consistently misses the long appoggiaturas and fudges some of the short ones in funny ways; sometimes pianist and violinist play the same melody one after the other with different versions of the ornaments. Draun, by the way, is capable enough, and indeed it would be a mistake to imply that Szel so comes off as a total duffer. But in view of the billing, the reputation and the music involved, one has the right to expect coherent, consistent performances that are, at least, stylistically right. At the very least. Good sound.

E. S.

RACHMANINOFF: Symphonic Dances (see Lutoslawski)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SATIE: Piano Music, Volume Two. La Belle Excentrique (four hands); Description automatique; Véritables préludes fantaisie (pour un elien); Vien sequens et violent caritasre; En habit de chien (four hands); Sports et divertissements; Chapitres tournés en tous sens; Aperçus désagréables (four hands). Aldo Ciccolini (piano). ANGEL S 36459 $5.79.

Performance: Crisply idiomatic
Recording: Excellent
Stereo Quality: Fine

When the post-Webernite vogue was at the peak of its influence in this country some ten years ago, Virgil Thomson, during an informal discussion, all but defined the term avant-garde for me with specific reference to the music of Erik Satie. His argument was that the dodecaphonic craze wasn’t avant-garde in any pure sense because its prophets and practitioners would invariably become (as indeed they have) tomorrow’s Establishment, Satie, on the other hand, having innovated an aesthetic rather than a method and, out of it, having composed a music that would always be for special rather than mass tastes—i.e., eternally separated from the main stream—is the quintessential avant-garde composer.

Take or leave Thomson’s definition of the term, he was most certainly correct in insisting that Satie was an important composer, one who cast a long shadow over history, but whose music is a very specially acquired taste. For Satie’s theory that music can be simple, banal, and fun—but still of excellence—was the one that lay behind France’s pre-empting of the Germanic dominance over music during the earlier decades of this century. There could have been no Milhaud, no Poulenc, no Ravel or for that matter Vir- tury. There could have been no Milhaud, no Poulenc, no Ravel or for that matter Vir- tury. There could have been no Milhaud, no Poulenc, no Ravel or for that matter Vir- tury. There could have been no Milhaud, no Poulenc, no Ravel or for that matter Vir- tury. There could have been no Milhaud, no Poulenc, no Ravel or for that matter Vir- tury. There could have been no Milhaud, no Poulenc, no Ravel or for that matter Vir- tury. 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