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BY RICHARD FREED

FOR some years critic Richard Freed, a contributing editor of *STEREO REVIEW*, has listened to all available recordings of the nearly two hundred symphonic works that form the essential core of orchestral programs and classical record collections, selecting those versions he considers the best. We have published his choices in a pamphlet, which we have updated periodically, and we are now publishing his selections of the best current recordings of the Basic Repertoire in a series in the magazine. All those cited are stereo LP's unless indicated otherwise by our usual symbols.

□ **RODRIGO: *Concierto de Aranjuez*.** Narciso Yepes's oldish recording with Argenta conducting remains for me the most persuasive of the several excellent accounts of this most beloved of all guitar concertos (London STS 15199, © STS5 15199). Among the newer and more expensive versions, Alfonso Moreno's, with Enrique Bátiz conducting, is especially recommendable, not only in its own right but also for the little-known material on the other side (Angel ● DS-37876, © 4XS-37876).

□ **ROSSINI: *Overtures*.** RCA's digital remastering of the Reiner collection, still at the low Gold Seal price, makes it competitive with the best available, and the selections are choice (AGL1-5210, © AGK1-5210). An outstanding mixture of familiar and unfamiliar titles is served up by Riccardo Chailly (London ● LDR 71034, © LDR5 71034, © 400 049-2). Abbado's album is nearly as fetching (RCA ARL1-3634, © ARK1-3634). None of these collections includes *Semiramide*; for a broader selection, the best combination of two discs without duplication would be Peter Maag's (London STS 15030, © STS5 15030) and the first of Marriner's five packages of this material (Philips 6500 878, © 7300 368).

□ **SAINT-SAËNS: *Carnival of the Animals*.** The recording by André Previn and the Pittsburgh Symphony excels in every respect and in every format (Philips ● 9500 973, © 7300 973, © 400 016-2). For the original chamber version, try Jörg Faerber on disc (Turnabout TV 34586) or Philippe Entremont on tape (CBS © MT 35851). Anyone who really wants the Oden Nash verses should buy the original recording in which Noël Coward recites them with André Kostelanetz conducting (Odyssey ● Y 32359).

□ **SAINT-SAËNS: *Piano Concerto No. 2, in G Minor*.** The new recordings

by Cécile Ousset, with Simon Rattle conducting (Angel ● DS-38004, © 4XS-38004), and by Pascal Rogé, with Charles Dutoit (London CS 7253, © CS5 7253), are both outstanding. Entremont's older version with Ormandy (CBS MS 6778) is superior to his remake with Plasson, and the Tacchino/Froment is a genuine bargain (Candide QCE 31080, Vox © CT-2124, or in Vox QSVBX-5143, © CBX-5143).

□ **SAINT-SAËNS: *Symphony No. 3, in C Minor ("Organ")*.** Charles Dutoit and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, with organist Peter Hurford, may be said to sweep the field with their extremely sympathetic, brilliantly recorded performance (London ● LDR 71090, © LDR5 71090, © 410 201-2), but Munch's 1959 Boston recording, re-vivified in RCA's half-speed remastering, is still a contender for top honors (ARP1-4440, © ARE1-4440).

SCHOENBERG: *Transfigured Night*. Several of the choice string-orchestra recordings have been deleted recently. Of the surviving ones, Horenstein's (Turnabout TV 34263) and Stokowski's (Seraphim S-60080) are the most expressive, Neumann's a bit brighter sounding (Quintessence PMC-7177, © P4C-7177). There are appealing recordings of the sextet version by the Ramor Quartet and friends (Turnabout TV 37012, © CT-7012) and from the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival (Nonesuch ● 1-79028, © 4-79028).

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 8, in B Minor ("Unfinished")*. Top honors may be divided between Carlos Kleiber's profound, freshly thought out reading (DG 2531 124, © 3301 124) and Jochum's powerful, heartfelt Boston performance (DG 2530 318). Also exceptional are Böhm's live Viennese remake (DG 2531 373, © 3301 373), Klemperer's (Angel RL-32038, © 4RL-32038), and the latest by Karajan (Angel SZ-37544, © 4ZS-37544, or in SE-3862).

□ **SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 9, in C Major ("The Great")*.** The Munch/Boston version, back on cassette only (RCA © Victrola ALK1-4507), is a marvelously exuberant performance, well recorded, and now an incredible bargain. At the expensive end of the scale, I like Heinz Rögner's provocative, grand-scaled digital recording (Denon ● OB-7350/51-ND, © 38C37-7035). Karajan's DG version, reissued now in the Privilege series, is a gem (2535 290, © 3335 290). Szell's CBS recording stands up beautifully in its latest transfer (MY 37239, © MYT 37239). Böhm's Dresden remake is marked by a splendid balance between majesty, urgency, and lyricism (DG 2531 352, © 3301 352).