



Boyd Neel: his artistry confirmed.

excerpts. The unfamiliar overture to one of Handel's last operas, *Faramondo*, with its grandly broad introduction, splendid fugue, and affecting air, is marked by exceptional virility.

Although there is no indication on the jacket or label, the performing group appears to be a Canadian edition of the Boyd Neel Orchestra. It matches in every way the cohesion, polish, and sonority of its older English counterpart, thereby attesting to the artistic stature of its founder-director. P.A.

DAVID OISTRAKH: *The Violinist-Composer*

Ysaÿe: *Elegiac Poem*, Op. 12. Wieniawski: *Etude in E*, Op. 18, No. 5; *Legende*, Op. 17. Sarasate: *Zortzico* (Spanish Dance). Kreisler: *La Gitana*. Vieuxtemps: *Two Romances*, Op. 7, Nos. 2 and 3. Paganini: *Variations on the G String* (on the *Prayer* from Rossini's *Mosé in Egitto*).

David Oistrakh, violin; Vladimir Yam-polsky, piano.
DECCA DL 9882. 12-in. \$3.98.

George Bernard Shaw once differentiated between those composers who wrote music for the violin and of the violin. The eight pieces in this collection belong to the latter category. Though every one of these violinist-composers created virtuoso music, there is none of it here; the accent is on the violin's tonal characteristics.

Oistrakh gets beneath the surface of this music and interprets it with greater understanding and intensity of feeling than he has done with many larger, more complex works. His double-stopping throughout the brilliant Wieniawski *Etude* and his octave passages in the Ysaÿe *Elegiac Poem* emerge with sparkling precision. Elsewhere he exploits with his suavest whipped-cream tone the rich romantic out-pourings that characterize most of these miniatures. Especially is this true of the lyrical parts of the *Elegiac Poem*, the two Vieuxtemps *Romances*, and the Rossini-Paganini *Moses* fantasy, his performance of the latter being one of the most sonorous performances on the violin's lowest string that I have ever encountered.

As Soviet-made recordings go, this one passes muster very well; no rasp, no fog. If the piano has been relegated to the background, it is because, in this instance, it belongs there. P.A.

FELIX SLATKIN: *España*

Ravel: *Boléro*; *Alborada del Gracioso*. Rimsky-Korsakov: *Capriccio espagnol*, Op.

34. Albéniz (arr. Arbós): *Triana* (from *Iberia*).

Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra, Felix Slatkin, cond.

CAPITOL P 8375. 12-in. \$3.98.

There are lots of *Boléros* in the catalogue, but no more than a couple that can rival this one. For one thing it respects the clearly expressed wishes of the composer in preserving correct tempos. Second, it is sympathetically played by a fine orchestra with first-desk men up to the solos and a percussionist who can stand the long haul. Third, the bright and spacious recording is first class.

In spite of occasional reverberation and orchestral voices seemingly misplaced, a set of fine performances. R.C.M.

SPOTLIGHT ON BRASS

Roger Voisin, Harold Meek, and Joseph Orsz.

VOX DL 300. 12-in. \$6.95.

According to R. D. Darrell's very readable accompanying booklet, this record of excerpts demonstrating twenty-six brass instruments is intended less for musical pleasure than for study. Certainly it provides a fine set of illustrations for any student of orchestration; and perhaps more important, it allows the ordinary listener to learn how to spot various members of the brass family by ear.

There are, of course, more brass instruments than are represented here, and perhaps longer selections from fewer instruments would have been desirable. Direct comparison between the sound of the instruments as they were known originally and as they are familiar to us today also would have been especially helpful. A choice had to be made, however, and so we have an African elephant horn sonorously blasted by a self-effacing virtuoso, a coach horn, and a medieval trumpeter among other interesting examples of obsolete brasses. Best of the historical material is the difficult solo from the Nocturne of Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream Music* as it sounded on a natural (i.e. valveless) horn. (I'll take the modern one, thanks!) On the other hand, we aren't given a chance to hear the big F trumpet which composers from Beethoven through Franck regarded as standard. A terror to keep in balance in the ensemble, it produced tones which the smaller contemporary instruments demonstrated here cannot match in power and color.

The performances are marred enough to be really realistic. If an instrument has difficult or unreliable intonation, one senses it in the playing. If some of the notes in its scale are "bad," one hears their defects. This is all to the good. The recording, billed as "ultra high fidelity," conveys a remarkable feeling of the great resonant spaces of Symphony Hall, Boston. All in all, a useful disc, and a pleasant one, evoking renewed appreciation of this "Spotlight" series by Vox. R.C.M.

SPOTLIGHT ON KEYBOARD

Bruce Simmonds, Claire Coci, Martin Hoherman, Harold Thompson.

VOX DL 362. Two 12-in. \$12.95.

Anyone who has had any questions about

differences in sound among harpsichords, virginals, spinets, clavichords, and pianos of various periods will find most of them answered here. From the Belle Skinner collection of instruments in Holyoke, Massachusetts, are recorded two kinds each of virginals, spinet, and clavichord, five makes of harpsichord, and four sorts of piano. Each is heard as Bruce Simmonds plays on it a short composition of its own period. Every now and then a piece played on an old instrument is repeated on a modern piano to dramatize the contrast. There are also four types of organ — Italian Renaissance, reconstructed baroque, modern studio, and the gigantic instrument at West Point. And finally there is a miscellaneous group of instruments, some of which are apparently included here because they do not fit any better in the other albums of the "Spotlight" series. This group comprises the monochord (with keyboard), the hurdy-gurdy, the barrel-organ, the music box, the glaschord, the accordion, the celesta, and the zanza — the last a little bamboo affair from Africa which has all the sensuous appeal of a plucked rubber band.

The claviers on these discs — and it is unusual for a collection of old instruments to have so many that are in playable condition — seem to be in excellent shape, except for the Peres harpsichord, which to me sounded out of condition. A harpsichord by Andreas Ruckers and a Hoffman clavichord sounded particularly fine. It is too bad that the pianos do not include one of the Mozart period. Among the odds and ends, the monochord, hurdy-gurdy, and glaschord are out-of-tune curiosities, but the Hohner accordion and the Mustel celesta sounded splendid.

Indispensable to the proper use of these discs are the lively and informative notes by R. D. Darrell about both instruments and music. The recording itself is first-rate throughout; the instruments of the harpsichord family were purposely recorded louder than life and must therefore be played back with less volume than usual. Included in the album are two paper strips which quickly and easily locate any desired instrument on the disc. N.B.

ETTEL SUSSMAN: *French Operatic Airs from Lully to Rameau*

Desmarests: *Circé: Air de Circé*. Marin Marais: *Alcyone: Air d'Alcyone*. Des-touches: *Callirhoë: Monologue de Callirhoë*. Lully: *Amadis: Air d'Arcabonne*. Lully: *Armide: Air d'Armide*. Campra: *Alcine: Air de Ménélie*. Campra: *Les Ages: Air de Florise*. Campra: *Hésione: Air d'Hésione*. Colasse: *Enee at Lavinie: Prologue (La Félicité)*. Da la Guerre: *Céphale et Procris: Air de Procris*. Mouret: *Les Fêtes de Thalie: Air d'Isabelle*.

Ettel Sussman, soprano; Jean-Pierre Rampal, flute; Roger Albin, cello; Robert Veyron-Lacroix, harpsichord; L'Ensemble Orchestral de l'Oiseau-Lyre, Louis de Froment, cond.

OISEAU-LYRE OL 50117. 12-in. \$4.98.

Eleven arias from operas written during the period stretching elastically between the death of Lully and the first successes

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