passages and labored rubato, the rendition remains earthbound and pedestrian—and ultimately, more than a little dull.

Columbia's sound is rich and muddy—a faithful replica of the current-day Philharmonic on a "pop" night. The solo-orchestra ratio is satisfactory. The best stereo edition of this Concerto remains the Janis-Menges for Mercury, while the single-channel entries of Richter (Parliament), Cherkassky (Decca), and Horowitz-Toscanini (RCA Victor) top the competition in the monophonic field. H.G.

*Continued on page 104*

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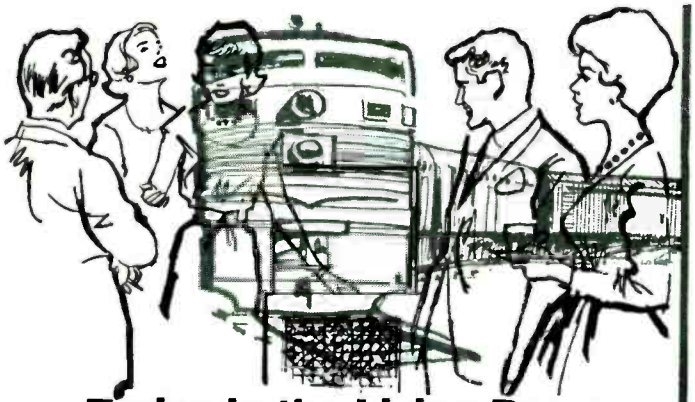

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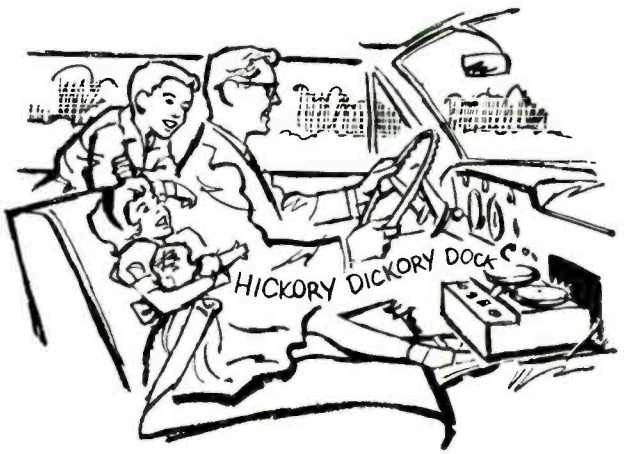


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TELEMANN: *Water Music "Hamburger Ebb und Fluht"; Suite for Oboe, Violin, and Continuo, No. 6, in D minor; Concerto for Flute, Harpsichord, and Continuo, No. 3, in A; Sonata for Oboe, Harpsichord, and Continuo, in E flat*

Concert Group of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, August Wenzinger, cond. (in the *Water Music*); Nuremberg Chamber Music Ensemble.
• ARCHIVE ARC 3198. LP. $5.98.
• • ARCHIVE ARC 73198. SD. $6.98.

Telemann's *Water Music*, unlike Handel's, is program music. Naiads at play are depicted in a graceful gavotte, Neptune in love in a languorous loure, and Aeolus storms through the strings in a movement very like something from Vivaldi's *Seasons*. It is all melodious and rather charming. Of the chamber works on the other side, the Suite is a trifle, while the "Concerto" and the Trio Sonata (both actually church sonatas) have somewhat more substance. The Concerto is for flute and a harpsichord whose part is fully written out. The editors have added a continuo for gamba and a second harpsichord. Flute, gamba, and continuo harpsichord are recorded on one track and the solo harpsichord on the other. A similar procedure was adopted for the Sonata, written for a high melodic instrument, solo harpsichord, and bass. These interpretations were apparently suggested by the possibilities provided by stereo recording—an interesting marriage of musicology and modern recording techniques.

N.B.



VARESE: *Arcana; Déserts; Offrandes*

Dona Precht, soprano (in the *Offrandes*); Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Robert Craft, cond.
• COLUMBIA ML 5762. LP. $4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6362. SD. $5.98.

If it were not already obvious that Edgard Varèse is one of the great figures not only of American music but of the whole twentieth century, this record (the second of Columbia's volumes of his music) ought to cinch it. *Arcana* and *Déserts* are the composer's works of greatest scope and their impact is enormous. In the sheer power of his musical personality alone, Varèse is unmatched.

*Déserts*, written in 1954, combines a wind and percussion ensemble with tape music to remarkable effect. *Arcana*, dating from 1927 (revised somewhat in 1960), employs 120 musicians including eight percussion players operating over forty different instruments. Power in these works is far from being merely a question of loudness and assertion; it stems rather from the composer's extraordinary technique of musical block building with his powerful, invented sonorities set out and built up in massive, static planes. Varèse imposes climax after climax with no diminution of effect because he can make you hear them as if they were simultaneous and cumulative. One has the sense of being able to view an entire musical object in space but constantly being grasped from new angles, from new vantage points. Varèse's music is thus spatial not only in its merely physical, stereophonic layout, but in its most basic conception.

*Arcana* still has links with the past in its use of themes and developments in the old way and in its occasional reminiscences of *Sacre du printemps*. But in its use of repeated-note figures, of rhythmic interplay and juxtaposition, of percussion instruments, and of harmonic and sonority build-up, it is already exceptionally original and personal in conception. In *Déserts*, the thematic material has become abstracted to the barest figures of one or two repeated notes and intervals. The patterns of rhythm, accent, dynamics, and sonority have achieved equal importance and actually emerge with "thematic" significance. And all these powerfully imagined instrumental sounds are brilliantly dovetailed with the tape interludes through the skillful use of the percussion. The percussion mediates, so to speak, between the sophisticated, complex, pitched, closed sound of the wind instruments and the primitive, open, limitless power of the sounds on tape. Out of this opposition grows a good deal of the strength and shape of the work. Varèse anticipated the ideas and conceptions of electronic music years before the technical means were available, and it is in this combination of taped and instrumental sound that one can find his most characteristic and powerful expression.

The *Offrandes* are two striking and impressive songs for soprano and orchestra written in 1921. *Chanson de Lahaut* still shows affinities to impressionism, but *La croix du sud*—with its use of percussion, its characteristic invention and sonority, and its blocked-out construction—is already mature and powerful Varèse.

Miss Precht is capable and the performances of *Offrandes* and *Déserts* are communicative. Unfortunately, *Arcana*

*Continued on page 108*

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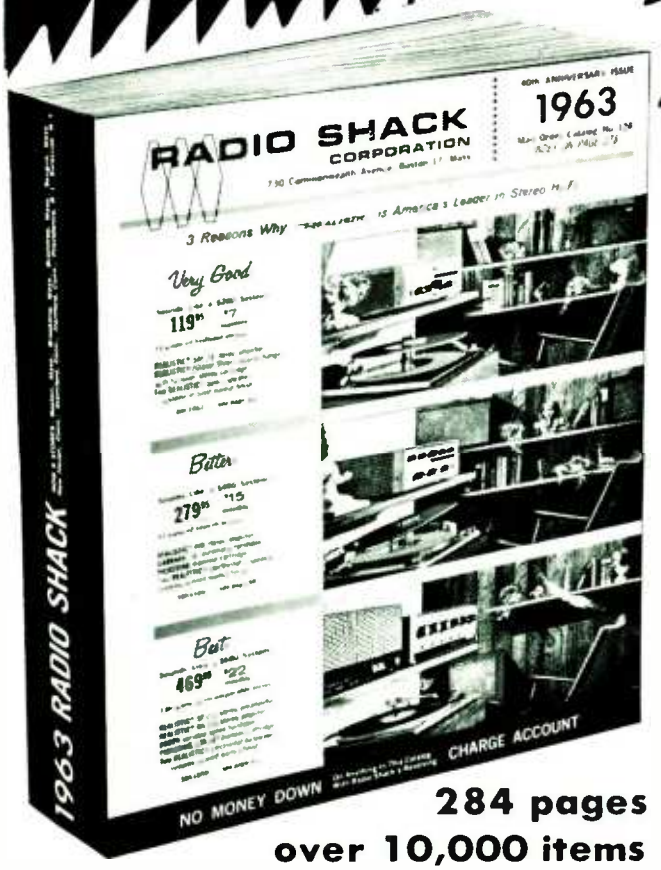


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gets something of a mauling, obviously due to inadequate rehearsal time. Still, the piece comes through with most of its impact. Since Varèse thinks in stereo, this music is obviously perfect for modern sound reproduction and Columbia doesn't miss a trick. The record is billed as "a sound spectacular" and the description, if a trifle gaudy, is nonetheless perfectly accurate. This music, of itself, is all the justification that stereo needs. E.S.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *Fantasia on a theme by Tallis; Fantasia on "Greensleeves"; Norfolk Rhapsody; Folk Song Suite*

Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond.
• VANGUARD VRS 1098. LP. $4.98.

It is interesting to compare these Vaughan Williams pieces with the Milhaud *Suite provençale* reviewed above. Both composers use references to folk material combined with elements of an older composing tradition. But while Milhaud's attitude is detached and witty, that of a sophisticate looking with amused affection at tradition, Vaughan Williams is directly and completely involved with his material. The English composer was, in fact, trying to re-create tradition from the inside and almost singlehandedly. Whether or not he succeeded is another afternoon's discussion, but the individual works that resulted certainly have a great deal of charm.

The *Folk Song Suite* is sprightly and delightful and the *Tallis* Fantasia is a piece of real scope. The *Norfolk Rhapsody* is an early and less elegant attempt. And, at this point, the *Greensleeves* Fantasia hardly needs any comment at all.

These performances were previously available on Westminster and have just been re-released by Vanguard. The record is neither more nor less than one would expect from a set of Vaughan Williams ultra-English works performed by an intimate of the composer with a good London orchestra (the London Philharmonic in disguise). The approach is stylish and leans to the cool rather than the subjective side of things. All to the good: this is probably the way Vaughan Williams liked it—English reticence and all that. In fact, it is probably this very English combination of reserve and traditionalism at the surface and involvement underneath that makes for a good deal of the appeal of this disc. The recorded sound, vintage 1955, is very reasonable. E.S.

WAGNER: *Tristan und Isolde: Prelude and Love-Death. Die Meistersinger: Prelude. Tannhäuser Overture (Dresden Version)*

Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond.
• EPIC LC 3845. LP. $4.98.
• • EPIC BC 1245. SD. $5.98.

Last season, the *Meistersinger* Prelude was played by North American orchestras more frequently than any other work of serious music. Perhaps one time in a hundred it was played as well as it is here, for Szell's version is remarkable in its clarity, its balance, and the conductor's sure control over the flow of the instrumental lines. (Listen, for example, to the way he handles the horns and trumpets.) More important than even these factors, however, is the way in

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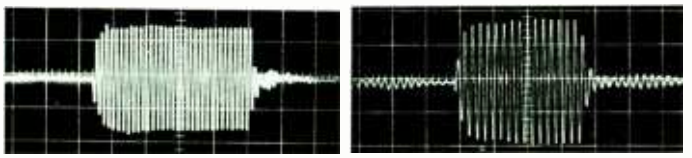

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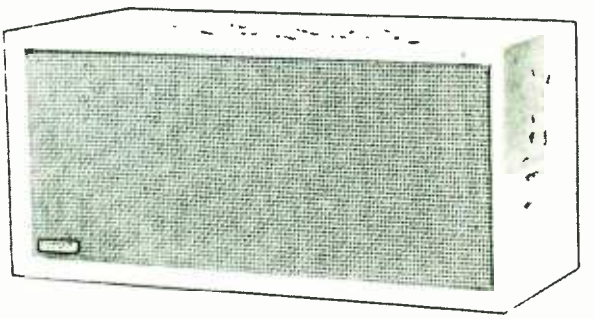

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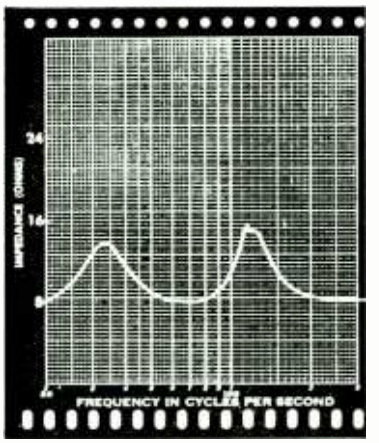


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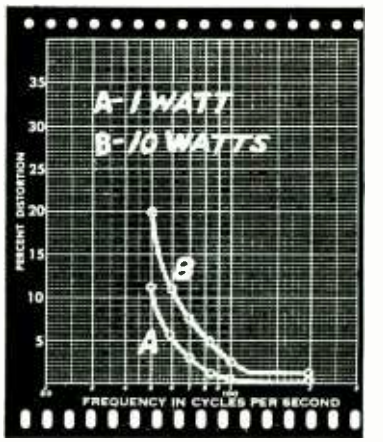


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which the music sings. In the majority of cases the work is either rushed or dragged, but here it seems to move with an inner heartbeat of its own.

Szell's approach to the *Tristan* is somewhat cooler than most, placing dramatic values ahead of eroticism. In those terms it's effective. The *Tannhäuser* was called by Tovey "very good bad music." Szell does his best to underplay its faults, refining such coarse tunes as the hymn to Venus to a greater degree than one might imagine possible, but abstracting some of their rowdy vitality at the same time. Perhaps the majority of those who buy this music on records prefer its vulgarity unabashed.

Technically, the disc is up to the usual high Cleveland standards, with the quality of the engineering consistent in both the monophonic and stereo formats.

R.C.M.

## WAGNER: *Die Walküre*

Birgit Nilsson (s), Brünnhilde; Gré Brouwenstijn (s), Sieglinde; Marie Collier (s), Gerhilde; Julia Malyon (s), Ortlinde; Judith Pierce (s), Helmwige; Rita Gorr (ms), Fricka; Margreta Elkins (ms), Waltraute; Joan Edwards (ms), Schwertleite; Noreen Berry (ms), Siegrune; Josephine Veasey (ms), Rossweisse; Maureen Guy (c), Grimgerde; Jon Vickers (t), Siegmund; George London (b), Wotan; David Ward (bs), Hunding. London Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond.

• RCA VICTOR LD 6706. Five LP. $25.98.

•• RCA VICTOR LDS 6706. Five SD. $30.98.

This is one of those albums which are, by and large, solid achievements but which give rise to enough reservations of the "yes, but" sort to keep one from turning cartwheels over their arrival. If the opera were, let us say, *La Traviata*, I would be tempted to counsel awaiting the further stereo versions that will be bound to come along in the next couple of years; since it is *Die Walküre*, I must advise buying it, as we are very likely to wait a decade before another edition happens along. The only alternative at the moment is investigation of the earlier HMV version, now pressed onto the Electrola label. In general, it suffers from the fact that its vocalists, with a couple of exceptions, cannot cope with their duties in an assured way. However, it boasts what seems to me a quite profound interpretation by Furtwängler; and if the singers are not always up to the vocal demands of the score, they are at least an experienced group of German artists, well schooled in the traditions of Wagnerian interpretation.

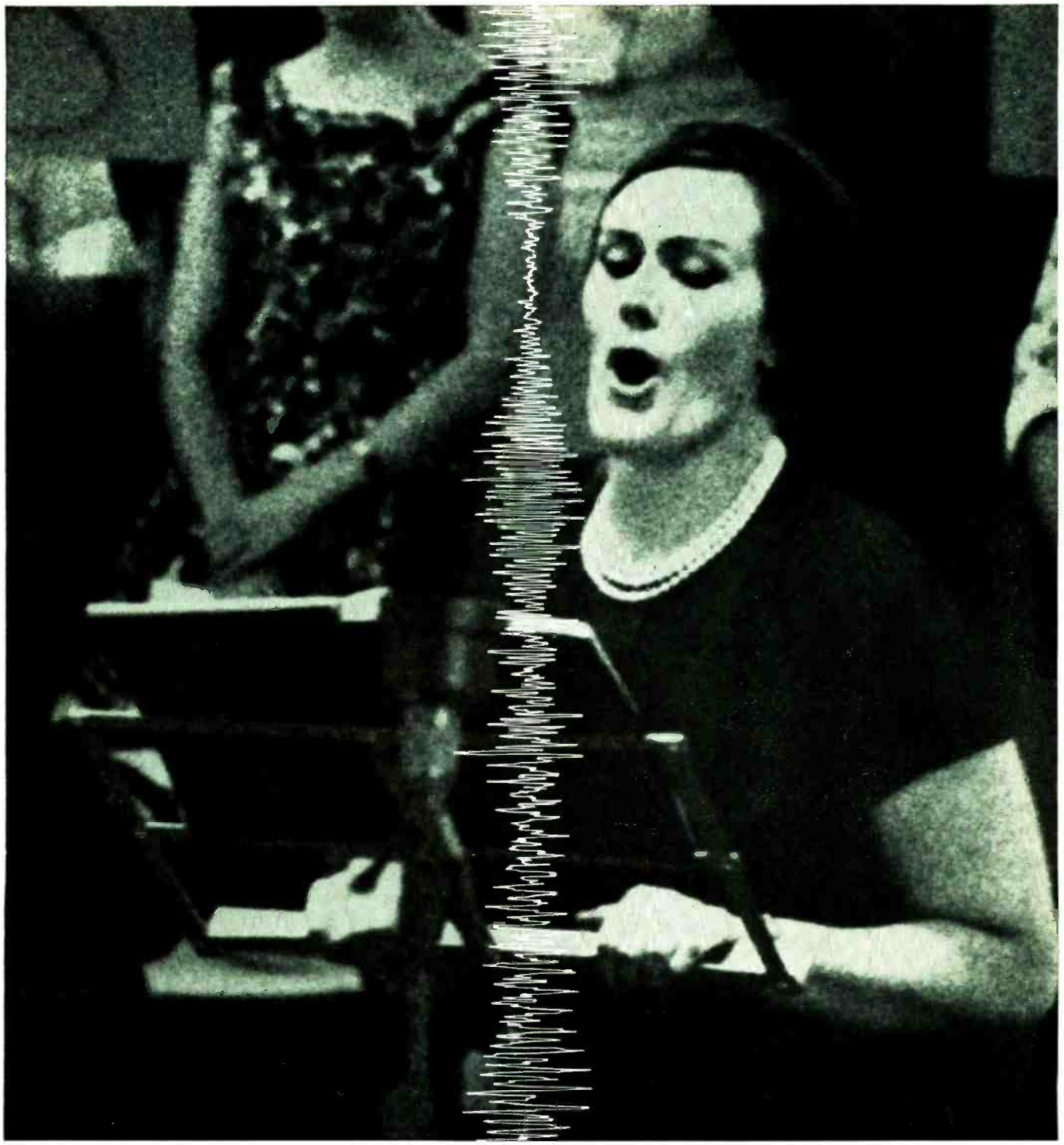
In this new Victor version, the leading roles are peopled entirely by representatives of the newly arrived band of Wagnerian singers who have made it possible, for the first time since the Forties, to attend performances without the awful advance knowledge that the majority of the singers are going to be drearily inept. They turn in an extraordinarily well-sung *Die Walküre*—I am almost tempted to say "nicely sung." What a pleasure to hear Nilsson's cool, firmly centered Nordic soprano cutting through the orchestra; to hear Rita Gorr's columnar mezzo organ moving almost casually over the demanding lines allotted to Fricka in her one magnificent scene; to hear Jon Vickers singing with considerable tonal beauty, intelligence, and a good measure of steel in what is undoubtedly his best role; to hear George London actually vocalizing and enunciating where so many Wotans can do nothing but huff and slur.

Still, one suspects that nearly all the participants in this performance would not have been harmed by a few more seasons of experience with these roles. Nilsson's *Walküre* Brünnhilde is easily the best since Flagstad's, and is constantly improving; yet, if last winter's Metropolitan *Ring* cycle can provide a good basis for judgment, it is still the least satisfactory of her three Brünnhildes. As the emergent woman of *Siegfried*, waking to the kiss of her hero, to her discovery of love and of her humanity, she is already incomparable—not only as vocalist, but as musician, interpreter, and even as actress. And in *Götterdämmerung*, she is well on her way towards giving us a figure of memorable depth and stature. But in *Walküre*, she still does not really hit a stride until Brünnhilde's resolve to aid Siegmund near the end of Act II, which is where Brünnhilde for the first time shows her human traits of pity, impulsive generosity, and selfless courage. With Brünnhilde the warrior-maiden, the representative of godly order, Nilsson is as yet somewhat less successful; her part of the *Todesverkundigung* has not acquired the feeling of implacability, of seemingly unchangeable order, that should invest it. Of course, there are wonderful moments—her line to Wotan, "*wer bin ich, wär ich dein Wille nicht?*" ("Who am I, if I am not your will?") is most movingly done. But it is in Act III that her characterization really starts to live; her prophecy of the arrival of Siegfried and her charge to Sieglinde ring forth thrillingly, and the long scene with Wotan, from "*War es so schmählich*" on, has now become quite fine. Altogether, a very excellent piece of work, and well sung, of course, throughout.

Gré Brouwenstijn turns in a sincere, very acceptable Sieglinde. There is a slight heaviness in her voice which I do not remember from her earlier recordings, and occasionally the top is not as well focused as one would wish; her soaring Act III outburst at "*O hehrstes Wunder! Herrlichste Mädchen*," is a case in point, and these great lines are not as compelling as we might expect from so fine an artist. Of Gorr's Fricka there can be no real complaint—one would have to go back to Thorborg to get a better characterization, and even she did not sing it any better.

As to London's Wotan, I am not completely convinced. This is no surprise, since he is relatively new to the *Ring* roles in general, and has never sung the *Walküre* Wotan in the opera house. His voice is consistently sonorous, and he always *sings*, which one can say of very few baritones in this part. In Act III, where he is given full-throated, constantly moving music to sing, he makes a fine effect. But he has much digging to do before his characterization is really convincing. I will confess that I am a little bothered by the thought that the *Walküre* Wotan of Hans Hotter, one of the supreme operatic creations of the past quarter-century, will probably go unrecorded except for some shreds and patches. It is not fair, of course, to reproach London for not being Hotter, and it should be noted that London's singing *per se* is certainly better than Hotter could be expected to produce at this advanced stage of his career. Curiously enough, Hotter is to be the Wotan on the forthcoming London (London label, not London, George) *Siegfried*; so that

PHOTO: LONDON RECORDS



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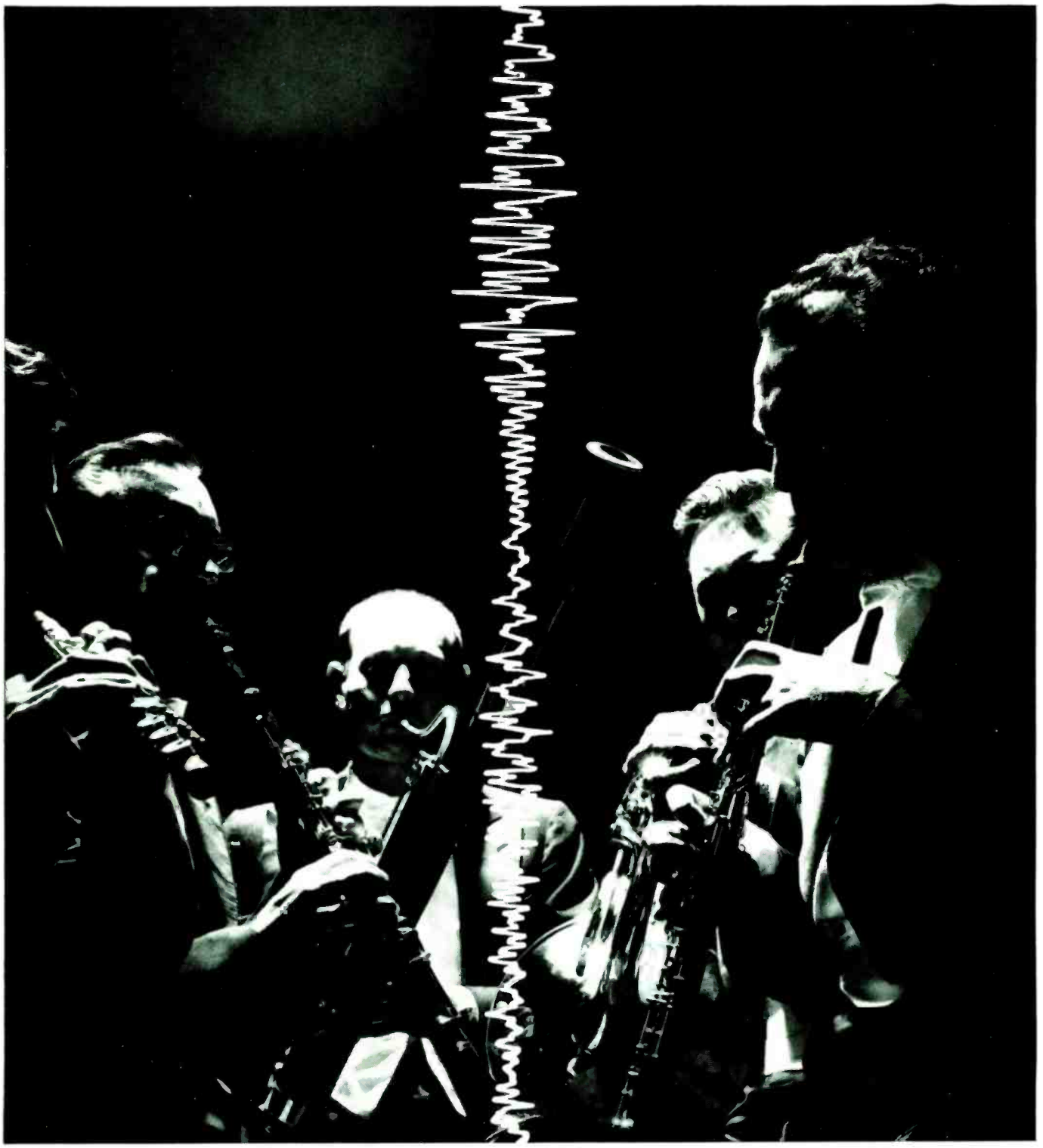
London, George, will have recorded the one Wotan he has never sung in the house, while his very good interpretation of The Wanderer will give way to that of Hotter, whose own *Walküre* Wotan can be heard only in sections recorded back in the Thirties! We will still not have a single interpreter all through the cycle—and the current strengths and weaknesses of the two singers would seem to have indicated a transposition of their assignments.

The tremendous test of a Wotan is the long narration to Brünnhilde in Act II. I suppose I am one of not more than a half-dozen persons now alive who think that this lengthy passage is a masterpiece of dramatic writing. The stanchest Wagnerites make a great show of falling asleep during it, and there are many jokes about "summary of the preceding installments," and so on. (In point of fact, only the opening passage is devoted to the events of *Das Rheingold*—the rest concerns happenings of which the audience supposedly has no knowledge—Wotan's mating with Erda, the begetting of the Valkyries, the assembling of heroes at Valhalla, Wotan's present helplessness before the dragon Fafner who possesses the Ring, the necessity for the coming of a "free" hero, and finally the chilling news that Alberich has won a woman, who has conceived the being we meet in *Götterdämmerung* as the half-dwarf Hagen, the eventual slayer of Siegfried.) But the scene is not simply a piece of exposition. It is Wotan's reactions to his own narration—his feelings about these events, his self-justification, self-laceration, and finally his despair in the realization that he has trapped himself in his own structure of law and treaty based on deceitful bargain—that constitute the real subject matter of the scene. And, we must not forget that he is talking to Brünnhilde—"his will"—and that the establishment of their relationship, as well as of her position as the chosen hearer of his fearful confessions, is of utmost importance. Musically, of course, the narration is not going to bowl anyone over; yet it is brilliant, all this suppressed and emotionally pent-up muttering about in the lower reaches of the voice, unaccompanied, or sometimes set off by a single sustaining tone.

The trouble is, naturally, that this is the spot for a great tragic actor. A good Wotan must live every moment of his narration, must take us with him through the whole span of emotion experienced by the character, or else the scene will become nothing more than a quagmire of deadly recitation; it is frighteningly difficult. It is here that the penetration and projection of a Hotter tells most convincingly. London sings it all accurately and with a general sense of mood, but he does not grip the listener with the agony of Wotan's situation, and when he approaches the tremendous lines, "*nur eines will ich noch—das Ende—das Ende!*" ("I want only one thing now—the end—the end!"), he is able only to produce a pleasant, well-placed tone—a tone that conveys almost nothing in the way of emotional impact. I hasten to add that he is a "good Wotan"—there is too much good singing and conscientious musicianship to make for a poor one; but this is not the towering characterization that one might have hoped would be preserved in the course of such a once-in-a-decade endeavor.

Vickers is very fine, particularly in the Second Act, where he shapes his part of the *Todesverkündigung* beautifully. His first act is also topflight, but still tends



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CIRCLE 8 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

toward a slightly fragmented effect, as if he were taking time out to register certain important passages. But even as it now stands, his Siegmund is on a plane with not more than three or four others since the Twenties. David Ward, the Hunding, is another singer with a round, pleasant voice and easy production, but his Hunding is hardly more malevolent than the average Sarastro. He is really a bit miscast, since his voice has not the weight of Kipnis', the bite of List's, or the toughness of Frick's (a Hunding should have one quality or another), and his temperament is all too gentle for this role. A good singer, but not for Hunding. The Valkyries are a strong ensemble; they start and end at the right places, which is in itself no small achievement, and one of them, Marie Collier, even manages to cut through with considerable vocal display.

I feel about Leinsdorf's leadership much as I did during last winter's cycle. It is very alive, and the tone he gets from the orchestra is mirror-bright and clear. It is also somewhat on the shrill and overbrilliant side, almost as if a few of the lower strings had been given the night off and the brass had been encouraged to blow just a bit sharp. There are times when one longs for a deeper, darker, more reposeful, or perhaps more dignified, effect, such as Knappertsbusch might draw from the Vienna Philharmonic. There is little mellowness here. The score is, incidentally, performed without any cuts whatever.

I am not especially happy about the sound; as recent stereo efforts go, it is on the shallow side, and there are many times when the singers' voices resound through an all too obviously limited enclosure. The added echo on off-stage voices (Hunding, Wotan, Brünnhilde, and Siegmund during the combat, and Wotan before his entrance in Act III) is ludicrous in the extreme, and badly disfigures the scenes involved. Most of the difficulties can probably be traced to the place of recording—Walthamstow Town Hall in London. It should be said that the woodwinds come through extremely well, that solo passages—such as the cello in Act I—are beautifully rendered, and that special effects (thunder, etc.) are convincingly in the frame.

This is a Soria Series album; the accompanying translation is excellent, and there are good color reproductions of sets and costumes, as well as the usual essay and synopsis. There is also an interesting chronological history of the opera—very comprehensive up through 1951, after which the only interpreters mentioned are, miraculously enough, those of the present album. C.L.O.



## RECITALS AND MISCELLANY

### ACADEMY OF ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS: *"A Recital"*

Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond.
• OISEAU-LYRE OL 50214, LP, $4.98.
• • OISEAU-LYRE SOL 60045, SD, $5.98.

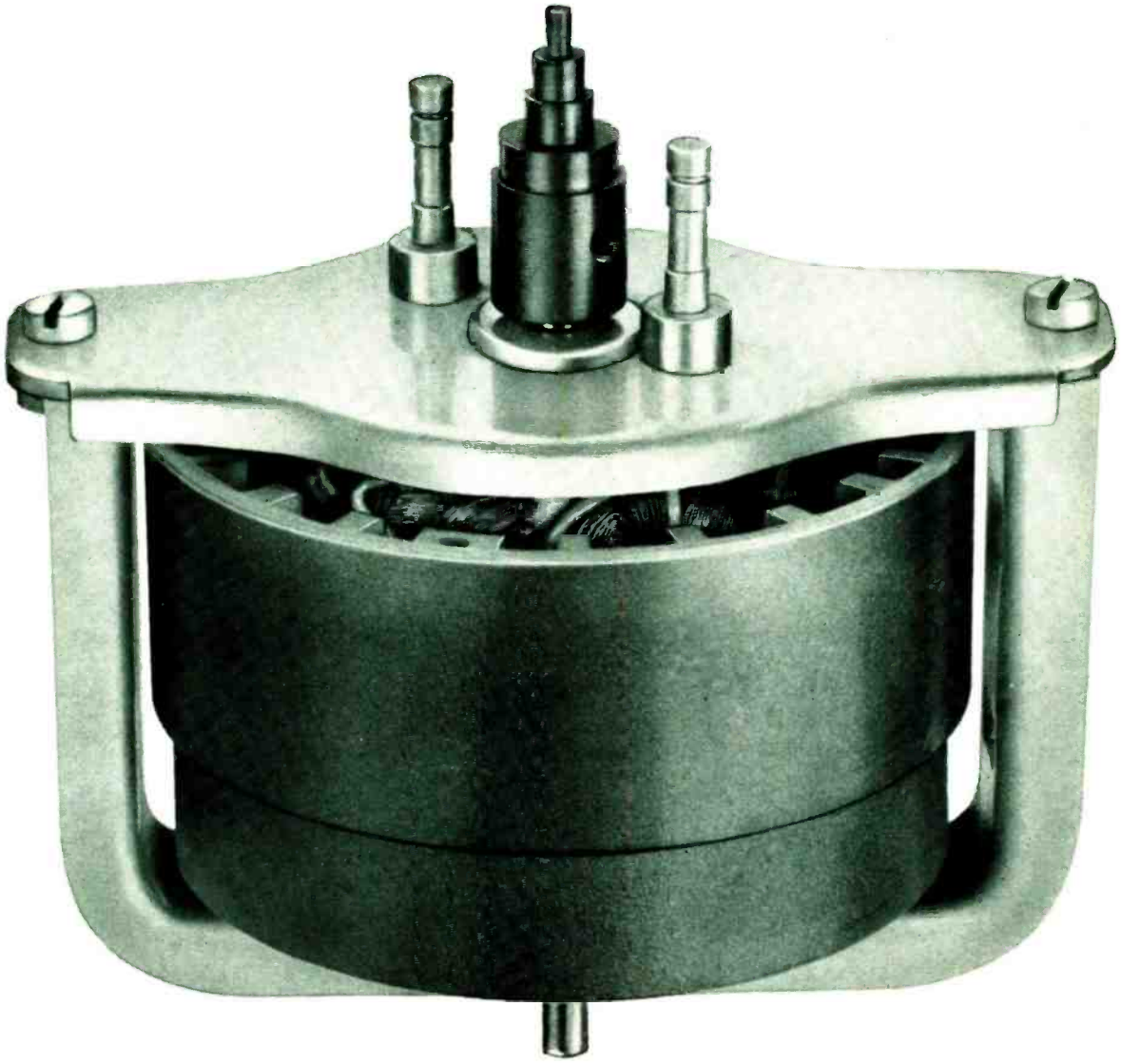
Clear, lifelike, and resonant sound enhances these excellent performances of five baroque concerti grossi for strings. The works are Corelli's Op. 6, No. 7; Torelli's Op. 6, No. 10; Locatelli's Op. 1, No. 9; Albicastro's Op. 7, No. 6; and Handel's Op. 6, No. 6. While none of the others is as consistently fine as the Handel, they are well worth repeated hearings, and together offer an interesting survey of the brief but busy life of this important form. Especially welcome is the opportunity to hear a work by Henrico Albicastro (active towards the end of the seventeenth century), a gifted Swiss composer not otherwise included in the current record catalogues.

The ensemble, concerning which the liner notes are silent, performs spiritedly, with flexibility and good tone. The harpsichordist's imaginative realization of the continuo parts is a decided asset, particularly in the Torelli. There is sometimes not enough difference in sound-weight between concertino and ripieno, but this is important mainly in the Corelli, where both groups share similar material and the contrast between full and thin sound is basic. On the first side the high strings seem to be grouped on one channel and the low ones and harpsichord on the other, but on Side 2 the sound appears to be more evenly distributed. N.B.

### E. POWER BIGGS: *"Heroic Music for Organ, Brass, and Percussion"*

E. Power Biggs, organ; New England Brass Ensemble.
• COLUMBIA ML 5754, LP, $4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6354, SD, $5.98.

Mr. Biggs seems to be fond of this combination of instruments, for which



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one can hardly blame him, because it does make a splendid sound. Since very little has been written for it, however, he has been obliged to make arrangements. All the pieces on this disc, which include works for various media by Purcell, Handel, and Telemann, have been transcribed by Mr. Biggs, with percussion parts by Daniel Pinkham. They are beautifully performed and superbly recorded. A couple of items in the notes call for comment: the *Heldenmusik* doesn't "come from Telemann's opera *Melante*"—"Melante," an anagram of Telemann, being a pen name he sometimes used; and Mr. Pinkham's reliance on Praetorius for methods of using percussion in music written a century later seems to be misplaced. N.B.

### CONCENTUS MUSICUS: *Instrumental Music of the Year 1600*

Concentus Musicus.
• VANGUARD BG 626. LP. $4.98.

The Concentus Musicus is a group of Viennese players who use old instruments or modern reproductions of them. Here they employ violins made in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, various sizes of viols and recorders, and a tenor trombone. The pieces they play are mostly dances, fantasies, and canzoni for from two to eight instruments, by French, English, German, and Italian composers. In one group of dances, by Etienne du Tertre (published in 1557), a tambourine beats out the rhythm. Among the other works I was especially struck by Eustach du Caurroy's fantasies on a sad and lovely tune, *Une jeune fillette*; Antony Holborne's melancholy but expressive pavan *The Funerals*; and a fine canzon, quite in the Gabrielian style, by Samuel Scheidt. All told, an interesting and unhackneyed sampling of early chamber music. The performers play with vivacity and unanimity, and the sound is excellent. N.B.

### LEON GOOSSENS: *"The Art of Léon Goossens"*

Bach-Whittaker: *Easter Oratorio: Adagio. Cantata No. 156: Sinfonia.* Barthe: *Couvre-feu.* Fiocco-Bent-O'Neill: *Arioso.* Franck-Doney: *Andantino.* Kelly: *Serenade, Op. 7: Jig.* Nicholas: *Melody.* P. Pierné: *Aubade.* Richardson: *Roundelay.* Senaillé-Moffat: *Entrée et Cotillion.* Templeton: *Scherzo caprice; Siciliana.* Traditional-Hugues: *Irish Song.*

Léon Goossens, oboe; Gerald Moore, piano.
• ANGEL 35794. LP. $4.98.
• • ANGEL S 35794. SD. $5.98.

The annotation for this record informs us that Mr. Goossens' recitals, while naturally intended to foster interest in music in general and the oboe in particular, are primarily designed "to entertain." Thus, this disc can be rewarding on at least two counts. For the connoisseur, it provides a wealth of artistic value (both from Mr. Goossens and from the magnificent Gerald Moore, surely the greatest "accompanist" that ever lived); for the lay person wishing merely to be "entertained," it furnishes sheer pleasure to a degree uncommon even among other fine recital programs.

Mr. Goossens' masterful oboe playing is a model of large-scaled declamatory phrasing, rhythmic spaciousness, and tonal vigor. His art offers an enlightening contrast to that of a comparable master of the instrument, Marcel Tabuteau: whereas the latter's style relies on shadowy nuance and undulant suggestion, Goossens' equally refined approach keeps the oboe's characteristic reediness in view at all times. His is a more extrovert thrust—hale, sportive playing, a delight to the ears and food for the soul.

The two Bach selections are especially resplendent (the label of the record incorrectly dubs the *Easter* Oratorio's Adagio as "Sinfonia") and lead one to hope that Angel will have this magnificent artist re-record the Mozart Oboe Quartet. The reproduction in both editions is absolutely luscious, and perfectly balanced. H.G.

### JASCHA HEIFETZ: *"The Heifetz-Piatigorsky Concerts, with Primrose, Pennario, and Guests"*

Mozart: *Quintet for Strings, in G minor, K. 516.* Mendelssohn: *Octet for Strings, in E flat, Op. 20.* Brahms: *Sextet for Strings, No. 2, in G, Op. 36.* Franck: *Quintet for Piano and Strings, in F minor.* Schubert: *Quintet for Strings, in C, Op. posth. 163.*

Jascha Heifetz, Israel Baker, violins; Arnold Belnick, Joseph Stepansky, violins (in the Mendelssohn and Brahms); William Primrose, viola; Virginia Majewski, viola (in the Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Brahms); Gregor Piatigorsky, cello; Gabor Rejto, cello (in the Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Schubert); Leonard Pennario, piano (in the Franck).
• RCA VICTOR LD 6159. Three LP. $15.98.
• • RCA VICTOR LDS 6159. Three SD. $18.98.

For a feature review of this album, see page 70.

### MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR: *"The Lord's Prayer," Vol. 2*

Alexander Schreiner, Frank W. Asper, organ; Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Richard P. Condie, cond.; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.
• COLUMBIA ML 5767. LP. $4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6367. SD. $5.98.

The Philadelphians' return visit to Salt Lake City last spring provided the opportunity for this popular-request sequel to the best-selling "Lord's Prayer" program of 1959. Again, the highly miscellaneous collection of hymns, oratorio excerpts,

*Léon Goossens: a sportive oboe.*

and devotional songs is sung throughout in English (but this time jacket texts clarify the big choir's obscurities of enunciation); and the orchestra gives broad and often thunderous support to the larger works ("Hallelujah, Amen" from Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus*, "Unfold, Ye Portals" from Gounod's *Redemption*, the *Requiem aeternam* and Kyrie Eleison from Mozart's Requiem, and "Old Things Are Done Away" from Leroy J. Robertson's *Oratorio from the Book of Mormon*), as well as to inflated arrangements of Schubert's *Ave Maria*, Bach's *Come Sweet Death*, and Malotte's *The Lord's Prayer*. The choir sings with organ accompaniment only in Virgil Thomson's setting of *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need*, L. S. Glarum's *O Be Joyful*, Adalbert Huguelet's paraphrase ("Lord, Hear Our Prayer") of the *Ave Maria* from Verdi's *Otello*, and Bach's *A Mighty Fortress*. Again, too, the performances range from a very moving, fervent simplicity (in the Thomson and Robertson selections particularly) to melodramatic pretentiousness; and the enormous dynamic range of the broad-spread stereoism reproduces the reverberant sonorities with impressive authenticity. R.D.D.

NEW YORK PRO MUSICA: *Spanish Medieval Music*

New York Pro Musica, Noah Greenberg, cond.
• DECCA DL 9416. LP. $4.98.
• • DECCA DL 79416. SD. $5.98.

Three important sources of early Spanish music are drawn upon here. From the more than four hundred *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (thirteenth century) we are given twelve. From a twelfth-century manuscript in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela we have three pieces. And from the early-fourteenth-century Codex Las Huelgas we hear four movements of a Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

As in Mr. Greenberg's previous ventures into the Middle Ages, this is no dusty archaeological excavation. The *Cantigas* have survived as one-line melodies whose rhythm may be interpreted in various ways. Here they are brought to life as vividly as the *Play of Daniel* was. Three of them are sung, the rest played by various combinations of medieval-styled instruments. In the percussion rhythms and the vivacity of the tempos chosen there is a strong Arabic flavor, which may very well be authentic. One may wonder whether medieval ensembles had any notion of the kind of sophisticated instrumentation employed here—such as the frequent changes from one instrumental combination to another in the course of a piece—but there is no denying that Mr. Greenberg's procedures hold the attention from start to finish. One of the compositions from Compostela is *Congaudeant catholici*, which is said to be the earliest known piece of three-part polyphony. Three of the Mass sections are troped—that is, new text and polyphonic music are interpolated in the plainsong. All together, a fascinating survey of a little-known corner of music history. The music is splendidly performed, and the sound is first-rate in both versions. N.B.

LEONTYNE PRICE: *Fourteen Spirituals*

*Ev'ry Time I Feel De Spirit; Let Us Break Bread Together on Our Knees; His Name So Sweet; 'Roun' About de Mountain; Swing Low, Sweet Chariot; Sit Down, Servant; Were You There; He's Got the Whole World in His Hands; Deep River; Honor! Honor!; My Soul's Been Anchored in de Lord; On Ma Journey; A City Called Heaven; Ride On, King Jesus.*

Leontyne Price, soprano; Chorus and Orchestra, Leonard de Paur, cond.
• RCA VICTOR LM 2600. LP. $4.98.
• • RCA VICTOR LSC 2600. SD. $5.98.

MARIAN ANDERSON: *Eighteen Spirituals*

*He's Got the Whole World in His Hands; Dere's No Hidin' Place; I Want Jesus To Walk with Me; Oh, Didn't It Rain; I Am Bound for de Kingdom; Oh, Wasn't Dat a Wide Ribber; My Soul's Been Anchored in de Lord; Lord, I Can't Stay Away; Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child; Hold On!; Scandalize My Name; Great Gittin' Up Mornin'; Done Foun' My Los' Sheep; I Stood on de Ribber ob Jerdon; Behold That Star; Heav'n, Heav'n; Oh, Peter, Go Ring Dem Bells; Trampin'; Hard Trials.*

Marian Anderson, contralto; Franz Rupp, piano.
• RCA VICTOR LM 2592. LP. $4.98.
• RCA VICTOR LSC 2592. SD. $5.98.

These two albums illustrate differing approaches to the performance of spirituals. Miss Price's, it seems to me, is not very successful—a distinct disappointment, coming from a splendidly gifted singer whose own heritage produced these songs. Miss Price's soprano voice is surely one of the loveliest sounds in the world today, and she has, certainly, no dearth of feeling for the spiritual. She faces two problems with these renditions. One is in the nature of the arrangements, which are elaborate and sophisticated—tasteful enough as such reworkings go, but still robbing the songs of their essential simplicity. The whole affair sounds overrehearsed, polished to a nub. The second problem is Miss Price's own; she simply stops enunciating when she gets above the staff. This is not merely a matter of coloring certain vowels or de-emphasizing certain consonants; Miss Price lets them go altogether. This may very well be of help to her in producing a pure, beautiful stream of sound, and I do not argue with it as vocal method. But what effect can a spiritual hope to make if its words are incomprehensible? I, for one, found myself unable to respond to more than one or two of these songs, because they emerge here as perfectly executed vocalises, rather than messages of human emotion.

Miss Anderson's album is, for me at least, far more communicative. There is no military-precision chorus; there are no tiresomely inventive arrangements. There are only the songs, accompanied by the excellent Franz Rupp. Miss Anderson is most successful these days with songs that she can take at a very muted level, or with a very light touch—*Heav'n, Heav'n*, for example, which is irresistible in her treatment. Her pitch is never too certain, the tone is often on the edge of breakup, and the extreme contrasts between bright and dark colorings in her voice are overexploited. But every word is distinct, every syllable right in rhythm, every mood projected with clarity and sincerity. The voice is undeniably ravaged, but the musicality

and sensitivity are still very much there.

I will confess that when I had finished listening to these releases, I turned again to Robeson (in this instance to his excellent recital on Supraphon) for a demonstration of what a still magnificent instrument, coupled with the most musical and direct approach to the spiritual, can do to restore to these pieces their most vital quality—that of one person communicating directly, and powerfully, to another. Still, Miss Anderson has recorded many songs not included on any of the available Robeson discs, and one will not go wrong with her latest contribution. C.L.O.

### MELVILLE SMITH: *"A Treasury of Early French Organ Music"*

Melville Smith, organ.

• CAMBRIDGE CRS 506/07. Two LP. $4.98 each.

CRS 506 contains pieces from the *Livre d'orgue* by Nicolas de Grigny (1671–1703) and the *Premier livre d'orgue* of Jean Dandrieu (1684–1740). The Grigny compositions include a lively Duo for the Gloria of the Mass and a big, imposing *Point d'orgue*. Among the works by Dandrieu, which have somewhat more rhythmic and harmonic interest, is a charming *Muzète*.

On the other disc are pieces by six composers, ranging chronologically from Jean Titelouze (1563–1633) to Louis Clérambault (1676–1749). Outstanding here are a long but impressive "fugue" by Titelouze, the beautiful Benedictus from François Couperin's *Messe des paroisses*, a chipper "Dialogue" by Clérambault, and a rather brilliant sectional "Dialogue" by Louis Marchand. All of these works are well played by the late Melville Smith of Boston on a reconstructed Silbermann organ in the Abbey church at Marmoutier in Alsace. One or two of the reed stops are a bit hoarse and include a few quavery pipes, but the other stops heard here have a lovely sound and plenty of character, making the counterpoint easy to follow. Excellent sound. N.B.

### RITA STREICH: *Song Recital*

Schumann: *Der Nussbaum; Die Stille; Schneeglöckchen; Die Lotosblume; Intermezzo; Aufträge.* Brahms: *Ständchen; Geheimnis; Auf dem Schiffe; Trennung; Vergebliches Ständchen; Wiegenlied; Das Mädchen spricht; Mädchenlied; Mädchenlied I; Mädchenlied II.* R. Strauss: *Schlagende Herzen; Wiegenlied; Schlechtes Wetter; Amor; An die Nacht; Als mir dein Lied erklang.*

Rita Streich, soprano; Günther Weissenborn, piano.

• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON LPM 18716. LP. $5.98.

• • DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON SLPM 138716. SD. $6.98.

This is the finest Lieder singing I have yet heard from Streich, and since the selection gets nicely away from the tried-and-true, the disc is altogether welcome.

Among the less familiar items, I was especially struck by Schumann's *Aufträge*, a winsome, good-humored song in which Miss Streich is captivating; Brahms's *Mädchenlied II*, a moving version of a Heyse poem vaguely reminiscent in sentiment and setting of *"Meine Ruh' ist hin"*; and Strauss's *Amor*, a fairly silly number which sounds like a study for Zerbinetta and Fiakermilli, with

its extended fioriture in the upper reaches, and which is fun if taken in an indulgent spirit. In general Miss Streich seems to sing here with greater care for the specific mood of each song and closer attention to textual nuance than she has heretofore, and her voice, always lovely, has never sounded fresher or purer. Songs like the Strauss *Wiegenlied* emerge as unadulterated magic. The record's sound (unfortunately, I have heard the stereo edition only—the mono versions of such recitals are often worth the saved dollar) is immaculate, and Weissenborn's work is excellent, if a bit subdued—one must remember that he is partnering a very small, light voice.

I am happy to note that DGG single discs are now encased in very sturdy and attractive jackets, and are furnished with separate leaflets containing complete texts and translations; this is a service long needed in this company's stateside releases, even if it has not eliminated frequent typographical errors, or such deathless lines of translation as "Why have blossomed you so early?" C.L.O.

### THEODOR UPPMAN: *Song Recital*

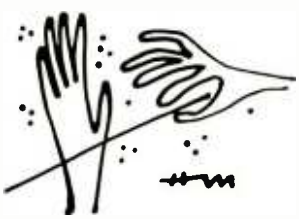
Strattner: *I Pray to Thee.* Hopkinson: *O'er the Hills Far Away.* Schumann: *Belsazar; Aus den Oestlichen Rosen.* Mozart: *Le Nozze di Figaro: Vedro, mentr'io sospiro.* Verdi: *Luisa Miller: Sacra la scelta.* Hahn: *A Chloris.* Poulenc: *Attributs: Chanson à boire; La belle jeunesse.* Kricka: *The Albatross.* Head: *Sweet Chance That Led My Steps Abroad.* Ives: *The Greatest Man.* Copland: *Simple Gifts.* Chanler: *I Rise When You Enter.* Sacco: *Maple Candy.*

Theodor Uppman, baritone; Allen Rogers, piano.
• INTERNOS 0001. LP. $4.98.

The program Uppman has chosen is interesting in the sense that much of this material has been seldom or never recorded in the past. The songs of Kricka, Head, and Sacco, as well as Copland's arrangements of *Simple Gifts*, are most welcome—these are strong pieces. On the other hand, it is difficult to fathom why, with the multitude of wonderful Ives songs to choose from, Mr. Uppman selected one of the weakest and least representative. Schumann's *Belsazar* is a windy trial, too.

The Poulenc group goes well, though the singer's sense of French idiom is really not extraordinary. Mr. Uppman should, however, stay away from the sort of operatic aria essayed here. His voice is a pleasant, warm, light baritone, not at all Verdian in tone or temperament, and far better suited to the lilting tunes of Mozart's Papageno or Guglielmo than to the teeth-gnashing of his Almaviva.

The recording is acceptable, but has Mr. Uppman rather too close for comfort, which detracts considerably from a song such as *Simple Gifts*. Rogers' accompaniments are helpful, and it is not his fault that piano reductions of Verdi accompaniments invariably sound a bit sleazy. C.L.O.



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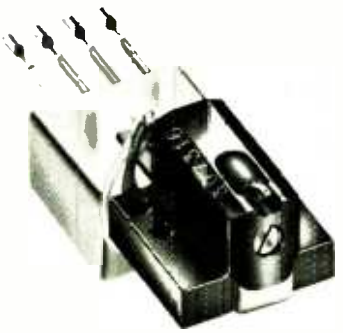

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*Rodgers, Deems, and Linden.*

## After Almost Thirty Years, Still Sparkling

**"Anything Goes."** *Eileen Rodgers, Hal Linden, Mickey Deems, Barbara Lang, Margery Gray. Epic FLM 13100, $4.98 (LP); FLS 15100, $5.98 (SD).*

WHEN, ON September 8, 1934, the *S.S. Morro Castle* burned and sank off Asbury Park with a loss of one hundred and twenty-five lives, repercussions of the tragedy were felt even in so unlikely an area as Tin Pan Alley. Vinton Freedley, about to go into rehearsal with his new musical *Anything Goes*, immediately realized that the book of his show, written by the team of Guy Bolton and P. G. Wodehouse, was now suddenly so much deadwood. For the authors had contrived a little tale around a shipwreck and its impact on the lives of a group of extremely colorful individuals. Freedley first considered the possibility of a quick rewrite job from the collaborating authors, but both were in Europe—Bolton in Paris, Wodehouse in London—and apparently it was impossible for the two to get together. In desperation, Freedley then called on his director, Howard Lindsay, to come up with a new libretto. Lindsay, not feeling up to the job on his own, called in Russel Crouse to collaborate with him. Between them they managed to whip up an acceptable book, which evidently retained some of the Bolton-Wodehouse ideas; it too had a shipboard setting, a seemingly unsinkable luxury liner on, and between, the decks of which a motley assortment of oddballs indulged in some typically improbable musical com-

edy didoes. It is fascinating to speculate whether the original Bolton-Wodehouse book would have proved as successful as the Lindsay-Crouse version which, with Ethel Merman, Victor Moore, and William Gaxton, opened on November 21, 1934, ran for four hundred and twenty performances and became the biggest musical smash of the Thirties.

Now, almost thirty years later. the musical has been revived in a brilliant off-Broadway production, the origin of Epic's extremely successful cast recording. The producers of the current revival appear to have taken the show's title quite literally, for they have bolstered up Porter's original score, one of his very strongest, with a number of songs he wrote for earlier and later musicals. Included in this unexpected musical largesse are: *It's De-Lovely (Red, Hot and Blue,* 1936), *Heaven Hop* and *Let's Misbehave (Paris,* 1928), *Friendship (Du-Barry Was a Lady,* 1939), *Let's Step Out (Fifty Million Frenchmen,* 1929), and *Take Me Back to Manhattan (The New Yorkers,* 1930). To add these to an already hit-laden score is to present a feast of Porter not likely again to be offered.

Fortunately, all the numbers are superbly handled by an outstanding group of artists. If, originally, the Merman songs were specifically tailored to suit her particular talents. they sound equally well adapted to the style of Eileen Rodgers who, though less brassy than Merman, has much of her assurance and swagger. I think Miss Rodgers has, if anything, a wider variety of styles, and it is displayed in a rousing *Blow, Gabriel, Blow,* a rather quiet but meaningful version of *I Get a Kick Out of You,* and a crisply sung *Anything Goes.* After playing second leads in Broadway musicals, this artist is surely headed for Broadway stardom.

Most current musicals are dreadfully weak when it comes to secondary singing roles, but not this production. Barbara Lang and Margery Gray both have excellent voices, and Miss Lang in particular gets an opportunity to display her vocal charms in well-sung performances of *It's De-Lovely* and *All Through the Night,* sharing the honors in each with Hal Linden. Miss Gray, as a character soubrette, has less chance to shine, for both her numbers are pretty lightweight. Her breezy performances, however, make the most of her material. Hal Linden is an excellent leading man, one who can really sing—(and of how many leading men in Broadway musicals can one say that today?). Unfortunately, he is limited to the two duets with Miss Lang mentioned above, the trio *Friendship,* with Eileen Rodgers and Mickey Deems, and a gay little version of *You're the Top,* with Miss Rodgers. Unless I am completely mistaken someone has tried to update the Porter lyrics in this song, for it now mentions Milton Berle, and who and where was he in 1934? The orchestrations and choral arrangements are by Julian Stein, and though I do not greatly admire the choral pieces, or perhaps I should say the way they are sung, my admiration for Stein's small-scaled settings of Porter's music is unbounded. The stereo version has been most skillfully contrived: I confess I found the more static mono version rather disappointing. J.F.I.

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*Satirist Bob Newhart.*

## A Sharp Spotlight On Our Social Mores

**"The Button-Down Mind on TV."** *Bob Newhart, Warner Brothers W 1467, $3.98 (LP); WS 1467, $4.98 (SD).*

AMONG THE New Wave of cerebral comedians which has engulfed American humor, Bob Newhart has emerged as perhaps the most durable and certainly the most consistently risible. As his fourth and newest album so hilariously attests, he has even survived unscathed a full season of video—the graveyard of most contemporary comics.

In mannerism, Newhart is mild and unobtrusive, rather like the nice nonentity down the street or the self-effacing clerk at the next desk. It is precisely this "averageness" that imparts added bite to his satirical sallies. Because he relies upon no eccentricities of speech or delivery, his comic characterizations remain solidly credible. For example, one of the funniest vignettes on this very funny disc finds Newhart—the good guest unwilling to offend—terrorized by his host's vicious Doberman pinscher. As the dog progressively chews up Newhart's foun-

tain pen, suit, and leg, the false heartiness of the "hi fella, hi boy" he uses in a futile effort to beguile the animal becomes more and more desperate, more and more comic. But never once does the character Newhart has created become other than a believable human being writhing in a social straitjacket that every one of us has experienced to some degree. This is the genius of his art.

The present release, containing six choice episodes culled from Newhart's thirty-nine TV programs of last year, offers nothing to rival the classic *Abe Lincoln* or *Driving Instructor* routines. But there is a touch of the Lincoln technique in a tickling item called *Introducing Tobacco to Civilization*. Here a seventeenth-century London entrepreneur receives a long-distance call from his American agent, Sir Walter Raleigh, announcing shipment of a new product called tobacco. The resultant monologue is a Newhart specialty—mockery that mocks mockery. "It's a kind of leaf, Walt? You bought eighty tons of it? . . . You roll it up and stick it in your mouth and set fire to it?"

Another episode, *General Chariot Corporation*, also employs a familiar Newhart gambit—the projection of usages of our own era against a historical backdrop in order to point up their inherent idiocy. In pre-Christian Rome, Newhart presides over a sales meeting of the General Chariot Corp. He answers questions about the new models: "Will the holes in the sides have any practical value? Yeah, they're gonna keep us in business, Herminius." He discusses the competition: "A lot of dealers have been complaining about the little chariot the Huns have come out with, so we're putting out a compact model of our own with the horses in the rear. . . . Gives the driver a better view."

In only one routine does the comedian come a cropper. Playing the role of one of two German World War II holdouts in a bunker in the Black Forest (à la the holdout Japanese still occasionally discovered on Pacific islands) he delivers his lines in a nasalized German dialect that just doesn't click. In point of fact, his failure with dialect—a sure-fire device with other comedians to shore up weak material—emphasizes the unique quality of Newhart's humor. At his best he is a social critic. He satirizes the mores of our time not through a funny way of talking, but through the sharp and merciless spotlight of his probing wit.

Taped live in a Colorado Springs resort, the recording preserves the spontaneity of actual performance. This is prime Newhart. Try it. O.B.B.

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**"Enoch Light and His Orchestra at Carnegie Hall Play Irving Berlin."** Command RS840, $4.98 (LP); RS840 SD, $5.98 (SD).

Here is the kind of record which I suspect may well split today's listening public right down the middle. For those to whom sound is the primary consideration, this is the *ne plus ultra* in the field today. A sound of almost frightening clarity and delineation—a sound which for brilliance, translucency, interior and over-all orchestral balance could not possibly be matched in public performance. A stereo sound so vastly spread yet so closely integrated that it emerges from the speakers as a sheer wall of sonic splendor. A sound in which the loudest *fortissimo* is as free from distortion as the slightest and quietest statement of any one orchestral instrument. It is a tribute to Command's engineers, and to the technological advances in recording techniques made by them. It is, too, a tribute to the art of the arranger, Lew Davies, who has devised his orchestrations to take full advantage of everything these new techniques have to offer. It would be extremely difficult to fault the sound, as sound.

But if your main concern is the music itself, then you may find the performances slightly disappointing. I did. The unique quality of nearly all Irving Berlin songs lies in their long-phrased melodic lines and their almost complete lack of sophistication. They need to breathe easily and comfortably to fulfill the composer's intention, and when they are chopped up, as in nearly all the Davies arrangements, when phrases jump from ensemble to ensemble with frightening speed, the music loses a great deal of its basic appeal. This sort of bandying back and forth may be fine for the music of Cole Porter or Harold Arlen, but it doesn't work well for Berlin. There are exceptions, of course, and Davies' arrangement for *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, full of brilliantly crisp writing for the brasses, is one of his most dazzling and successful jobs. I have considerable liking too for his setting of *Remember*, which is plush, not too sweet, and has respect for Berlin's simple but lilting melody. Otherwise I find that the music has been made subservient to the undeniable talents of the arranger, and even in this admittedly gorgeous sound I can't say I find the performance very attractive. J.F.I.

**"I Feel So Alive."** Dalida; Orchestra, Raymond Lefevre, cond. Verve V 8467, $4.98 (LP).

A clear and limpid voice plus a warmly projected personality stamp Dalida as one of the finest of Europe's younger *chanteuses*. Singing in Italian and her native French, she offers a splendid program of recent continental hits including the haunting *Cordoba* (known in an American version as *Adios*), *Nuits d'Espagne*, and the theme from *Aimez-vous Brahms?*. Running an emotional gamut from the torchy *Mon amour oublié* to the swinging mockery of the Italian smash *24 Mila Baci*, Dalida displays both versatility and interpretative sensitivity. She projects the nuances as well as the essence of her songs. This is an impressive disc debut marred only by the regrettable omission of texts and/or translations. O.B.B.

**"Exotica Suite."** Si Zentner Orchestra and Martin Denny Ensemble. Liberty LMM 13020, $4.98 (LP); LSS 14020, $5.98 (SD).

**"50 Guitars Visit Hawaii."** Tommy Garrett, cond. Liberty LMM 13022, $4.98 (LP); LSS 14022, $5.98 (SD).

Liberty's latest spectaculars feature, besides fancy jacket formats, "Poly-120" disc processing—which, if it does not actually involve the use of "Polymax" vinyl, does possess the advantage of that material's initially ultraquiet surfaces. The extremely powerful and broad-spread recording is impressive, too, in monophony as well as strongly channel-differentiated stereoism, although some of the Zentner-Denny *fortissimos*, which are raucous enough in stereo, become painfully so in the higher level, less expansive LP edition. The *Exotica* Suite itself, however, is a real oddity—not so much for Les Baxter's familiar popularizations of quasi-South Seas idioms (in a new series of genre pieces entitled *The Enchanted Reef, Stolen Idol, Jungle Train, Calabash Annie*, and the like) as for the stylistic contrasts in the performances themselves. Obviously non-homogeneous, the hard-driving swing of Zentner's big band and the glittering percussive "exoticism" of Denny's little ensemble are juxtaposed rather than mixed, with the former mainly in the right channel and farther back than the quite closely miked Denny group in the left channel. The more rambunctious moments are ear-splitting indeed, if occasionally mightily exciting, but the most atmospherically effective ones are those in which Denny's piano and his percussion sidemen are featured together

with a centered, suavely fat-toned trombone soloist, presumably Zentner himself.

Garrett's grandiose guitar ensemble again displays the sonority range and executant skills which distinguished the earlier "South of the Border" programs, but it is sadly handicapped here by the absence of Laurindo Almeida's subtly colored solos and by the general prominence of steel-stringed instruments. Hank Levine's scorings of both authentic and Tin Pan Alley Hawaiian favorites are ingenious and in better taste than most of their genre, but except for devotees the pervading metallic twanginess soon becomes extremely tiresome. R.D.D.

**"Come to the Caribbean."** The Exciting Eloise Trio. Decca DL 74293, $4.98 (SD).

Dynamic and unrestrained, the Eloise Trio will take both your speakers and your ears by storm. Infectious rhythms and free-swinging arrangements mark their versions of calypso staples like *Mama, Look a Boo Boo* (here reshaped in twist tempo), *Gin and Cocoanut Water*, and *Island in the Sun*. Occasionally the trio overdoes it in their effort toward uniqueness, as in the brittle and unfeeling veneer they impart to the tender verses of *Bahama Lullaby*. But on balance the disc emerges as a sea-tossed fiesta of brightness, lightness, and fun. Fine stereo sound. O.B.B.

**"Sousa's Greatest Marches."** Warner Brothers Military Band. Henry Mancini, cond. Warner Brothers WS 1465, $4.98 (SD).

One of the first successful band releases in stereo was a 1958 Sousa program (featuring the relatively unfamiliar *National Fencibles, Gladiator*, and *Invincible Eagle*, as well as better-known marches) conducted by the versatile, if then less famous, Mancini—a program which well warrants its present re-recording in smoother-spread, even more full-blooded and glittering stereoism. Again Mancini's readings are indefatigably energetic, precisely march-rhythmed, and galvanically exciting. The competition is more severe now, of course, and a few other Sousa records surpass this in spaciousness of acoustical background, as well as in variety of both materials and treatment. But for sheer zip this can hold its own with any of them. R.D.D.

**"Almost Authentic Folk Songs."** Dolan Ellis and the Inn Group. Reprise R 6038, $3.98 (LP); R9 6038, $4.98 (SD).

A healthy dose of satire has been a long time coming to the folk song renaissance, but it is at last here. Bud Freeman has fabricated a dozen droll take-offs on balladry of all genres and all periods, while Leon Pober has strung together a glittering array of folk and folklike tunes to provide melodic backing. The results are wholly happy as interpreted by a pleasing—and suitably serious—young folk singer, Dolan Ellis, seconded by the versatile voices and instruments of the Inn Group. *Oberlin River* neatly undoes the endless traditional tales of those who died for love; *Dat Man Is My Daddy* and *Sick in de Stomach* bring Caribbean mores into far sharper focus than ever Harry Belafonte has managed. But the *pièce de résistance* of this gay burlesque is easily *Joe Bean*, a tuneful parody that stamps a final, risible finis on the files of young murderers. Thanks to Freeman, Pober, *et al.*, Tom Dooley has at last been buried. A good deal of skill and a good deal of knowledge underlie these sophisticated satires and it's a tossup as to whether folkniks or antifolkniks will enjoy them more. Fine sound in both versions, with the stereo particularly broad and brilliant. Highly recommended. O.B.B.

**"Piano Cocktail, Volume 2: Flower Cocktail."** Michael Danzinger, piano; with bass, drums, guitar, vibraphone. Apon 7752. $4.95 (LP).

The verve and precision with which this small Viennese combo plays this delightful mélange of continental successes make this one of the most attractive discs of dance music, or music for relaxed listening (take your choice), to turn up in several months. A great deal of the music is of *Mittel* European origin and will be relatively unfamiliar to most listeners, having had little currency outside that area. To offset this, the group has included a few numbers, *La Vie en rose, Roses of Picardy, Petite fleur*, and two excerpts from ballet scores by Delibes and Tchaikovsky. The arrangements are unusually suave, with a number of deft touches—the music box effect in *Heidenröslein*, the guitar-zither work in *Alpine Rose and Edelweiss*, and the unexpected calypso flavor in *Only Charly Gave Me the Roses*—giving these intimate and elegant performances additional piquancy. The floral motif of each number makes this a particularly fragrant musical bouquet of considerable melodic appeal. J.F.I.

**"Spanish Guitar."** Tony Mottola and His Orchestra. Command RS 841, $5.98 (SD).

In this logical sequel to his celebrated "Roman Guitar" series, Mottola wisely makes no special attempt at authenticity in Iberian idioms (and indeed features four electronic guitars in antiphonal interplays with a quartet of true classical instruments). But his *divertissements* are piquantly Spanish-flavored as well as liberally embellished by the woodwinds of Phil Bodner and Stan Webb, Dom Cortese's accordion, Doc Severinsen's trumpet, and the now familiar Command percussion specialists. The recording is of course first-rate, but I miss the greater warmth of the more reverberant recording utilizing 35-mm film masters, and some of the scorings are either overfancy or overexpressive. In the best Mottola-Command tradition, however, are the *Block Party in Barcelona*, the leader's own *Beguine Tampico* and *Guitar Espagnol*, and his mellifluous *Lullaby de España*—a transcription of Tárrega's memorable *Tremolo Study* featuring flute and vibes as well as multiple guitars. This last-named piece is one of two in which true Spanish gut-stringed guitars are used exclusively; the other, *Tico Tico*, is especially interesting for its inclusion of two requintos (a smaller, round-holed instrument tuned a fifth higher than the normal guitar) and an unusual twelve-stringed guitar. R.D.D.

*Dorothy Provine: very nice Nineties.*

**"Dancing Theatre Party."** Lester Lanin and His Orchestra, featuring the Dancing Pianos. Epic LN 24016, $3.98 (LP); BN 26016, $4.98 (SD).

Music from Broadway shows has been a standard item in the "books" of society dance orchestras for so long that it is surprising that the most successful and most recorded of all such bands, Lester Lanin's, has not got around before now to giving us a disc made up exclusively of danceable show tunes. The situation is now rectified by this new release, which is certainly well up to his very best level. There are one or two surprising entries here: *Hey Look Me Over, I Ain't Down Yet*, and *Once Upon a Time* do not seem songs easily transformed into good dance numbers. Lanin has contrived some eminently danceable arrangements for them, however, highlighting his performances, in the Guy Lombardo manner, with pianos. Lombardo used only two. Lanin seems to have more at his disposal, and they add much to a program that is particularly inviting and gay. J.F.I.

**"Ya'ssoo."** The Amphion Choir. Helios VXLP 860, $3.98 (LP).

An utterly delightful listening experience whether or not you choose to utilize the enclosed booklets (containing texts in Greek with English transliterations and synopses) to sing along. Greek traditional song, drawn from the ancient classical world as well as from one thousand years of Byzantine civilization and the ever encroaching populations of the Near East, possesses a tonal catholicity unique in our culture. The Amphion Choir limns twelve time-burnished ballads from this rich heritage with contagious enthusiasm and a fine vocal sheen. The most attractive include an achingly sweet lover's lament, *Yirise* (Return to Me), the wryly smiling *Samiotissa* (Girl from Samoa), and *I Agnoristi* (The Unknown Girl), which captures all the longing of mankind for happiness once glimpsed and gone forever. Excellent reproduction and a repertory that is fresh and immediate in its appeal make this a release to audition forthwith. O.B.B.

**"Oh You Kid."** Dorothy Provine; Joe "Fingers" Carr, piano; and the Four Sultans of Song. Warner Brothers W 1466, $3.98 (LP); WS 1466, $4.98 (SD).

Dorothy Provine, whose two records of songs of the Roaring Twenties were the most authentic re-creation of that gay and daffy period, is equally successful in her exploration of the pop song repertoire of an even earlier era. The record calls these "nice and naughty songs from the Gay Nineties," but none are in any sense naughty, and most of them were popular well after the Nineties had become history. From the rowdy *Ta-Ra-Ra-Bom-Der-E* of 1891 to the saccharinity of *Alice Blue Gown* of 1919, it is the honesty of the singer's approach

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to all the numbers that contributes so much to her successful performances. The ballads are sung with understanding and restraint, and never become tediously bathetic, and the snappy numbers have an infectious zest which never steps into the realm of parody. Supported by a sturdy foursome of male singers and Joe "Fingers" Carr's lively period accompaniments at a tinkly piano, Miss Provine, with her sparkling, inspired performances, conjures up memories of the great singers of the past who made these songs famous. J.F.I.

**"Folk Songs of Our Land."** Flatt and Scruggs. Columbia CL 1830, $3.98 (LP); CS 8630, $4.98 (SD).

Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, luminaries of Nashville's Grand Ol' Opry, display a driving vitality in this collection of folk ballads sung in country music style. Scruggs—father of the "Scruggs Style" of three-fingered banjo picking—shapes impelling instrumental accompaniments for the nasal, but by no means displeasing, vocals of his longtime partner. Their collaboration in *The Legend of the Johnson Boys* and *Sun's Gonna Shine in My Back Door Someday* flashes with rhythm, *Hear the Wind Blow* is softly lyrical, and Woody Guthrie's *This Land Is Your Land* becomes almost serene in contrast to the wildly exuberant treatment usually accorded it. Here is a happy wedding of the best of country music techniques with traditional balladry, the match solemnized amid outstanding sound, both mono and stereo. O.B.B.

**"Rhapsody by Candlelight."** Liberace, piano; Orchestra, Gordon Robinson, cond. Coral 57395, $3.95 (LP); 757395, $4.95 (LP).

This is not exactly a pianistic *tour de force*, but it is head and shoulders above any previous Liberace recording to come my way. The pianist, who has weathered, in fact flourished on, a veritable clutch of critical barbs, does extremely well in this program of music by Chopin, Liszt, Debussy, Schubert, and others. If anything the others actually come off best here, and best of all Liberace himself, who reserves his finest work for his own two compositions, *Rhapsody by Candlelight* and *Sincerely Yours*. Well, that's understandable, yet all the performances are musical, in good taste, and make quite an agreeable set of polite dinner music. The recording is excellent, the balances are good, and the orchestral support, though not always as interesting as it might be, is more than adequate to the occasion. J.F.I.

**"Make Way for the Ramblers Three."** M-G-M E 4072, $3.98 (LP); SE 4072, $4.98 (SD).

Of the dozens—or is it hundreds?—of campus folk combos being recorded helter-skelter, the Ramblers Three impress me as being among the more ingratiating. In addition to sound musicianship, they allow their songs to speak for themselves; their arrangements, though catchy, are mercifully free of the little idiosyncrasies so prized by their colleagues in this overcrowded field. Among the most effective offerings on this, their first release, are a driving version of *Climbing up the Mountain*, a merry *Everybody Loves Saturday Night*, and an exultant *Walking through Jerusalem*. Both stereo and mono versions are well engineered, with the former displaying the trio to greater advantage. O.B.B.

**"Concertos from Hollywood."** Bill Butler, piano; Orchestra, Jack Pleis, cond. Epic BN 26014, $4.98 (SD).

A new (to me at least) Canadian pops pianist proves to be one of the rarities of his species who doesn't just pick at the keyboard but really *plays* the piano with assurance, precise control, and full-blooded sonority. The Pleis arrangements of *Till There Was You, The Most Beautiful Girl in the World, Moon River, La Dolce Vita*, and themes from *Lolita, My Geisha, The Apartment*, etc., range from cocktail hour to Hollywoodian "concerto" styles in orthodox fashion, but they are distinguished by far better musical taste and a defter realization of antiphonal potentialities than most of their kind. And the fine playing of both the soloist and Pleis's orchestra, which participates rather than merely accompanies, is further enhanced by notably open, rich, and broadspread stereo recording. R.D.D.

*Merman: still packing power.*

**"Merman—Her Greatest."** Ethel Merman; Orchestra, Billy May, cond. Reprise R 6032, $3.98 (LP); R9 6032, $4.98 (SD).

The Merman voice may no longer be as stentorian as it once was, but it still packs enough power to give a lusty, supercharged account of eleven songs with which Miss Merman illuminated the seven musicals in which she appeared between 1930 and 1939. Actually, there are twelve songs in her program, and her inclusion of *But Not for Me* from *Girl Crazy* is not without a touch of irony. In the original production the number was sung by the star, Ginger Rogers, but it was Miss Merman, making her Broadway debut, who walked off with all the notices. It was a trick she was to repeat all through The Merman Era, yet it never brought her solo star billing. She had to wait until 1940 and *Panama Hattie* for that. In a program that includes most of her better songs, it is nice to find her resurrecting Cole Porter's small masterpiece *Down in the Depths of the Ninetieth Floor*, and Arthur Schwartz's *This Is It*, from a 1939 turkey *Stars in Your Eyes*—one of the rare flops in which Miss Merman was involved. Apart from one or two ill-advised flights into high sustained notes, where the voice develops an uncomfortable wobble, Miss Merman is in splendid form, and her robust and energetic performances are well complemented by Billy May's suitably strong arrangements. J.F.I.

**"Music from Outer Space."** Frank Comstock and His Orchestra. Warner Brothers WS 1463, $4.98 (SD).

I have yet to hear a "music of the spheres" program which rings any new changes on the eerie whistling, ticking, and echo chamber idioms devised long ago for science fiction movies and broadcasts. At least Comstock manipulates all the familiar clichés with considerable skill and he benefits by beautifully pure stereo sonics. At his best, in the elaborations on *Deep Night* and *The Moon Is Blue*, he creates a rich atmosphere, and at least one of his originals, *Journey to Infinity*, makes quite imaginative use of woodwinds. A cello quartet also provides some distinctive moments elsewhere, along with the fancy glissandos and timbres of the inevitable Theremin, abetted here by a more novel electronic violin and a novachord. R.D.D.

**"Fantastic Strings Play Fantastic Themes."** The Fantastic Strings of Felix Slatkin. Liberty LMM 13021, $4.98 (LP); LSS 14021, $5.98 (SD).

Calling these themes "fantastic" is a typical example of hyperbole indulged in by those who dream up album titles. Actually they are all solid and well-known excerpts from the classical repertoire, as may be gathered by the fact that the program includes Beethoven's *Für Elise*, Mozart's Rondo in D, the Rachmaninoff Prelude in C sharp minor, and familiar themes from the music of Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, *et al*. The adjective, however, is undeniably appropriate for the brilliant orchestral arrangements and the virtuoso performances of them, as well as for the super excellence of the recorded sound. In a program so full of colorful and imaginative settings there are inevitably certain items that seem more compelling than others. Among these I'd place the humorous presentation of the Carmen excerpt as a countrified hoedown, and the fascination of hearing Offenbach's *Can Can* in a rambunctious twist arrangement. Equally delightful is the boundless *joie de vivre* of the strings, merrily scampering through the Mozart Rondo, and *Havana Mist*, a vaporous vignette which, with its harp arpeggios, celeste, and other assorted tinklings, sounds far more suggestive of Martin Denny than Saint-Saëns, on whose *Havanaise* it is based. Selecting these four items for special mention is not intended to disparage the values of the remainder, all of which have been embellished with interesting and provocative musical ideas, making the entire program one of continuous delight. The stereo version features a rather strong separation, but it is wonderfully apt for the music and the arranger's intentions. J.F.I.

**"It Could Be a Wonderful World."** Ronnie Gilbert, Tommy Makem, and The Tarriers. UAW Records. $2.00 (LP).

Ironically enough, on the very day I reviewed this fine disc my morning paper informed me that New York's Teamsters were preparing to strike to win two coffee breaks a day plus free chiropractic care. Can this be the millennium envisioned by Big Bill Haywood? Actually, in our era of fat cat unionism this release provides a salubrious reminder of the blood-flecked, persecuted past of organized labor. A top array of talent —soprano Ronnie Gilbert of the Weavers, Tommy Makem and The Tarriers—romp through historic rallying songs of the picket line such as *Solidarity Forever*, *Roll the Union On*, and *Union Maid*. But

the most memorable ballads are those of recollected tragedy: the execution of a Wobbly organizer memorialized in the moving *Joe Hill*; a lost textile strike that produced the poignant "The mill was made of marble/The machines were made of gold./And nobody ever got tired,/And nobody ever grew old." This outstanding, handsomely reproduced and packaged album features complete texts of all fifteen songs plus informative and scholarly annotation. It is available by mail for $2.00 a copy from the United Automobile Workers Education Department, 8000 East Jefferson, Detroit 14, Michigan. O.B.B.

**"The Primitive and the Passionate."** Les Baxter and His Orchestra. Reprise R 6048, $3.98 (LP); R9 6048, $4.98 (SD).
**"Splendor in the Brass."** Chuck Sagle and His Orchestra. Reprise R 6047, $3.98 (LP); R9 6047, $4.98 (SD).

Another new spectacular sound series (wondrously yclept "Dual 120 cmps 35 mm"), the first examples of which may not fully substantiate the advertising department's claims to an "extraordinary breakthru in the technology of sound" and the "ultimate in recording and mastering techniques." But they do eschew musically pointless stereogenics and certainly are distinguished by genuinely bold, authentic, and thrilling sonics. (The mono editions are impressive, too, but tonally sharper-edged.) Musically, there is less novelty in still another of Baxter's typically exotic programs (*Peking Tiger, A Night with Cleopatra, Slave Ship*, etc.), yet even these are given better than average, not too fancily arranged performances, notably enhanced by the jungle bird calls and four-octave wordless vocalizations of an amazingly Theremin-voiced soprano soloist, Tiki.

The second program, however, lives up to its title, both in the effectiveness of its straightforward yet gloriously sonorous scoring (*Bernie's Tune, Man with a Horn, Love for Sale*, Sagle's own *Brassanctified*, etc.) and above all in the exceptionally skillful playing by a twenty-five-man orchestra featuring five trumpets, five trombones, four French horns, and tuba, together with five saxophonists doubling on other woodwinds, and a rhythm section. There is a wide variety of ringing brass timbres displayed here, notably by bass trumpeter Dave Wells, flugelhornist Cappy Lewis, tuba player Red Callender, trumpeter Shorty Sherlock, and others, plus a dazzling performance of Dizzy Gillespie's original trumpet solo in *A Night in Tunisia*—done here in precise unison by all five trumpeters. In short, an outstanding record of its kind, in which both technical and executant virtuosity are exploited with musical and dramatic taste. R.D.D.

**"Leroy Anderson Favorites."** Boston Pops Orchestra, Arthur Fiedler, cond. RCA Victor LSC 2638, $5.98 (SD).

Nothing new seems to have come from Anderson's once indefatigable pen since the Broadway musical *Goldilocks* of four or five years ago. Many of his earlier and still incomparable symphonic *divertissements* are, of course, frequently rerecorded, in the manner of the present collection by the composer's original sponsor, Arthur Fiedler. It's good to have Bostonian stereo updatings of *Fiddle Faddle, Blue Tango, Sleigh Ride, Waltz-*

*ing Cat, Jazz Pizzicato/Jazz Legato, Syncopated Clock, Classical Juke Box,* and others. Older Anderson *aficionados* may feel, however, that the present virtuosic performances are so vehemently energetic, incisive, and weighty that they lose much of the music's distinctive grace and wit. A considerable share of the responsibility for this must be the engineers': impressively brilliant as the "new sound" of the Boston Pops undoubtedly is, the current multiple miking and "spotlighting" techniques are far less suited to Anderson's lilting scores than they were to the heavier ones of Hayman and Mason in the recent "Pops Roundup" release. There is an abundance of sonic splendor here, all right, but too little of the luminosity, buoyancy, and acoustical warmth of the best earlier Bostonian recordings. R.D.D.

**"The Sammy Davis, Jr., All-Star Spectacular."** Sammy Davis, Jr., Orchestra; Morton Stevens, Neal Hefti, George Rhodes, conds. Reprise R 6033, $3.98 (LP); R9 6033, $4.98 (SD).

If to be cruel is to be kind, then Sammy Davis, Jr., is the personification of magnanimity in his satirical impressions of the singing styles of a number of pop vocalists of today and yesterday. He has observed his victims with rare acuteness, and captured the almost imperceptible flaws in their highly personalized performances with remarkable accuracy. Among his more cutting impressions are those of Ray Charles singing *That Lucky Old Sun*; a sharply etched, almost merciless impersonation of Tony Bennett doing *Stranger in Paradise*; the syrupy style of Nat King Cole, and the overmuscular, sometimes out of tune vocalism of Vaughn Monroe, both tackling *Ballerina*. Lifelike and extremely funny is a version of *Be My Love*, begun by Mario Lanza and then taken over by Louis Armstrong, whose gravel voice Davis produces with startling realism. On a slightly lower level, there is a version of *Lulu's Back in Town* distributed between the fog-bound vocal chords of Mel Tormé and the high-pitched nasal tones of Jerry Lewis. There is, of course, the inevitable impression of Al Jolson singing *Sonny Boy* (and an excellent one it is), but after that Davis appears to have run out of vocalists, and hauls in spoken impressions of the voices of Bela Lugosi, Boris Karloff, Edward G. Robinson, and Jimmy Stewart. About the only thing missing from his bag of tricks is an impersonation of Winston Churchill singing *There'll Always Be an England*, something I am sure Davis could do quite well. The singer is obviously having a ball and, if you don't mind discovering that your particular idol may have feet of clay, so will you. After all this fun, Side 2, on which Davis sings (and extremely well) a half a dozen ballads, is something of an anticlimax. J.F.I.

**"Satin Latin." "Soft and Silky." "Smooth and Swinging."** The George Shearing Quintet. M-G-M E 4041, E 4042/43, $3.98 each (LP).

Although they sport brand-new titles, these three Shearing discs are not, as those who have but recently joined the Shearing fold may think, new recordings. They are reissues of sides cut by the quintet between 1949 and 1954, all of which have been available on previous LP records, some now deleted from the catalogue. Anyone not familiar with Shearing's early work with the group will find these jazz-oriented performances adventurous and musically stimulating, and in general more interesting than his current recordings. M-G-M appears to have remastered the old sound and also rectified some of the errors in balance which plagued the original issues, thus greatly improving the sonic appeal of these new discs. J.F.I.

**"Lester Lanin and His Orchestra."** Electronically Rechannelled for Stereo. Epic BN 628, $4.98 (SD).

Reprocessing succeeds better in separating Lanin's players than in tempering their hard and coarse tonal qualities or providing a warmer acoustical background. But while the present program, originally recorded in 1956, is in itself a routine one of socialite fox trots, diversified only by crudely popularized fragments of the *Rosenkavalier* and *Accelerations* waltzes, it has a certain documentary interest for having been recorded "live" at the famous Monte Carlo Ball in New York City which celebrated the engagement of Grace Kelly and Prince Rainier. R.D.D.

**"¡Bravo! Toro!"** Banda de Corrida de Cadiz, Estaban Valdez, cond. Quarante-Cinq 45002, $5.98 (12-in. 45-rpm SD). (Available by special order only, from 333 Sixth Ave., New York 14, N. Y.)

The big Spanish band plays bullring favorites with swaggering vigor, but it is most exciting in the lusty *Marcia Allegre* (which betrays obvious American influences) and the rhapsodic *Sangre y Sol* (wholly Iberian, and by far the most musically rewarding work in the program). The primary interest here, however, is extramusical. This is one of the first attempts to utilize 45-rpm speed with a 12-inch stereo disc. The full-blooded

sonics are indeed impressive (with unusually marked channel separation). I can't honestly say that either the crispness of transient response or freedom from distortion is noticeably superior to many technically outstanding 33⅓-rpm recordings. Perhaps super-tweeters would reveal the legitimately-enough-claimed high frequency improvements. . . . Actually, this company's release of a disc devoted to Chabrier is a better demonstration of the 45's potentialities. (See June 1962, p. 56.) R.D.D.

**"British and American Murder Ballads."** Sung by Paul Clayton. Washington Records WLP 727, $4.98 (LP).

With a disarmingly calm vocal style, Paul Clayton presents a rather grisly collection of murder ballads. Never veering from the subject, the songs deal, one after the other, with patricide, infanticide, fratricide, and murder of lovers, friends, and strangers by such diverse means as drowning, stabbing, shooting, and poisoning. Paul Clayton's haunting and melancholy tones, always sung at the same dynamic level, add to the eeriness of the recording. Not to be recommended if you're feeling depressed; otherwise, as compelling as a series of good murder mysteries. O.B.B.

**"Now Hear This."** Dukes of Dixieland. Columbia CS 8593, $4.98 (SD).

This second release by the newly reconstituted Dukes (now with still another newcomer, guitarist Herb Ellis) again demonstrates the vitalizing effects a modern rhythm section can have on the unchangeably blustering playing of the Assuntos themselves. As in the earlier "Breaking It Up on Broadway," clarinetist Jerry Fuller provides the most distinctive solos (particularly in *My Inspiration*, *I'm Coming Virginia*, and *Mood Indigo*). Jim Atlass' sawed bass in *At the Jazz Band Ball* is another notable feature in a program which is elsewhere often routine in its free-for-all, slapdash ensemble playing and clean, but rather dry, stereo sound. R.D.D.

**"Golden Themes from Motion Pictures."** Arthur Ferrante and Louis Teicher, duo pianos; Orchestra, Nich Perito, cond. United Artists UAL 3210, $3.98 (LP); UAS 6210, $4.98 (SD).

**"The Many Moods of Ferrante & Teicher."** Ferrante & Teicher, duo pianos; Orchestra, Nich Perito, cond. United Artists UAL 3211, $3.98 (LP); UAS 6211, $4.98 (SD).

There appears to be no abatement in the flood of Ferrante and Teicher recordings; and unless it begins to subside soon, the duo pianists are likely to find themselves running out of repertoire. They may already, in fact, be feeling the pinch for new material: no less than four numbers on the "Many Moods" disc have appeared on previous issues. The "Motion Pictures" collection appears to be all new, however, and it is another astonishing example of how well balanced and integrated the work of these two pianists has become. J.F.I.

**"Odetta at Town Hall."** Vanguard VRS 9103, $4.98 (LP); VSD 2109, $5.95 (SD).

Odetta's deep, dark voice is heard at its best in this recording of a recent Town Hall concert. Yet in spite of her top form (and her audience seems to have nestled neatly in the palm of her hand throughout the proceedings) this disc does not wear well. For one thing, Odetta takes a stab at introductory patter—intended to be witty—which she delivers with all the verve of a female Ned Sparks. This is unfortunate but forgivable. However, her increasingly mannered way with folk ballads is not: the tiresome mimicry in *The Fox* provides a particularly melancholy case in point. Nonetheless, Odetta remains a powerful and important artist. At her best—as in the high spot of this release, *Another Man Done Gone*—she is profoundly moving. Superlative engineering in both stereo and LP editions. O.B.B.

**"More Cole Español."** Nat King Cole; Orchestra, Ralph Carmichael, cond. Capitol W 1749, $4.98 (LP); SW 1749, $5.98 (SD).

This is Nat King Cole's third brush with Latin-American ballads and folk songs, and on the whole it seems to me to be no more successsful than his previous efforts. For a singer who is a master at investing even the most banal American song with unexpected romantic overtones, these are surprisingly cold, almost clinical, performances. Even in the most ardent love songs, *Solamente una Vez* and *Tres Palabras*, he is unable to generate any geniune warmth, possibly because he is too intent on enunciating the Spanish lyrics clearly. In this he is entirely successful, even though his accent would be no great credit to a first-year student in the language. In fact, the only authentic Latin-American moments on the record are those when the singer is joined, in some numbers, by a marimba orchestra or by one of Mexico's mariachi bands. J.F.I.

# JAZZ

**The American Jazz Ensemble in Rome:** "New Sounds . . . Old World." RCA Victor LPM 2557, $3.98 (LP); LSP 2557, $4.98 (SD).

The American Jazz Ensemble is a quartet made up of two Americans who have been studying in Rome—Bill Smith, a clarinetist heard on records in a jazz context with Dave Brubeck, and Johnny Eaton, a pianist who led a modern jazz group at Princeton several years ago—and two Roman musicians, Erich Peter, bass, and Pierre Favre, drums. Playing both familiar tunes (*Too Darn Hot, Autumn in New York, Rise 'n' Shine, Summertime, Swing Low Sweet Chariot*) and several originals, they have a decidedly personal approach which falls very attractively within the normal concepts of jazz, even though their performances are developed in settings constructed largely on nonjazz devices. On his past recordings, Smith's clarinet playing has identified him as a capable exponent of the Benny Goodman manner, but here, although there are occasional suggestions of Goodman, he moves into much more adventurous areas. Most of the pieces are developed through provocative exchanges between Smith and Eaton, rather than in direct solo or ensemble manner, with bassist Peter occasionally entering the conversation, too. The fresh sound and fresh attitude in these performances are extremely welcome in a jazz world that tends toward stereotypes.

**Mildred Bailey:** "Her Greatest Performances, 1929-1946." Columbia C3L 22, $11.98 (Three LP).

Now that the almost complete lack of available Mildred Bailey recordings has been corrected by the release of this three-disc set covering her work from 1929 to 1946, one can more readily understand why compiling a collection has been difficult. One remembers fondly the pure, soaring grace of her relatively small voice. There was warmth and individuality in everything she sang, from blues to ballads. What one is apt to forget is that, on records, she was all too often saddled with dreadful songs, and that while Red Norvo and other musicians who accompanied her could escape into improvisations on their solos, she was trapped by lyrics which she tended to take at face value. Consequently, this group of forty-eight selections includes an uncomfortably high proportion of dross along with constant reminders of the inimitable charm conveyed by her uniquely lifting manner of phrasing. It is on the earliest records (on which she is accompanied by Eddie Lang's orchestra, the Dorsey brothers, and a Benny Goodman studio group) that she has her major problems with "dog" lyrics. In 1935, however, when she recorded her superb series for Parlophone with Johnny Hodges, Bunny Berigan, and Teddy Wilson, songs and settings finally came together properly. Most of the 1937 and 1938 recordings were made with Red Norvo's band—a not particularly inspiring group, although Norvo himself contributes several delightful interludes. In 1939 Miss Bailey found herself recording once again with highly compatible small ensembles—her Oxford Greys with Mary Lou Williams on piano and Floyd Smith on guitar, and a woodwind ensemble led by Alec Wilder. Several superior results of these sessions are included (*There'll Be Some Changes Made, Gulf Coast Blues, Hold On, Nobody's Baby*). Later, Miss Bailey was at her lyrical best on at least two of the pieces (*In Love in Vain, I'll Close My Eyes*) made during her postwar stay with the Majestic label. The quality of her singing all through these years is amazingly consistent. The drawbacks are not of her doing, but stem from the circumstances—the lyrics and the accompaniment. Yet even with these hindrances this is a valuable set, for Mildred Bailey was one of the great vocal talents that stemmed from jazz. Like Bix Beiderbecke, she recorded all too frequently in poor settings; but just as Beiderbecke's presence salvages many otherwise dismal discs, so does Miss Bailey's voice.

*Basie: in fine surroundings.*

**Count Basie:** "And the Kansas City Seven." Impulse A 15, $4.98 (LP); AS 15, $5.98 (SD).

The light-footed airiness which was one of the characteristics of the original Basie band, a quality usually missing from his current group, is recaptured by this septet drawn from that current band. Of the eight tunes played by the Basie rhythm section plus Thad Jones, trumpet, with Frank Foster, Frank Wess, and Eric Dixon of the reed section, three are repeats of some of Basie's earliest recordings—*Lady Be Good, I Want a Little Girl,* and *Shoe Shine Boy*. It may be the pure joy of hearing these familiar pieces played with such effortless warmth and recorded so brilliantly that makes them seem distinctly superior to the five originals included here. Nonetheless, none of the new pieces offers anything to compare to Thad Jones's superb wa-wa solo on *Little Girl,* with Basie filling in perceptively on organ behind him, or Basie's gorgeously succinct two-chorus solo on *Lady Be Good,* with Jones's crisp, to-the-point trumpet. The new selections have their moments, but there is a great deal of flute playing which reduces them to ordinary terms, and they lack the positive shape of the older pieces. In both cases, however, it is a pleasure to hear Basie in such loose, flexible surroundings once again.

**George Brunis:** "King of the Tailgate Trombone." Commodore 30015, $4.98 (LP).

Twelve of the selections recorded by Brunis for Commodore between 1943 and 1946 make up this collection. On most, he is joined by the wryly lyrical Pee Wee Russell on clarinet, and by Wild Bill Davison, whose brashness on cornet matches Brunis' extroverted use of the trombone. Instrumentally, these are appealingly rough-and-ready performances. Brunis sings on many of them, foregoing some of the pointless coarseness that has often crept into his style on the stand, and revealing a strong affinity for Jack Teagarden's vocal mannerisms—an affinity also reflected when Brunis applies his trombone to a ballad.

*Continued on next page*

**Billy Butterfield Jazz Band:** "Billy Plays Bix." Epic 16026, $3.98 (LP); 17026, $5.98 (SD).

Billy Butterfield's explorations of tunes associated with Bix Beiderbecke are fresh and lively, and although Butterfield plays with constant acknowledgment of Beiderbecke's attack, there is little overt attempt at imitation. The key to the approach occurs in Tommy Gwaltney's entrance on clarinet on *Way Down Yonder in New Orleans*: he begins with a startling reproduction of Frank Trumbauer's C Melody saxophone solo, but once this association has been established Gwaltney's solo takes shape in his own individual manner. The performances have a lot of body and are served well by a strongly buoyant rhythm section. Butterfield's trumpet work is properly bright and lustrous, and he catches a great deal of the crisp, charging quality typical of Beiderbecke. Beiderbecke recorded many dull tunes, and one wonders if any purpose is served by slavishly holding to a repertory that often has so little to offer. However, this band (made up of unfamiliar names) gives Butterfield a strong foundation—much stronger than Beiderbecke's groups usually gave *him*.

**Joe Carroll:** "Man with a Happy Sound." Charlie Parker 802, $3.98 (LP); 402 S, $4.98 (SD).

Carroll, usually identified with bop scat singing (in partnership with Dizzy Gillespie), gives much broader scope to his vocal talents here. He has, quite obviously, been doing himself a disservice all these years by concentrating so heavily on novelty material, for he is an exuberant and imaginative singer who can belt out a rocking blues, tear through a rhythm tune with bubbling vitality, or take an astonishing but amazingly effective view of a familiar tune (*Lady Be Good*, for instance, is done as a slow, insinuating, humorous rocker—and it works). Although there is little similarity between Carroll and Fats Waller, Carroll projects the same sense of bubbling gaiety. These are lusty, uninhibited performances, full of rhythm and good humor.

**Miles Davis:** "At Carnegie Hall." Columbia CL 1812, $3.98 (LP); CS 8612, $4.98 (SD).

In May 1961, Miles Davis appeared in public for the first time with the twenty-one-piece Gil Evans orchestra which had recorded with him very successfully on several occasions. For this concert, in addition to the Evans band, he brought along his regular quintet. Davis, as this recording of portions of the concert attests, was in rare form, playing with tremendous, driving intensity and, when the occasion demanded, shifting to a poignantly romantic style. The Evans orchestra served, as it had previously on records, as a highly complementary setting for Davis' solos. At the concert, however, there were long, somnolent stretches when Davis was resting and members of his quintet—Hank Mobley, tenor saxophone, or Wynton Kelly, piano—took the spotlight to grind out routine, lengthy solos. Some of these lesser moments are heard in the recording, using up a lot of time that might have been devoted to more diverting events. Whenever Davis is at work, however, whether with his quintet or supported by the band, this is a compelling disc.

**Jimmy Hamilton:** "Can't Help Swinging." Swingville 2028, $4.98 (LP).

Although Jimmy Hamilton has been a member of Duke Ellington's band for over twenty years, he has never become a homogeneous part of the ensemble. His dry and formal clarinet style has always been a thing apart from the overall Ellington sound. He fits into that context better on tenor saxophone—but Duke rarely chooses to feature him on that instrument. This graceful and unpretentious set of performances, in which Hamilton is heard with only a rhythm section, suggests that Ellington has been missing a bet all these years in not letting Hamilton loose on the kind of flowing, rhythmic things he does here. He sounds much more at ease on both clarinet and tenor saxophone than he usually does with Ellington. Much of his clarinet work is done in a gently feathery high note style while his tenor lines, taking an opposite tack, are lean, sinewy, and assertive. In both cases his playing is perceptively economical and so seemingly effortless that one is constantly surprised by the strength of the swinging propulsion which he generates. The eight pleasant tunes are split between standards (*Dancing on the Ceiling, Lullaby of the Leaves*, etc.) and attractive originals.

**Barry Harris Quintet:** "Newer Than New." Riverside 413, $4.98 (LP); 9413, $5.98 (SD).

Having recently shown himself to be an absorbingly personal piano soloist, Barry Harris now shifts to the leadership of a five-man group that often suggests the Parker-Gillespie ensembles of the mid-Forties. The inclusion of one selection from their repertory, *Anthropology*, stresses the association. Otherwise, the

connection is established by the sources from which Harris, his alto saxophonist, Charles McPherson, and his trumpeter, Lonnie Hillyer, have sprung. This is not to say that they are merely imitating, for they are not. Unlike the alto saxophonists who for years have been depending on a large collection of Parker phrases, McPherson uses the manner rather than the matter of Parker. He has the same fleet ease and the running style of phrasing but, in using them, he does not sound notably like Parker. Similarly Hillyer, a trumpeter not yet as mature as McPherson, has Gillespie's crisp approach and feeling for shading; while Harris, as he has shown before, is, in part, a descendant of Bud Powell. The group has the help of light and lifting propulsion from Ernie Farrow, bass, and Clifford Jarvis, drums. It has a fresh sound, develops some interesting ensemble passages and, in Harris and McPherson, has reasonably consistent soloists. Hillyer, however, tends to run dry very quickly.

**Coleman Hawkins:** "On the Bean." Continental 16006, $3.98 (LP).
This miscellany of small-ensemble performances recorded in the middle Forties boasts (in addition to Hawkins) Don Byas, Edmond Hall, Charlie Shavers, Hank D'Amico, Buck Clayton, and Slam Stewart among the featured musicians. Aside from four ballads, one of which is completely devoted to a Hawkins solo, the tunes are simple riffs with brief solo spots. Hawkins is the only one who emerges with any real impact, although Shavers, Hall, and Byas each get in a short and creditable solo. Hawkins, however, is indomitable, and he stands out in any company and under any circumstances, including these relatively routine settings. The recording is erratic and ranges from thin to tubby.

**Jazz at Massey Hall.** Fantasy 6003, $4.98 (LP).
This recording of a concert held in Toronto in 1953 involving Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Charlie Mingus, and Max Roach was released several years ago on Mingus' relatively obscure Debut label. For this new appearance the recording has been cleaned up skillfully and, as a result, the tremendous vitality of this remarkable performance now comes across much more potently than in the original release. These five men were the nonpareils of the bop period. They are heard here in more relaxed surroundings than they had in their studio efforts, and they play some of the classics of the repertory—*Hot House, Salt Peanuts, Night in Tunisia, Wee*. Powell rips through an amazing piano solo on *Wee*. Parker's playing is spirited all through the set, and Roach takes two of the most effectively fiery drum solos ever caught on records. This disc stands with the greatest small-group jazz classics.

**Charlie Parker:** "Bird Symbols." Charlie Parker 407, $5.98 (LP).
These are reissues of recordings made by Parker for the Dial label in 1946 and 1947, the periods just preceding and following his commitment to a sanitarium in California. They are, somewhat surprisingly in view of Parker's condition at the time, superb examples of his playing, particularly in the gorgeous ease and flow of such ballads as *Bird of Paradise, Embraceable You, My Old Flame*, or in the firmer adaptation of that style on *Cool Blues*, in which he was accompanied by Erroll Garner. The set includes the version of *Night in Tunisia* on which Parker dove into his now classic break, and a beautifully compact treatment of *Yardbird Suite* which is established, developed, and concluded in a highly satisfactory manner in a mere two minutes and forty-five seconds. These recordings also include several appearances by Miles Davis, playing with such strong assurance as to belie the legend that he was a very uncertain trumpeter at this time.

**Jack Teagarden:** "Think Well of Me." Verve 8465, $4.98 (LP); 6-8465, $5.98 (SD).
For those who remember Willard Robison's Deep River Orchestra, the prospect of Jack Teagarden doing a batch of Robison's songs is highly promising. Unfortunately, the project is largely undermined by string accompaniments which are utterly inappropriate. Robison's lyrics often turn into solid corn, but his tunes have a rare, nostalgic pastoral quality which, properly handled, can excuse even his lesser efforts as a lyricist. In the proper setting, Teagarden might have been able to evoke the old Deep River feeling, but the odds are against him here. In spite of this, however, he contributes several beautifully warm, lyrical trombone solos. The tunes include *Cottage for Sale, Tain't So Honey Tain't So, Don't Smoke in Bed*, and *I'm a Fool About My Mama*. JOHN S. WILSON

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# the Tape Deck

*Reviewed by* R. D. DARRELL

**The following reviews are of 4-track 7.5-ips stereo tapes in normal reel form.**

## BEETHOVEN: *Fidelio*

Sena Jurinac (s), Leonore; Maria Stader (s), Marzelline; Jan Peerce (t), Florestan; Murray Dickie (t), Jacquino; Gustav Neidlinger (b), Pizarro; Dezsö Ernster (bs), Rocco; Frederick Guthrie (bs), Don Fernando. Chorus and Orchestra of the Bavarian State Opera, Hans Knappertsbusch, cond.

• • WESTMINSTER WTZ 154. Two reels: approx. 70 and 85 min. $19.95.

Among the first stereo editions (and the first on tape of any kind), this *Fidelio* is one that most connoisseurs are likely to consider only as a stopgap—soon to be eclipsed, on discs at least, by a Klemperer version for Angel which, according to many reviewers, is notably superior. There are some admirable things here (as detailed in Conrad Osborne's disc review of last April), but I'm afraid that I cannot be as objective as he about the conductor's over-all pacing, which for me is exasperatingly deliberate throughout. Except for Jan Peerce's now somewhat vocally worn Florestan and Maria Stader's Marzelline, the individual roles lack dramatic conviction; and Miss Jurinac, fine artist though she is, simply does not command the vocal authority needed by Leonore's great *"Abscheulicher, wo eilst du hin?"* On the other hand, the spoken German dialogue is excellently done and Knappertsbusch's glacially slow tempos do at least have the advantage of revealing the details of the score with absorbing lucidity. The orchestra and chorus are first-rate, too; the recording and tape processing satisfactory, if scarcely outstanding.

## GILBERT and SULLIVAN: *Iolanthe*

Yvonne Newman (s), Iolanthe; Mary Sansom (s), Phyllis; Gillian Knight (c), Queen of the Fairies; Alan Styler (b), Strephon; John Reed (b), Lord Chancellor; *et al.*; D'Oyly Carte Company Chorus, New Symphony Orchestra, Isidore Godfrey, cond.

• • LONDON LOS 90046. Two reels: approx. 73 and 46 min. $15.95.

This is a welcome resumption on tape of the new D'Oyly Carte series, and while the young singers of the present company are still largely unfamiliar to American listeners (and though few of them as yet demonstrate as vivid personalities as the famous D'Oyly Carte stars of an earlier generation), their fresh voices and decorously restrained—very British—enactments are consistently delightful. The humor, however, is very low in key, and to faithful Martyn Green devotees the present Lord Chancellor's patter songs may seem lacking in dramatic virtuosity. Yet John Reed sings them probably better than they ever have been sung before and also endows them with subtler wit and zest. Indeed, the musicianship of the entire cast is notable; Godfrey conducts with leisurely aplomb; the fine chorus and orchestra—augmented in the more martial passages by a contingent from the Grenadier Guards Band—show off to perfection the theatrical authenticity of the gleaming stereo recording; and apart from a few slight intrusions of background noise the tape itself is very well processed. As in the previous *Pinafore* taping, the complete spoken dialogue is included—in this case, in particular, a decided advantage.

## HOLST: *The Planets, Op. 32*

Women of the Vienna State Opera Chorus; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond.

• • LONDON LCL 80097. 49 min. $7.95.

After the sad case of the first reel edition of Ansermet's *Scheherazade*, I feared that the no less sensationally brilliant recording of Von Karajan's *Planets* (August 1962) might also have been timidly watered down for tape release. Fortunately, it is not: what we can hear here is probably as close a match for the supreme concert-hall realism of the stereo disc version as tape-processing techniques can achieve. The high fidelity specialist with a super-pickup may still squeeze out a few more highs from a brand-new disc copy, but in comparably wide-range tape reproduction there is no dimming of the original sparkle. The crisp transients of even the low level percussion passages come through without veiling or perspective shifts, while the midrange and extreme low frequencies achieve, as always in the best tapes, an even more satisfying warmth and solidity. A genuine triumph which no tape collector can afford to miss!

[For further good news, I'm overjoyed to report that the current tapings of the Ansermet *Scheherazade* and *Prince Igor* Dances (London LCL 80076) now are being produced from a reëdited 4-track master, and that their technical qualities are comparable in every way with those of *The Planets*. Having chided the UST editors for a grievous error in the tape edition, I now take pleasure in congratulating them on correcting it so satisfactorily. I regret only that there seems to be no marking by which the new taping can be distinguished from the earlier ones.]

## MACHAUT: *Notre Dame Mass*
## †Pérotin: *Viderunt omnes; Sederunt principes*

Deller Consort, Alfred Deller, cond.

• • VANGUARD VTC 1644. 47 min. $7.95.

A doubly welcome release representing what I believe to be the tape debut of the Deller ensemble and certainly the first reel editions of two of the earliest examples of "signed" art music. (Pérotin's *Sederunt principes* once was available in a 1957 Expériences Anonymes 2-track version by Russell Oberlin, *et al.*) Even more than the music of the Renaissance master Josquin des Prez recently taped by Vanguard, these Gothic works of the late twelfth and mid-fourteenth centuries are so strange to present-day ears that they often seem to have "modern" qualities— an impression enhanced here both by the singers' vigor and by the participation of such pungently timbred ancient instruments as the regal (a small reed organ), recorder, zink (or cornett), discant and tenor pommers (or shawms—early oboes), as well as violins, flute, and trombone. The recording is almost too reverberant (with consequent post- and preëchoes), but at least it effectively suggests the grandiose acoustics of the Cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris where these works were originally presented. Not for casual entertainment, the reel is outstanding for the historical importance of its contents. For some ears at least, the granitic eloquence of the Machaut Mass, as well as the striking contrasts between serene calm and almost dancelike vivacity in the Pérotin *organa*, will have a very special, quite timeless fascination.

## PROKOFIEV: *Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67*
## †Tchaikovsky: *The Nutcracker, Op. 71: Orchestral Suite*

Leonard Bernstein, narrator (in the Prokofiev); New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond.

• • COLUMBIA MQ 469. 49 min. $7.95.

Apart from the children's quiz show preliminaries (rather pointless on records, however effective they may have been in broadcasts), both Bernstein's narration and his performance of the familiar orchestral tale are admirably straightforward and vividly recorded—if with rather too close miking for the narration and some bottom heaviness in the orchestral sonics. Neither these slight flaws, however, nor the more serious ones of considerable preëcho and background amplification "roar," are likely to reduce the relish of the enormous Bernstein public first introduced to this work via TV or radio. I trust, too, that they will fully appreciate the much more translucently and naturally recorded *Nutcracker* Suite. This part of the tape is immaculately processed, free from mannerisms, zestful, and sonically gleaming. A man of infinite surprises, Bernstein reveals a restraint and resilience here which are as unexpected as they are delightful.

*Continued on next page*



PUCCINI: *La Bohème*

Anna Moffo (s), Mimi; Mary Costa (s), Musetta; Richard Tucker (t), Rodolfo; Adelio Zagonara (t), Parpignol and A Sergeant; Robert Merrill (b), Marcello; Philip Maero (b), Schaunard; Flavio Tosin (b), A Customhouse Official; Fernando Corena (bs), Benoit; Giorgio Onesti (bs), Alcindoro. Chorus and Orchestra of the Rome Opera House, Erich Leinsdorf, cond.

• • RCA VICTOR FTC 7002. Approx. 99 min. $14.95.

My second tape encounter with Miss Moffo is disconcertingly different from the first one: either I underestimated her acting ability (if not her enchanting, however delicate, voice) in reviewing her *Traviata* (August 1961), or Mimi is a far more suitable role for her than that of Violetta. At any rate, she strikes me as near ideal here, dramatically and vocally; and without yet knowing anyone else's opinion of this recording, I'm rash enough to report that my first impressions are *all* favorable. I've rarely heard, indeed, an opera performance in which every member of the cast, as well as the chorus, orchestra, and conductor, are so uniformly admirable. This impression is reinforced when I compare the present version with the earlier taping by Serafin for London, which up to now has been generally ranked as the best on records today. (The unforgettable 1946 mono version by Toscanini of course remains *sui generis*.) Reheard, the Serafin *Bohème* seems as fine as ever, and the opulence of Tebaldi's superb singing even more impressive. But it's now more evident that hers is a definitely mature and hardly fatally stricken Mimi; more importantly, the whole Serafin conception seems slow in pacing and more self-consciously grandly operatic than Leinsdorf's. The new version, besides its youthful and poignantly appealing heroine, brings more distinction and subtlety to practically all the other roles, is markedly brisker in the lively sections, and over-all more dramatically naturalistic.

What gives the Leinsdorf *Bohème* its clearest superiority, however, are the slightly more forward positionings of the soloists vis-à-vis the orchestra, and the lighter, purer, more natural recorded sonics. An unexpected advantage, too (thanks to Leinsdorf's livelier tempos) is the pairing of two acts on each side of a single reel, whereas Serafin's pacing was just enough slower to require two reels (with considerable tape wastage on the B side). Yet the economy of the new version has been achieved with no sense of hurrying or any processing difficulties. There are inevitable preëchoes, as before, but the quietness of the surfaces is even more notable here.

RACHMANINOFF: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in C minor, Op. 18*
†Sibelius: *Finlandia, Op. 26*

Kjell Baekkelund, piano; Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Oivin Fjeldstad (in the Concerto) and Odd Grüner-Hegge, conds.

• • RCA CAMDEN CTR 475. 41 min. $4.95.

STRAUSS, JOHANN II: Waltzes (4)

Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Oivin Fjeldstad, cond.

• • RCA CAMDEN CTR 623. 36 min. $4.95.

On its own merits, Baekkelund's Rachmaninoff Second is a good if not outstanding version, handicapped a bit by its emotional restraint but accompanied and recorded with fine dramatic breadth and the authentic ring of beautifully produced piano sonorities. At its present bargain price (with a rousing *Finlandia* thrown in for good measure), however, this is a real "sleeper," slightly preferable (for orchestral and recording richness, at least) to the similarly low-priced Richmond taping by Katin.

Fjeldstad's Strauss waltzes (*Emperor, Blue Danube, Tales from the Vienna Woods*, and *Wine, Women, and Song*) are also a good buy in another well-processed low cost reel, since the conductor uses the scores (if, alas, no zither in *G'schichten aus dem Wiener Wald*) and plays them with infectious vitality in a style midway between the true Viennese lilt and the higher-tensioned sweep of most American conductors. His Oslo strings, however, aren't quite capable of truly golden sonorities and I should like a still warmer acoustical background than the present otherwise good stereoism provides.

Even with these relatively slight reservations, the new Camden series is off to a most promising start (there also is an exceptionally engaging and unpretentious Grofé *Grand Canyon* Suite, CTR 468, which was at one time available in a Tandberg/SMS tape edition), and it is sure to be welcomed by many budget-conscious collectors who so far have been largely limited for classical bargains to the Richmond catalogue.

ROSSINI: *Overtures*

*Semiramide; Guillaume Tell; La Gazza ladra; La Scala di seta; Il Barbieri di Siviglia.*

London Symphony Orchestra, Pierino Gamba, cond.

• • LONDON LCL 80096. 45 min. $7.95.

If Gamba can't quite match the supreme virtuosity of Reiner's celebrated taping of Rossini overtures of January 1960 (which differs from the present program only in the omission of *Semiramide* and the addition of *La Cenerentola* and *Il Signor Bruschino*), he certainly isn't far behind. And to some ears the richer warmth of the beautiful stereoism here may even be preferable to the more scintillant brilliance of the RCA Victor reel. The present tape is admirably processed, too, making it all the more preferable to London's earlier Rossini tape (by Peter Maag), which had technical defects as well as overdeliberate performances. Bargain hunters should not overlook an attractive though far less distinctive Richmond reel by Kenneth Alwyn (which includes four of the present overtures, omitting *La Gazza ladra*); but no connoisseur will want to settle for anything less than Reiner or Gamba—or both.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 9, in C*

Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond.

• • COLUMBIA MQ 467. 52 min. $7.95.

Except among devout Walterians, the late maestro's last recording of the great Schubert Ninth elicited a somewhat mixed reception when it first appeared on discs just over a year and a half ago —as it must indeed from me now. But

if it is a bit slow and heavy-handed at times, and rather somberly colored (a quality probably accentuated by the rather dark recording), it does have truly incomparable and uniquely Walterian grandeurs, not least in the heroic drama of its driving finale. And, dark as it may be, the recording is impressively expansive, clearly detailed, and powerful, while the tape itself is admirably processed. My first choice still remains the more elastic, spontaneous, and songful Krips version for London (March 1961), but the comparison of these two sets provides another striking illustration of the aesthetic truism than any genuine masterpiece may be approached in quite different ways—each of which can reveal new facets of its composer's genius.

SCHUMANN: *Symphony No. 1, in B flat, Op. 38 ("Spring"); Manfred, Op. 115: Overture*

Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond.
• • EPIC EC 821. 42 min. $7.95.

At last the tape industry has come around to representing Schumann's orchestral works: appropriately, by the impetuous First Symphony and a duplication of the *Manfred* overture also released this month with Munch's Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique*. An acknowledged Schumann specialist, Szell brings his many talents to both performances, about which my only reservation is that he lacks some of the spontaneity which the "Spring" symphony in particular calls for. I am less happy about the recording and tape processing here: the former seems dark and bottom-heavy; the latter betrays not only a slight intrusion of reverse channel spill-over before the Larghetto movement but considerable background hum or noise in the quieter passages, especially on the B side. I hope these flaws are not characteristic of other tape copies; this reel should, even in spite of them, win new friends for Schumann's deeply rewarding orchestral works.

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ARTUR RUBINSTEIN: *"Highlights from Rubinstein at Carnegie Hall"*

Artur Rubinstein, piano.
• • RCA VICTOR FTC 2125. 51 min. $8.95.

Like many other Doubting Thomases, I was once unconvinced that stereo really was necessary to the recording of solo instruments. My mind was changed for me before now, but for everyone who still remains to be "sold," the present reel surely will be irrefutable proof that stereo is just as valuable here as elsewhere. I have yet to hear the monophonic version of this program, but it just can't possibly match the grandeur, yet never overlifesize sonority, of Rubinstein's piano tone—still less the spacious acoustical authenticity of his Carnegie Hall setting. For the rest, I can say no more than that the maestro is at the height of his matured powers and insights, that the audience is both properly quiet (except for a few coughs at the beginning) and enthusiastic, that the applause is promptly faded out (as is always preferable on records), and that the tape itself is exceptionally well processed even though a trace of spill-over is detectable just once. (This is hardly

*Continued on next page*

surprising, considering the enormous dynamic range the recording captures here.)

Oh, yes . . . the music itself—a twentieth-century segment of the vast repertory covered by Rubinstein in his series of ten recitals in the fall of 1961: two Debussy Préludes (*La Cathédrale engloutie* and *Ondine*) and two *Images* (*Poissons d'or* and *Hommage à Rameau*); Szymanowski's Four Mazurkas, Op. 50; twelve of the Op. 12 *Visions fugitives* by Prokofiev; and six pieces (including the *Polichinelle*) from the first *Próle do Bébé* Suite by Villa Lobos. Let us hope this is only the first installment of a long series to come.

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**"Borge's Back—Recorded Live!"** Victor Borge, with Leonid Hambro, piano. M-G-M STC 3995, 44 min., $7.95.

Except for a few all too brief musical moments with some superb two-piano miscegenations of classics and pops, this evening with Borge in Buffalo, New York, is mostly casual talk which is seldom as hilarious on this tape as the enraptured audience in Buffalo obviously found it. Yet Borge himself is so engaging, whatever he has to say (many of his witticisms are impromptu), and everybody present has such a good time, that it's impossible for a tape listener not to have one too.

**"Bravo Giovanni."** Original Cast Recording. Anton Coppola, cond. Columbia OQ 458, 51 min., $9.95.

**"Songs of Italy."** Cesare Siepi; Orchestra and Chorus, Dino di Stefano, cond. London LOL 90047, 42 min., $7.95.

These two reels, together with the current London *Rigoletto*, impressively demonstrate Siepi's versatility—in a Broadway show especially tailored for him, and in a collection of popular Italian airs, all sung with great zest and lilt but topped by exceptional performances of a swaggering *Tiritomba* and a hauntingly expressive *Nu Quarto 'e Luna*. The basso is less assured in Milton Schafer's not-quite-show-stopping songs, but his big voice rings out magnificently, and *Bravo Giovanni* proves to be unexpectedly entertaining in recorded form. For this Siepi himself has to share honors with his vocally less gifted leading lady Michele Lee, whose personality is vividly projected, and with comedians George S. Irving, David Opatushu, and Maria Karnilova. Irving is particularly effective in delivering Ronnie Graham's deft and witty lyrics, and the full-blooded recording captures every word with exciting theatrical immediacy.

**"College Concert."** The Kingston Trio. Capitol ZT 1658, 39 min., $6.98.

This is the first recording I've heard of the Kingstonians in a live concert, and if the presence of an enthusiastic collegiate audience (at the University of California at Los Angeles) encourages a bit of hamming, it also stimulates the trio to some of its best performances. Home listeners will relish the lilting *Oh Miss Mary* and *Where Have All the Flowers Gone*, the lustily swinging *O Ken Karanga*, and the haunting *Chilly Winds*. The recording admirably achieves on-location atmospheric realism with no loss of verbal or sonic clarity.

**"The Count Meets the Duke."** Count Basie and Duke Ellington Orchestras. Columbia CQ 459, 41 min., $7.95.

This is a collaboration rather than a

competition, with the two leaders starring in their individually distinctive pianistic commentaries and antiphonies (Basie on the left throughout, the Duke on the right), and varied solos by at least a dozen of the thirty players involved. Apparently unrehearsed, the performances might have been even more effective if they had been carefully planned, but they do have exuberant spontaneity and at their best (in *Battle Royal, Jumpin' at the Woodside*, and *Wild Man*), they are immensely exhilarating. The strong, open, markedly stereoistic recording does them full justice, but unfortunately the tape processing is flawed by slight spill-overs between some of the selections.

**"Ella Swings Brightly with Nelson."** Ella Fitzgerald; Orchestra, Nelson Riddle, cond. Verve VSTC 274, 36 min., $7.95.
A typical Fitzgerald program with Ella at her lilting best in *Love Me or Leave Me, I Won't Dance, Alone Together, I Only Have Eyes for You*, etc.; she's less distinctive (but, as always, good) in the bluesy *I'm Goin' Fishin'* and other slower, more emotional songs. Riddle's little orchestra indeed "swings brightly" throughout, and the gleaming stereo recording (in which the soloist is not too closely miked) discloses every felicity of his deft arrangements.

**"For the Nero-Minded."** Peter Nero, piano; Orchestra, Marty Gold, cond. RCA Victor FTP 1141, 39 min., $7.95.
Again Nero demonstrates that cocktail hour pianism need be neither languidly sentimental nor lacking in musical imagination and substance. He brings genuine zest and bounce to *Ev'rything I've Got, Dancing on the Ceiling*, and *Something's Coming*; provides interesting quasipolyphonic textures for *Isn't It Romantic* and *Love Is a Simple Thing*; and only occasionally lapses (as in *Yesterdays* and *Let's Not Waste a Moment*) into more pretentious floridities. Marty Gold supplies rich orchestral support and the RCA Victor engineers capture the piano in particular with impressively natural and ringing solidity.

**"Hymns and Songs of Brotherhood."** Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Richard P. Condie, cond. Columbia MQ 453, 37 min., $7.95.
For no technically logical reason, the choir seems less closely miked here than in last June's disc version of the same recording; and while this is undoubtedly a subjective illusion, it certainly makes the reverberant, broadspread stereoism even more sonically impressive than before. It also makes one regret more than ever the lack of orchestral accompaniment in the *Pilgrims' Chorus*, Holst's *Two Veterans*, and the abridgment of Vaughan Williams' *Song of Thanksgiving*. But the rest of the well-varied, mostly unhackneyed program should please the choir's many admirers. The excellently processed taping is miraculously free of preëchoes.

**"In Praise of God."** Frank Chacksfield and His Orchestra. Richmond RPE 45029, 45 min., $4.95.
In a first-rate taping (with even quieter surfaces than the disc editions), this glowingly rich stereoism, the magnificent orchestral playing, and the imaginative symphonic scorings combine to place Chacksfield's program among the finest "devotional" releases to come along. At its bargain price it is one of the best buys in the whole tape catalogue—if only for its *All People That on Earth Do Dwell*, Vaughan Williams' magnificent setting of the "Old Hundredth," a tastefully stereogenic "patrol" arrangement of *Onward Christian Soldiers*, and Eric Rodgers' impressively sonorous scoring of the jubilant *All Things Bright and Beautiful*.

**"¡Mexico!"** Mariachi Miguel Dias. Audio Fidelity AFST 1957, 32 min., $8.95.
A colorful tape revival of one of Sidney Frey's 1960 south-of-the-border documentations of a *mariachi* ensemble—typical for its zestfully slapdash fiddles and guitars, and for its exuberant vocals. It is notable, too, for the comparative restraint of its florid trumpet playing and the effective use of a harp. The tirelessly festive performances tend to get a bit monotonous, but there are welcome contrasts in the best of them: *Las Trompetas del Diabolo, Alma Llanera*, and *La Adelita*. Brilliant, highly stereoistic recording; rather dry acoustics; quiet tape surfaces marred occasionally by slight preëchoes and spill-overs.

**"The Midnight Special."** Harry Belafonte; Orchestra, Jimmie Jones, cond. RCA Victor FTP 1108, 40 min., $7.95.
Belafonte's latest program ranges less widely than many of his earlier ones, and dispenses with the usual chorus and orchestra in favor of a studio instrumental ensemble featuring pianist-leader Jimmie Jones, trumpeter Joe Wilder, and tenor saxophonist Jerome Richardson. Belafonte seems inspired here to some of the best—and least-mannered—singing I have ever heard from him on records. His eloquent *Makes a Long Time Man Feel Bad* is an authentic blues masterpiece; and not far behind are *Did You Hear About Jerry?, Crawdad Song, Gotta Travel On*, and *Michael Row the Boat Ashore*. Belafonte's old friends will find fresh reasons here for their admiration, while listeners who have never heard him before will find this reel an ideal introduction to one of the most engaging *volkstümlich* personalities of our day. Happily, too, it is superbly recorded and, apart from some preëchoes, well processed.

**"The Music Man."** Film Track Recording, Ray Hentoff, cond. Warner Brothers WSTA 1459, 49 min., $8.95.
The film version of Meredith Willson's masterpiece may well duplicate the popular success of the Hollywood *West Side Story*—but I'd be willing to bet that it will not delight those who know either the original Broadway production or its Capitol taping. Robert Preston is still starred, to be sure, but while one might expect his virtuoso performance to have become more slickly mannered with constant repetition, even listeners with the worst opinion of Hollywood can hardly be prepared for the insensitivity with which the music itself has been diluted for mass consumption. Hentoff's pallid orchestra is an unacceptable substitute for the lusty pit band of Herbert Greene, and the freshness and homespun gusto of Willson's score are barely suggested here.


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Antenna Input: 300 ohms balanced. IHFM Usable Sensitivity: 3uV (30db quieting), 1.5uV for 20db quieting. Sensitivity for phase-locking (synchronization) in stereo: 2.5 uV. Full limiting sensitivity: 10uV. IF Bandwidth: 280kc at 6db points. Ratio Detector Bandwidth: 1 megacycle peak-to-peak separation. Audio Bandwidth at FM Detector: Flat to 53kc discounting pre-emphasis. IHFM Signal-to-Noise Ratio: —55db. IHFM Harmonic Distortion: 0.6%. Stereo Harmonic Distortion: less than 1.5%*. IHFM IM Distortion: 0.1%. Output Audio Frequency Response: ±1db 20cps-15kc. IHFM Capture Ratio: 3db. Channel Separation: 30db. Audio Output: 0.8 volt. Output Impedance: low impedance cathode followers. Controls: Power, Separation, FM Tuning, Stereo-Mono, AFC-Defeat. Tubes: 1-ECC85, 5-6AU6, 1-6AL5, 1-12AT7, 2-12AU7, 1-6D10 (triple triode), 1-DM70 (tuning-eye), 1-EZ80 rectifier, 6 signal diodes, 1 neon lamp. Power Source: 117V, 60cps; 60 watts drain; extractor post fuse. Size (HWD): 5⅛" x 15⅞" x 11⅜". Weight 17 lbs.

*Actual distortion meter reading of derived left or right channel output with a stereo FM signal fed to the antenna input terminals.

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CIRCLE 44 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# HIGH FIDELITY NEWSFRONTS

BY NORMAN EISENBERG

**Transistors in Progress.** Having been duly impressed by recent figures from the Electronic Industries Association on the rapidly growing use of transistors (over 34,000,000 more sold in 1962 than in 1961), we hied ourselves to the Plainview, Long Island, plant of Harman-Kardon, a firm reportedly going in heavily for semi-conductors in its new audio gear. There we discovered that the semiconductor revolution apparently has really arrived: an expanded staff that now includes a "human engineering" department (which relates the design of components to the physical dimensions of people) as well as a major portion of a giant modern plant all seem bent on eliminating vacuum tubes from electronic equipment. While H-K has not suddenly stopped producing vacuum tube equipment, all its new designs are based strictly on the use of transistors—and, in the case of amplifiers, on the elimination of output and interstage transformers. Spearheading this trend is chief engineer Robert Furst, who seems always to have a brier pipe in his mouth and a transistor in his hand. Among the plant innovations that Furst showed us is a temperature chamber which tests the effects of cold and heat on transistors. "We have found," says Furst, "that rising heat means rising distortion in transistors. In fact, the relationship is so direct, you can almost plot an IM curve with degrees of centigrade."

"What about transistor reliability?" we wanted to know.

"Every transistor we use is individually tested," stated Furst. "No sampling, no spot-checks—but complete, 100% testing. This includes our kits as well as our in-plant wired units."

For the latter type, as well as for prefabricated printed boards supplied with new kits, H-K has installed an automated soldering system. A circuit board, made of epoxy glass (said to be stronger and more impervious to moisture and heat than phenolic), is fitted with components and then moved along a set of rails. The board passes over a huge tank containing liquid solder; as it reaches a certain point, a cylinder rotates from the tank to apply solder exactly where it is needed on the board. Excess solder is then steamed off the board, which comes off the rails complete and perfect.

The first fruits of this new technology are found in the pride of H-K's new line, the Citation A preamplifier. Aside from such unusual specifications as response from one to one million cycles, and a set of controls than can effectively compensate for misaligned tape heads when playing from a tape deck, the "A" incorporates some novel circuitry. Details will be forthcoming when we report on this unit in a future issue, but the feature that most intrigued us is a circuit in the power supply which H-K engineers call a "capacitor multiplier." Built around a power transistor, this wafer-thin network actually takes the place of a 0.01-farad capacitor. Remarkable, when you realize that a 0.01-farad capacitor is normally the size of a cookie jar.

**Listening Library.** They still do things in a big way out West. Built into a wing of the library at Foothill College in Los Altos, California, is a stereo system that can feed nine different tape and disc program sources to eighty sets of headphones as well as five different listening rooms. Designed by the college's audio-visual department, engineered by Byron

*Lending library, California-style.*

Carr of Ampex, and installed by McDaniels Hi-Fi Center of Menlo Park, the $15,000 system is one of the most ambitious teaching aids yet devised. A student may "borrow" a selection from the library's collection of nearly one thousand records and tapes by requesting an attendant to play it. Private listening with the headphones, or group listening in one of the rooms, can be arranged for the teaching of languages, music appreciation, speech, and drama.

**Literature, Free and Otherwise.** This is the time of year when the high fidelity industry becomes known as much for its publications as its products. Manufacturers and the larger distributors are issuing their 1963 catalogues and brochures, and one company—in a new departure—is publishing its own general books on sound reproduction. The first two volumes in the "AR Library" launched by Acoustic Research, Inc., are neither catalogues nor instruction manuals but full-length books offering comprehensive treatments of audio. We hope to discuss these books, as well as others on the subject, in detail in the future—for the nonce we will state that they are welcome additions to the small but growing body of serious literature on home music systems. The first is titled *High Fidelity Systems, A User's Guide* and is just that. Author Roy F. Allison (once with this journal and now AR's plant manager) addresses himself with clarity and intelligence to the rank novice. More detailed, but still not too formidable for a nontechnical but patient reader, is *Reproduction of Sound*, written by AR's president, Edgar Villchur. Both books are handsomely printed and lavishly illustrated. In soft covers, the Allison work sells for $1.00; the Villchur volume, $2.00.

For winter reading, a record-size 1963 catalogue, totaling 672 pages, has been announced by Allied Radio, 100 N. Western Ave., Chicago 80, Ill. More than six hundred manufacturers of electronic devices will be represented.

Yawning fidelitarians are directed toward "Audio Robots Are for Sleeping," a brochure published by Royce Electronic Developments, Inc., P. O. Box 321, Valley Stream, N.Y., which explains how automatic control of a high fidelity system can be accomplished remotely in conjunction with extension speakers and a new type of control box. Also of interest to lazy listeners is a folder from Stereosonics, Inc., 39-43 46th St., Long Island City, N.Y., which describes this company's new "Universal Remote Control," a motorized device that permits the user to control stereo from the listening position.

An 8-page booklet from Ungar Electric Tools, 1475 East El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, Calif., describes this company's new "Imperial" line of soldering irons. The irons themselves are the prettiest we've ever seen, featuring pastel-colored handles, color-banded heating cartridges, and gold-plated as well as copper tips. The iron is sold in parts, so that the user can select different combinations for varying soldering needs.

Tape manufacturer Triton Electronics, Inc., 62-05 30th Ave., Woodside 77, N.Y., is offering a booklet titled "How To Make Quality Tape Recordings in Your Home."

The story of Audio Exchange's "trade-in" and "trade-back" of new and used equipment is told in "Trader's Handbook," available from A.E. at 153-21 Hillside Ave., Jamaica, N.Y.

## THE MAGIC SPARK

*Continued from page 47*

ROSENTHAL: But the word "record" surely means also that you must be faithful to an individual's *performance*. This particular recording wasn't one hundred per cent true to Flagstad.

CULSHAW: Let us accept that definition. When I first heard Flagstad's Isolde in 1945 her top Cs were intact. For me the truth about Flagstad is the memory of 1945. This recording was made in 1951, when her top Cs were no more. They could, of course, have recorded her without any, or with painful ones. But as a record of the essential Flagstad the results would have been inaccurate, untrue. In any case, these top Cs pass very quickly. I never noticed the interpolations until the "scandal" came out in the newspapers—to the bitter hurt of a very great artist.

REID: One point you make, John, is about the modern recording director's scrupulous attention to musico-dramatic detail. We all rejoice in your six harps, eighteen real anvils—and eighteen real blacksmiths—in *Rheingold*, the cornemuse in the *Otello* garden scene, and the alpenhorn frolics when the ship is sighted in *Tristan* Act III. Some of your detail, however, is not, I think, quite as happy. More than one critic has complained of the oppressive beat or throb of the famous organ pedal in the *Otello* storm scene.

CULSHAW: There is, I admit, a good deal of argument about the strength of that pedal note. Is it too loud? Some people say it is. Other people say it is just what's wanted—or rather, just what Verdi wanted. I certainly thought at the time that it was what he wanted.

ROSENTHAL: The *Rheingold* thunderclap and anvils are absolutely fabulous. But what about the point where Wotan (or is it Loge?) tosses the Ring onto the treasure heap? It sounds as if it has fallen into a chamber pot!

CULSHAW: I confess that if we were making *Rheingold* again tomorrow I would take that one out—just as we eliminated, after four days' work, the sounds of fighting in *Tristan* Act III on the arrival of King Marke's ship, simply because, although asked for by Wagner, they just didn't seem to fit when recorded.

REID: One final point. Is stereo opera as much a menace to repertory opera as Norman Tucker [director of Sadler's Wells Opera], for example, thinks? What's your feeling, Harold?

ROSENTHAL: John wrote in his *Records and Recording* article that people will no longer tolerate third-rate repertory performances when they can hear first-rate ones in their homes. That made me hopping mad. Don't you realize, John, that by taking this attitude you may be killing the goose that lays golden eggs for the gramophone companies? If you don't have these lower-level repertory performances, "shoddy and apologetic," as you call them, you will never train and bring on our future Nilssons, Del Monacos, and Tebaldis, to mention only three big names on your own list.

CULSHAW: I absolutely agree. . . . I have seen repertory performances in Germany with reduced orchestras that were magnificent. . . .

ROSENTHAL: I wish you had made that clear in your article!

CULSHAW: Well, I'm glad to make it clear now. I'm not saying: cut out repertory opera. All I'm saying is that it drives me mad when something is slipshod that doesn't have to be, when it doesn't cost twopence to put it right. What angers me is the shoddiness, the lack of imagination, the inattention to detail, the orchestral deployments which haven't been changed for years—simply because it's too much bother or because there's a troublemaker in the theatre. . . .

ROSENTHAL: Against all that I must again paint the other side of the picture: the uncertainties, hopes, and anticipations of a live performance; the magic spark that is sometimes kindled, as it can never be kindled outside the theatre: the conductor, audience, and singers linked together in a supreme musical experience, all taking something from and giving something to each other. Of course this doesn't happen every night of the week. How could it? But it happens often enough to confirm our faith. For me and, I'm sure, for many others, recorded opera will never capture the atmosphere and the thrill of live performances.

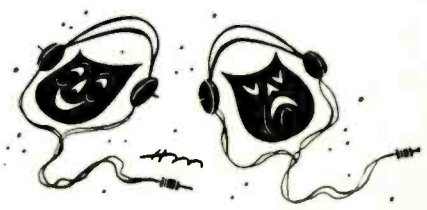
REID: Let's see if we can end on a square inch of common ground. You, John, will agree, I think, that a first-rate performance by a first-rate company in a first-rate theatre is, all in all—for we're not confining it to music now—a fine and incomparable thing?

CULSHAW: Yes—when it happens.

REID: And you, Harold, will, I think, agree that theatre acousticians and live musicians (conductors especially) have a lot of technical things to learn from stereo opera?

ROSENTHAL: So long as they don't get their ears stuffed with interpolated top Cs—yes!

REID: Shake on that. . . . Fine!



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## DEBUSSY ON MICROGROOVE

*Continued from page 90*

Debussy seeks not to send us away with a new tune in our repertoire, but to conjure a series of images and sensations that will add up to an indefinable but meaningful experience. We are not supposed to apprehend this special world and take it away with us, for its essence lies in its transitoriness; we can experience it only while there, and each aspect of it for only a fathomless instant, since it is in constant flux. And when moving away from it, we carry with us only some feeling of associations, a certain faded remembrance, which leads us back to it in a vain search for something recognizable and constant. When Debussy does employ more traditional usages, the effect is almost shocking. For instance, the highly accessible tune with which he proclaims the verses of *Chevaux de bois* (*"Tournez, tournez, bons chevaux de bois"*) is, in the last verse (after ventures afield in the third), altered as to tempo and dynamic level to achieve its affective purpose.

The infrequency with which such devices are used provides us with a key: we must be willing to listen to Debussy, as to Wolf, prepared for a new series of premises. We must abide by his particular selection of texts (Verlaine; Louÿs; Debussy himself; medieval sources matching medieval modes). We must also accept the difficulties presented by the fact that competent performances of Debussy are rarities. To project a Debussy song, the artist must first get inside the poetry—no easy task in itself. Since so much of the effect in a typical Debussy song (and this is even more true in *Pelléas*) depends on keeping a consistent texture and forward movement despite frequent and unprepared rhythmic modifications, the singer's sense of rhythm must be practically absolute. Moreover, the purely vocal demands are considerable. Gerard Souzay pointed out in his Mannes College master classes last year (brilliant and inspiring sessions, by the way, of great value to any singer or student) that there is a widespread notion to the effect that the French art song does not impose great vocal demands; such an idea is absurd. The compasses of these songs are wide; *La Mort des amants*, for instance, is just a tone short of being two full octaves, and it is by no means unique. Of course, it is what the singer is supposed to do within this range that makes things tough. *Green* offers an excellent example. In the medium key (E flat minor) this song ranges from low A to high F—an octave and a minor sixth. This is a wide compass, but no great obstacle in itself to a singer of moderately good equipment and training. The catch is that the singer is expected to glide over the uppermost phrases as if he were holding a relaxed parlor conversation. The very opening phrase, *"Voici des fruits, des fleurs, des feuilles et des branches,"* must sail over the F (on *"feuilles"*) with the utmost ease and freedom, at the *piano* dynamic, with no heaviness or trace of strain. A few phrases later, the singer must ascend easily and steadily to E natural, effecting a crescendo on *"deux mains blanches,"* but still keeping within the dynamic framework (*nowhere* should the song be loud), and pronouncing the two syllables of *"blanches"* with clarity and intensity. Still later, he must go *"caressant"* and *"piano"* over the F again (on *"laissez rouler ma tête"*). In other words, the lyric baritone (or mezzo—though it will not be so difficult for her) must have a feather-light, legato touch around E natural and F. While there is no rule against transposing the song downward, it is bound to lose some of its *"leggierissimo"* (the composer's indication) quality as it descends. Moreover, it already goes down to A (with the important final line, *"Puisque vous reposez,"* on the low B flat), and a lyric baritone or mezzo will run into trouble at that end of the line by lowering it. And, even assuming that all these problems are solved, we have not begun to consider whether the singer has well-nigh perfect French diction, sensitivity to poetry, etc.

Given these circumstances, it is not really surprising that Debussy's songs have been given scant recorded attention. I shall therefore consider here (as with some of the choral works) imported discs and certain records that have been deleted but might still be found, along with those generally available.

The most systematic attempt to put Debussy's songs on record since the days of 78s (when Maggie Teyte, Claire Croiza, Charles Panzera, and Roger Bourdin, among them, put practically all of them on disc) are the two volumes issued by the French Valois label, available here as imports. Taken together, they form an admirable cross section of the composer's output. Volume One features Flore Wend, accompanied by Noël Lee; Volume Two has Bernard Kruysen accompanied by Jean-Charles Richard. Wend's voice has that direct, slightly boyish quality which suits her so well for the title role in *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* or that of Yniold in *Pelléas*. It is attractive, a bit thin, and rather limited in color. Her sense of what to do with this music, though, is almost impeccable. She is not an inimitable personality like Teyte; here there are lacking the little glides, the occasional tendency to romanticize, the fuller, more emotional quality of voice which sometimes distorted phrases but which also made Teyte's rendition of a song like *Colloque sentimental* unforgettable. What Wend gives us is unfailing good taste, clear projection of the text, and musical accuracy. Her disc also affords the only current version of the three *Chansons de Bilitis*, which are among the composer's finest for female voice, and of *Spleen*. Her performance of the *Trois Ballades de François Villon* is also the best available (despite my preference for a male voice in this little cycle—it is, after all, Villon speaking), for reasons I shall cite below, in connection with the Fischer-Dieskau version.

Kruysen is also an excellent artist, with a dark, smooth baritone not un-

like Souzay's or Panzera's, and a fine comprehension of the songs. However, his disc runs into direct competition with Souzay's. The two recitals have thirteen songs in common. Souzay's has the following advantages: 1) Twenty-one songs as against eighteen for Kruysen, including a repeat of *Auprès de cette grotte sombre*, which is included in both the *Trois Chansons de France* and *Le Promenoir des deux amants*; 2) Marginally superior piano work by Baldwin (compare the arpeggiated chords leading into the second verse of *La Grotte*); 3) Slightly better sound. Kruysen's record holds the edge in these respects: 1) A voice of somewhat more bite and solidity, making his performances of such songs as *La mer est plus belle que les cathédrales* basically superior to Souzay's; 2) More interesting repertory in the songs not included on both discs. (I refer to the *Noël des enfants qui n'ont plus de maisons*, Debussy's last song and a very moving one, and to the *Trois Poèmes de Mallarmé*; while Souzay's record includes several major items, such as *Beau soir* and *Green*, it also includes a dud, *De soir*, and most of the good ones can be had on the Wend disc if they are wanted.

Fischer-Dieskau sings the *Trois Ballades de François Villon* on his DGG Debussy/Ravel recital. This is now the only edition of this group available in the orchestrated version. Singher's fine performance for Columbia having long since been withdrawn. The German baritone assuredly has the equipment necessary to handle these songs, and his French is not at all bad, as non-native French goes. Unfortunately, he overdramatizes the songs, substituting for their simple essence a flavor that would be more appropriate to Wolf (if you like your Wolf that way). His delivery of the little repeated *"Sans empirer, ung povre secourir"* in the *Ballade de Villon à s'amye* quivers as if he were declaiming *The Highwayman*, and many other lines are similarly overloaded. *Mandoline* and *La Grotte*, also included on the disc, fare better, but hardly well enough to rate higher than the Souzay or Kruysen performances.

Eileen Farrell turns her big, billowy voice to five Debussy songs on her Columbia song recital. Her performance of the *Noël* is quite gripping, since this song can take an abundance of tone and a dramatic approach (not ideally of course, since, theoretically, a child is singing). The others offer little illumination, being too open and American in feeling, though the voice itself is consistently lovely and is scaled down as well as one could reasonably expect. Her version of *Fleur des blés* is the only available one.

In sum, I would recommend purchase of the two Valois discs if one wants a fairly comprehensive selection of Debussy songs, well performed, and without duplication. If, however, the collector wants to limit himself to a single record or has difficulty in obtaining imports, the Souzay record is an excellent

*Continued on page 149*

## THE QUEST FOR VERISMO

*Continued from page 54*

should really be unfaithful—then the story would finish very differently, as sure as I'm talking with you!"

Next comes another formal chorus, the "Bell Chorus," which constitutes a sort of interlude. Then Nedda's Ballatella, a distinctly separate number, and then the Tonio/Nedda scene, including an arioso passage for Tonio and two pages of actual duet. This scene again refers to the theatre/life contrast; in fact, the thing that goads Tonio beyond endurance is Nedda's repeated reminder that Tonio gets his chance at courtship during the performance (when, of course, he is again rebuffed). Tonio's exit after the whipping by Nedda is followed immediately by the lengthy love scene between Silvio and Nedda, interrupted when Tonio leads Canio to the spot. Then, after the extremely concise scene of Canio's attempted stabbing of Nedda, the act closes with the arioso (it is so labeled in the score, though it is at least as much an aria as, say, "*Mi chiamano Mimì*") of Canio, "*Vesti la giubba*," whose entire subject, of course, is the irony of acting like a clown when one's heart is poisoned by a shattered love.

The second act is a remarkably complete parallel to the first—everything that has happened that afternoon happens again, on the stage—only with Canio's promised "very different finish." The parallel between the happenings during the *commedia* and those of the first act is complete down to small details in both text and music. Again Nedda, as Columbine, sings to herself while she awaits the arrival of a love. Again she is interrupted by Tonio (Taddeo), who presses his suit; again Nedda rebuffs him. Then Nedda and her lover (Arlecchino) have their love scene, during which they plot to drug Pagliaccio (Canio) and flee together. Then Taddeo interrupts to announce the unexpected return of Pagliaccio. Nedda's final words to Arlecchino are precisely those of her farewell to Silvio, overheard by Canio in the first act—"Till tonight—and I will be yours forever!"

From here, the parallel begins to disintegrate, because Canio cannot hold himself in check. He tries to improvise lines in the traditional mold of the *commedia*, but finds this increasingly difficult, especially as almost every line of dialogue underlines the irony of the parallel. Taddeo's mocking assurance ("Believe her! Believe her! She's pure! Those pious lips abhor a lie!") finally puts an end to Canio's self-control, and, wiping the grease paint from his face, he launches into his great aria "*No, Pagliaccio non son!*" ("No, I am not Pagliaccio!").

From this point on, the mask is off. The aria is very similar to Rigoletto's "*Cortigiani, vil razza dannata!*" in construction—an opening section of savage intensity, followed by a cantabile. Between the two parts of the aria are interpolated the remarks of the chorus —"Friend, he makes me cry!" "This scene is like truth itself!" etc. As Canio furiously demands the name of her lover, Nedda tries to restore the course of the comedy; but this puts Canio into a paroxysm: "Ah! you defy me! And again you do not understand that I won't give in—the name, or your life!" Now Nedda also drops the pretense, and openly defies Canio; the villagers are not sure what to make of the scene before them—"Is this thing serious?" "Are they really acting?" etc. The end comes with a shocking suddenness: as Nedda tries to escape into the audience, Canio seizes her and stabs her again and again, shouting "The name, the name!" Silvio arrives at the stage, dagger in hand, just in time to meet his own death. With Canio's line "*La commedia è finita!*" ("The show is over!") the curtain falls quickly.

So *Pagliacci*, structurally, breaks down to this: a Prologue, which is also a baritone aria; an aria for the soprano; three arias for the tenor; three formally developed choruses; an intermezzo generally used as a prelude to Act II; two scenes between soprano and baritone, one a confrontation, the other a love scene; and passages of through-composed dialogue which keep the score moving but do not blur the distinct lines between sections. And all of this, of course, is

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(Signed) John W. Ross, Secretary

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28th day of September 1962.

(Seal) Leroy V. Johnson

Notary Public, Hamilton County, Ohio

(My Commission expires March 14, 1963)

set into a very fully developed play-within-a-play framework, in which the parallels between stage and life are constantly played against each other, until the line between the two becomes blurred, and the pretense gives way to the reality that has from the beginning threatened to show itself.

I HAVE TAKEN SPACE to look closely at *Pagliacci* because it is so representative of the best that verismo opera has to offer and is illustrative of the fact that verismo is by no means an attempt at slice-of-life photography.

Verismo works do, however, tend towards an almost journalistic brevity and conciseness. It is interesting to observe that though all of them picture characters caught in moments of uncontrolled lust or jealousy or other passion, none of them concerns itself, in any philosophical fashion, with the nature of lust or jealousy or passion. No time is taken to explore the meaning of passion, as in *Tristan*; nor is any attempt made to investigate its origins or quality, as in the Carlo/Elisabetta scenes in *Don Carlo*, so explicitly illustrative of the quality of suppressed passion. We see only its moment of rule, and its effects, in the verismo works. Man plus woman plus second man equals murder, and that is it.

I cannot subscribe to the theory that the verismo composers are responsible for the decadence and virtual collapse of the Italian operatic tradition. This is true only insofar as later composers and their critics carried verismo too far in the direction of literalism, of naturalistic plays set to music; but the doings of their successors are hardly the responsibility of Leoncavallo or Mascagni. The decline of Italian opera was accomplished by a host of factors involving much more than the work of a handful of composers of near-genius—factors equally operative in other branches of music and the arts in general. Sadly, the verismo movement found itself a small manifestation of an upheaval that marked the passing of an age; and even more sadly, its representatives were men of remarkably inconsistent productivity—every one of the verismo composers, with the obvious exception of Puccini, either retired early, in discouragement, or spent long years trying on various stylistic garments, to no good purpose. Not one of them wrote more than a single opera of lasting viability. But surely this is much more a commentary on these composers' limited abilities than on the strictures of verismo.

It is the art of *seeming* lifelike in an art form that is of necessity highly stylized that gives the better verismo works their grip on the public, for it makes them seem more accessible than the more formally patterned nineteenth-century works. It is the art of presenting Tonio's "slice of life" through the "ancient masks" and the "old usages"—in short, of making pretense seem real in order to show us reality's meaning. And that, after all, is nothing less than the whole purpose of any work of the theatre.



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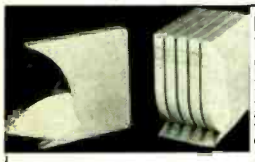

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*Continued from page 145*

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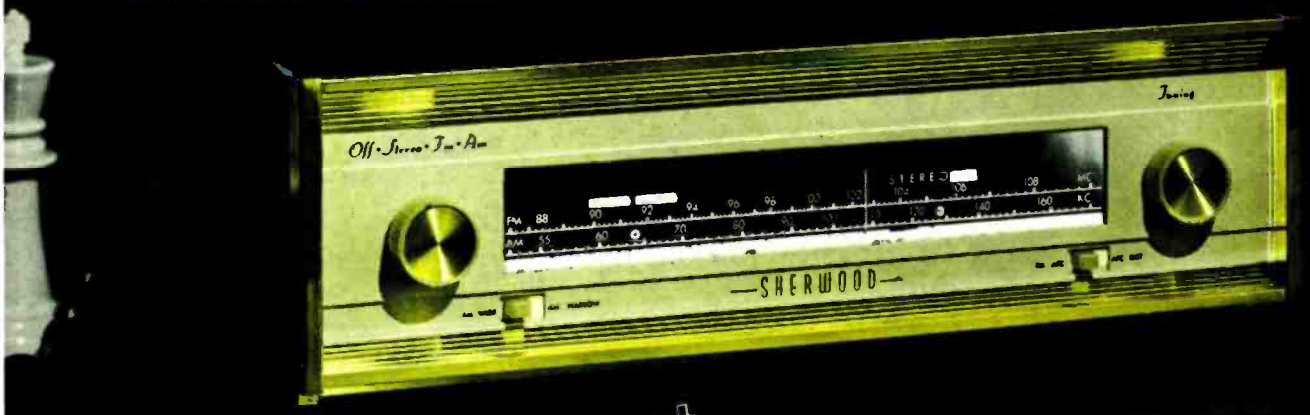


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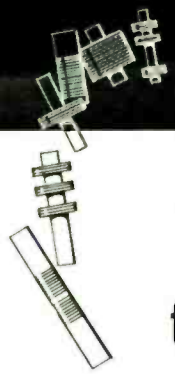

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