HOW TO EXPLAIN STEREO TO YOUR FRIENDS

high fidelity

JANUARY 1960

THE MAGAZINE FOR MUSIC LISTENERS 60 CENTS

VERDI

on records—a discography

by Conrad L. Osborne

a visit to his Sant'Agata

by William Weaver

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AUTHORItatively Speaking

Last heard from in these pages relating the somewhat frenetic career of young Thomas Schippers (Schenectady, New York), William Weaver takes this issue, a decide change of pace: see "The Pavilion of the Open Sky" (p. 42), being an account of Giuseppe Verdi at his bucolic retreat near Busseto (Duchy of Parma). For some years Mr. Weaver has been an observer of Italian artistic affairs and is presently engaged in a detailed examination of Verdi’s letters. Like all good writers, he has placed his subject in its proper milieu. The result, for us, is this personally rendered visit to Verdi’s villa at Sant’ Agata.

Readers of High Fidelity’s "Records in Review" will have noted in late months the name of Conrad L. Osborne. With the appearance of his discography, "Verdi on Microgroove" (p. 46), we feel Mr. Osborne should no longer remain a man of mystery. Out of Nebraska by way of Columbia University, C. L. O. embarked on a series of diverse professions: student of vocal music and piano; actor for stage, radio, and television; editor and freelance writer. He’s also paid his respects to the Government, by way of the U. S. Army, psychological warfare division. And there’s a Mrs. Osborne—young, pretty, and a student of Yeats.

When Herman Burstein wrote one of our first articles on stereo (in the remote past, some two years ago) he had to his credit thirty published articles on high-fidelity reproduction and a technical handbook. Which clearly made him an authority. We don’t know what to add now, when the roster has grown to half a hundred magazine pieces and the book-length Fundamentals of High Fidelity and Stereo—How It Works, as well as the earlier Elements of Stereo Recordings. Mr. Burstein is an economics and statistics management consultant; but you can’t blame us if we regard him as audio man par excellence. Therefore we present with absolute assurance his advice on "How To Explain Stereo to Your Friends," p. 52.

Alan Wagner is a refugee from the academic world who became an executive in a large New York advertising agency—and who finds refuge from that harried sphere in the world of music. As producer-host of WNYC’s weekly “Living Opera” broadcast, he knows very well what he’s writing in "The New Golden Age of Opera," p. 53. He also lectures widely on the present state of vocal music (and other subjects), first practicing his addresses on one musically knowledgeable wife and now musically intellectual sons, aged twenty months. Best friends and second most critics, Mr. Wagner—not unsurprisingly—says.

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Vienna’s Real Bargain

Sir:

While Hans Herzog’s article ["Night Lights in the Konzerthaus"] in the November issue is entertaining, it contains some statements which are erroneous and others which may lead the reader to unfortunate impressions.

Among the inaccuracies is the statement that members of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra receive $3.00 per recording session currently. The figure is at least several times that amount. Further, if the Vienna Philharmonic comprises a body of over one hundred men drawn from a total of less than one hundred fifty in the entire State Opera orchestra, that would leave less than fifty in the Volksopern orchestra. The Volksopern orchestra actually comprises about eighty players. Thus any large-scale recording made by this orchestra would actually include so-called Philharmonic personnel.

Moreover, it is patently an oversimplification to state that [the economic factor] was the prime reason for all of the recording activity taking place in Vienna, France, Italy, and Spain were also economically depressed, and no activity took place in these countries on the same scale. The answer must lie as is made clear in the other excellent articles in the selfsame issue, in the unparalleled assemblage of musical talent available in this city. It is well and good to point out the incredibly low prices paid by the original Haydn Society in recording its Nelson Mass in Vienna in 1950. or that Walter Berry received $20 for a recording made at that time. As an indication of how times have changed, suffice it to say that this selfsame star, Mr. Berry, received a fee in four figures (American, not Viennese) for his participation in Vanguard's current recording of the Bach St. Matthew Passion.

The fact that the Vienna Symphony has its own recording studio

Continued on page 10

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When Handel finished that triumphant climax to the second part of the work, the 'Hallelujah Chorus,' tears were streaming down his cheeks. 'I did think I did see all Heaven before me and the Great God Himself!' he told his servant. And when the score was written he pointed to his bulky manuscript and said simply: 'I think God has visited me.'—DAVID EWEN, It was during the first London performance that the audience, carried away by the power of the 'Hallelujah Chorus,' arose in concert as though by a prearranged signal. Ever since then, audiences the world over express a similar respect: rising at the onset of this chorus and remaining standing until its conclusion.

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C-5 TCHAIKOVSKY Concerto No. 1 Cliburn, pianist Kondrashin, conductor
C-6 TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 5 Chicago Symphony, Reiner
C-7 R. STRAUSS Till Eulenspiegel and Death and Transfiguration Vienna Phil., Reiner

BEGIN YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH ANY ONE OF THESE

C-10 Heifetz, violinist
C-11 Krieps

不过，自然语言处理系统无法处理这个页面的文本，因为它包含了音乐作品的详细信息和价格信息。
LETTERS

Continued from page 8

does not make it any more tempting for American firms to operate in Vienna. No responsible recording firm uses outside engineers more than occasionally. As a point of fact one of the key reasons for our own firm's work in Vienna, aside from musical considerations, is that we maintain full studio facilities in that city, as do Westminster and London-Decca.

The Schwann catalogue is littered with the remains of those record companies which tried to prosper through "bargain basement" recordings. The real "bargain" in Vienna is the quality of its musical wares.

Seymour Solomon
Vanguard Recording Society, Inc.
New York, N. Y.

MR. HERZOG REPLIES: Mr. Seymour Solomon's letter, if I may quote his own words, is entertaining but it, too, contains some statements which are erroneous and others which may lead the reader to unfortunate impressions.

May I, for my part, correct an unfortunate slip of the pen. The Vienna Symphony gets $3.00 per man per hour, not per session. On the other hand, Mr. Solomon seems to feel that he must persuade American readers that the Volksoper (not Volksopera) Orchestra usually includes Philharmonic players when it makes records. In the first place, Mr. Solomon's mathematics are faulty. The total figure of 150 for the State Opera Orchestra does not include the eighty excellent men of the Volksoper Orchestra. Let me explain it once again:

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra: plays in the State Opera Orchestra.
State Opera Orchestra: includes the Vienna Philharmonic and nearly fifty more.
Orchestra in the Volksoper: some eighty players included neither in the Philharmonic nor in the State Opera personnel.

As to the economic advantages of recording in Vienna, I assure Mr. Solomon that the Viennese are fully aware that the real bargain here is the quality of our wares. We know about these long before the record companies "discovered" us.

Hans Herzog
Vienna
Austria

Errors of Fact

SIR:

Peter Heyworth's article on my late husband ["Ernest Newman," Oct. 1959] is extremely interesting, and so far as my husband's character and professional career are concerned a true and penetrating study. But there are one or two factual errors which I

Continued on page 12

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE
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See the 'Stereo Suite' at your Ektape dealer, or call him for a demonstration in your home. Write direct for full specifications and data.

LETTERS

Continued from page 10

should be glad if you could find an occasion to correct.

The most important one is the date of our marriage. According to Peter Heyworth, it took place after the move to Tadworth. This was in April 1928, and as everybody knows we had been living together in London since our marriage on June 14, 1919. Such a statement might cause complications. Also we did not build the house in Tadworth; we bought it in March 1928, and the library was added afterwards. My husband's name was never E. N. Roberts. He was christened William, and was so called by his intimate friends all his life.

Vera Neuman
Woldingham, Surrey England

Somebody Loves Us

Sir:
Bravo! Your editorial ["A Scolding"—to manufacturers and to customers] in the October issue hit the proverbial nail on the head. It couldn't have appeared at a more opportune time.

Another point worth mentioning is the method in which you present your record and equipment reviews. One is immediately struck with the idea that here are people who know what they are doing. This is not to mention the wonderful articles appearing each month which never fail to interest me. To prove my point I have recently renewed my subscription for five years.

P. L. Gilet
RCAF Cold Lake, Alb. Canada

The Sterbas

Sir:
I noticed that the excellent article ["Freudians in Enterpe's Realm," September] refers to the authors of the book Beethoven and His Nephew as Edith and Erika Sterba. The names are Richard and Editha Sterba.

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JANUARY 1960
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Notes

LONDON—From EMI news comes that Maria Callas has agreed in principle to record three operas before the end of 1960. Which operas these shall be has not been decided, and any decision is unlikely until litigation over the diva’s marital affairs has been disposed of.

Meantime, her recording for EMI-Angel of La Gioconda, made with the cooperation of La Scala, is the first outward sign of her reconciliation with the Sovrintendente of that august house, Antonio Ghiringelli. I am told that on the third day of the Gioconda recording Miss Callas met Signor Ghiringelli in the Scala courtyard. Figuratively, if not literally, they fell on each other’s necks; tears of relief were shed on both sides. The two-year Callas absence from the Scala probably won’t be protracted.

Klemperer in Fine Fettle. Forced by an infection to withdraw from EMI’s Don Giovanni sessions (now, with Giulini conducting, almost finished), the unapproachable Otto Klemperer has again shown his talent for quick recuperation. Back in the studio for stereo remakes of his Beethoven recordings, he finished the Symphony No. 4, with The Consecration of the House as a filler, and the King Stephan Overture as filler, to the Fifth Symphony. He then started on the Eroica.

Klemperer’s prankish sense of humor is also still unmarred. At a morning rehearsal before one of his Royal Festival Hall Beethoven concerts—with a single lone figure, that of his daughter Lotte, in the auditorium—he rapped his baton sharply on the desk and shouted portentously: “Gentlemen! Beethoven—Symphony No. 2” (this being the first item on the rehearsal plan). The Philharmonia Orchestra instantly plunged, by conspiratorial prearrangement, into that un-Beethovenian ditty. Happy Birthday to You. The “you” so honored was Lotte Klemperer, who—once re-

Continued on page 20

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE
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NOTES FROM ABROAD

Continued from page 18

covered from the shock—roared with laughter. "It’s Papa’s best joke," she opined later.

Maag—On To New Things. Shuttling between English Decca’s studios, the Festival Hall, and La Scala, where he was billed for two orchestral concerts, Mozart-specialist Peter Maag, the Swiss conductor, told me cheerfully that a couple of days earlier he had given in a verbal resignation from the musical directorship of the Netherlands Opera, Amsterdam. His tenure has been short. Formerly (1952-55) principal conductor of the Dusseldorf Opera and thereafter general music director of the Bonn Opera, thirty-eight-year-old Maag fulfilled a four-week pilot engagement with the Netherlands Opera during Holland’s summer music festival and took over the musical directorship, with a two-year contract, on September 1. A prospective two-year stay dwindled to two months. I of course asked why he was leaving.

"Because," he replied, "I am profoundly dissatisfied with Amsterdam’s rehearsal facilities, general disciplinary arrangements, and the interference in artistic matters by the musicians’ and ‘house’ unions... I cannot tell you how glad I am to get away.”

Maag’s current and prospective recording arrangements with Decca-London involve Mozart and (mainly) the London Symphony Orchestra. They include the Twelve Deutsche Tänze; three out of the four horn concertos (one in D major, two in E flat major), with Barry Tuckwell, the LSO’s first horn, as soloist; the Clarinet Concerto, with another LSO principal, Gervase de Peyer; and one LP disc comprising the Idomeneo and Finta Giardiniera overtures, three entr’actes from König Thamos, and a recherché Serenade for Four Orchestras, each orchestra consisting of strings and two horns. In January, with the Suisse Romande Orchestra and their first horn player, Edmond Leoir, Maag will do a stereo remake of the Posthorn Serenade, K. 320. He tells me that the instrument Leloir uses comes from the Swiss State Museum, Zurich, and that a century ago it was used by...
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The short, elderly man with the round face leaned forward in his chair. A television reporter had just asked him why he selected the works of Bach for a special concert. With the honesty and dignity characteristic of him, he replied "Bach is my best friend."

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The Chorale, Model A260 — $199.95. Optional Enclosure, Model AC60 — $12.95. The Madrigal, Model ST360 — $199.95. Optional Enclosure, Model CX60 — $12.50. MA350 Multiplex Adapter — $49.95. All prices slightly higher in the West.

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NOTES FROM ABROAD
Continued from page 20

positions on the Gotthard routes to warn auberges in advance how many horses and passengers were to be fed, whether there were any VIPs on board, and so on.

Ben Hur, 1960 Version. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer’s technicolor spectacular had its London opening ten days before Christmas, a month after the world premiere in New York. Miklós Rózsa, the Hungarian-born composer now based in Hollywood, spent nine months writing three and a half hours of music for the film and then cutting it to two and a half. Later, in Rome and Nuremberg, he recorded condensations of his score for the M-G-M and Lion labels—a task of condensation taking him a mere fortnight. For the M-G-M disc he used the Band di Carabinieri (which has a more impressive ring than the Rome Police Band) in the marches and “triumph” bits and the Rome Radio Orchestra and Chorus in the rest of the score. For the Lion disc of highlights he had the North Frankenland State Symphony Orchestra, Erich Klass as conductor, and no chorus at all.

“What is the most interesting thing technically about your Ben Hur music?” I asked him, when he stopped in London on his way home.

“The big problem,” said Rozsa, “was the music for Christ. The director and everybody else wanted me to use a Theremin, all very spellbinding and eerie; but you can’t use electronics for the First Century. So I opted for a pipe organ. Every time you see Christ in the film or hear about Him or feel His presence you hear the pipe organ and effects for divided high strings, usually playing harmonics. For the recordings in Nuremberg we used an excellent church organ and in Rome a studio organ—after adjusting it technically to cut out any suspicion of vibrato.”

CHARLES REID

High Fidelity Magazine
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Last month, you will recall, we introduced you to yourself... America’s musical millionaire. We reported some fascinating data about you (from you) ... what you do for a living, the fine home you own, your above-average income, and your influence. Yes, especially, your influence.

We also said (that you said) you were going to spend $40-million in the next 12 months for components and LP’s and tape. Now, it occurs to us that perhaps you’d like to be reminded about what specifically you intend to spend all that money for...

It’s a whopping big shopping list, that’s for sure... at least 260,000 units of component high fidelity equipment. That includes 52,000 amps and/or preamps, more than 45,000 speakers (about half with enclosures), almost 25,000 turntables, changers and players, about 3,000 tuners...

How about LP’s and tape? After all, you must already possess the world’s largest record library. Well (as though you didn’t know), you’re going to buy 3,400,000 LP’s (that’s almost 10,000 a day!)... more than a million units of pre-recorded and raw tape.

We’ve taken the liberty of telling manufacturers of quality components, and the leading recording companies about all this. We know what conscientious citizens they are... why, they’ll knock themselves out to deliver the newest and best for you. After all, the most constructive force in the past, present and future of “music listening” is you. Your good taste and discriminating judgment, as well as your many dollars, have made high fidelity. And... HIGH FIDELITY!

high fidelity
THE MAGAZINE FOR MUSIC LISTENERS

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JANUARY 1960
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a built-in, or “package” console, the
Sargent-Rayment centralized control
feature assures you of better audio
with less effort.

fewer separate
units needed
A conventional stereo system may
involve as many as nine separate
components exclusive of speakers —
two tuners, two pre-amps, tone con-
trol, two amplifiers, and two power
supplies. All of these are provided
in just two components in a Sargent-
Rayment combination such as that
shown at the left.

less hum and noise;
lowest distortion
In a Sargent-Rayment integrated
stereo system, the absence of all
power supply elements from the
tuner/pre-amp/tone control section
insures cool, stable, hum-free opera-
tion. Distortion is negligible — from
antenna to output terminals, Sargent-
Rayment has the lowest combined
distortion of any stereo system at
any price, laboratory-proved.

better stereo
performance
Stereo balance control insures equal
volume from both channels to any
point in the listening area. Stereo
separation control, an exclusive S-R
feature, gives you fingertip control
of the degree of separation between
channels; permits “filling the hole in
the middle” and essentially achiev-
ing 3-channel stereo reproduction.

greater reliability,
guaranteed!
Sargent-Rayment, leading the indus-
try in experience with dual-channel
components, stands solidly behind
the quality of its products with a
stronger guarantee than that offered
by any other hi-fi manufacturer — a
full 15 months.

www.americanradiohistory.com
Preservation and Storage of Sound Records, by A. C. Pickett and M. M. Lemcoe, for the Library of Congress, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation. The report is in fact one of the most important in the field of acoustics in the United States, and has been welcomed by the Library as a long overdue guide. The report includes a detailed list of materials and techniques for the preservation and storage of sound records, and is available in large libraries.

Here from University is a complete range of superb high compliance systems - the finest on the market today! Authentic, smooth, full-range performance from ultra-compact, beautifully styled systems. Cleaner, fuller bass response than ever before obtained from any small enclosure... due to the development of the University RRL feature!

RRL - radiation resistance loading - provided by a precisely matched acoustical coupler, considerably increases bass efficiency. This enables the woofer to develop ample sound output with only a small portion of its great excursion potential... only 1/4 the excursion required by the older, fully sealed small-space systems to give the same output. Result: 75% less bass distortion at higher output levels.

Perfect matching of all speakers in each RRL system produces level response from lowest bass (as low as 15 cps for the S-11S) to smooth highs well beyond audible limits.

Compare University prices and performance with any competitive units and convince yourself that RRL systems offer the finest value in high fidelity. For the full story, write Desk P-8, University Loudspeakers, Inc., White Plains, N. Y.
With DYNAKIT you KNOW you have the BEST!

The finest high fidelity you can buy at any price.

DESIGNED FOR STEREO

PAS-2 $59.95

- New stereo control preamp with complete flexibility, fastest construction, and simplest operation.
- Only 8 hours to build.
- Truly unmeasurable distortion—below 0.05%.

Stereo 70 $99.95

- Two outstanding 35 watt channels (160 watts peak) to power any speaker.
- Unequalled transient response.
- Absolute stability with every loud-speaker without restriction of bandwidth.

STEREO IN EASY STEPS

Start with a superb monophonic system

PAA-1 $34.95

- History-making "no-distortion" preamplifier which has never been equalled.
- 6 hour assembly.

Mark IV $59.95

- Either the renowned 60 watt Mark III or its new little brother, the 40 watt Mark IV.
- 3 hours to build.

Expand to matchless stereo

Add on the DSC-1 $12.95

- Every stereo function at your finger tips.
- Unsurpassed flexibility.
- Utilized panel or cabinet mount available as an accessory.

Two Mark III's $79.95 each

- Just add on the second Mark III or Mark IV and you can have the most highly recommended, most desired stereo amplifier ensemble for less than 20 hours of your time.

See and hear Dynakits at your local dealer

A post card will bring complete specifications

DYNACO, INC. 3916 Powelton Ave., Philadelphia 4, Pa.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Continued from preceding page

terms, of disc and tape. Unfortunately, if perhaps necessarily, it is confined exclusively to storage-deterioration problems (which leaves the even more vital ones of use-wear still awaiting attack), and most of its 74 pages, 6 tables, and 30 illustrations will be largely incomprehensible to nonchemists and nonphysicists. Its conclusions, however, are expressed in language all of us can plainly understand, and these are of scarcely less significance to the ordinary record buyer than they are to the professional archivist. Some of them merely confirm generally known principles; that discs should be stored vertically; that temperature and humidity should be avoided; etc. Others are more startling: that most paper and even plastic envelopes are potentially dangerous; that life qualities are largely built in by the manufacturer's choice of materials and care of processing; and that fungi rank among the most lethal enemies of stored discs. But it is encouraging also to learn that most vinylites and many shells (as well as most current types of magnetic tapes) should have a long life expectancy—if proper precautions are taken. And many connoisseur collectors may be especially delighted by the investigators' earnest recommendations that manufacturers not only adopt the generally improved materials, packaging and shipping methods, that are available nowadays, but also venture on limited editions specifically designed for archive preservation (Library of Congress, via Government Printing Office, paper, 45¢).

Beethoven's Beloved. Perhaps the greatest of musical-biography enigmas is the identity of the "Immortal Beloved" to whom Beethoven addressed the most famous of all his letters, and who is believed by many to have been the inspiration of An die ferne Geliebte and perhaps numerous other works. Various likely candidates have been suggested over the years, but none more vigorously and emotionally than by the late Dana Steichen (wife of the famous photographer and herself a passionate musical amateur), who here pleads the cause of an entirely new name—Countess Anna Marie Erdödy, née Niczky, to whom Beethoven dedicated his two piano trios, Op. 70. Mrs. Steichen has a plausible-enough case to begin with and some of her deductions are extremely ingenious, but she defeats

Continued on page 30

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE
A pleasure to buy...

Thorens has thought of many ways to make buying a Thorens TD-124 a distinct pleasure. A Thorens franchised dealer is a man of broad knowledge and ability, can command your immediate respect. That's why there aren't too many of them. The service after you buy is just as important as the initial sale. You get an almost unheard of full one year guarantee. All this in addition to "music as it's meant to be heard." See your Thorens dealer tomorrow...you're in for a real treat.

Guaranteed for one full year. Sold only through carefully selected franchised dealers.

a continuing pleasure to own!

No other turntable combines all these features. The Thorens TD-124 gives you...

- 4 speeds—plays any record you have or can buy.
- Easy-to-use illuminated strobe lets you set exact record speed for best musical reproduction while record is playing.
- Extra heavy table (11½ lbs.) for extra smooth running...includes light-weight aluminum cueing table.
- Built-in level with easy-to-get-at fingertip control.
- Easy arm installation or change.
- Motor operates on 50/60 cps, any voltage from 100 to 250.

This isn't all... when you see it, you'll agree that this is the turntable you've been waiting for.
herself in the end by a compulsion to find the Countess' influence in practically everything Beethoven wrote after meeting her, and to "correct" every earlier writerwhose evidence tends to weaken her own argument. Nor does the added "Study of a Study," by Dale S. Kugel, which endeavors to document the Erdödy case by musical analysis of obsessive Beethovenian thematic fragments, add much conviction. In fact, Mrs. Steichen would have been advised to recast her notions and "discoveries" in the form of a frankly fictional work or to have written a biography of the lady herself, who, whatever her relationship to Beethoven may have been, was certainly a fascinating personality in her own right (Doubleday, $6.95).

Mozart and His Times, by Erich Schenk, a noted Austrian musicologist and Mozart specialist, immediately takes a high place in the enormous Mozartean literature by reason of both its authority (soundly based on the latest scholarly researches) and sheer scope (probably the largest of Mozart biographies since Jahn's, and certainly one of the most handsome in its printing and illustrations). And since the author eschews strictly musical analysis to concentrate on the "life" alone, he has been able to include an extraordinary wealth of documentary detail. For earnest Mozarteans, then, the new Schenk work (admirably translated here by Richard and Clara Winston from the 1955 German original) will be a valued acquisition, but for less omnivorous collectors it is far less essential than the Mozart Family Letters and the works of W. A. Turner, Einstein, Dent, and even Eduard Mörike's fictional story of Mozart on the Way to Prague—in each of which the man himself comes far more vividly to life than he ever does in Schenk's richly informative but overobjective pages (Knopf, $10).

Subway to the Met and Please Don't Hate Me. The present volumes are only too characteristic of the current trend to folksy human-interest stories, entertaining enough but signifying little: in the former Kyle Crichton recounts Rissé Stevens' "own lighthearted story of the long road from the Bronx to the Met"; in the latter Prosper Buranelli puts into idiomatic English Dimitri Tiomkin's tale of his even longer road from Czarist and revolutionary Russia to Hollywood and the scores for High Noon, etc. The fact
FULL SIZE POWER TUBES—Four 6L6GC power tubes (a vastly improved version of the standard 6L6) provide undistorted peak power. Each tube operates completely within its rated capacity. You get better performance, longer tube life.

LARGE OUTPUT TRANSFORMERS—The power handling capability of a transformer at low frequency is determined by size. The 353A employs two output transformers large enough to handle the full audio frequency range, from 10 to 30,000 cps.

BEETTER VENTILATED CHASSIS—Altec divides the 353A chassis into two separate sections to eliminate troublesome thermal paths that cause overheating. Altec engineers have placed components so that normal room air-flow properly ventilates the entire chassis. Output tubes are mounted on a separate base at the back of the chassis. Heat is forced directly out the back and away from front section. Transformers are protected against heat transference from output tubes by air separation and a metal guard plate. A specially engineered heat shield protects the cabinet top. The unit can be conveniently mounted in wooden cabinet installations if desired.

CONTROLS: Input selector switch • Channel balance control • Dual gain control • Dual bass control • Dual treble control • Stereo two channel—three channel switch • Stereophonophonic switch • Rumble filter switch • Loudness contour switch.

AC CIRCUIT BREAKER—A trip-free circuit breaker replaces the old-fashioned fuse to protect against thermal overload. Circuit breaker can be reset only when trouble is corrected and the 353A is ready for normal operation.

DECORATOR COLORS—The new 353A is handsomely designed to enhance any decor. You may select from two panel finishes—Platinum Gold, or Platinum Pink.

SPECIAL FEATURES: Recorder outputs independent of gain and tone control • Dual microphone inputs for stereo recording • 14 stereo or mono inputs • 6 stereo or mono outputs • adds left and right stereo program for single speaker use at remote locations • center speaker output for full three speaker stereo.

SPECIFICATIONS: POWER OUTPUT: 100 watts stereo program peak power, 50 watts rms continuous, 25 watts per channel (nominal), stereo or mono. DISTORTION: Less than 1 % THD at 25 watts 1,000 cps, each channel; less than 1 % THD at 20 watts 30 to 15,000 cps, each channel. FREQUENCY RESPONSE: ± 0.0 db 20 to 20,000 cps at 25 watts; ± 0.5 db 10 to 30,000 cps at 1 watt. TONE CONTROL RANGE: ± 14 db at 50 cps; ± 14 db at 10,000 cps. DIMENSIONS: 5½” H x 15” W x 11½” D. WEIGHT: Approximately 35 pounds.

PRICE: $199.50
GEORGE WRIGHT
Has Made Over 3,000,000 Record Buyers Pipe Happy!

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14 EXCITING ALBUMS TO SHOW OFF YOUR OWN HI FI EQUIPMENT

STEREOPHONIC HIFI RECORi

R701 George Wright Plays the Mighty Wurlitzer Pipe Organ
R702 George Wright Encores at the Mighty Wurlitzer Pipe Organ
R706 Merry Christmas (George Wright, Wurlitzer Pipe Organ)
R707 More George Wright
R710 The George Wright Sound
R721 Have Organ Will Travel

STEREOPHONIC HIFI TAPE

R712 George Wright Plays the Conn Electric Organ
R713 The Genius of George Wright
R714 Hymns That Live (George Wright Pipe Organ)
R715 George Wright's Impressions of My Fair Lady
R716 George Wright Goes South Pacific
R717 George Wright's Flight to Tokyo
R718 The Roaring 20's

Available at record shops and HIFI equipment dealers everywhere

HIGH FIDELITY RECORDINGS, INC.
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New **HEATHKIT** Stereo Amplifiers

MORE OF THE BEST FROM THE LEADER . . .

Heathkit, first in performance, quality and dependability, proudly presents a host of new, outstanding do-it-yourself projects designed, as always, to bring you the finest in kit-form electronics.

FOR THE FINEST IN STEREO . . .

14/14-WATT STEREO AMPLIFIER KIT (SA-2)

A complete dual channel amplifier/preamplifier combination, the new Heathkit SA-2, in one compact, handsomely styled unit provides every modern feature required for superb stereo reproduction . . . yet is priced well within your budget.

Delivers 14 watts per channel stereo, or 28 watts total monophonic. Maximum flexibility is provided by the 6-position function switch which gives you instant selection of "Amp. A" or "Amp. B" for single channel monophonic; "Mono. A" or "Mono. B" for dual channel monophonic using both amplifiers and either preamp; and "Stereo" or "Stereo reverse". A four-position input selector switch provides choice of magnetic phono, crystal phono, tuner, and high level auxiliary input for tape recorder, TV, etc. The magnetic phono input is RIAA equalized and features 3 mv sensitivity—a definite advantage for the lowest output cartridges available today.

Other features include a speaker phasing switch, two AC outlets for accessory equipment and hum balancer controls in each channel. As beautiful as it is functional, the SA-2 will be a proud addition to your stereo sound system. Shpg. Wt. 23 lbs.

**SPECIFICATIONS**—Power output: 14 watts per channel, "Amp. A"); 12 watts per channel, "professional"); 16 watts per channel, "utility". Power response: 0.1 db from 20 cps to 30 kc at 14 watts output. Total harmonic distortion: less than 0.5% at 16 watts output using 60 cps and 6 kc signal mixed 4:1. Hum and noises: may phone input, 47 db below 14 watts; tuner and crystal phono, 60 db below 14 watts. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 4-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC receptacles: 3 switched, 2 normal. Inputs: 2 phono or 1 monophonic. Outputs: 4. 6 and 16 ohms. Dimensions: 6 5/8" H. x 8 1/8" W. x 6 3/4" D. Power requirements: 117 volts 50/60 cycle, AC, 150 watts listed.

STEREO PERFORMANCE AT MINIMUM COST

ECONOMY STEREO AMPLIFIER KIT (SA-3)

The amazing SA-3 delivers more than enough power for pure undisputed room-filling stereophonic sound at the lowest price anywhere. Delivers 3 watts per channel stereo—or 6 watts monophonic. The built-in high level preamplifier has two separate inputs for each channel, designed for use with ceramic or crystal cartridge record players, tuners, tape recorders, etc. Ganged tone controls provide convenient bass "boost" and treble "cut" action, while a dual concentric clutching volume control makes possible precise channel balancing. A channel reversing position is provided on the function switch and a speaker phasing switch on the back panel allows optimum performance with any speaker system. Skillfully styled in black with gold trim. Shpg. Wt. 13 lbs.

**SPECIFICATIONS**—Power output: 3 watts per channel. Power response: 0.1 db from 20 cals. 20 kc at 3 watts. Total harmonic distortion: less than 0.5% at 16 watts. Intermodulation distortion: less than 1% at 16 watts output using 60 cps and 6 kc signal mixed 4:1. Hum and noises: 65 db below full output. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc. Controls: dual clutched volume-ganged bass, ganged before 2-position selector, speaker phasing switch. AC outlets for tape recorder, TV, etc.

Dimensions: 12 1/2" H. x 6 3/4" D. x 3 3/4" W.
A NEW AMPLIFIER AND PREAMP UNIT
PRICED WELL WITHIN ANY BUDGET

14-WATT HI-FI AMPLIFIER KIT (EA-3)
This thrilling successor to the famous Heathkit EA-2 is one of the finest investments anyone can make in a top-quality monophonic high-fidelity amplifier. It delivers a full 14 watts of hi-fi rated power and easily meets professional standards as a 12 watt amplifier.

Rich, full-range sound reproduction and low noise and distortion are achieved through careful design using the latest developments in the audio field. Miniature tubes are used throughout, including EL-84 output tubes in a push-pull output circuit with a special-design output transformer. The built-in preamplifier has three separate-switch-selected inputs for magnetic phono, crystal phono or tape and AM-FM tuner. RIAA equalization is featured on the magnetic phono input. The stunning new styling of the EA-3 represents the latest word in modern design, with mar-proof vinyl-clad steel cover in black leather-like texture, inlaid gold design and brush-gold trim. Shpg. Wt. 15 lbs.

NOTE THESE OUTSTANDING SPECIFICATIONS—Power output: 14 watts. Hi-Fi: 17 watts. Power response: 21 db from 20 cps to 20 kc. All 14 watts output. Total harmonic distortion: less than 2%. 20 cps to 14 kc. at 14 watts output. Intermodulation distortion: less than 1%. At 16 watts output using 80 cps and 16 kc signal mixed. Hum and noise: max. phono input: 41 db below 14 watts; tuner and crystal input: 60 db below 14 watts. Output impedances: 2, 8 and 16 ohms.

MORE STATIONS AND TRUE FM QUALITY ARE YOURS WITH THIS FINE TUNER KIT

HIGH FIDELITY FM TUNER KIT (FM-4)
This handsomely styled FM tuner features better than 2.5 microvolt sensitivity, automatic frequency control (AFC) with on-off switch, flywheel tuning and prewired, prealigned and pretested tuning unit. Clean chassis layout, prealigned intermediate stage transformers and assembled tuning unit makes construction simple—guarantees top performance. Flywheel tuning and new soft, evenly-lighted dial scale provide smooth, effortless operation. Vinyl-covered case has black, simulated-leather texture with gold design and trim. Multiplex adapter output also provided. Shpg. Wt. 8 lbs.

SPECIFICATIONS—Tuning range: 88 to 108 mc. Quieting sensitivity: 7.5 uv for 70 db of quieting.
IF frequency: 10.7 mc. Image value: 46 db. AFC correction 0.5 db per volt. AM suppression: 25 db. Frequency response: 5.7 db 20 to 20,000 cps. Harmonic distortion: 15 db at 1 kc. 1 kw 2% 1000 ohms. Intermodulation distortion: 1% at 250 mc, 1% at 11 kmc. Noise: 17 db. 1 kmc. Output: 250 mwms (r.m.s.) at 50 phons. Output voltages: nominal 5 volts (with 50 phons, 20 phons signals). Overall dimensions: 12 x 10 x 7.5 inches.

NEVER BEFORE HAS ANY HI-FI AMPLIFIER OFFERED SO MUCH AT SO LOW A PRICE!

"UNIVERSAL" 14-WATT HI-FI AMPLIFIER KIT (UA-2)
Meeting 14-watt "hi-fi" and 12-watt "professional" standards the UA-2 lives up to its title of "universal" performing with equal brilliance in the most demanding monophonic or stereophonic high-fidelity systems. Its high quality, remarkable economy and ease of assembly make it one of the finest values in high-fidelity equipment. Buy two for stereo. Shpg. Wt. 13 lbs.

WORLD'S BIGGEST BARGAIN IN A HI-FI AMPLIFIER

55-WATT HI-FI AMPLIFIER KIT (W-7A)
Utilizing advanced design in components and tubes to achieve unprecedented performance with fewer parts, Heathkit has produced the world's first and only "dollar-a-watt" genuine high-fidelity amplifier. Meeting full 55 watt hi-fi rating and 35-watt professional standards, the new improved W-7A provides a comfortable margin of distortion-free power for any high-fidelity application.

The clean, open layout of chassis and preset wired harness makes the W-7A extremely easy to assemble. Shpg. Wt. 28 lbs.

STEREO-MONO PREAMPLIFIER KIT (SP-2A)
Available in two outstanding versions! SP-2A (stereo) and SP-1A (monophonic). SP-1A convertible to stereo with conversion kit C-SP-1A. Use with any basic amplifier as the control center of your entire high-fidelity system. Six inputs in each channel accommodate most any program source. Switch selection of NARTB or RIAA, LP, and 78 rpm record compensation.
PROFESSIONAL QUALITY TAPE RECORDER KITS (TR-1 Series)

Enjoy the incomparable performance of these professional quality tape recorders at less than half the usual cost. These outstanding kits offer a combination of features found only in much higher priced professional equipment, generally selling for $350 to $400. Not the least of these special features is the handsome styling which characterizes the kit... a semi-gloss black panel is set off by a plastic escutcheon in soft gold, which is matched by black control knobs with gold inserts. The mechanical assembly, with fast forward and rewind functions, comes to you completely assembled and adjusted; you build only the tape amplifier. And, you'll find this very easy to accomplish, since the two circuit boards eliminate much of the wiring. Separate record and playback head assemblies, and access control devices, like the 45-turn input controls of reels from tape while recording and a "pause" control permits instant starting and stopping of tape for accurate cueing and tape editing. A digit counter is provided for convenient selection of any particular recording. Push-pull control knobs provide instant selection of 3/4 or 7 1/2 IPS tape speed. Safely interlock on record switch reduces possibility of accidental erasure of recorded tape. Slp.; Wt. 30 lbs.

MODE TR-1C Monophonic Tape Deck:
- Monophonic Record and Playback. $159.95
- $16.00 DN. $14.00 MO. $169.95
- $17.00 DN. $15.00 MO. $189.95
- $18.00 DN. $16.00 MO. $199.95

MODEL TR-1D Two Track Stereo Tape Deck:
- Monophonic Record and Playback, plus Playback of 2-track Pre-recorded Stereo Tapes (staked). $169.95
- $17.00 DN. $15.00 MO. $189.95

MODEL TR-1E Four Track Stereo Tape Deck:
- Monophonic Record and Playback, plus Playback of 4-track Pre-recorded Stereo Tapes (staked). $179.95
- $18.00 DN. $16.00 MO. $199.95

MODEL C-TR-1C Conversion Kit: Converts TR-1C to TR-1D (see TR-1D description above). Slp.; Wt. 2 lbs. $19.95

MODEL C-TR-1D Conversion Kit: Converts TR-1D to TR-1E (see TR-1E description above). Slp.; Wt. 2 lbs. $14.95

MODEL C-TR-1CO: Converts TR-1C to TR-1E (see TR-1E description above). Slp.; Wt. 2 lbs. $19.95

STEREO-MONO TAPE RECORDER KITS (TR-1A Series)

Here are the tape recorders the avid hi-fi fan will find most appealing! Their complete flexibility in installation and many functions make them our most versatile tape recorder kits. This outstanding tape recorder now can be purchased in any of the three versions. You can buy the new two-track (TR-1AH) or four-track (TR-1AQ) versions which record and playback both stereo and monophonic programming, or the two-track monophonic-record-playback version (TR-1A) and later convert to either two-track or four-track record-playback models by purchasing the MK-4 or MK-5 conversion kits. The tape deck mechanism is extremely simple to assemble. Long, faithful service is assured by precision bearings and close machining tolerances that hold flutter and wow to less than 0.35%. Power is provided by a four-pole, fan-cooled induction motor. One lever controls all tape handling functions of forward, fast-forward or rewind modes of operation. The deck handles up to 7/8 tape reels at 7.5 or 3.75 IPS as determined by belt position. The TR-1A series decks may be mounted in either a vertical or horizontal position (mounting brackets included). The TE-1 Tape Electronics kits supplied feature NARTB equalization, separate record and playback gain controls and a safety interlock. Provision is made for mike or line inputs and recording level is indicated on a .65" "magic eye" tube. Two circuit boards simplify assembly.

MODEL TR-1A: Monophonic two-track record/playback with fast forward and rewind functions. Includes one TE-1 Tape Electronics kit. Slp.; Wt. 24 lbs.
- $9.00 DN. $8.00 MO. $9.95

TR-1A SPECIFICATIONS—Frequency response: 5 IPS 3.75 db 50 to 10,000 cps 3.75 IPS 3 db 62 to 7,000 cps. Signal-to-noise ratio: less than 65 db full output of 1.75 volts channel. Harmonic distortion: less than 2% at full output. Bias error frequency: 60 k c (push-pull oscillator).

MODEL TR-1AH: Two-track monophonic and stereo record/playback with fast forward and rewind functions. Two TE-1 Tape Electronics kits. Slp.; Wt. 36 lbs.
- $15.00 DN. $13.00 MO. $14.95

TR-1AH SPECIFICATIONS—Frequency response: 5 IPS 3.75 db 50 to 10,000 cps 3.75 IPS 3 db 62 to 10,000 cps. Signal-to-noise ratio: less than 65 db full output of 1 volt/ channel. Harmonic distortion: less than 2% at full output. Bias error frequency: 60 k c (push-pull oscillator).

MODEL TR-1AQ: Four-track monophonic and stereo record/playback with fast forward and rewind functions. Two TE-1 Tape Electronics kits. Slp.; Wt. 36 lbs.
- $15.00 DN. $13.00 MO. $14.95

TR-1AQ SPECIFICATIONS—Frequency response: 5 IPS 3.75 db 50 to 10,000 cps 3.75 IPS 3 db 62 to 10,000 cps. Signal-to-noise ratio: less than 65 db full output of .75 volts/ channel. Harmonic distortion: less than 2% at full output. Bias error frequency: 60 k c (push-pull oscillator).
New "Acoustic Suspension" Speaker System

NOW-FOR THE FIRST TIME IN KIT FORM

...EXCLUSIVELY FROM HEATH

"Best we've ever heard"..."cleanest bass response I have ever heard"..."achieves the seemingly impossible"..."an outstanding speaker because of its small size, not in spite of it"...such superlatives flowed from the pens of noted authors and editors of audiophile magazines when the Acoustic Research speaker appeared on the market a few years ago. A revolutionary principle in speaker design, the Acoustic Research speaker has been universally accepted as one of the most praiseworthy speaker systems in the world of high fidelity sound reproduction.

HEATHKIT is proud to be the sole kit licensee of this Acoustic Suspension principle from AR, Inc. and now offers for the first time this remarkable speaker system in money-saving, easy-to-build kit form.

The Acoustic Suspension principle involves the use of a freely suspended bass woofer, using the "cushion" of air inside the cabinet as a "spring". In conventional loudspeakers the moving cone is mounted on elastic suspensions—thus, when the cone is moved and then released, it springs back to its normal position. The necessarily imperfect quality of these mechanical springs is the greatest single source of speaker distortion. The Acoustic Suspension principle replaces the mechanical spring of the bass speaker suspension with a pneumatic spring of near-perfect characteristics—the sealed-in air of the cabinet. This fundamentally new approach to speaker design results in: reduction of bass harmonic distortion by a factor of 4; a uniform and extended low frequency response; establishing the new standards: ability to realize optimum speaker performance from conveniently small cabinet size.

The size of the AS-2 speaker cabinet is dictated by acoustical considerations and represents an advance, rather than a compromise, in quality. The 10" Acoustic Suspension woofer delivers clean, clear bass response over an extended range with markedly low harmonic distortion. Outstanding high frequency distribution is a result of the specially designed "cross-fired" two speaker tweeter assembly.

Another first in the Heathkit line with the AS-2 is the availability of completely pre-assembled, pre-finished cabinets; the AS-2 cabinets are available in pre-finished birch (blonde) or mahogany, or unfinished bircb models. The unfinished birch model is of furniture grade wood suitable for the finish of your choice, walnut, mahogany, blonde, etc. Kit assembly consists merely of mounting the speakers, wiring the simple crossover network and filling the cabinet with the fiberglass included with the kit. Shpg. Wt. 32 lbs.

RECOMMENDED AMPLIFIER FOR THE AS-2

The Heathkit W-7A high fidelity amplifier has proven by laboratory tests to be ideal for driving the new Heathkit AS-2 acoustic suspension speaker. See full details and specifications for the W-7A in this ad.

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Musical Suggestion Box

Last month, John Indox assayed the yield of disc stereo in its first full calendar year, 1959. He compiled quite a tempting list, and one of considerable variety. The diskeries (as the trade papers call record companies) are not doing all badly. Still, of course, they've been working in a hurry; hence they have made omissions. It occurred to us that we could help them, i.e., render their lives more miserable, by suggesting some records they ought to have made by the time Mr. Indox gets around to his 1960 summation.

The source for such suggestions was at hand, our Editorial Board. This consists, I may say, altogether of men to whom music serves as a living companion; so they are always as ready for its wit as for its wisdom. They were asked for purely personal suggestions, just whatever their wants were. As example, the chairman (undersigned) listed his own choices: Haydn's 39th Symphony; Weber's Der Freischütz; Goldmark's Rustic Wedding Symphony; Thomson and Stein's Four Saints in Three Acts; De Koven's Robin Hood.

Three members couldn't contribute. Dr. Howard Hanson, Director of the Eastman School of Music, was away working with the President's Music Committee. Francis Robinson, assistant manager of the Metropolitan Opera, had a season beginning and no time to cogitate. Julian Hirsch, of the Hirsch-Houck Laboratories, was deep in sine waves, which come thickest in winter.

In the answers which did arrive, be it noted (by record makers, especially) that three works received two votes each: Beethoven's Wellington's Victory; Stravinsky's Symphonie des psaumes; Virgil Thomson's Four Saints.

E. Power Biggs, leading American organist, answered from a Baltimore hotel room, where he was stopping on tour. The gist of his message was: Poulenc. He's been a Poulenc man ever since he made the first American LP of the Poulenc Organ Concerto (the only one, in fact, that has survived in the catalogues), and he thinks we need more, more, more Poulenc. Amen.

Nathan Broder, associate editor of Musical Quarterly, chose Mozart's Zauberflöte; Verdi's Otello and Requiem; Berg's Wozzeck; Ives's The Unanswered Question; Stravinsky's Symphonie des psaumes; Samuel Barber's Essay No. 2; and William Schuman's Third Symphony.

R. D. Darrell, editor of the world's first record encyclopedia, came up with suggestions of works never recorded at all before: Albinoni's Two Fugues on a Subject by Bach; Handel's dramatic oratorios Saul and Jephtha in their original forms; and Henry Gilbert's Symphonic Piece. To these he added the Mozart Bassoon Concerto; Stravinsky's Orpheus and Symphonie des psaumes; Handel's Double-Wind Concertos; the Smetana-Szell orchestral version of From My Life; Couperin's Leçons de ténèbres; and Four Saints again.

Alfred Frankenstein, music and art critic of the San Francisco Chronicle, proposed Mussorgsky's Boris Godunov in its original version; Vaughan Williams' Sir John in Love; the Mozart C minor Mass; Delius' Sea Drift; Roger Sessions' String Quintet; Randall Thompson's Requiem; Schoenberg's Gurrelieder; Dallapiccola's The Prisoner; Monteverdi's L'Incoronazione di Poppea; a selection of William Billings' Anthems and Fuguing Tunes; Berlioz's Benvenuto Cellini. And, finally, Wellington's Victory ("with the English army in one speaker and the French in the other").

Robert Charles Marsh, music critic of the Chicago Sun-Times, also voted for Wellington's Victory, although without specifying tactical dispositions. Further he wanted the Mahler Third and Eighth Symphonies; Siegfried (with a realistic dragon fight); Rimsky-Korsakov's "inspired nonsense" Le Coq d'or; Berlioz's Les Troyens; Smetana's The Bartered Bride; Robert Parris' Timpani Concerto; and some of the Gabrieli Processional Music.

The longest telegram came from the honored violinist Joseph Szigeti, and I will use his own words: "I suggest reconstruction of a camp meeting like the one Charles Ives speaks of, complete with hymn singing and organ, and cetera. Second suggestion: Jacques Ibert's lightweight opera Angélique, which I took Klemperer to see in Paris in the late 1920s and which enchanted him. If I am not mistaken, he produced it later in Berlin. Third suggestion: something by Johann Georg Pisendel (1667-1755), a pupil of Vivaldi who was also personally acquainted with Bach. The little I know of his music whets my appetite for more."

In view of the deluge of black diamonds, signifying deletions, in the Schwann LP catalogues lately, a drive in the direction of enriching the stereo repertoire and heightening its variety is clearly indicated, to make up for the monophonic depletion. Our probe here has been a modest one, but we hope it may stir interest.

John M. Conly

As the Editors See It
A Visit to Verdi's Sant' Agata

If a music-dramatist is not to die young, as Mozart did, probably he must have a retreat from the centers of artistic warfare. Giuseppe Verdi died old: hence we have Otello and Falstaff. We owe them to a house, a garden, and a quiet pond in the flat Po Valley.
by WILLIAM WEAVER

FOR THE PAST YEAR I have had the particular pleasure of reading through various collections of Verdi's letters, including some not yet published. They are, of course, a fascinating study; and although most of them are concerned with business—or, at least, the business of writing operas—some reveal the writer's most personal feelings. Verdi did not love many people: his wife, his patron and father-in-law, a few trusted friends like Countess Maffeì and, at the end of his life, Boito; and he loved even fewer places. But one spot he felt profoundly and permanently bound to. This was his home, the villa at Sant' Agata, near Busseto, which he bought in 1849 at the peak of his career and which he spent the rest of his life improving and embellishing.

I first saw the house in December, a year ago. "The country is sad, silent, and bare in winter. Then I do not love it." Thus wrote Giuseppina Strepponi, Verdi's second wife, not long after she and Verdi had settled at the villa. And even today, in a century of all-pervading noise, the country around Sant' Agata is silent. Its winter is still sad and bare, too. Mist sweeps over the flat plains, strawstacks bulk shapelessly and ominously in the gray light. It is, indeed, not a country to love at first sight.

The villa is not inhabited during the winter months. Its owners, Verdi's heirs, the Carrara Verdi family, move every October to nearby Busseto, where they have a notary's office (in Italy, the notary functions rather like the solicitor in England), carrying on the tradition of their great-grandfather and his son, who married Maria Verdi, the composer's cousin. Signorina Carla Carrara Verdi, a charming and friendly titian-haired girl, kindly offered to accompany me out to the villa and show me through it.

When we got there, even though it was early afternoon, the garden was dark and gloomy, almost conspiratorial; but I wanted to look at it for a moment before entering the house. Tall trees seemed to dwarf the curving paths that Verdi had laid out, and at the end of the garden, the little artificial lake—his mud puddle, he called it—was shrouded in haze. Beyond the lake, a gate led into the open country, and on either side of an alley of bare trees the dormant winter fields stretched away—the farms in which Verdi had soundly invested a good part of his earnings. He knew them all by name, these fields; and in the last year of his life, when he was drawing up his will in Milan, he could tick off the farms, one by one, as if naming his children.

Inside, my first impression of the house was its comfort. In their day the furnishings were surely in the very finest taste; they belong to a period now out of favor, but the heavy plush hangings, the lace curtains, the dark overstuffed sofas and chairs have an antiquated, family charm. There is no mistaking the fact that the house was—and is—a pleasant and easy place to live, and evidence of the pleasure Verdi took in it is everywhere. His guns and hunting equipment are still kept in good order; his writing table—in the little study off his bedroom—remains where it always was, facing a window which overlooks the back entrance of the house, so that the owner could observe the comings and goings of his workmen and farmers.

Verdi's music library is smaller than one might expect: mostly piano scores of operas by his contemporaries, and the four-hand piano literature he used to play for fun with such musical guests as Boito and his publisher, Tito Ricordi. His sets of Shakespeare and of Wagner's Scritti are on the little shelf within reach of his bed, in a room cluttered with souvenirs, portraits of friends and heroes, like Alessandro Manzoni. There is also an ample room dedicated to a huge billiard table, and next to it, a good-sized library, where a heterogeneous collection—obviously all personal choices—is housed in glass-front cases. The dining room can hold a dozen people without crowding (a TV set is now discreetly placed in one corner); and the display of glass and porcelain on the shelves confirms Verdi's reputation as a good host. "I ate too poorly in my day to be able to give up the pleasure of eating fairly well now," Verdi once said in later life.

As she led me from room to room, opening cabinets and removing dust covers, Signorina Carla kept apologizing for the severe cold in the house. "You must come back and see it in summer," she repeated.

And I did. While my first visit had been greatly interesting and useful in revealing many facets of Verdi's personality (Sant' Agata is as much his own creation as one of his operas), the second visit was deeply moving. I went in mid-September, and in the fine sunny weather the countryside was like a different land.

The main façade, shaded by the willows Verdi planted.
“It’s impossible to find an uglier place than this,” I had read in a letter of Verdi’s written from Sant’ Agata in 1858. And though I knew that Verdi had been joking, or rather trying to mask under gruffness a passionate love for his land, even so, on the strength of my first visit, I would have been inclined to take him at his word. The choice of Busseto seemed incredible: in 1849 Verdi was a rich man, any city in Europe would have welcomed him, and in Italy—a country famous for its spectacular landscapes—he picked the one dull region. The fact that he was born there is counterbalanced by the fact that, by 1849, he had quarreled with the people of the neighborhood more than once.

But, seeing the country in September, I could understand Verdi’s choice. The charm of the Po plain is subtle. As I drove from Parma to Busseto, the fields were green and glowing, prim rows of leafy trees separated one farm from the next, families out digging up sugar beets (an important local crop) looked up and smiled as I went by. All was a picture of sanity, sobriety, and health. If this is a taciturn country, it is one made after Verdi’s own image. Not for him the flamboyant beauty of a Venice or the pastel loveliness of an Amalfi coast.

The villa itself, seen as Verdi would have wanted it to be seen (he, too, shut it up in winter and moved away, to Genoa or Milan), expresses the owner’s character: reserved on the outside, warm within. The neat, anonymous wall that runs along the little country road hardly gives an idea of the luxuriant park it encloses. Two weeping willows, planted by Verdi, stand at the entrance (Ghislanzoni, the librettist of I talia, found these trees highly exotic and expressive of the composer’s “poetical” side). The façade is plain yellow stucco, and long French windows open from all the ground-floor rooms onto the garden, which in September is a cool and shady haven, with stands of magnolia and lacy shrubs. An arbor covers a sandy court where booce—the Italian version of lawn bowls—was played.

I found the rooms, too, airier and brighter than they had seemed to me the previous winter, and it became possible to imagine the life lived here in the days of the composer, those long, leisurely days in the periods when he wasn’t writing music, with the welcome visits of the few intimate friends he invited into his home: his librettists, his publisher, the singer Teresa Stolz, his sister-in-law Barberina Strepponi. And as I walked again into the bedroom—dominated by the long Erard grand piano—I could hear the notes of Otello and Falstaff, composed on it, and I recalled reading how Verdi would often get up in the heart of the night and would call through the open door into the adjoining bedroom for his Peppina to listen to the music that had just come to him.

The present inhabitants of the house—Signorina Carla, her sister Gabriella, her brother Alberto, and their mother—have managed to achieve something rare and admirable: they have kept the house and the garden virtually as they were when Verdi left them, over half a century ago, but at the same time they have not allowed the place to acquire the chilling museum pall of houses that become shrines. If Verdi were to return to Sant’ Agata tomorrow, he would be able to find his way around in the dark.

And if he did come back, surely one of the things that would most please him would be the presence of a fine collection of dogs: two handsome (though, alas, not over-friendly) German shepherds named Beauty and Black, the latter named after a favorite dog of the composer’s frequently referred to in his letters (usually misspelled “Blach”), plus a dignified and sweet-natured Great Dane called Astra, and Anoldo, a playful young bulldog.

In talking about the composer and his wife, the Carrara Verdis refer to them familiarly and affectionately as “il maestro” and “zia Peppina.” You feel almost as if they were alive and around the house somewhere, perhaps in the next room. Certainly if ghosts exist and can choose their abode, Verdi’s ghost is not at La Scala, but in some part of Sant’ Agata.

The house was an obsession with him. In a letter to Countess Maffeis, Peppina Verdi describes the origin of this passion:

“Many years ago (I don’t dare say how many), I asked Verdi with some insistence to leave Paris in order to go out beneath the pavilion of the open sky and take those baths of air and sun which give vigor to the body as well as calm to the mind. Verdi, who—like Auber—had almost a horror of staying in the country, after much beseeching consented to take a little house a short distance from Paris. This new life was for Verdi a revelation. He began to love it with such passion that I found myself overwhelmed and paid back only too well for my love of the gods of the woods. He bought the land at S. Agata, and I—who had already furnished a house in Milan and another in Paris—had to organize a pied-a-terre for the illustrious professor of Le Roncole. To our infinite pleasure we began to plant a garden, which at first was called ‘Peppina’s garden.’ Then it was extended and called ‘his’ garden; and I must say that in this garden of his he is Czar to such an extent that I am reduced to a few patches of soil where, by conditions established, he hasn’t the right to stick his nose. I can’t always say he respects these—Continued on page 124
Above, Verdi’s “mud puddle,” the artificial lake at the bottom of the garden, where the composer and his wife often went boating. At right, tall plane trees line a walk through the fields; as they were in Verdi’s own day, household dogs are very much part of the scene. Below, the Maestro’s bedroom: everything remains as it was when in the night he would call Peppina to listen to the music he composed there on the Erard grand.
VERDI on Microgroove

by CONRAD L. OSBORNE

ASCANT three years after the beginning of the LP era, in the summer of 1952, High Fidelity published its first Verdi discography, written by C. G. Burke. Mr. Burke's remarks covered eighteen recordings—thirteen Verdi operas, the Requiem, and a few of the composer's shorter works. In the discography that follows, no fewer than forty-six recordings of seventeen operas are considered, and the advent of stereo undoubtedly portends further opera releases in the next couple of years.

The turnover has been tremendous. There are, for instance, three Otello in the current catalogue, not one of them available in 1952. Of the six Aidas now in circulation, there was only one in the catalogue at that time. In fact, it would be possible to build a fair-sized Verdi library (albeit one of uneven quality) from recordings that have come and gone in the last seven years, and are not discussed either in Mr. Burke's discography or the present one. Camden's reissues (Trovatore, Traviata, Otello), priced at a bargain rate of $1.98 per record, were on the market for a very short time, and Columbia's Entré series (Rigolettes, Aida, Falstaff) has also passed into history. A few of these are well worth a search; I have called attention to them under the appropriate headings below. At that, not all the riches of 78s have been mined. Victor had a wonderful Aida featuring Giannini, Cattaneo, Petile, and Inghilleri, but bypassed it in favor of the Caniglia-Gigli version. The latter, of course, had the better-known names, but it was a shameful performance, reflecting clearly the decline of the artists involved; yet Victor issued it, on four LPs, in "The Treasury of Immortal Performances."

Since the summer of 1952, recorded opera has become a mass commodity. With each season the packaging becomes increasingly elaborate, the advertising increasingly pompous. Singers record entire operas as they used to record single arias. Buyers choose their Rigolettes either on the advice of a reviewer or, even worse, on the basis of the names involved plus the packaging of the album. It seems not at all improbable that our generation will see the birth of a new trade—the fine-boxing trade; people will collect aristocratic albums as they now collect aristocratic book bindings, and Angel's old thrift packages will be sought as some bibliophiles now seek out Dickens' novels in their original, serialized form. My point is this: while reviews can be of real help in directing a buyer to significant releases (and perhaps of more help by steering him away from the slag), the best way to select a recording is to listen to it—a process becoming more and more difficult as more and more records are sold firmly, if elegantly, sealed.

A brief statement regarding my own predilections and prejudices may be useful. I am in favor of performances that seem to me to convey a work's total meaning. The process of evaluating different recordings by comparing their separate elements can lead us far astray. While one performance may seem to have better singing in all the leading roles, better sound, and even better conducting, it may be the competitive version that, for reasons hard to define, conveys the totality of the work to better effect. This recording will get the nod from me. (I must add, however, that I fail to see how an opera's meaning can be conveyed without first-class singing, whereas poor sound or mediocre conducting will not necessarily strike a deathblow.) The operas considered are arranged in chronological order, and the recordings listed in descending order of preference, with my favorite cited first.

Un Giorno di Regno (1840)

It would be easy to sentimentalize over Un Giorno di Regno. With his entire young family carried away by disease in less than two years, and his own health in precarious condition, Verdi regarded with deep-rooted loathing the task of setting Romani's arch libretto. But set it he did. After the success of his first opera, Oberto, La Scala refused to release him from his contract for a comic opera. The result was the one unequivocal, permanent failure of Verdi's long career. But indulgence for this work would be arrogant, and dismissal presumptuous; the fact is that Giorno is a very entertaining little piece. The only objections one can have about the libretto are objections to buffo conventions as such. The music is not memorable, but it is far from dull. It contains the only secco recitative to be found in Verdi's published works, and owes much to Donizetti and Rossini; but
it is tuneful, lively, and astonishingly professional in construction, particularly in the ensembles. As with most of Verdi's early operas, one must take the Cetra recording or none at all. The performance here is top-flight. Pagliuggi, vocally a bit faded, still brings the right touch to the music. Oncina's voice had not yet acquired the wry edge that mars his more recent recordings, and is a pleasure to hear. Capecci's work is expert, Bruscantini's a bit pushed but still more than competent. And Dalamagas, operating with practically no voice, turns every comic point to account. Simonetto is firm and vigorous with his forces, though the chorus is occasionally limp. The sound, not ideal, is clear.

---Lina Pagliuggi, Juan Oncina, Renato Capecci, Sesto Bruscantini, Cristiano Dalamagas. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Alfredo Simonetto, cond. Cetra 1225. Two LP.

Nabucco (1842)

It was Solera's book for Nabucco, with its liberal paraphrasing of Jeremiah, that lured the despondent Verdi back to the job of composing. It contains nearly all the elements which were eventually to inspire the best of Verdi's music: foredoomed love, religious and patriotic zeal, and an ambivalent but passionate father-daughter relationship. Nabucco also affords the earliest example of Verdi's sustained musical inspiration. In the first act, for example, nearly every number is strong—Zaccaria's opening aria, "D'Egitto la uni lidi," is followed almost immediately by the chorus "Come veste a sol fulgente," the dramatic entrance of Abigaille, and then the ingeniously handled choruses in which the approach of the Babylonians is reported. Later in the opera we hear the best-known numbers: "Inch'io dischiuso un giorno," "Tu sul labbro dei reggenti," the Anathema Chorus, and the renowned "Va, pensiero." The latter part of the opera gives us the composer's first penetrating character study in the Nabucco of Acts III and IV. Solera's work here is puerile enough, but in Verdi's music we are given a first glimpse of the insight that was to produce Rigoletto, Boccanegra, Philip, and finally Otello.

Cetra's effort is just good enough to make us wish for singers who could really do justice to the music. In addition, since Nabucco is beautifully tailored for stereo, it is to be hoped a two-channel version will be forthcoming. Among Nabucco's requirements are two front-rank basses, and both Cassinelli and Gaggi here are swamped by the music. Mancini makes a brave stab at Abigaille, and with highly dramatic results at some points, but it is a part that demands not only voice and temperament, but repeated performance and study. The same is true of the title part, and Silveri's conscientious reading is not a filled-in portrayal. The other singers are adequate. Previtali's conducting forceful. The sound was acceptable in its day, and is still listenable, but there is much more to Nabucco than these records can convey.


I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata (1843)

Another libretto by Solera, another religious-patriotic theme to inflame the Milanese public, another triumph for Verdi. I do not know Tomasso Grossi's poem on which the book is based, but I know the libretto, God help me; and I can only suggest that this opera be listened to as a piece of absolute music. The first two acts are drawn through and through, manner without substance; only the Hermit's monologue and Giselda's prayer are of any interest. In the third and fourth acts, however, the music suddenly takes on emotional coloring and a sense of forward motion. Especially interesting is the scene of Onorato's death, with its almost shocking introduction for solo violin, the virtually continuous obligato for that instrument, and the fine trio "Quae voluntia trascurere." Two scenes later (one in this recording, since IV, i is dropped), the crusaders and pilgrims sing the moving "O Signore, dal tetto natio." The concluding laud is impressive, and in the theatre must make a magnificent tableau.

There is one outstanding performance on the Cetra recording—the bass Petri's as Pagano. This is extremely intelligent, well-shaded singing, and his voice, of only moderate caliber, is a responsive, round one. Gallo is one of the mouthiest tenors I have ever heard, though his upper register has a good ring; and Vitale's thin voice and rather precious approach make his work tiresome. The role of Arvino gives the capable Bertocci little chance. Wolf-Ferrari's conducting seems to be on the heavy side, but this may be the nature of things. The recording brings us fairish sound and a variety of coughs, paper rattling, bow tapping, and other noises—welcome, in a way. In fact, for three full sides, they are the only signs of life.

---Maria Vitale, Aldo Bertocci, Gustavo Gallo, Mario Petri. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Manno Wolf-Ferrari, cond. Cetra 1217. Three LP.

Ernani (1844)

I suppose that, as a stage piece, Ernani is dead and gone. Such matters as the sanctity of hospitality or the honor of an oath cannot be expected to excite today's audiences, and such devices as the fateful horn call are grounds for general amusement. But whether or not Ernani is dramatically viable, its music is very strong. Each of the four leading roles contains at least one outstanding aria, and the baritone role of Carlo has hardly a pedestrian moment. The finales and several other ensembles are vigorous and thematically in-
teresting. Even though the last act is, regrettably, much the weakest of the four (and in consequence the denouement barely endurable) I would judge the melodic inspiration of this opera as a whole to be very close to the level of Traviata.

Cetra's recording is one of that company's better efforts. The role of Elvira presents very little challenge after the opening "Ernani, involami"; in general, Mancini does very well for herself, though she must slow both cavatina and cabaletta, thus robbing them of brilliance. Penno's unusually fine singing of the title role serves as reminder that his sudden disintegration was a major disaster for the operatic world. There is not another post-war dramatic tenor who can combine such ringing tone with such flexibility—his graceful rendition of "Come rugiada al ceppite" puts his contemporaries entirely in the shade. Taddei hasn't quite the light legato touch for a really top notch "Ieni mero" or "O de' verdi anni miei," but his voice is always plump, and he makes the most of the dramatic moments. Vaghi's monochrome Silva is the one weak performance on the recording. Previtali's leadership is properly impetuous, the sound respectable.

—Mancini, Gino Penno, Giuseppe Taddei, Giacomo Vaghi. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Previtali, cond.
Cetra 1210. Three LP.

**Macbeth (1847)**

For extended commentary on both this opera and the recent RCA Victor stereo recording, I refer the reader to page 81 of the November 1959 issue of this magazine. For present purposes, I will merely say that I regard Macbeth as a worthy repertory opera, despite the unfortunate business with the Witches and some other banal passages. Victor's edition, the only one now in the catalogue, boasts a high-powered cast of principals, and orchestra and chorus (the Witches excepted) are shown to advantage in sound that is remarkable for stereo directionality.

RCA Victor LSC 6147. Three SD.

**Luise Miller (1849)**

Luise Miller is often referred to as a precursor of La Traviata, apparently because these two are intimate in theme and less than grand in scale. But Parisian salons are not Tyrolean castles, and the highly individual personal destinies of Violetta and Alfredo are a good distance from the stereotyped difficulties of Luise and Rudolfo. Cammarano's libretto, hacked out of Schiller's Kabale und Liebe, retains just enough of the drama's vital social conflict to serve as imetus for the ordinary set of intrigues and misunderstandings that comprise the lovers' "tragedy." Musically, the opera is afflicted with page after page of deadly recitative. There is one memorable aria for tenor ("Quando le sere al placido")—still not of Verdi's best), a typically powerful ensemble in the first finale, and an effective concluding tertezzette: otherwise, it's just not very interesting.

Cetra's liberally cut Luise is a grim production. Lauri-Volpi, far beyond his prime and in bad voice to boot, is intolerable when singing at full voice above the staff, but most of his work is painful to hear, and "Quando le sere" is wrecked. Colombo is a decent baritone, but his competent performance has little variety. The others cannot bring life to their parts. Rossi maintains the pace and keeps things in order, which is all that is called for. Peerce sings "Quando le sere" stylishly in Victor's set (LM 6041) of Verdi selections, and that will be enough of Luise for most listeners.

—Lucy Kelston, Giacomo Lauri-Volpi, Scipio Colombo, Vaghi, Dallio Baronti. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Mario Ross, cond.
Cetra 1221. Three LP.

**Rigoletto (1851)**

Rigoletto is the first of Verdi's operas about which there can be no argument as to quality. Of its recordings I would like to mention first the Columbia Entré set, dubbed from 78s and now deleted. Although its sound is naturally narrow in range and a bit tubby, it has Lorenzo Molajoli conducting, Riccardo Stracciari singing the title role (head and shoulders above all others on records). Dino Borgioli is the Duke. excellent supporting singers, and the élan of a Golden Age performance. Another remarkable performance is that of Act IV, a fascinating rendition from Milanov, Warren, Peerce, and Moscona, under Toscanini—on RCA Victor LM 6041. All soloists are in splendid shape, the original notes are sung, and despite the old sound you will never hear another storm like Toscanini's.

Among the more modern versions, the Victor (Cellini) and Angel sets have distinct advantages, and either of them can be considered a good investment. Cellini clamps through some of the music, but maintains discipline and a good pace. Warren had not completely built the character when his Rigoletto was committed to records; however, his voice rings out wonderfully, and in the cantabile passages he easily outclasses his competitors. Peerce is in good form, bringing a firm line to the music. Berger, though aging, still produces consistently lovely sound, and visely replaces the sensational coloratura effects with a melting legato. Tajo's smooth voice is too light for Spara-fucile, and his characterization consists of throwing away the last syllables of words.

The Angel version gives us Gobbi's Rigoletto, an admirable creation very different from Warren's. Gobbi cannot sustain the high-lying cantilena in the second part of "Corri-giani" or in the ensuing duet with Gilda, but he brings a fine dramatic insight to the part, particularly useful in the first and last acts. Callas contributes a well-drawn, incisively vocalized Gilda. Angel's Duke is Di Stefano, and I will make it clear now that I find most of his performances distressing; each successive recording brings additional evidence of vocal deterioration. I have no intention of belaboring this point in succeeding sections; let it stand that this Duke is typical of his somewhat strenuous efforts, and is this recording's one grave drawback. The Angel pressing boasts better sound than the older Victor one, and includes a few bars omitted by Cellini, running to a fifth side in the process.

Queta conducts a graceful, balanced production, not exciting, but amiable. The Rigoletto, Taddei, is splendid in the dramatic outbursts, less so when the long
line is called for, and his concept of the role is pedestrian. Pagliuca has some pre-curious moments, but is generally acceptable. Tagliavini is adequate until he tries to “refine,” whereupon he becomes repellent. Neri is a ponderous Sparafucile. The sound features the soloists too prominently, especially in the first-act ensemble.

The new Victor set, under Perlea, claims good, bright sound and an outstanding Sparafucile by Tozzi. Björling is, characteristically, the best recorded Duke, though not in his best form. Peters is an uninteresting Gilda. Merrill makes imposing sounds, but is musically sloppy and interpretatively unperturbing; I cite his near-blubbering on “La run, la ru” and his spoilt-child “Non’i” in the “Vendetta” duet. Perlea tends to rush things, and there is a disastrous tug in pitch on the final chord of Act III.

London’s well-recorded set suffers from a nondescript Rigoletto by Aldo Protti, an excusably miscast Duke in Del Monaco, and flabby, obvious conducting by Erede. Its virtues are a beautifully vocalized Gilda by Hilde Gueden and a rich Sparafucile by Siepi. This set—and the Cetra—include the Duke’s “Posente amor” (the cabaletta to “Parmi veder”), a routine number, much below the level of the score, and neither Del Monaco nor Tagliavini is the sort for whom to revive it.


—Maria Callas, Giuseppe di Stefano, Tito Gobbi, Nicola Zaccaria. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Tullo Serafin, cond. Angel 3517. Three LP. (Five sides.)

—Pagliuca, Ferruccio Tagliavini, Taddei, Giulio Neri. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Angelo Questa, cond. Cetra 1247. Three LP.

—Roberto Peters, Iussi Björling, Robert Merrill, Giorgio Tozzi. Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Jonel Perlea, cond. RCA Victor LM 6051. Two LP.

—Hilde Gueden, Mario del Monaco, Aldo Protti, Cesare Siepi. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Alberto Erede, cond. London A 4313. Three LP.

Il Trovatore (1853)

Considering the popularity of Il Trovatore, there have been relatively few recordings of the complete opera. I suspect that one reason is that it demands real singers. I mean by this that in contrast to, say, Rigoletto, Trovatore contains no characters—it has only stage figures. A singer whose voice is well past its prime can nevertheless make a powerful Rigoletto, even on records, provided he has dignity, intelligence, and strong histrionic ability. But the same singer will never get away with Di Luna; the Trovatore crew are just singers in costume, and if they can’t sing, there is no excuse for their existence. They all sang on the old Victor recording, reissued on the Camden label but now withdrawn. I have a personal distaste for the spread tone of Aureliano Pertile, the Manrico, but he was in some ways a thrilling tenor; and the rest of the cast, particularly the baritone Gianfranco and the contralto Minghini-Cattaneo, are superlative.

They also sing on the more recent Victor set—a little restrainedly, perhaps, but beautifully nonetheless. Milanov was in superb form when this recording was made, floating one phrase after another on the delicate pianissimo which is the trade-mark of her best singing, swelling to fine climaxes, and executing her runs cleanly. Her Leonora is one of the great individual performances of our generation, and Victor captured it at just the right moment. Björling turns in a faultless Manrico, clean and smooth from first note to last. “Ah, si ben mio” is rendered with tenderness and elasticity, and seconds later the “Di quella pira” is hurled forth in spine-tingling fashion. Warren’s pliant, wide-ranging instrument gives Di Luna’s music its full value, and Barbieri is a forceful, lush-voiced Azucena. The leadership of Cellini may be perfunctory and occasionally rushed, but it is at least lively; he also has the Shaw Chorale, a real advantage. Victor’s sound is perfectly acceptable, and the opera is gotten onto two records, as against three for all other versions.

The casts of both the Angel and London albums offer strong singing from the distaff side. Angel presents Callas, who is, as one would expect, a sensitive Leonora, but her peculiar talents for plumping character are of relatively little use here, since there is no character to plumb; and while she is adept with the passage work (including the rarely heard cabaletta to “D’amor sull’ali”, her voice has not the steadiness nor the body of Milanov’s. Barbieri’s Azucena is in some ways more refined here than on the Victor set (compare the two openings of “Ai nostri monti”), but the separation of registers is also a bit more extreme, and she is given to more exaggeration. Di Stefano is not a very knightly Manrico; in addition his attempt at a high D flat is a mistake, and the C at the conclusion of “Di quella pira” is as tight as a drumhead. Panerai pushes his vibrant voice mercilessly. Von Karajan’s treatment is a little slow for my taste, and he includes repeats of “Per me ora fatele” and “Di quella pira,” dissipating the effect in both cases.

London gives us Tebaldi, who as usual produces consistently beautiful, strong tone, and demonstrates a wide dynamic range. Still, her Leonora has not the pose or polish or passion of Milanov’s. Simionato is a smart singer with a flexible instrument, but I prefer Barbieri’s dark voice and unpremeditated approach to this role. Del Monaco is a clanging Manrico. Savarese a lackluster, limp Di Luna. Erede has a feeling for this music, and I rather like his ability to give-and-take with the soloists. As for engineering, this album is the richest and most spacious among Trovatore; it is also available in stereo.

Cetra gets a sterling Azucena from Miriam Pirazzini, a contralto more concerned with the music than with the hysteria. Lauri-Volpi’s Troubadour is, however, thoroughly bad. The rest of the cast is capable but hardly magnetic, the recording best by occasional echo.


—Callas, Barbieri, Di Stefano, Rolando Panerai. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Herbert von Karajan, cond. Angel 3554. Three LP. (Five sides.)

—Renata Tebaldi, Continued on page 95
London Records gathered its forces in Vienna for a full-scale recording of Aida—and, as expected, found that the city on the Danube furnished fine facilities for Giuseppe Verdi’s tragedy of life on the Nile. At right, Herbert von Karajan shares a score with Giulietta Simionato, who sings Amneris, and below, he goes to work—directing soloists, chorus, and the Vienna Philharmonic.

Egyptians in Vienna
No miracle of modern technology was absent from this recording session. Note, at left, the conductor of the offstage band for the Triumphal Scene, who follows Karajan’s beat on closed-circuit television. . . . Everybody seems to be enjoying everything: the soloists peal forth in full voice for the Finale of Act I; Von Karajan quips with his stars Tebaldi and Bergonzi. . . . In the photograph at bottom, the engineers play back the results of everyone’s labors, and Karajan abandons the score to revel in the full majesty of Verdi’s music.

Photographs by Hans Wild
How to Explain

STEREO

to Your Friends

Lest we seem repetitious: there appears an endless demand for analyses of the basic stereo proposition by thoughtful experimenters. This sits well with us; no good gospel deserves less than dozens of preachers. Here is one worth attending.

by HERMAN BURSTEIN

Most of us now have a happy confidence that we can define stereo to the satisfaction of any curious inquisitor: it means solid or complete sound, complete in the sense that stereophonic reproduction brings us all the characteristics of the original sound. But we may feel less assured when we’re asked for further explanation. “All the characteristics?” our interested party may demand. Answer him boldly. Yes, stereo in itself is complete. If what we hear in our homes is still incomplete, it is because engineering technology has not yet reached the ultimate. What we have today, however, comes remarkably close to recreation of the full, complete illusion, and represents a long, long step forward from yesterday’s level of monophonic achievement.

For real understanding of what is being done, it becomes important that we should know something about stereo illusion: how much is image, and how much illusion. For while directionality is the major—and certainly the most widely advertised—attribute of stereo, other characteristics are equally or even more important, depending on the music and on the listener. As an aid to buying wisely and listening fully—even, should the need arise, to explaining convincingly—this article will review the essential characteristics of sound and hearing which, combined, make stereophonic sound possible.

Directionality

Directionality refers not only to lateral spacing of sound (left, center, right) but also to depth (front to back) and perhaps even to height. Several factors account for our ability to assign spatial position to a sound source. While there is substantial agreement among the experts as to what these factors are, there is less agreement as to their relative importance. Conceivably, this importance varies with the listener, the listening site, and the type of sound.

Directionality is attributed to the following factors:

1. Difference in Arrival Time of the Sound at Each Ear. A sound reaches a listener’s left ear, say, about half a millisecond before it reaches his right ear. Apparently even such a tiny difference in time leads the mind to conclude: “The sound is from the left.” (This is known as the precedence effect.)

The ability of the mind to orient sound in this manner seems confined to transients rather than steady sine waves. Most sounds in nature, however, are initiated by a pulse of some degree, and not built up slowly and gradually. One set of experiments has indicated that the aural nerves discharge a signal to the brain at the first positive peak of the sound, and it has been reasoned
that this signal serves as a reference for measuring the interval between arrival time at each ear.

2. Intensity Difference at Each Ear. Let us say a sound from the left reaches the left ear at a certain level of loudness. Because the ears are separated by the width of the head, the same sound will reach the right ear at a lower level of loudness. This difference helps the mind to determine the direction of the source. There is also an increase of air pressure on the ear nearest the source, and a decrease of pressure on the ear away from the source. The higher the frequency, the greater is the pressure difference, because the head is relatively large, compared with one wavelength of sound. This is why one can more readily identify the direction of sounds with high frequencies than those with low ones.

Intensity differences are regarded as more important than arrival time differences in producing a sense of directionality. How sensitive are we to differences of intensity? "...with sustained tones," say two authorities, "even a 2-db difference in loudspeaker intensity can produce a shift in the apparent position of the sound source." 3 This helps explain the importance of achieving balance between channels and of having speakers with matched frequency characteristics.

It is believed that through experience the mind has learned to interpret a given difference in loudness at each ear as corresponding to a given angular placement of the source with respect to the listener. In an experiment, listeners were asked to state the location of a sound source on the basis of sound heard through earphones. So long as the difference between the sound level at each ear was held constant, each subject was highly consistent in ascribing the same angular location to the source. 4

3. Waveform Difference. Most of those who have explored stereophonic phenomena have concluded that differences in the waveform at each ear help account for the sense of directionality. The most thorough exposition of this point of view is perhaps that of Hume, 5 who has claimed that waveform differences at each ear are the basic factor, with intensity and arrival-time differences serving merely to confirm what the mind already knows. "...The stereophonic effect," says Hume, "is produced by a difference in high-frequency or harmonic content, created by head and external ear shading, of the sound signal reaching the inner ear." To illustrate, the left ear would receive all the frequencies of a sound arriving from the left, while the sound reaching the right ear from this same source would be substantially stripped of its harmonic content.

If this is true, how then does a person with only one good ear identify a sound source? Several authorities have suggested that slight movements of the head result in changes of the waveform at the good ear; although a person presumably remains still, nevertheless his head will make minute involuntary movements, permitting spatial orientation.

4. Ratio of Direct to Reverberated Sound. We normally receive sound both directly from the source and indirectly as the result of reflections from room surfaces and objects in the room. The ratio of direct to reverberated sound helps us locate the source; sound appears to come from the source with the highest ratio. One authority has stated: "In general, the localization tends toward the channel giving the most natural or close-up reproduction... Experiment shows that decreasing either the total loudness or the amount of direct sound relative to reverberant gave the impression that the sound was moving back on the stage. Depth localization is thus a complicated function of loudness and relative reverberation." 6

In reproducing sound, the illusion of directionality may depend partly upon keeping reverberation out of one or the other speaker, so that the source appears to be in the locality of the speaker with the least reverberation. Or the illusion of instruments arrayed in depth may be achieved as the result of the different amounts of reverberation associated with each instrument.

Reverberation does not altogether prevent us from gauging the location of a sound source. It is believed that the mind distinguishes direct from reverberant

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5 W. B. Snow, op. cit.
sound on the basis of arrival time and gives much heavier weight to the direct sound, thereby locating the source.

**Spaciousness**

At least as important to stereophonic effect as directionality and very likely more important is the sense of spaciousness, which has nothing to do with either lateral or depth perception. The objective is to make the listener believe the source is a large one rather than of the order of the dimensions of the speaker enclosure and to create the illusion that the performance is taking place in a large hall instead of in the typical living room. Snow maintains that “The enhanced aesthetic appeal obtained from an auditory-perspective reproduction of an orchestra is not due so much to an accurate localization of the various sounds as to a general effect of space distribution, which adds a fullness to the over-all effect.”

The sensation of spaciousness may be achieved in at least two ways:

1. By a physical spread of the sound source, namely the use of two or more speakers spaced several feet apart, generally in lateral fashion, and fed by one sound channel. This explains why quasi-stereo in the form of two speakers connected to a monophonic channel can noticeably increase listening pleasure.

2. By reverberation. It is estimated that at a musical performance in a typical hall, as much as “90% of the sound energy reaching a member of the audience may have been reflected one or more times from the various surfaces in the auditorium.” Our minds tend to associate a given amount of reverberation—the ratio of reverberated to direct sound and time interval between the two types of sound—with a given size of room or hall. Moreover, as previously noted, a large amount of reverberated sound relative to direct sound reduces the ear’s ability to localize the source and thereby lessens the impression that the sound originates in a restricted area.

On the other hand, too much reverberation can muddy the sound, and excessive time intervals between direct and indirect sound can produce an echo rather than concert hall effect.

**Multiplicity Effect**

Studies of orchestra reproduction reveal that our aural image of a large number of violins playing at once depends upon the fact that they are playing not quite together. Slight and inevitable differences in attack and release time, in pitch and timbre, produce the effect of a group of violins. If all the violinists played exactly together and produced exactly the same sound, the effect would be of a single violin greatly amplified.

Similarly, stereo illusion depends to a degree upon multiple representations of sound (usually two in home stereo) that differ slightly in some manner—intensity, phase, waveform, arrival time. A crude analogy may be drawn with visual stereo, where two slightly different images, seen by each eye, fuse in the mind to produce the effect of solidity.

The multiplicity effect, like the sense of spaciousness, can be achieved to some degree by certain quasi-stereo techniques. With a single channel serving as the sound source, a partial illusion of solidity can be conveyed by altering the sound’s characteristics in some manner (e.g., phase, frequency, arrival time) as it is reproduced through a second speaker system. It is possible that quasi-stereo effects might be attained even with a single speaker system.

**High Fidelity Attributes**

Although stereo is not necessarily high fidelity, the best stereo is at the same time high fidelity and therefore possesses the following characteristics essential for realistic reproduction.

1. **High Signal-to-Noise Ratio.** An appreciable noise level tends to prevent one’s hearing the weakest sounds, many of which are high frequencies and play an important role in the stereo effect, particularly with respect to directionality. Moreover, noise in itself is objectionable.

2. **Low Distortion.** Although the initial dramatic impact of stereo upon the newcomer tends to obscure for him the differences between mediocre and excellent speakers, mediocre and excellent amplifiers, etc., repeated listening will clearly reveal whatever distortion is present. It is just as true for stereo as for monophonic reproduction that minimum distortion is a requisite for maximum listening pleasure. Directionality, spaciousness, and so forth cannot compensate for sound that lacks the clarity and cleanliness of the original performance.

3. **Good Frequency Response.** It seems to be true that limited frequency range is less noticeable in stereo than mono. But this does not mean that stereo with a range of, say, 50 to 8,000 cycles will be just as good as stereo with a range of 30 to 15,000 cycles. Stereo depends substantially upon adequate treble reproduction. Transients, associated with directionality, are by their nature high frequencies. Inadequate reproduction of transients causes loss in directionality and clarity.

Equally important is uniformity of response. In mono and stereo, acute peaks are in themselves disturbing to the ear. In the case of stereo, peaks or dips that occur in one sound channel but not in the other tend to produce an apparent shift of source from the left to the right or vice versa.

4. **Wide Dynamic Range.** At a live orchestral performance, the range between the softest and loudest sounds is approximately 60 to 70 db. Realistic reproduction requires that this range be substantially retained. The loudest sounds must not overload the equipment so as to cause noticeable distortion, and the weakest sounds must be above the

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*Continued on page 123*
by ALAN WAGNER

The New Golden Age of Opera

Mr. Rudolf Bing of the Metropolitan Opera said not long ago, and firmly: "The golden age of opera is now."

Our author expands upon the Bing pronouncement.

BLESSED is the LP — and thrice-blessed among lovers of opera. For their private pleasure it has made available a repertoire ranging from Monteverdi to Alban Berg, an array of vocal talent covering half a century.

And yet, the blessing is not unmitigated. The man who collects canned glories may forget that opera is a living art, rooted in that most energetic of disciplines, the theatre, and meant to be performed, not merely recorded. It's all too easy to succumb to the insidious cult of the definitive, to proclaim that the best of opera is past and available only on disc. Among my acquaintances are some who seriously maintain, for example, that since Flagstad retired from the stage to the studio they need never again attend a Ring Cycle.

Even recordings themselves are judged on the basis of their antiquity. Age becomes equated with virtue, and an acoustic circa 1908 is held ipso facto superior to an LP circa 1958. Complete operas as well as recitals are also subject to this kind of evaluation. A 1936 Glyndebourne Mozart recording becomes preferable to newer releases—not because its conductor is the great Fritz Busch, but because it has acquired a patina of venerability. "All in all," comes the plaint from behind a pile of deleted 78s, "they don't make singers like they used to. Where are the glories of yesteryear?" Such rhetoric is decidedly pointless. All praise to microgroove and allied arts for resurrecting the honored past, but the mid-twentieth century has its glories, too. Even though there are perhaps a few giants of vocal history we cannot match—a Caruso or a Claudia Muzio, say—we have artists who are at least worthy successors. And as a group our singers are every bit as fine as their predecessors.

To begin with, there is now such a sheer abundance of talent. If nothing else, 1959 surpasses the Golden Age in numbers. A half-century ago it was a rare season indeed when the Metropolitan Opera Company, for example, could boast more than two or three first-rate voices in any category. This year the same company has on its roster double or even triple that many leading artists, with as many more...
waiting for places. Perhaps four singers now stand where one stood before.

Instances abound. How many important basses can you name from the turn of the century to the period when the current crop became active? Edouard de Reszke, Pol Plançon, Feodor Chaliapin, Adamo Didur, Marcel Journet, Léon Rothier, Andrès de Segurola, Ezio Pinza, Alexander Kipnis—who else? That’s nine, over a period of half a century. Right now, singing at opera houses around the world, are artists of the caliber of Cesare Siepi, Giorgio Tozzi, Boris Christoff, Nicola Rossi-Lemeni, Kim Borg, Miro Chaldeovich, Jerome Hines, the Russians Mark Reizen and Alexander Pirogov. That’s also nine—and there are many more. One thinks of Mihaly Szekely, William Wildermann, Nicola Moscona, Fernando Corena, Raphael Arié, Norman Treigle, Nicola Zaccaria, Ludwig Weber, Josef Greindl, Arnold van Mill, all active simultaneously.

These singers would have been useful in any opera house at any time, and some are peers with the best of any age. For skill and delicacy combined with rolling beauty of sound, listen to Tozzi sing “Infelice e tu crederi” from Verdi’s Ernani or “Deh, vieni alla finestra” from Don Giovanni: he commands a mezza voce that would have done Pinza proud. Feel the sheer power and the dignified grief of Siepi’s “Ella giammai m’amò” from Don Carlo, or the raw elemental strength of Christoff’s Boris Godunov. I venture to say their performances rank with anything the lyric stage has ever offered.

Our era is similarly rich in German bass-baritones. Friedrich Schorr is silent, and Richard Mayr and Joel Berglund; but I remember no other singer when there has been at one time a group of first-line Wagnerian and Straussian experts to match Hans Hotter, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Paul Schöffler, Otto Edelmann, Eberhard Wächter, Joseph Metternich, George London, Hermann Uhde, Walter Cassel, and James Pease. These men could staff a couple of Bayreuths.

None of them is limited in scope, either. On occasion they have all forgotten that they are Helden-baritones and have wandered successfully far afield. If you tell me about Heinrich Schulenburg and Lieder, I’ll speak of Hotter singing the Winterreise or Fischer-Dieskau the Dichterliebe. London and Cassel are fine Scarpias, Fischer-Dieskau a marvelous Falstaff. And Mozart—they almost all sing Mozart beautifully. Among them are three of the finest of Count Almavivas.

Nor am I stacking the cards. We may be living through a particular renaissance of bass-baritones, but it seems to me that contemporary superiority is evident almost anywhere you look. To continue with Mozart, compare the best of the past as preserved on vinyl with what we can produce today. Ina Souez, for instance, enjoyed a tremendous reputation as Fiordiligi in Così fan tutte, and yet Souez simply couldn’t manage the jumps and runs of “Come scoglio” with anything like the facility displayed by Eleanor Steber. Of course, as far as I’m concerned, on grounds of technique Steber outclasses any Mozart soprano you’d care to mention. Anyone fortunate enough to have heard her Donna Anna in the Met’s production of Don Giovanni will have experienced a truly remarkable performance. Nor was she alone; the Donna Elvira in that cast was Lisa Della Casa, who is also such a lovely Countess in The Marriage of Figaro that her “Dove sono” makes me forget Elisabeth Rethberg, Maria Stader (who sings a wonderful Pamina), Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Irmgard Seefried, Sena Jurinac, Hilde Gueden, Erna Berger, Wilma Lipp—all perform Mozart with extraordinary skill.

In that same Metropolitan Don Giovanni was the Don Ottavio of Cesare Valletti. The grace of this tenor’s passage work, the ease with which he spins out the cruelly long phrases of “Il mio tenore” (as if breathing were an obsolete necessity), both mark him as the worthy heir to the mantle of Tito Schipa. And there are others. During this production’s first season Jan Peerce and Nicolai Gedda sang the role with brilliancy. Anton Dermota, Léopold Simoneau, and Ernst Häf tiger are lyric tenors.
in the greatest tradition: listen to Dermota as Don Ottavio, or Simoneau as Ferrando in Cosi fan tutte, or Häfli- ger as Tamino in The Magic Flute. Ferruccio Tagliavini is also still active, and what person who has ever heard him sing Nemorino in Donizetti’s L’Elisir d’amore can forget him?

To point up once more the versatility characteristic of today’s singers, consider again the ladies—Steber and Della Casa and company. They are as at home in Strauss, and Wagner, and even Italian opera, as they are in Mo- zart. Della Casa as Arabella, Steber as Elsa in Lohengrin, Schwarzkopf as the Marschallin and Jurinac as Octavian in Der Rosenkavalier, Seefried as the Composer in Ariadne, Guetert as Musetta in La Bohème, Berger as Rigo- letto’s Gilda: all these portrayals are worthy of admira- tion. Steber in particular varies her roles. She sings Puccini widely and well, created the title role in Samuel Barber’s Vanessa, sang Marie in Alban Berg’s biting Woz- zek, and tops it all off with a successful appearance in Otello or Traviata or Der Rosenkavalier.

For my part, I am convinced that there are more good sopranos around today, more sopranos with the potentiality for greatness, than there were in any so-called Golden Age. Start with Kirsten Flagstad, now in her sixties but no stranger to today’s microphones. When has there been a dramatic soprano with the sheer majesty of voice that Flagstad still commands? Already she seems to dwarf the memory of all the Frida Leiders and Olive Fremstads. Her recorded performance of Tristan und Isolde under Furtwängler and the first and third acts of Die Walküre under Knappertsbusch and Solti are land- marks in Wagnerian history. And there is, of course, London’s recent Das Rheingold. Mme. Flagstad is now almost exclusively a recording artist, but her place on stage is being taken by some exciting young artists. Birgit Nilsson is turning into a Valkyrie of high order, and at least on the concert stage Eileen Farrell pours out silver floods of sound as sumptuous as even Richard Wagner himself might wish.

Many will want to remember Ljuba Welitch (she still sings a little—she’s the Duenna, an infinitesimal part, on the Angel Rosenkavalier), but one need not mourn the passing of her Salome, memorable though it was. We now have Inge Borkh—endowed with a lovely, shining voice, great intelligence, immense acting resources. In this young singer, the brutally taxing roles of Salome and Elektra have found a fine new interpreter.

As for the Italian repertoire; we can cast it today with more felicity than ever. Norma? Watch the proto- Maria Callas in good form make something royal and searing out of the Druid priestess. There has never been a more touching, more ravishingly sung Mimi in La Bohème than Renata Tebaldi, or a more searching and vivid Leonora in Il Trovatore than Antonietta Stella. Callas, Tebaldi, Stella: these artists alone might single out an epoch for grandeur.

The theatrical excitement of Callas, her incisive grasp of the drama in a musical phrase, and her range of roles from Turandot to Lucia di Lammermoor and back to Tosca by way of The Barber of Seville can charge a season with electricity. She is the Mary Garden of the mid- century—and more. A vivid flair for personal dramatization adds an extra dimension to her appearances, and before the intensity of her performances any qualms about the high tones dissolve.

Seldom in history has there been a voice as melting as Tebaldi’s to reduce an audience to tears and cheers. The excruciating loveliness of her “Willow Song” from Otello is something to treasure, but then so is most of the music this voice makes. Honey and liquid fire, one of the most beautiful voices, note for note, ever produced, all directed by a personality of warm charm and by a telling dramatic instinct: this is the essence of Tebaldi.

It may be too early to assess the full powers of Stella, but this much is certain: here is an artist of the highest integrity, possessor of an enchanting lyricospinto voice, trained well and thoroughly. She is an outstanding actress, capable of making Continued on page 120
The Viking 85 Series deck and Viking recording amplifiers provide the perfect memory for your high fidelity music system. Record monaural or stereo programs at the flick of a switch. Record with the full performance provided by laminated heads. Record quarter track if you prefer, but better still, use the brilliant, ultra short-gap quarter-track head for simultaneous monitoring from the recorded track.

All Viking 85 Series decks now feature laminated (not single laminar) half-track and quarter-track record and playback heads; the same heads used on the professional 95 Series. A laminated head permits a substantially higher recording level without saturation, requires less equalization for brilliant high-end performance and provides much longer head life.

All Viking "Q" model decks may be used equally well for playing the new 7½ i.p.s. four-track tapes and the 3¾ i.p.s. tapes featured in cartridges. Cartridge tapes may be removed from the cartridge and played reel-to-reel on the Viking 85.

Viking tape components are sold through high fidelity dealers, exclusively. Further technical information may be obtained by writing directly to Viking's Customer Service Department.
MAX GOBERMAN, who has embarked on a complete-Vivaldi recording project, is no stranger to long-memoryed collectors. Almost twenty years ago he and his New York Sinfinietta made the then-startling gesture of recording eight string symphonies by the English composer William Boyce. This little-known music was issued on nine 78-rpm discs by one of the earliest "independents," an outfit called Timely Records. Goberman has since then taken part in a goodly number of recordings, but more usually as the conductor of Broadway wayers (West Side Story, to name one) than of recondite repertoire from the eighteenth century. Now he has returned to the classical fold in a quite spectacular way by proposing to do no less than put the entire life work of Antonio Vivaldi on records.

The agency of this ambitious undertaking is the Library of Recorded Masterpieces, a new "independent" founded and directed by Mr. Goberman. The LRM will sell its records exclusively by mail. Subscribers to the series will receive a new Vivaldi record each month, complete with scores reproduced from the Ricordi Edition. The first record is now in the hands of charter subscribers, and material for several ensuing records is already on tape.

Goberman defrays the cost of preparation by combining his recordings with all-Vivaldi concerts in New York City. Each concert provides enough music for two discs, and studio recordings in three-channel stereo are made immediately following the public performances. Goberman's schedule calls for six concerts and twelve records per year. At this rate he expects to write "Finis" to the complete-Vivaldi project some time late in the 1960s.

Subscribers to the Library of Recorded Masterpieces receive a record (mono or stereo) and accompanying scores for $8.50 a month. You cannot purchase one without the other. Goberman believes that the enjoyment of music—particularly music as transparently orchestrated as Vivaldi's—is measurably heightened by attention to the printed score. "Most record listeners won't go to the trouble or expense of buying a score," he says, "but if they have one presented to them they invariably enjoy following the music as they listen. Anybody interested in a complete recording of Vivaldi should be interested in owning the complete scores as well."

This is a refreshingly uncompromising point of view, especially at a time when the large companies are retreating more and more from the esoteric and the experimental. Vivaldians should communicate with the Library of Recorded Masterpieces, 150 West 82nd Street, New York 24, N.Y.

ELEANOR STEBER is another musician who has taken the step of becoming an entrepreneur in the record business. Her company, called Stand Records, has started off by issuing an actual-performance LP of Miss Steber's Carnegie Hall recital of October 10, 1958.

Like a good many other artists, Eleanor Steber has discovered that the big companies are no longer as receptive as in days past to recordings of fairly limited sales potential. But instead of merely bemoaning this state of affairs (a favored indoor occupation of musicians), she determined to do something about it. Result: Stand Records. "I feel there's a need," Miss Steber told us, "for recordings of the more unusual vocal repertoire. Of course, it attracts a smaller audience than the standard arias you hear all the time, and for that reason most record companies won't bother with it. But I believe I can bring out this kind of music and at least make ends meet."

This spring Eleanor Steber will make an all-Mozart record with an orchestra conducted by Robert Lawrence. Also on her agenda is an all-Debussy recital (including the Gymnès de Bordeau), the Seven Fairy Songs of Alban Berg, and the Cantata No. 51, Jungezet Gott, by Bach.

ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO Decca-London's chief recording engineer, Arthur Haddy, left England for an unpublicized visit to Sunnyvale, California. His mission: to talk to the engineers at Ampex Audio and investigate the four-track tape processing of Ampex's subsidiary, United Stereo Tapes. In 1958, just before the introduction of London's stereo discs, Arthur Haddy had told us that he was and had always been opposed to tape as a stereo medium for home listening. The trip to Sunnyvale changed his mind. On January 18, United Stereo Tapes will release a great batch of Decca-London recordings, the first fruit of a five-year pact.

"I suppose everyone is entitled to second thoughts," says Lee Hattson, vice president of London Records. "Haddy talked to the Ampex people, listened to their ideas about the future of tape, saw their processing operation, and decided that this was a company we should work with. Had it not been for Ampex, we wouldn't today be in the tape field. I don't believe there's another company in the world to whom we would have leased our catalogue."

In the first tape release are London's complete stereo recordings of Rheingold, Butterfly, and Figaro, also Von Karajan's Also sprach Zarathustra, Ansermet's Coppélia, and much, much more. Four-track tape has been given a very sizable boost.
A landmark in monophonic recording history:
The Westminster recording of the Bach *Mass in B Minor*
conducted by Scherchen (XWN 3305)
"By far the finest recording of this work." N. Y. Herald Tribune

Another Westminster landmark in monophonic recording history:
The Handel *Messiah* conducted by Scherchen (XWL 3306)
"An inspired performance! Especially wonderful is Scherchen
in his finest offering on records." John Conly, Atlantic Magazine

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great conductor and the same great company
The Bach Mass in B Minor and The Handel Messiah.
...An unforgettable experience.

**BACH: Mass in B Minor**—Pierrette Alarie, soprano; Nan Merriman, alto; Leopold Simoneau, tenor; Gustav Neidlinger, bass; Vienna Academy Chorus; Vienna State Opera Orchestra; Conducted by Hermann Scherchen (Stereo WST 304)

**HANDEL: Messiah**—Pierrette Alarie, soprano; Nan Merriman, alto; Leopold Simoneau, tenor; Richard Standen, bass; Vienna Academy Chorus; Vienna State Opera Orchestra; Conducted by Hermann Scherchen (Stereo WST 401)

For complete Westminster Catalog, write Dept. HF-1, Westminster, 275 Seventh Avenue, N.Y.C.
The Early Quartets: Beethoven Anew, by the Budapest at Its Finest

by Robert C. Marsh

Commentators on Beethoven's Op. 18 quartets—now issued by Columbia in a new Budapest stereo version—are prone to begin with the "accepted scholarly idea" that in these works one sees the young composer operating within a form taken over very largely from Haydn and Mozart and yet to be modified with any distinctive contribution from his own genius. Like many "accepted scholarly ideas," this is more truth than falsehood, but it is just a little too pat a generalization to be swallowed unchewed.

The six Op. 18 quartets are filled with the most individual marks of Beethovenian creativity, and we would do well to stress these features rather than the links with their predecessors.

For one thing, the Op. 18 quartets are not as early as some may suppose. Written between 1798-1800, they are prefaced by the first of the five canonical piano concertos, ten piano sonatas, and a great deal of other music, including (if one accepts its authenticity) the Jena symphony. This is youthful Beethoven but it is not juvenilia.

I do not think, for example, that there is any set of variations in Haydn and Mozart which one may regard as anticipation of the Andante cantabile of the Op. 18, No. 5. Here the Beethoven stamp is unmistakable, and the variation writing stylistically grounded on the techniques which, in time, produced the great Diabelli series of Op. 120. Harmonically, these quartets are a fully realized expression of the Beethoven character that is more forcefully pronounced in his middle period. The wit (beautifully illustrated in the complimentary exchanges that open Op. 18, No. 2) is far removed from any Haydn joke; while the tragedy, found in the magnificent slow movement of Op. 18, No. 1, is distinctively shaped in terms of Beethoven's Promethean manner. And it should also be noted that these six quartets cover an enormous range of content, from the sublime to the courtly gallant to the stab of grief to quasi-Hungarian frivolity. Not even the six quartets of Bartók offer such scope of material and emotional content, and few living composers could hope to encompass half this range.

Early Beethoven is not, of course, late Beethoven, but we would do well to avoid the delusion that our lives are conducted on such a level that only the most transcendent works of art deserve attention. These quartets are worth all the interest and affection one may care to give them.

For many of us, their qualities first registered with force as they appeared fifteen or
more years ago in a series of Budapest recordings. That first Budapest edition, a mixture of American Columbias and HMVs, was not fully complete, since the opening and closing movements of Op. 18, No. 5 were missing. Time corrected this omission, however, and the microgroove album of 1952 gave us the whole of the series in consistent sonics.

It is natural to fear that on the third time around repetition might have done its worst and introduced a deterioration from those superb earlier statements of these works. It is therefore pleasing to discover that quite the contrary has taken place, and this third edition (the first, of course, in stereo) is quite the finest of the three. I do not say this arbitrarily, since I gave considerable time to playing Budapest Beethoven against Budapest Beethoven. I expect that some who have been enamoured of the early performances will resent the fact that these are different, but for me the changes may all be taken validly as further refinements.

Just to avoid any confusion, it hardly needs be said that at no time since it established itself in this country in 1938 has the Budapest String Quartet been anything less than an impressively fine musical organization. The difference is simply that between a group playing well from notes it has carefully rehearsed and one which, in this new set, takes its knowledge of the notes for granted and is free to concentrate on stating a musical line with the maximum of expression and force.

The effect of such playing is completely realized only in stereo recording which separates the four instruments to a degree such that the interplay of the themes is heard rather than imagined. Take, as illustration, the menuetto (it is really one of Beethoven’s early scherzos) of the quartet Op. 18, No. 3, where the lively thematic line moves back and forth from the violins on the right to the viola and cello on the left. No monophonic recording can reproduce this effect—which Beethoven plainly wanted to exploit. Here in stereo it is just right.

The microphone placement was clearly very close (at times you can even hear the players’ breathing), and the sound is consequently that heard when one is in the midst of a group of stringed instruments rather than the blended and softened sonorities experienced midway back in a hall. I approve, for this is the only way that stereo can offer a genuine, quartet-in-the-living-room effect; but be prepared for realism.

Be prepared, too, for ten more Budapest quartets to complete this third Budapest edition. I, for one, find that prospect thoroughly appealing.

**BEETHOVEN: Quartets for Strings**

Op. 18: No. 1 in F; No. 2 in G; No. 3 in D; No. 4, in C minor; No. 5, in A; No. 6, in E flat.

Budapest Quartet.
- **Columbia MSL 262.** Three LP. **$14.94.**
- **Columbia MJS 606.** Three 12". **$17.94.**

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**A Notable Don from Deutsche Grammophon**

by Nathan Broder

One of the curious and unexpected results of modern recording of operas has been to throw an extra burden on the singer. Deprived of costume, gesture, movement, and all other visual props, he must create the character he is portraying entirely with his voice, coloring it in such a way as to reflect the different emotional states and mental attitudes he assumes in the course of the story. To be sure, the greatest artists did this on stage too, but—to judge by records—the ability to do it has always been rare; even celebrated singers of the Golden Age seldom had more than two or three emotional strings to their bow. One thinks, of course, of Chaliapin, but the very fact that he springs to mind so far ahead of all others shows how lonely he is on his peak. Perhaps the microphone will force singers to try to develop this skill, which would be only fair, since the microphone has relieved them of the necessity of having a big voice.

These reflections were brought to mind by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau’s performance in this new Deutsche Grammophon recording of Don Giovanni. More than any other recorded Don, I think, he takes the pains to characterize with his voice. When, at the beginning of the second act, he pretends to be consumed once more with love for Elvira, without exaggerating he makes it quite clear to the audience that he is putting it on. And a little later, when he masquerades as Leporello, his voice immediately takes on the color of Karl Kohn’s. Yet at no time is the music distorted. In other respects too this Don is a highly commendable one. Fischer-Dieskau does not have quite the bravura to carry off the “Finch’han del vino” without a slip of tongue or lip (how many Dons do?), and he is perceptibly off on a high D sharp in the graveyard scene; but his fine, lyric voice flows accurately everywhere else. This Don Giovanni is noble, cruel, lively, and fearless, not cringing even before his terrible doom.

The Leporelo of Karl Kohn is a not unworthy servant to this Don. Considerably less varied in color, it is nevertheless sung in rich and well-focused tones. Ernst Häfliger, the Ottavio, handles his two arias with skill and musicianship. One has heard tenors with more honey in the voice, but not many nowadays who can spin out a phrase more smoothly or land so solidly yet effortlessly on a high note. Sardi’s Masetto does not reflect all the feelings experienced by that much-put-upon character, but it contains one or two fine touches. For example, when the disguised Don, craftily removing the weapons with which Masetto plans to attack him, asks whether he has any more, Sardi’s “Non basta!” (“Aren’t these enough?”) has an innocent surprise that is delicious.

There is more unevenness on the distaff side, frequently within the same role. Sena Jurinac, the Anna, produces some lovely singing, full of feeling, as in the wonderful accompanied recitative following the Commendatore’s slaying. Her “Non mi dir,” too, is moving, though it would be even more effective if its first section were softer; and she sails through the extremely difficult Allegretto section with hardly a trace of strain. Elsewhere, however, as in “Or sai chi l’ama,” her tone becomes pinched or metallic in moments of stress or on high-lying passages. The Elvira, Maria Studer, is at her best in “Mi tradi,” where leaps are successfully negotiated and scale passages and arpeggios unroll smoothly. In other places, such as “Ah chi mi dice mai,” she is rather unsteady, and scoops up high notes in a laborious attempt to convey Elvira’s desperation in her last plea to Don
ELLA FITZGERALD'S reputation as "a jazz singer" is to a large extent, deserved—but it is also misleading. Miss Fitzgerald's association with jazz has been more a matter of convenience than inclination, for her primary talent is her treatment of warmly melodic ballads. She began her career twenty-five years ago as the vocalist in Chick Webb's quite genuine jazz band, but Webb hired her because of her way with a slow and sentimental ballad (her entire repertory at the time is reputed to have consisted of two songs, both pop ballads of the moment) and ballads have been her forte ever since. Nonetheless, the jazz label has clung to her. She has spent the bulk of her career in a jazz milieu—singing with Webb's band, leading a band of her own, appearing as a "single" in night clubs which cater to a jazz audience and as a perennial star of the "jazz at the Philharmonic" troupe—and although she has sung and recorded numerous ballads, her popular hits have usually been novelty tunes with jazz overtones (Stone Cold Dead in the Market) or such out-and-out jazz efforts as her scat versions of Flyin' Home and Oh, Lady Be Good.

It is only in the past few years that Miss Fitzgerald's talents as a singer beyond the jazz fold have begun to be realized. From what has previously seemed to be a haphazard selection of tunes, she has been guided, under the direction of Norman Granz, towards the melodic heart of the popular repertory, a move which has resulted in recorded sets of the songs of Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Duke Ellington, and Irving Berlin. All of these albums were partially successful—but only partially; Miss Fitzgerald was not at home with trickily worded lyrics, and her accompaniment too often missed the mark (the most surprising instances being the inept backing she received from Duke Ellington's orchestra on Ellington's own songs).

by John S. Wilson

Ella Meets the Gershwins

With an Assist from Nelson Riddle

January 1960
BRAHMS: Violin Concerto (New Recording)

In his traversal of this symphony, Kreisler presents a rather heavy, hard-driven reading of the first movement, with a strangely broadened return to the recapitulation. His handling of the second movement is fairly intense, while the Trio of the third movement is slightly dragged, and the finale is slow and heavy-handed. Strong, full-range recording prevails.

Despite its shortcomings, Kreisler’s conception is, however, a model of correctness compared to Stokowski’s erratic treatment—or rather, mistreatment—of the score. In the latter’s reading no two measures of the first movement are taken at the same tempo. The second movement is more even and it is beautifully phrased but inordinately slow. The third movement again is uneven in tempo and is heavily sentimental, while the last movement is slow, overdramatized, and generally exaggerated in pace and phrasing.

Yet with it all Stokowski works wonders with the Houston orchestra, which has never sounded better. He draws from the players an extremely polished, rich-colored tone. The strings sound positively gorgeous, and the wind soloists and choirs are of the first rank. Sonically, the monophonic version is excellent, but it is the stereo edition that really shines: it is the last word in naturalness, spaciousness, and distinction.

Since neither of these interpretations is up to standard, the best of the newer versions remain those by Klemperer and Kubelik.

P.A.

BRAHMS: Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a

Wagner: Siegfried Idyll; Träume

Philharmonia Orchestra, Paul Kletzki, cond.

Brahms: Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a

Philharmonia Orchestra, Paul Kletzki, cond.

* ANGEL S 35765. LP. $4.98.
* ANGEL S 35765. SD. $5.98.

Kletzki is not a showy conductor. He allows the music to sing, to emerge frankly and naturally, and in so doing, serves it best. Other performances of the Haydn Variations and the Siegfried Idyll may have more tension and excitement, but few, if any, are more solidly grounded, more carefully wrought, or more satisfying. The orchestral arrangement of the hauntingly beautiful song Träume, the last of the five Wesendonck Lieder, is presumably the composer’s own, with one slight variation: the solo line is allotted to a single violin, here affectingly played by Hugh Bean.

While the monophonic recording is strong in the middle frequencies, it is a bit weak in the highs. The stereo version, on the other hand, is ideal in every respect, with every leading voice emerging with the clear relief the conductor intended—indeed, in this reproduction, with less warm and more satisfying as the interpretations.

P.A.

CAGE: Indeterminacy

John Cage, narrator; David Tudor, music.

* FOLKWAYS FT 3704. Two LP. $5.95 each.

Here John Cage tells about ninety short anecdotes, one after the other, while David Tudor adds bloops and bangs in the background, some of them taken from Cage’s piano music and some from his tape recorder works. Cage’s stories, on the whole, are very good. He gives us bits of autobiography, philosophic tales, and whatnot, as if he were unloading two years of amiable dinner conversation in one monologue, but before long it all begins to sound very arbitrary and affected. The music makes no sense, and neither does Cage’s way of speeding up and slowing down his speech, now dragging the words with long intervals between them, now spilling them out as fast as he can. Indeterminacy is an attractive idea, but there is nothing more completely determinative than a phonograph record, and such charm as this experiment may have had in live performance is lost when it is transferred to disc.

A.F.


Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano.

* ANGEL S 35648. LP. $4.98.
* ANGEL S 33648. SD. $3.98.

Continued on page 68

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January 1960

67

www.americanradiohistory.com
This is a stereophonic reissue of a performance which has been in the catalogue for a couple of years now. Apart from Simonato, who fills the full baritone we are told to expect splendidly as Leonora, the performance is not ideal; one could ask for more elegance from everyone concerned, and for more fire from Mr. Hines. The voices are all of imposing caliber, however, and much of the music is magnificent—the opera's total effect is quite powerful. Stereo is an asset, particularly in the last act. Soloists do not move around much, but the added depth is important at several points, and the sound throughout is richer than in the monophonic edition. C.L.O.

ETLER: Quintet for Winds
D. Dahlu: Allegro and Arioso for Five Wind Instruments
Barber: Summer Music for Woodwind Quintet
New York Woodwind Quintet.
• Concerto Disc CS 216. SD. $6.95.

This latest Ashkenazy release represents his playing as more subjective, willful, capricious, poetic—and fascinating—than ever. The young Russian pianist has at his command a very beautiful, melting, almost clinging tone—ideal for a legato, a wonderfully light staccato for fast passage work or rhythmic accompaniments, and a remarkable sensitivity to soft tonal gradations, from pianissimo to mezzo-forte. He can also throw away notes in stressing others, and he can make perfectly arbitrary changes in tempos and dynamics that are neither implied in the music nor logical. Yet, like other outstanding pianists, he makes you follow him almost hypnotically from one note to the next. The slow movement of the sonata and the cello sonata have a seductive, dreamlike atmosphere that is magical. The Scherzo of the sonata becomes a delightful scamper; the waltzes are light as froth; the mazurkas seem almost tempestuous in their quicksilver changes.

In its highly special, personal way, this is superb music making. The recording sounds as if it had been made in a particularly resonant, echoing hall, with results that are cleaner on the monophonic than the stereo disc. There is no actual blurring on the latter, but there the tone loses some of its body in loud passages. R.E.

DAIL: Allegro and Arioso for Five Wind Instruments—See Elter: Quintet for Winds.

DEBUSSY: Quartet for Strings, in G minor, Op. 10—See Bavel: Quartet for Strings, in F.

DONIZETTI: La Favorita
Giulietta Simonato (s.), Leonora; Bice Magnani (s.), Ines; Gianni Poggi (t.), Fernando; Piero di Palma (t.), Don Gasparo; Ettore Bastianini (b.), Alfonso; Je-rome Hines (b.s.), Baldassare. Chorus and Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fioren- tino, Alberto Erede, conductor.
• London OSA 1310. Three SD. $17.94.

This is one of the most important records of the year, for it introduces the work of a young American composer who is bound to become one of the most creative and original musical minds of the present day. The record will, of course, speed that recognition enormously, and Columbia is to be congratulated on bringing it out.

Containing eight short compositions, the disc is representative of Morton Feldman's output from 1951 to 1957. Two of the works are for violin and piano and two are for string quartet; the others are for one, two, three, or four pianos. How three pianists—only three are named—manage to play four pianos without one being out of tune is not told. In fact, we are told exasperatingly little in the turgid notes on the record sleeve. This is unfortunate, since in confronting so new and different an idiom as Feldman's one tends to fall back on theoretical explanations, an understanding and as a method for acquiring the vocabulary needed if one is to speak intelligently about the new phenomenon.

It would appear, however, that Feldman makes use of a technique of partial control which, in the philosophic sense, is not unlike that of abstract expressionism in painting; it is far from insignificant that the jacket of his record is adorned with a drawing by the abstract expressionist painter Philip Caron. That Frank O'Hara, his annotator, is on the staff at the Museum of Modern Art. In some instances, Feldman leaves the time intervals of the music to the choice of the player. In other instances the player is free to select the pitch intervals within certain broadly indicated levels; here Feldman is forced to use a special graph notation. One gathers that freedom in one area is coupled with exceptionally rigid control in others; this, after all, is composition, not improvisation.

Be all that as it may, Feldman possesses an incredibly acute and subtle ear. Although O'Hara quotes him as denying that his Piece for Four Pianos has anything to do with Webern's pointillism, the effect of all eight works is eminently Webernian. They are full of spots, sparks, and spangles of radiant color; a single note becomes an event of epical portent; the final result is to compact hours into seconds with an almost overwhelming intensity and depth of feeling. The performance is clearly a labor of love by the participants, who are among the finest chamber music players in New York. Feldman's own out of control recording to the utmost, but it seems safe to assume that most if not all of his delicacies have been captured in the grooves. A.F.

GRIEG: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 16—See Lissitz: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in A.

HANDEL: Messiah
Adelle Addison, soprano; Lorna Sydney, contralto; David Lloyd, tenor; Donald Gramm, bass; Handel and Haydn Society; Zimbler Sinfonietta, Thompson Stone, cond.
• Kapp K 38000 S. Three SD. $14.94.

This is a stereo version of a recording made in 1955. The sound is very good, and there is some fine work by Adele Addison and Donald Gramm, but in most other respects this set is surpassed by other Messiahs now available. The editing used is based on Barenreiter and, in many cases, are not ideal; some of the cuts, especially in the Messiah and Messiah, are not ideal; some of the cuts, especially in the Messiah and Messiah, are

Continued on page 70
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MOUSSORGSKY Pictures at an Exhibition; Prelude and Dance of the Persian Slaves from “Khojanshchina.” Minneapolis Symphony, Dorati. MG 50217/SR 90217

PISTON The Incredible Flutist; MOORE Pageant of P. T. Barnum. Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, Hanson. MG 50206/ SR 90206


RESPIGHI Ancient Dances and Airs, Suites 1, 2, 3. Philharmonia Hungarica, Dorati. MG 50199/ SR 90199

FRANCK Pièce héroïque, Trois chorals. Marcel Dupré at St. Thomas Church. MG 50168/ SR 90168

PERCY GRAINGER FAVORITES. Eastman-Rochester “Pops.” Fennell. SR 90199/MG 50199

TCHAIKOVSKY March Slav, Francesca da Rimini; Waltz and Polonaise from “Eugene Onegin.” Minneapolis Symphony, Dorati. MG 50201/SR 90201


BARBER Medea; Capricorn Concerto. Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, Hanson. MG 50224/SR 90224

BRITISH BAND CLASSICS: Works by Walton, Holst, and Jacob. Eastman Wind Ensemble, Fennell. MG 50197/ SR 90197

SR indicates the stereo album number; MG, the monaural number.
with His stripes," "Their sound is gone out," and "Since by man came death."  

N.B.

HANDEL: "Music of Handel"


Joan Sutherland, soprano; William Herbet, tenor; Hervey Alan, bass; Philomusica of London, Anthony Lewis, cond.

- Oiseau-Lyre SOL 60001. SD. $3.98.

As an inattractive Handelian, I am so enraptured by the mostly unfamiliar melodic jewels here that I can only pretend to evaluate the performances objectively. Miss Sutherland's arias, evidently made before her sensational rise to British fame, may not display the young Australian soprano's full powers—but what a fresh voice she has and what restrained yet dramatic grace she brings, for instance, to "Ombre pallide." Neither Herbert nor Alan has exceptional vocal equipment—but how expressively and straightforwardly they sing here, and what a superb dialogue between tenor and oboe in the former's "Tune Your Harps," surely one of the most enchanting airs of all the Handelian masterpieces. The recording may be a bit unkind to the properly small orchestra's more intense string passages, especially in the forceful, high-stepping Jephtha Sinfonia, but in general how transparently it reveals, in beautifully blended and unexaggerated stenorism, the felicities of the apparently undoctored scoring and the skill of the unidentified orchestrators. In short this is a disc which many of us will cherish as one of the rarely detectable jewels of our baroque collections.

R.D.D.

HAYDN: Symphonies: No. 44, in E minor ("Trauer"); No. 57, in D

Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, Szymon Goldberg, cond.

- Epic LC 3025. LP. $4.98.
- Epic: BC 1046. SD. $5.98.

No. 44, with its gravely lovely slow movement and its fine canonique Minuet (which, according to Robbins Landon, should precede the Adagio, not follow it, as it does here), is available in several satisfactory recordings, but this seems to be the first appearance on discs of No. 57. It is very welcome indeed: although the first movement is not especially distinguished, the Adagio makes charming play with plucked and bowed strings, the Minuet contrasts a hearty peasant dance with a delicate, melancholy trio, and the finale whizzes along in Haydn's gayest vein.

Szymon Goldberg is well known as an excellent violinist; this is the first time I have heard him in the role of conductor, and I must say he sounds like a veteran. Except for one or two pizzicatos, the men play with admirable precision, and there is plenty of drive and power as well as nuance. With its good sound (in both versions, although the stereo has its usual advantage of spaciousness), this is altogether an enjoyable disc.

R.B.

JANACEK: Quartets for Strings: No. 1; No. 2

Smetana Quartet.

- Artia ALP 109. LP. $4.98.

Leos Janácek is here revealed as a kind of cross between Dvořák and James Joyce. Like Dvořák, he drew upon an inexhaustible fund of melody, all of it strongly beholden to Czech folk song and folk dance. His harmony, too, has something of Dvořák's sweetness, but his forms, in sharp distinction to those of the older master, have nothing to do with the classic patterns but seem to have been constructed on the principle of free association. Proceeding according to no perceptible logic, they have a fresh, improvised, white-hot quality that stumps this music with a personal thumbprint like none other in the entire literature. There is also in Janácek's use of the instruments something extravagant and capricious which contributes mightily to the special character of these delightful works. The performance is excellent; the recording somewhat astringent. A.F.

LISZT: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in A

György Cziffra, piano; Philharmonia Orchestra, André Vandernoot, cond.

- Angel 35738. LP. $4.98.
- Angel S 33738. SD. $5.98.

György Cziffra deserves his reputation as an old-fashioned, bravura, freewheeling pianist, and in music of this romantic cast he is in his element. Both concertos are given large-format, highly colored performances that—quite reasonably—try to be as effective as possible at every possible moment. What could be more ravishing than Mr. Cziffra's softly glistening tone as he accomplishes his solo in the Liszt work—and in the whole section that follows? Yet to this same artist tremendously surging octave passages sound like child's play. The first-movement cadenza of the Grieg is conceived and carried out on a grand scale, one that erupts in the end in some startling added notes, as if the pianist found the printed page too confining for his temperament. Again, how gentle and caressing the slow movement of the Grieg. This all-stops-out treatment may irritate some, but it should gratify many pianists.

André Vandernoot stays right with his capricious soloist, and the orchestra plays beautifully. On the monophonic edition the sound is clean, lifelike, and well balanced; on stereo, perspective gains depth, but the pianist is given too much prominence relative to the orchestra. R.E.

MARTIN: Le Voilier sous la Croix

Thérèse Haim, soprano; Louis Noguera, bass; Jean Clairville, narrator; Les Chanteurs de Saint-Eustache; Orchestre de l'Association des Concerts Paspdeloup, Pierre Derval, cond.

- Pathé DTX 290. LP. $5.95.

Emile Martin, a French priest well known in Paris as a composer of religious music, wrote this oratorio in 1957 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Canada. It is eminently descriptive, almost operatic in character, although the occurrences with which it deals are nearly all inward and psychological in their nature. After the overture, we hear the gathering of the missionaries, who sing in a severely fugal style as they embark at Saint-Nazaire for the wilderness. The longest part of the work is concerned with the anguish of the voyage and the temptations of the Devil, who taunts the missionaries with the idea of failure, with nostalgia for home, and so on. But the Devil, his temptations and his storms, are overcome, and the oratorio ends in triumph.

The style of the piece is neither entirely conservative nor entirely modern; it pays its respects to César Franck and to Arthur Honegger; it uses the chorus, female voices, and the speaking voice in high dramatic style; and one would like it better if the text had been provided with the disc. The performance seems to be excellent; there is nothing to complain about in the recording.

A.F.

MENDELSSOHN: Octet for Strings, in E flat, Op. 20

Janácek Quartet; Smetana Quartet.

- Westminster XWN 18836. LP. $4.98.
- Westminster WST 14082. SD. $5.98.

It is almost frightening to contemplate, but this masterpiece of chamber music was written when Mendelssohn was only sixteen. Its performance here, the first in stereo, is a sound one, very well balanced, wonderfully transparent, and full of spirit. Though the monophonic edition is first-rate, it cannot possibly distribute the players and their music nearly as effectively as does the stereo version. The overall sound on both could have been just a trifle brighter, but this is a relatively unimportant detail in an otherwise commendable presentation.

P.A.

Continued on page 72
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Reviewers are saluting this new recording of Mozart’s delightful opera. Featuring Peters, Della Casa, Elias and Tozzi, with Erich Leinsdorf conducting the Vienna Philharmonic, the album’s performances and sound share critics’ plaudits.

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Miss Shaffer, according to the notes, studied with the great William Kincaid at the Curtis Institute, and that experience shows. Her tone is beautifully round and liquid, she phrases musically, her intonation is accurate, and she gives the impression that technically she can handle far more difficult tasks than confront her here. She is placed at a proper distance from the microphone, so that we are spared the extraneous noises, such as the clicking of the key mechanism, that often mar close-up recording of woodwind instruments. Kurtz keeps his orchestra nicely scaled down, though by no means lacking in verve, and aside from a few questionably appoggiaturas turns in a first-rate job. N.B.


Elaine Shaffer, flute; Philharmonia Orchestra, Efrem Kurtz, cond.

• CAPITOL SG 7135. SD. $5.98.

MOZART: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 17, in G, K. 453; No. 24, in C minor, K. 491

Gina Bachauer, piano; London Symphony Orchestra, Alec Sherman, cond.

• CAPITOL C 7194. LP. $4.98.

In the marvelous G major Concerto, Mine. Bachauer’s playing is buoyant and crisp. In the great C minor she falls in with the dramatic mood established by the conductor, but does not let the music’s intensity lead her into exaggeration. Straightforward and high-grade are the words for these performances. There is a little more nuance in Serkin’s reading of K. 453, and some phrases are more highly polished in the Casadesus and Gieseking versions of K. 491. The sound here is first-rate, and the balance generally good, though there are moments in both first movements when the bassoons are too faint. N.B.

MOZART: Don Giovanni

Sena Jurinac (s), Donna Anna; Maria Stader (s), Dona Elvira; Irmgard Scefried (s), Zerlina; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (b), Don Giovanni; Karl Kohn (b), Leporello; Ernst Häfliger (t), Don Ottavio; Ivan Sardi (bs), Masetto; Walter Kreppel (bs), the Commendatore. RIAS Chamber Choir and Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, cond.

• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON DCGO 302. Three LP. $15.94.

For a feature review of this opera, see page 62.

MOZART: Serenades: No. 13, in G, K. 525 ("Eine kleine Nachtmusik"); No. 6, in D, K. 299 ("Serenata Notturna"). Divertimento in D, K. 136

I Musici.

• EPI RC 3613. LP. $4.98.

I do not remember having ever encountered a really bad performance of Eine kleine Nachtmusik on records. It has been done by ensembles too large for it, and some conductors are inclined to race through the finale, but otherwise every-body seems inspired by this adorable work to his best efforts. The present performance is no exception: it is straightforward but sensitive, by turns robust and poetic, and because it is done by a chamber orchestra, completely transparent. Equally pleasant is the performance of the delightful serenade for two string groups and a pair of kettledrums.

The least familiar work of the three here is K. 136, written when Mozart was sixteen. Einstein surmised that the title was not Mozart’s and that the work was actually an Italian-style opera symphony without winds. It has some of the earmarks of that category—such as the fast-slow-fast pattern—and contains some passages of special interest, such as a sudden bit of sadness intruding on the gaiety of the first movement, the pert opening of the finale, and a later section of counterpoint, as though the young master were showing off his skill at "orchestrate" the music. Except for a slight edginess in the violin tone, the sound is good.

N.B.

MUSSORGSKY: Pictures from an Exhibition

Vladimir Horowitz, piano.

• RCA Victor LM 2357. LP. $4.98.

Vladimir Horowitz’s performance of his own "edition" of this work has been available in an old recording. This one was made during a Carnegie Hall recital on April 23, 1951, and offers—along with audience coughing—a wonderfully direct experience, as if one were close to the piano yet enjoying concert hall acoustics. The sonorities stagger the senses—sometimes the recording cannot handle the pianist’s extraordinary percussive chords—and all the minutely delicate colorations are faithfully mirrored.

Mr. Horowitz’s version of this music goes in for much note doubling, octave tremolando, transpositions of phrases up and down—a la Liszt—in an effort to "orchestrate" the work. It gives the pianist a chance to perform as only he can in miraculous fashion at the keyboard. Stunning his effects are, literally, and just how beautiful they can be is best illustrated by the sustained chords in the "Con mortuis in lingua mortua" section of "Catuccios." But in the standard version of this piano piece problem is to avoid loud monotony, and it seems to me that Mr. Horowitz has compounded the problem with his additions—and not solved them. And many are bound to find his free reading of melodic lines highly mannered. These "Pictures" might be described as garish, but for students of piano playing they represent a unique "exhibition."

R.E.

PUCCINI: La Bohème

Renata Tebaldi (s), Mimi; Gianna d’Angelo (s), Musetta; Carlo Bergonzi (t), Rodolfo; Piero di Palma (t), Parpignol; Ettore Bastianini (b), Marcello; Renato Cesari (b), Schaunard; Cesare Siepi (b), Colline; Alessandro d’Orazzi (bs), Sarge- gente; Giorgio Onesti, Organo. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Tullo Serafin, cond.

• LONDON A 4236. Two LP. $9.96.

• LONDON OSA 1208. Two SD. $11.96.

This recording is another in the series of London remakes of standard operas. Fugagioni, Tosca, and Aida—the last two again with Mine. Tebaldi—will follow soon. If they are all up to the standard set here, we can be very content with the project. Presumably, the commercial arrival of stereo is the impetus behind this decision to give Mine. Tebaldi the chance to record no other roles a second time in less than a decade, and a comparison of the new version of Bohème with the old (which was among the best-sounding of the early LP releases) serves to justify the repetition of even so familiar a work.

The depth and richness of the sound and the clarity of definition, particularly of orchestral detail, add immeasurably to the work’s impact. I do wish, however, that recording supervisors could be persuaded that this is enough and that the directional effect has only a limited use. London’s taste in this matter has been generally good, but on this recording there is some really needless wandering about. It is most obtrusive in the opening scene between Rodolfo and Marcello, with tenor and baritone crossing back and forth in pointless fashion. It is true that this has the air of the stage, but that is no excuse. In this case: we are reminded of the comedy Bohèmes we have seen which featured just such empty business, though on the stage some visible excuse (Marcello must get a new brush, or what have you) is usually put forward for most of the movement. Since the sound is splendid, it would be better to leave the gimmick at rest.

Tebaldi’s voice remains the loveliest soprano in the operatic world, and she is at her best in Puccini. It may be that her darker tone and more deliberate style make her Mimi a bit less exciting than formerly; it is still better than any one else’s, at least as recorded, with the possible exception of Siepi’s. The real seal of the cast stands comparison with the best to be found today, and is certainly improved from that of the old London set. Bergonzi’s voice isn’t a liquid, effulgent one of the Gigli variety, but it

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The recordings are not the best in the world, but the performance is quite remarkable and deserves attention. These quartets are often sentimentalized, refined to wisps, or bathed in marshmallow; here is an interpretation full of sinew and life, one that places the works in the classic line where they belong and provides new insight into them by returning to what their composers wrote. Beautiful playing.

A.F.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Scheherazade, Op. 35
Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond.
- • Mercury SR 90195. SD. $5.95.

It was back in 1952 that Mercury released a monophonic recording of Scheherazade by Dorati and the Minneapolis Symphony, and it earned some words of high praise from me at the time. Some seven years later, Mercury returned to Northrop Auditorium and did the whole thing over again in stereo. The results are spectacularly clean and brilliant, especially in the over-all separations, the strings and the percussion. From the standpoint of sheer sound, there probably isn't a better Scheherazade around. As for Dorati's interpretation, it is just a little on the businessike side. Since there is really no distortion of musical values, however, those who don't want too much oriental lusciness in their Scheherazade may appreciate this conception. Those interested in sonics per se will be using this disc to test their equipment. As for me, I still prefer Beecham on Angel.

F.A.

ROSSINI: Overtures: Guillaume Tell; Semiramide; Il Barbiere di Siviglia; La Gazza ladra
Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Jonel Perlea, cond.
- • Vox PL 11180. LP. $4.98.
- • Vox STPL 511180. SD. $5.98.

With all the collections of Rossini overtures on the market, the matter of choosing among them has become a rather sily game. This collection is as good as most, though it's hardly going to make Toscanini move over. Perlea tends to build the crescendos somewhat precipitously, and in some of these spots his grip is not quite as firm as it should be. The strings play with a tight, slightly dry tone. While the stereo version is clearly preferable to the monophonic, both have occasional distortion, mostly on Side 1. There is extremely sharp definition in the treble—so sharp, in fact, that I found it necessary to take the treble down a few notches for fear of losing effect in the bass, where things are not as clear.

C.L.O.

SCHUBERT: Trio for Piano and Strings, No. 1, in B flat, Op. 99
David Oistrakh, violin; Sviatoslav Knushevitzky, cello; Lev Oborin, piano.
- • Angel 35713. LP. $4.98.
- • Angel S 35713. SD. $5.98.

www.americanradiohistory.com
Of all the lyrical outpourings of the song-minded Franz Schubert, this trio is among the most glorious. Every phrase overlaps with song. Why, then, did three artists of the stature of Messrs. Oistrakh, Knushevitzky, and Oborin approach the music with such cautious timidity? The result is a very carefully phrased but altogether too tentative performance of a work that must glow from beginning to end if it is to break into open flame in the more dramatic portions of the final movement.

Whereas I usually object to stereo for two instruments only, such as violin and piano, I find it definitely enhances the sound of this trio. After all, something has to hold the listener's attention during a pallid performance.

My favorite version of this work—available only monophonically—is that by Fournier, Janigro, and Badura-Skoda on Westminster, though despite its age there is still much to be said for the great old Thibaud-Casals-Cortot performance, recently reissued on Angels' "Recordings of the Century" series.

P.A.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: Don Quixote, Op. 35; Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28
Paul Tortelier, cello (in Don Quixote); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe, cond.

The first stereo Don Quixote, happily, is a good one, spreading Strauss's opulent orchestration over two channels that fuse into an impressive likeness of the great Berlin orchestra. Since this is my favorite symphonic work of the Strauss repertory, experiencing it in this way was a satisfaction which those who admire this music as much as I do will probably share.

Kempe is remarkably self-effacing in both the solo part and Till suffers from a lack of the firm character delineation the conductor must provide. Don Quixote, on the other hand, is powerful enough to produce a strong effect without the services of a zealous interpreter. Kempe's intentions in this music therefore seem very much like Toscanini's, although the details are rarely the same. Fortunately for everyone, Tortelier shares the same outlook and plays the solo part as an integral aspect of the design rather than a concertdèlite display of personal virtuosity.

The flock of sheep, the amusing episode with the wind machine, and the other well-known passages are recorded with exceptional realism and the elegance of slight understatement. R.C.M.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: Parergon to the Sinfonia Domestica, for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 73
Paul Wittgenstein, piano; Boston Records Orchestra, Eric Simon, cond.

This is the first recording anywhere of the ambitious work Strauss wrote in 1925 for Paul Wittgenstein, the renowned one-armed pianist who also commissioned the better-known concerto by Ravel. The title, from the Greek "parergon" (beyond, or outside of, work), indicates a sort of musical hors d'oeuvre, in this case served up twenty-two years after the meal, the Sinfonia Domestica. Leading motives from the earlier work both up somewhat aimlessly here; all varicolored, but without real transformation. Another, more successful "parergon" comes to mind: Wagner's Siegfried Idyll, in which the derivative themes are given a fresh direction and symphonic adaptation.

The effect is more curious than convincing; that of random pictures of ideas colored in sundown tones. Somehow, one misses the warmth needed to fuse these elements into an experience. Undoubtedly Mr. Wittgenstein's reworking of the solo part (done with the approval of Strauss) adds something in the way of dramatic tension, but the piano is blunted by an overdose of pedal and by an oversupply of mikes above the brasses. Nevertheless, we welcome Mr. Wittgenstein out of his virtual retirement from the public (he turned seventy-two last November), and look forward to his unveiling those concertos for left hand by Korngold, Weigl, and Prokofiev that he still carries in his brief case.

The second side of the disc is given to five effective transcriptions from the pianist's Scherzi for the Left Hand, which allow a fairer estimate of his remarkable accomplishment. ROBERT W. DUMM

STRAUSS, RICHARD: Der Rosenkavalier
Marianne Scheeh (s), The Fieldmar...
schallin; Rita Streich (s), Sophie; Irmgard Seefried (s), Octavian; Ilona Steinrubner (s), Marianne; Sieglinde Wagner (ms), Amina; Rudolf Franch (t), A Singer; Gerhard Unger (t), Val- zacchi; Albrecht Peter (b), Police Com- missary; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (b), Herr von Faninal; Kurt Böhme (bs), Baron Ochs. Ensemble and Chorus of the Dresden State Opera; Saxon State Orchestra (Dresden), Karl Böhm, cond.

Despite some fine individual work, my general feeling regarding this release is one of disappointment. I have great ad- miration for Karl Böhm, and indeed pre- fer his sincere, straightforward reading to the slick, heavily cologne'd job by Von Karajan. That many passages never quite get off the ground is, I think, due to the fact that the Saxon State Orchestra is just a goaldone--highly satisfactory, I'm sure, for Dresden opera performances, but not in a class with Von Karajan's or Kleiber's aggregations. The strings do not have quite the ripe sound I would like to hear (the sarpy violin fermata at the close of Act I is downright painful), and only the woodwinds seem to me really to meet the challenge.

There are also certain fatal weaknesses in the casting. While the Marschallin may be the opera's pivotal role from a dramatic standpoint, and Sophie is cer- tainly a vitul part, it is Octavian and Ochs to whom we must listen most of the time, and I fear both Seefried and Kurt Böhme are lacking, though the latter's portrayal is probably worth see- ing. Miss Seefried is so completely wrong as Octavian that I can only chalk up her performance as a mistake for all con- cerned. She does not produce a round, rich tone from beginning to end, is quite unable to open up in the climaxes, and clips off so many tunes in what I gather is supposed to be a boyish manner that Octavian emerges as a snippy, smug youth. (Gruber's omission of the re- tiring sort, but his delight at the Feld- marshal's absence need not seem down- right offensive.) Böhme knows his way around the role of Ochs, and has found solutions for it. But, though much of the dialogue must be rattled off in a quasi-parlando, I cannot for the life of me see why a good number of the notes should not be sung. London's Weber manages to sing most of them, as Mayr seems to have, and Kipnis and List. Mr. Böhme simply roars, and while it may all be very appropriate and funny on the stage, it is rough to listen to through most of Roskenwalder's three and a half hours. In addition, Rudolf Franch fails to take advantage of the Singer's moment in the sun, and Steingruber is a frayed-sounding Marianne.

On the credit side are Fischer-Dies- katu's pungent, pompous Faninal, Streich's lovely vocalism as Sophie, an outstanding pair of conspirators in Un- ger and Sieglinde Wagner, and a strong bit by Albrecht Peter. Somewhere be- between is the Marschallin of Marianne Scheich. She is a woefully underrated singer of whom I hope we shall hear more soon, but she is at her best in the

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singing of this work. Her voice is not always as steady here as I have heard it, and the role's inwardness does not seem to come naturally to her. Still, it is a solid, conscien- tious Princess, and somewhat more than that in the Monologue. Possibly a more idiomatic, spontaneous Octavian would have made a difference for the better in Mine. Schiech's Act I work.

DG's sound is wide-ranging, but the soloists are too close-up, especially Böhme, and the stereo separation is only a distraction in the Levée Scene. The accompanying booklet contains the com- plete text, translation, and a good essay and synopsis by Alex Robertson. In sum, I'll still take Kleiber, especially with Gueden and Jurinac.

C.L.O.

STRAVINSKY: Pétrouchka
London Symphony Orchestra, Sir Eugene Goossens, cond.
• EVEREST LP 3033. LP. $4.98.
• EVEREST SDBR 3033. SD. $5.98.

Another Pétrouchka is not front-page news, but I have never heard the polyphony of this great work so beautifully set forth on a phonograph record as it is in the stereo version here presented. The interpretation is classically without tricks or exaggerations, but vivid and exciting, and the sound in general is ex- tremely fine.

A.F.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Marche slave
Eugen Onegin; Waltz and Polonaise.
Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32
Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond.
• MERCURY MG 50201. LP. $3.98.
• MERCURY SR 90201. SD. $5.95.

Except for a properly lively finale, Do- rat's Marche slave lumbers along with stiff, ponderous steps; but in the music from Eugen Onegin, his long experience as a ballet conductor comes to the fore as he leads vivacious, strongly rhythm- ed performances of the Waltz and Polono- naise. And the reading of Francesca da Rimini is even better--a powerful, intense, and, above all, extremely transparent and cleanly articulated perform- ance that allows every passage and every instrument to stand out in bold re- lief. The Minneapolis Symphony is here at its best; and while the monophonic disc is brilliant, its stereo counterpart has excellent depth and direction.

P.A.

VILLA LOBOS: Forest of the Amazon
Budí Sayao, soprano; Chorus; Symphony of the Air, Heitor Villa Lobos, cond.
• UNITED ARTISTS UAS 8007. SD. $4.98.

How can a good composer's style be wa- tered down and blown up at one and the same time? The answer, if you care to seek it, may be found in this well- recorded movie score.

A.F.

WAGNER: Siegfried Idyll; Träume—See Brahms: Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a.

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE
EILEEN FARRELL: "Arias in the Great Tradition"


Eileen Farrell, soprano; Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Max Rudolf, cond.

- COLUMBIA ML 5408. LP. $4.98.
- COLUMBIA MS 6086. SD. $5.98.

EILEEN FARRELL: "Eileen Farrell in Songs and Ballads"

Eileen Farrell, soprano; George Trovillo, piano.

- ANGEL 55008. LP. $4.98.

For a feature review of these discs, see p. 64.

MAITRISE D’ENFANTS ET ORCHESTRE NATIONAL DE LA RADIO-DIFFUSION FRANCAISE


Henriette Bogey, organ; Maitrise d’Enfants et Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française, Jacques Jouineau, cond.

- PATHE DTX 247. LP. $5.95.

If, like me, you have a wife who weeps when she hears children sing, keep her away from this record; she’ll be in tears for a week if you don’t. She will be particularly affected, I suspect, by the Poulenc and the two works of Fauré on the first side. All the little angels in heaven are going to sound like this, especially those whom the good Lord has modeled after Raphael. Whether in the modal style of Poulenc or the diatonic style of Fauré, the voices of these children are absolutely seraphic, thanks about equally to the music, to the perfection of the performance, and the sensationally beautiful quality of the recording.

The Bartók and Honegger works on the second side are equally well sung and recorded. The Bartók is a set of Hungarian folk-song miniatures, not arrangements but original compositions based on folk themes. They are delightful, but slight, especially by comparison to the French works with which they are here associated. The Honegger is not in the angelic style but is very intense, highly polyphonic, and exceedingly difficult. Its performance is a major triumph for M. Jouineau and his singers. A.F.

ANNA MOFFO: "Anna Moffo Sings Mozart"

Le Nozze di Figaro: Voi che sapete: Non so più; Deh vieni non tardar; Venite ingenucellieri. Don Giovanni: Vedrai...

January 1960
This young American soprano's first recorded recital has much to recommend it. Hers is decidedly a lyric instrument, but it is a full-bodied, mature one, and I welcome a singer who will give us Susanna, Zerlina, and Despina without coy squealing and simpering. Her characterizations are still rather generalized, but they have life and taste, and Miss Moffo has sufficient time to bring them into sharper focus. The concert arias are properly done, if we overlook a few precarious pianissimos in Misera, doce non? The two C minor Mass sections are unusually warm and reposeful. There is nothing to fault in Galliera's accompaniments, nor in Angel's sound, except for a trace of echo on the second side.

C.L.O.

ELISABETH SCHWARZKOPF: “Elisabeth Schwarzkopf Sings Weber and Wagner”


• Angel 35806. LP. $4.98.
• Angel S 35806. SD. $5.98.

Schwarzkopf's voice is nearly always a beautiful sound to listen to, and her interpretations are invariably well planned and carefully executed. Some of this music, though, could do with more vocal spontaneity and with more freedom of expression. “Dicht, treue Halle” nearly suffocates beneath her intense concentration, and her Elsa Trauern does not possess much visionary glow. She is noticeably more successful with the two Freischütz arias, particularly “Und ob die Wolke,” which is nearly flawless. In the second Lohengrin excerpt, she loses up and gives us some of her finest work, aided in large measure by Ludwig, who demonstrates an amplitude of tone and temperamental affinity for the dramatic that I have not previously detected.

Susskind's leadership is appropriate throughout; Wallberg, who conducts the Elsa/Ortrud Scene, overdoes the contrasts a bit, but stirs up plenty of excitement for the Invocation. Stereo directionality is valuable in this one scene, with Ortrud calling out from one side and Elsa answering from the other, but otherwise I would rather listen to the monophonic version, which is clearer and

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BRAMSH: Wir wandelten; Nicht mehr zu dir zu gehen; Rohe, Süssliebchen; Die Mainacht; Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht; Unbewegte, laue Luft; Ständchen. STRAUSS: Morgen; Die Nacht; Du meines Herzens Kronelein; Allerseelen; Die Georgine; Meinem Kinde; Traum durch die Dämmerung; Ständchen.

IRMGARD SEEFFRIED: Brahms and Strauss Lieder

This recording gives me more pleasure than Miss Seefried's Schubert recital of a few months back, but still does not capture the qualities that made some of her earlier recordings so rewarding. Everything sounds quite difficult for her: when she sings the long phrase, we are conscious that she has used the last of her breath; when flowing legato is called for, her voice, instead of rolling naturally over the notes, must be steered along, and instead of resting on a sustained tone, must be held there. Her most conscientious efforts cannot paint for us the setting of Die Mainacht, and when she reaches the song's great climax on "Und die einsame Trüme/Beld mir heisser die Wange herab," she has no reserve to bring forth.

There are countless such opportunities missed, which is certainly a pity, in view of the artist's intelligence and sensitivity; in fact, the only song which is really done justice is the concluding Ständchen of Strauss—Miss Seefried has an unsurpassed flair for this sort of music. My impression is that this singer could benefit by a period of rest and vocal readjustment; it would be a shame to lose a singer of Miss Seefried's temperament when years of worthwhile singing should lie ahead of her. Verha's accompaniments are technically first-rate, but seem to me lacking in warmth. DGC's sound is clear, though not very rich; surfaces are silent. I would as soon listen to the monophonic version of this release as to the stereo.

LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI: "Italian Program"

Symphony of the Air, Leopold Stokowski, cond.
• UNITED ARTISTS UAL 7001. LP. $4.98.

The best of the "best" Stokowski may be heard on one disc here; the best of the "worst" on the other. Four transcriptions of Renaissance works can be quickly dismissed as aural sweetmeats, as unimpressive sonically as they are indigestible aesthetically. It's far too late for Stokowski to learn that heart-throbbing emotionalism is wholly alien to music of this kind, but one would expect him to be familiar enough with contemporary musicology to abandon the
long-disproved attribution of the Adoration of the Magi to Palestina.

Respighi's Pini di Roma is something else again, for here if ever is music that might have been specifically composed for Stokowski's unique talents and in which he actually is far less emotionally mannered. Sonically, this disc is so broadspread, pellucid, and brilliantly detailed that at first I was quite dumfounded into assuming it was stereophony. The actual SD, which I haven't yet heard, must be even better--although it's hard to imagine how it can be. But, more surprisingly, even the sonic splendors here are scarcely as profoundly impressive as the verve, restraint, and poetic eloquence of the reading. No other version I've ever heard, including Toscanini's, approaches this one, which wholly warrants the rarely deserved accolade of "definitive." R.D.D.

TRIBUTE TO CARNEGIE HALL

The passing of the wonderful old building, announced for the end of the 1959 season, stirs up memories of historic events. Among them is the "Spirituals to Swing" concert of December, 1938 (followed by another in 1939) which was the first time that blues, gospel songs and jazz were heard in the hall consecrated to Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. The importance of the event was its confirmation that jazz belonged there, as a vital American music of deep folk roots. The participants were inspired and the music was glorious. We are proud to present, as a momento of the great days of Carnegie Hall, the best of these two memorable concerts. We think that not only the jazz lover, but everyone interested in the living musical currents of our time, will want it.

RITA STREICH: Mozart Concert Arias
Ah se in ciel, benigne stelle, K. 528; Vado, ma diletto, K. 358; Polpdi di Tessagliai, K. 316; Vorei spiegarcì, oh Dio!, K. 418; No, no, no, che non sei capace, K. 419; Mia speranza adoratal, K. 416; Nehmen meinen Dank, K. 383.

Rita Streich, soprano; Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Charles Mackerras, cond.
- Deutsche Grammophon DGM 12012. LP. $4.98.
- Deutsche Grammophon DGS 712012. SD. $5.98.

Rita Streich offers further evidence here as to her technical security and range, and in these respects this German coloratura ranks with today's best. Her tone is consistently lovely, her attack clean, her articulation of all manners of embellishment above reproach. Miss Streich, however, apparently subscribes to the theory that Mozart intended his concert arias to be sung as vocalises, without the slightest hint of emotional coloring. This approach leaves me cold, unless the singer is of a sort who can make music into a real bravura display, and Miss Streich's gifts are not quite that extensive. The notes of Polpdi di Tessagliai are all there, but there is no hint of the mourning Acaestis. In this regard I can do no better than to quote Lilli Lehman, who in her preface to the Peters Edition of the Mozartarias said that the recitative must be sung "wie eine lebhafte Theaterszene" ("like a living theatrical scene . . ." Mozart was no pedant, no schoolmaster—he made concessions to his artists and left to the singer what belongs to the singer, as did all great musicians of the time."). Amen. Those for whom the notes themselves are enough will find this a satisfying disc; the accompaniments are proper and the sound is good, though dry for my taste; texts and translations are provided. C.L.O.

JOAN SUTHERLAND: Operatic Recital

Joan Sutherland, soprano; Nadine Santereau, soprano; Paris Opéra Chorus; Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire d: Paris, Nello Santi, cond. - • London 25111. SD. $3.98.

The recent reports out of England on this young Australian soprano have been nothing short of ecstatic, and her recent Covent Garden appearance as Lucia was an unequivocal triumph. Her first recital for London Records leaves no doubt at all as to her natural gift or the thoroughness of her schooling. Her voice is fresh and free, with resonances well blended except at the bottom of her impressive range. She has a very pretty trill (not at all a common thing any more, even among coloraturas) and a nice sense for the lifting rhythms of the Donizetti numbers. But everything on this disc receives the same careful treatment, filtered through the same silvery tone; she never becomes very intense, and I am not convinced that she is yet "inside" the music. At present, she uses a little glide as a means of getting down off too many notes in the upper part, and some phrases are disfigured by it.

The Lucia excerpts are her best. Even here, I wish she would calculate a bit less and empathize a bit more, but there's no denying that the vocalism, as such, is quite remarkable. The Verdi numbers show more punch and more body of tone, though I am grateful for the soaring ease of her "Ernani invocami." Since Miss Sutherland clearly has the equipment, I hope she will soon feel secure enough to devote more effort to communication, rather than mere tasteful vocalism. The accompaniments are just that, correct but not very uplifting. The London sound is fine. C.L.O.

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Here at Home

"Dinah, Yes Indeed." Dinah Shore; Orchestra, Nelson Riddle, cond. Capitol ST 1247, $4.98 (SD).

This superbly song program of great standards marks Dinah Shore's debut as a Capitol artist. To call the occasion "auspicious" would be something of an understatement; this is not only the best recording ever made by the Tennessee girl, but it's also one of the finest albums, by any female singer, issued over the past year.

Leaned heavily on ballads, Miss Shore illuminates each one with warm, smooth-as-honey tones and distinctive phrasing. Furthermore, she seems to have abandoned a good many of the little vocal tricks so noticeable in her previous work. Their disappearance is all to the good, for she now seems to be singing with much more depth and feeling. When in the mood, she can also swing with the best in the business, as she proves in a rousing version of Yes Indeed; and I liked, too, her handling of Falling in Love with Love, brilliantly arranged by Nelson Riddle and lovingly projected by Miss Shore. Riddle's arrangements, as well as his sympathetic support, go a long way to make this an exceptional album.

"Leave It to Jane." Recording with the cast of the 1959 New York production. Strand SLS 1002, $5.98 (SD).

A recording of Jerome Kern's 1917 musical Leave It to Jane, made by the cast of the current off-Broadway revival, is as unexpected as it is welcome. To waste no time about it ... it's a pure delight. A great deal of my own pleasure is due to the fact that the show turns up without any misguided attempts to modernize the music, to update the lyrics, or to turn it into a big, overblown production. It has been left for what it is, a period piece. Although originally produced at the Longacre, Leave It to Jane belongs to those legedary musicals known as "The Princess Theatre Shows," along with Nobody Home and Very Good Eddie (1915), Oh, Boy (1917), and Oh, Lady, Lady (1918). Because the Princess was merely a little bandbox, big productions were out, and intimate musicals in.
“Leroy Anderson Conducts Leroy Anderson.” Decca DL 8865, $3.98 (LP); DL 79865, $4.98 (SD).

I've lost count of the number of times Decca has issued new or recoupled most of Leroy Anderson’s music, but this release, like then all, is a charm-er. Nobody in this country writes more delightful light music, and nobody manages to make it more appealing than does the composer when he turns conductor. Here are brand-new recordings, monophonic and stereo, of the old standards (Blue Tango, Sleigh Ride, The Typewriter, etc.) plus two new numbers salvaged from the musical Goldilocks, for which Anderson wrote the score. The charming ballad Lady in Waiting has been expanded into a short ballet sequence, and the song Heart of Stone is the basis for another brief ballet work, Pyramid Dance. Both are charming additions to the Anderson repertoire. The new recordings are a tremendous sonic advance on the earlier editions. The mono is excellent, the stereo outstanding, es-pecially in Bugler’s Holiday and The Phantom Regiment, though there is no number that does not benefit tremendously by the new process.

“Great for Dancing.” Eddy Howard and His Orchestra. Mercury SR 60184, $4.98 (SD).

This is a surprisingly well-played program of dance music by a band previously condemned to supporting the leader’s vocal efforts. In fact, the excellent teamwork, the carefree orchestra playing, and the unchitterled arrangements suggest that this could easily be the David Carroll orchestra operating under a “Nom du disque.” Not that the name matters, really, since this is a record that will bring a good deal of pleasure to both listener and dancer. The former can just sit back and enjoy the relaxed performances of a group of old favorites; the dancer, if he does not oversipy, can revel just as easily in the smooth rhythms. Mercury’s stereo sound here has a better than adequate spread, good depth and resonance.

“Now.” Fred Astaire; Chorus and Orchestra, Pete King, cond. Kapp KL 1165, $3.98 (LP).

To judge from this recording, the Astaire voice has deepened into a good deal since I heard it last. It is still no great shakes musically, but it is serviceable enough; and any lack of purely vocal prowess is more than compensated by Astaire’s adroit presentation and his knack of letting a winning personality shine through. Most of the songs in this program are from the memorable movies Astaire made in the Thirties. Many he has recorded before, and in definitive versions; but if you can possibly have a definitive version of a definitive version, you’ll find it here. The only real newcomer is a smart rhythm song, The Afterbeat, a thoroughly typical Astaire number and one likely to develop into a new dance craze. Neat arrangements by Pete King and Marty Paich provide a needed fillip to an excellent memento of late Astaire.


When Billy Rose’s gargantuan musical entertainment Jumbo collapsed in 1935, Richard Rodgers’ agreeable score seemed to be headed for oblivion. Fortunately, two numbers escaped this fate. Little Girl Blue was adopted by night club singers, and Ted Strayer has given it to The Most Beautiful Girl in the World. He, and he almost alone, has been singing, playing, and recording it ever since. Naturally it turns up on this program of dance music, with Strayer supplying the vocals and the piano work. Strayer’s voice is a peculiarly half-musical one, used in breathless fashion, which somehow manages to be oddly attractive. The orchestra is a good society dance band, and it is not surprising that it has been delighting habitués of the Plaza Room for many years. Nice, small-scaled stereo sound, particularly adaptable to the average-size living room. Dorothy Kilgallen’s gushing liner notes add nothing to an attractive disc.

“Semprini’s Piano.” Albert Semprini, piano; The Abbey Orchestra. Capitol ST 10218, $4.98 (SD).

Like his American counterpart Roger Williams, England’s Albert Semprini is a pianist who shines brightest in the field of light or semiclassical music arranged for large orchestra and piano. In Semprini’s case, the ratio of musicians (sixty) to pianist (one) seems at first glance too lopsided, but in items like Three Coins in the Fountain, No Other Love, or Symphony can he well hold his own. And he can do even better than that in Liszt’s Liebestraum, the “Chopin” section of Schumann’s Carnaval, or Chopin’s Nocturne in E flat, Op. 9, No. 2 (here called Tristesse), where the orchestral arrangements have been scaled down considerably. This is a particularly good record for occasional listening. The piano sound is unusually true, and both are admirably transmitted.

“The Game of Love.” Vic Damone; Orchestra, Robert Smale, cond. Columbia CL 1368, $3.98 (LP); CS 8169, $4.98 (SD).

Vic Damone gets top billing here, but it is the unconventional orchestral arrangements of Robert Smale that walk off with top honors. Damone handles these romantic ballads with a fine appreciation for their mood and lyrical value, and he’s in good voice (though still sounding like a carbon copy of Sinatra), but he is not a dynamic enough vocalist to hold the listener’s interest in his work when the orchestral arrangements offer such stiff competition. Featuring flute, celeste, harpsichord and other unusual instruments, the arrangements are fascinating and constantly surprising. Stereo points up the disposition of individual instruments quite strongly, its only advantage over the good monophonic version.

“Square Dancing Made Easy.” Slim Jackson; The Promenaders; Conducted by Slim; Recorded also by Slim Jackson. Epic LNX 3607, $3.98 (LP); BN 543, $4.98 (SD).

For anyone who doesn’t know a Do-si-do from an allemande right but who would like to be initiated into the mysteries of this most athletic form of terpsichore, the present album should prove the perfect guide. Slim Jackson ennunciates the calls clearly—and at a speed reasonable enough to eliminate the possibility of any confusion in the set; the Promenaders play the country music briskly; and in the unlikely event of your finding the art of square dancing still a mystery, the liner notes are admirably explicit as to the terms and patterns in use. There is little, if anything, to choose between the two recorded versions.

“The Music Goes Round and Around.” Original Hit Performances: The Late Thirties; Into the Forties; The Middle Forties; Into the Fifties; The Early Fifties; The Late Fifties. Decca DL 4000/05, $3.98 each (Six LP).

Here Decca has exhumer from its vaults some of its outstanding recordings made since the company was brought out in August 1934. Understandably, the three early-period discs are the most interesting, since they contain many items that have long been out of print. DL 4001 offers, among other gems, Andy Kirk’s Until the Real Thing Comes Along, Jimmie Lunceford’s Organ Grinder Swing, Basie’s One O’Clock Jump, and Ella Fitzgerald’s A-Tisket A-Tasket (with Chick Webb). There is also Judy Gar-land offering You Made Me Lose You—with the “Dear Mr. Cable” verses—one of her very best sides. On DL 4001 the most interesting items are Woody Herman’s Woodchopper’s Ball, Bob Crosby’s Big Noise from Winnetka, a version of Yes Indeed by Bing Crosby, and Con-nece Boswell and Lionel Hampton’s Flying Home, plus the first Over the Rainbow made by Judy Garland. DL 4002 is relatively a loss, except perhaps for pops songs by Dick Haymes (I Know), The Andrews Sisters (Rum and Coca Cola), and Hoagy Carmichael’s version of Huggin’ and Chalkin’. I’d recommend DL 4003 if only for Ray Bul- ger’s Once in Love with Amy and his duet with Ethel Merman of Deenie;

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remainder of the numbers on this disc are pretty dull. Since DL 4004 and 4005 contain many numbers available singly on 45-rpm records, the 12-inch format is not especially attractive. Where the original recordings date back some twenty years, the sound appears to have been enhanced slightly, and is certainly an improvement over the original issues. The early and mid-Forties sides still suffer from some surface noise common to the 78 issues of that day.

"Leibert Takes You Dancing." Dick Leibert, organ. Westminster WST 15043, $5.98 (SD). Today's mighty Wurlitzer organs, endowed with as many orchestral side effects as can be found in the ordinary dance orchestra, still can't provide the crisp beat and steady rhythm necessary for modern dances. Dick Leibert here tries to turn out a dance program, but his efforts are only occasionally successful. When he has the assistance of Bunny Shankwasser on bongos and drums, keeping a pronounced and steady beat, the result is fine. Elsewhere the rhythm tends to become slack, and in the slower numbers, when the organist is playing rather freely, the most accomplished dancer would find himself in trouble. The stereo sound is extremely effective and brilliantly reproduced. It was not intended to be overpowering, and the greater part of the program has a nice intimate quality.

"Kiss Me Kate." Capitol STAO 1267, $5.98 (SD). The tempos that fugitive has not made any impression on Shakepere's Taming of the Shrew, on which the Spewacks based their book for the musical Kiss Me Kate. Nor has it dated in any way the Cole Porter lyrics and music, which both sound as fresh and ingenous today as they did eleven years ago. Unfortunately, it has a hard time on the voices of the principals of the original production, here assembled for a re-recording under Capitol auspices. Patricia Morison now sounds like an excessively shrill shrew, Alfred Drake more stuffy and churchwardenish than before, and Lisa Kirk, throwing the subtlety of her earlier performance out the window, sounds like Sophie Tucker, slightly subdued. Only Harold Lang and Lorenzo Fuller appear to have escaped the general decline, and even the latter's performance of Too Darned Hot is by no means equal to the earlier version. The stereo version has been skillfully managed where stage movement is concerned, and their sound is really impressive. These virtues, however, do not outweigh the considerable attractions of the original recording on Columbia OL 4140.

"Enchanted Waltzes." Bela Sanders and His Orchestra. Telefunken TP 2510, $1.98 (LP). Telefunken waltzes of Austro-German derivation, superbly performed. For those who can manage the usual faster waltz tempo used by most Continental orchestras this is an excellent dance program; others are advised to sit these out, and simply be beguiled by the luscious melodies of Ziehrer, Lincke, Lehár, and Strauss. Good sound, though with some reduction of the top end. Previously released, with two additional waltzes, as Telefunken LGX 66052, at $4.98, at its cheaper price this disc obviously represents an attractive buy.

John F. IncoX

Foreign Flavor

"Caramba!" Richard Hayman and His Orchestra. Mercury MG 20431, $3.98 (LP). A resplendently engineered big-band treatment of Latin-American themes woven together in "Day of the Bullfight Suite." To display dawn and its imminent tension, Hayman employs the prelude to the film Captain from Castile, follows with a series of musical vignettes (notably an electrifying treatment of La Virgen del Carmen) and finishes with Twilight on the Pampas. Although the music lacks even the most tenuous relationship with the corrida, it all has its own interest and is played with great verve and color. To repeat, the recorded sound is absolutely dazzling.

"Japan: Its Sounds and People." Capitol ST 10234, $4.98 (SD). A big banzai to Capitol for this superb sonoric portrait of the strange amalgam of West and East that constitutes contemporary Japan. Here are the samisen and the organ, the sounds of traffic and the sounds of temple bells; here too is a solitary night watchman clacking his traditional sticks as he shouts warnings against fire, the chugging of ferryboats along Tokyo's Sumida River, the loneliness of a noodle-seller's piped tune, the simplicity of an ancient cradle song. Rose Okugawa's unimpeachable commentary links the diverse elements that will fill old Asia hands with nostalgia, and entice others to visit Japan at any price—even a reissue.

"Monseur Georges Brasses Sings... with His Guitar." Epic LN 3619, $3.98 (LP). Georges Brasses will never win any Grand Prix du Disque for his vocal gifts. His voice is of limited range, his enunciation sloppy. But Brasses is a terrifyingly effective chansonnier, and to a chansonnier his instrument is nothing—impact alone counts. Take the straight-faced introductory song which commences, "Je suis pornographe du phonographe." ("I am the pornographer of the phonograph"). Brasses calmly flays everyone who has ever sung or heard a risqué song. Other high spots are the searing bitterness—counterpointed by a devastatingly bouncy rhythm—of Le Coq (The Cuckold) and the fugitive tenderness of Au Bois de mon Coeur (In the Wood of My Love). Brasses himself composed all of the dozen songs in this well-recorded disc. Epic provides comprehensive summaries a half-step removed from actual translations.

"Takarazuka Dance Theatre." Takarazuka Grand Theatres in Japan. Columbia WL 163, $4.98 (LP); WS 315, $5.98 (SD). A recording is not quite a substitute for actual attendance at a Takarazuka Dance Theatre performance, but Columbia very nearly succeeds in bringing it one. This record presents, at least, a dazzling array of musical selections—some composed especially for the dances, others arranged from traditional Japanese songs. The vocalists sing the melodies with bell-like clarity, and brilliant orchestration suggests the spectacular precision of the dancers. In keeping with the Takarazuka principle of fusing Oriental themes with the theatrical expertise of the West, the insulation is Japanese but the flavor of Japanese music is never abandoned. Both mono and stereo versions are excellent, with the latter having a slight edge in conveying the excitement of the performances.

"Rhythm of Spain." Curro de Uteria; Rafael de Cordobes, guitar. United Artists UAS 6054, $4.98 (SD). With this release, United Artists makes an exceptionally fine addition to the growing galaxy of brilliant flamenco discs. Curro de Uteria is a credit to his homeland, Andalusia, where flamenco music is heard in its purest form. His voice, powerful and impassioned, is a marvel of flexibility in the complex melodic lines of the polo, cana, and siquigias (more difficult modes of cante jondo), and the record is further distinguished by the electrifying double- and traditional reed guitars of Rafael de Cordobes. Both artists have been given superb reproduction.

"Austria Revisited." Vienna Choir Boys. Capitol T 10217, $3.98 (LP). The Wiener Sangerknaben, or Vienna Choir Boys, have achieved a world-wide renown both through their tours and their regular Sunday appearances at home. Hand in hand with the Vienna State Orchestra and the Vienna State Opera. Lightness and vivacity mark their close-textured performances in this crisply engineered release, and give freshness to a wide-ranging program of folk songs, melodious choral lullabies, and Viennese favorites. The ensemble is particularly moving in Brahms's Cradle Song, particularly gay in the traditional A Hunter from Kufurs.

"Tahiti." The Surfers. HiFiRecord R 417, $4.95 (LP). Veterans of three previous island forays for HiFiRecords, the youthful Surfers are wise in the ways of the South Seas Quartet. There is sweetness and studied lyricism in their style, and it's excellently set off by a suave rhythm quintet. The reproduction, however, is somewhat thick-textured, and the Surfers' repertory—including Song of Old Hawaii, My Waikane and Me, and Beyond—smacks rather more of the fiftieth State than of Tahiti.

"Folk Songs from Around the World." United Nations Singers. Coral CRL 757301, $4.98 (SD). Twenty-five nationalities are represented

January 1960
THE EAR THAT HAS HEARD EVERYTHING, HAS HEARD NOTHING UNTIL IT HEARS

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It's HAS our opinion that this tape is a most acceptable effort. Billy Maxted, as a leader, is recognized as a man of marked ability, in German. His voice, pleasant and mellow in the middle range, takes on excessive harshness when she reaches for high notes, which she tends to shriek out. Miss Valente's renditions are reproduced with clarity, but the accompaniment of the chorus is, invariably, muffled.

"Tequila." Arcadio Elias and His Mariachi Nacional. Dot DLP 3217, $3.98 (LP).

A well-chosen collection of Mexican favorites, including, in "mariachi" style, Senior Bob Wills's San Antonio Rose and La Varnoviana (Put Your Little Foot). Elias and his band convey the brassy timbre of genuine mariachi, but unfortunately, with spotty engineering, this brassiness sometimes grate on the ear.

"Passport to China." Chinese National Song and Dance Ensembles: Chen-kheng Yin, Tsu Te Fang, cond. Artia ALP 112, $4.98 (LP).

The Chinese music represented on this American release from the Czech Supraphon catalog—while performed with traditional Chinese concern for individual notes and their ramifications—shows very decided Western influence. Both The Bubbling Brook and The River Tutu, conducted by Tsu Te Fang, sound disconcertingly like American cantatas written with Chinesotown in mind, although the four selections guided by Chen-kheng Yin hew more closely to the harsh sonorities of old China. While the sound is acceptable, voices tend to be distantly miked and strident. Credit should be given, however, for a strikingly attractive album and notes that are a model of cogency.

"Bésame!" Sara Montiel. Columbia WL 149, $4.98 (LP).

It's possible that a contingent of male listeners will succumb to the languorous charms of the recorded voices of Sara Montiel, but probably even those most susceptible to vocalised aphrodisiacs will be somewhat bored by the monotony of this disc. Each selection is like the one that has gone before and the one that follows: Bésame Mucho (Kiss Me Lots), Mil Voces (A Thousand Times), Mil Besos (A Thousand Kisses), Acércate (Come Closer). In addition, Senorita Montiel's voice is consistently overmiked, and its heavy breathiness thereby intensified.

O. B. BRUMMELL

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"Pop Concert, Latin America." Cleveland Pops Orchestra, Louis Lane, cond. Epic LC 3626, $4.98 (LP); BC 1047, $5.98 (-SD).

The praises lavished on both the programing and recording of Lane's "Pop Concert, U.S.A." of last April must be repeated here. In addition to perceptive musical glimpses of our Southern cousins' music from the "outside" (such as Gershwin's too seldom heard Cuban Overture and Benjamin's even less well-known but highly evocative From San Domingo), the conductor also presents both familiar and novel native works: Leuconia's Andalucia and Malagueña, and the ever-captivating Villa Lobos Little Train of Cuajpe, on one hand; on the other, Calindo's improvisatory Sones de Mariachi and—best of all—Guarnieri's superbly exciting tocat-like sahba, Danza Brasilieana. All of these are played with immense gusto and all of them are recorded with great power in big-hall acoustics. The stereo edition is recommended, both for its superior atmospheres and greater kindness to the high-string intensities, which become rather harsh in the monophonic version.

"Stereo Showcase," Capitol SKAO 1268, $4.98 (SD).

One of the most effective stereo demos to date, featuring pops materials only (topped by Les Baxter's ingeniously stereoscopic scoring of Banana Boy and Felix
Slatkin's virtuoso big-band performance of *American Patrol* and happily free from any spoken narration or sales plugs. The recording is Capitol's broadest and most ultrabrilliant throughout, and the accompanying 12-page illustrated booklet not only provides unusually detailed notes, but in many instances shows scoring diagrams of the participating ensembles—a practice which every stereo release might profitably emulate.

"Hands Across the Sea." Eastman Wind Ensemble, Frederick Fennell, cond. Mercury MG 50207, $3.98 (LP); SR 90207, $5.95 (SD).

Interesting and impressive as Fennell's concert-band releases invariably are, this is perhaps one of the most attractive programatically and certainly one of the most striking for its technical qualities—noteable in particular for an enormous dynamic range and an almost overpowering "presence" of the percussion section in the stereo edition (the even higher-level LP is tonally sharper, harder, more "sensational," and less natural). Besides such relatively familiar masterworks as Sousa's title piece, Tiele's *Old Comrades*, Ganne's *Père de la Victoire*, and Eric Coates's *Knightsbridge* March (taken here so slowly and in such sharply delineated fashion that it sounds surprisingly novel), Fennell ventures far off the usual band program paths to bring us a slashingly exciting performance of Prokofiev's Op. 99 *March*, the florid *Golden Ear* by Mariano San Miguel, the extremely odd and gusty *Ingrina* by D. Delle Cese, and—best of all—the wondrously lilting and haunting *Valdres* March by Johannes Hanssen. James Austin is the dazzling trumpet soloist in this last as well as in several of the other pieces.

John Sebastian: *Harmonica Recital*. Renato Josi, harpsichord and piano. Deutsche Grammophon DCM 12015, $4.98 (LP); DGS 712015, $5.98 (SD).

Larry Adler's only rival as a virtuoso exponent of the chromatic harmonica's serious musical potentialities demonstrates them again in an excellent recording of a Veracini Sonata No. 1 in F and Telemann Sonata No. 1 in G minor (original scoring unspecified). Played with unromanticized expressiveness, genuine verve and precision, and beautifully accompanied by a harpsichord, these two sonatas reveal the modern mouth organ's subtle variety of tonal coloring perhaps even more effectively than the fascinating contemporary works, written especially for the harmonica, which Sebastian plays on the "B" side: Milhaud's nostalgic *Chanson du Marin* and Hovhaness' rhapsodic Six Greek Folksongs. And of all these far overshadow the showpieces quite superbly included. The monophonic edition is as clean and brilliant as the SD, but it is only in the latter that the harpsichord and piano tones ring most authentically and the piquant harmonica timbres float most airily.

**Suppé Overtures.** Hallé Orchestra, Sir John Barbirolli, cond. Mercury SR 90160, $5.95 (SD).
SUPPE OVERTURES. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. London CS 6146, $4.98 (SD).

Although to my mind the ideal recorded performances of Suppé were provided once and for all by Henry Krips on an Angel stereo tape and disc, many listeners may have preferred the more extraverted treatments by Barbirolli, only three of which were released in the Mercury two-track tape of November 1958. It is good to have all six (Light Cavalry, Morning, Noon and Night, Poet and Peasant, Pique Dame, Jolly Robbers, and The Beautiful Galatea) in the present stereo disc edition, which sounds nightly impressive both in the razzle-dazzle orchestral playing and brilliant big-hall sonics—that is, until one hears the Solti disc. The latter includes only the first four of these overtures, but it demonstrates even harder-driven and more precise orchestral virtuosity, as well as the further advances in technology achieved only within the last year. Here the recording is even bigger, livelier, more incisively detailed, and more dazzlingly glittering. Solti seems almost cynically determined to extract the last drop of blood from his warhorses to make a hippodrome holiday, but whatever his motives, he—and his engineers—certainly do succeed in providing a truly extraordinary sonic spectacular.

DUKAS-FALLA-RAVEL PROGRAM. Symphony Orchestra of the Belgian National Radio, Franz ANDRÉ, cond. Telefunken TCS 18008, $2.98 (SD). Extremely transparent recording and Andre’s precisely controlled and brightly colored performances are the attractions of this bargain-price stereo disc; its shortcomings are the lack of really full-blooded sonorities and the overobjectivity of the readings. There are many fine details in the Bohemian and Latin standards at 14:40 and L’Apprenti sorcier, but both works lack dramatic weight and climactic impact. Falla’s Nights in the Garden of Spain comes off best, even though it lacks full atmospheric magic. And why is the notably gleaning-toned solo pianist denied labeling credit?

ROSSINI OVERTURES. New Symphony Orchestra of London, Kenneth ALWYN, cond. Richmond S 20058, $2.98 (SD). This must be one of English Decca’s low-price “Ace of Clubs” originals, rather than a reprint of an earlier recording now withdrawn from the regular English Decca/London series. Although the recording sounds recent and is beautifully blended and transparent, it—or the New Symphony Orchestra—is regularly lacking in substantial tonal body. Alwyn’s performances (Semiramide, The Silken Ladder, The Barber of Seville, and William Tell) are similarly clean-cut and lightweight, pleasantly vivacious in their lighter moments, but overintense elsewhere.

“HIGH Fidelity INTRODUCTION to the World-Famous Wurlitzer Pipe Organ.” Don DeWitt, Dick Scott, Johnny Seng, organ. United Artists UAS 5059, $4.98 (SD).

The instrument in question is identified only as the “four-manual Wurlitzer formerly owned by Paramount Pictures Corp.”, but for once in a movie-organ release the jacket notes provide detailed stop specifications; and the present highly stereoscopic, quite closely nuked yet reverberant, recording effectively demonstrates the wide range of registrations available. The dozen selections themselves are all pops tunes, mostly delivered with synthetic vivacity and full-organ blare, but the four pieces featuring Dick Scott, while little less course and blustery than the rest, are notably freer from interpretative mannerisms than those by De Witt and Seng.


I’m not sure what the audience which will relish these suave versions of popular church-music favorites will make of the true masterpieces (Bach’s Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring and the final chorus and chorus from the St. John Passion) also included here. I am sure, however, that no Bachian connoisseur can approve of the overexpressivity and meandering quality of the latter. The exaggerated stereosism floats the fine melody beautifully and also does full justice to Cretz’s Ritchie’s sonorous but not overfancy orchestrations, but Wagner’s readings lack conviction in themselves as well as the eloquent simplicity which Robert Shaw has brought to many of the same materials.
The performances here are seldom more than routinely blustery (with the Navy Band on the "B" side proving to have somewhat less hard tonal qualities), but the dozen Swedish marches themselves are refreshingly novel—yet honors going to the Army's jaunty Kungl: Gotlandsk Infanterie Marsch and the Navy's swinging Svenlandsgaranticsmarsch Nr. 1. And the moderately stereoscopic recording provides admirably natural—and undoubtedly highly authentic—sonics throughout.

"Eddie Layton at the Mighty Wurlitzer." Mercury MG 20473, $3.98 (LP).

The Radio City Music Hall organ heard here is not in that in the main auditorium but an instrument in the adjoining broadcasting booth, occasionally augmented by Doug Allen's snare drum and sock cymbal. Layton is conventionally schmaltzy in his slower pieces, yet even here his registrations are better varied than those of most Wurlitzarians and his blustery performances of "Enjoy Yourself," Bye Bye Blackbird, Ain't Misbehavin', etc., have considerable jauntness. The constant clatter and tinkle of the decorative and rhythmic effects, however, become out-of-hand ear-splitting in the exaggerated high-end brilliance of the extremely powerful and high-level monophonic recording. I imagine that the fault lies in the machine's tone edginess is likely to be much less evident in the simultaneously released stereo edition.

"Spike Jones in Stereo." Warner Bros. WS 1332, $4.98 (SD).

Remembering Spike's ribald extravaganzas of the past, I find his present "spooktacular in screaming sound" a sad disappointment. Here he merely provides unimaginative background effects for take-offs on horror movies and TV shows as they might be done by "monsters."


This Red Army group sounds to me intoxicated with its own virtuosity and patriotic fervor—singing and playing with indefatigable bluster, especially in the mostly martial works on the "A" side. The other side, devoted to the folk songs of neighboring countries, is somewhat better varied, although it too gets tiresomely raucous in the present (Supraphon/ Bambi) ultrabrilliant but definitely top-heavy and too closely miked recording.


This is one of the highest-level monophonic discs I have ever encountered; and since it is coarsely as well as ear-splittingly recorded, Rose's bid for Leroy Anderson honors has little chance of success. His Holiday for Strings is a fine divertissement (although it's been done more effectively elsewhere), but his ambitious Concerto (with Don Ferris as pianist) and Majoica are merely pretentiously melodramatic, while his shorter genre pieces are mostly inconsequential.

R. D. DANIELL
Jimmy Cleveland: "A Map of Jimmy Cleveland." Mercury 30442, $3.98 (LP); 60117, $4.98 (SD).

The colorless, ad-lib blowing atmosphere in which Cleveland is usually recorded has been abandoned this time in favor of some neat, uncompromising Ernie Wilkins arrangements which give the performances a suggestion of body. Cleveland responds by playing with warmth and a sense of involvement, a pleasant change from the staccato exercises he often favors. He is surrounded by a capable group including Ernie Royal, Jerome Richardson, and Don Butterfield. It's a pleasant, if scarcely distinguished, set.

Ornette Coleman: "The Shape of Jazz to Come." Atlantic 1317, $4.98 (LP).

"Tomorrow Is the Question?" Contemporary S 7569, $5.98 (SD)

Coleman, who plays a flexible alto saxophone and has an eccentrically slashing yet detached manner of developing his solos, is being pushed as a potentially important influence on the future of jazz. On the basis of his current Contemporary disc and an earlier one on the same label, Coleman sounds more like an oddity than an influence. But on the Atlantic disc there are definite signs of a validly original approach. This approach uses Charlie Parker as a jumping-off point but, instead of indulging in the customary dilution of Parker's ideas, Coleman moves off in his own direction. On both discs he has the company of Don Cherry, a lightly sympathetic trumpet player whose work many listeners may find more immediately communicative than Coleman's own.

A crucial difference between these two discs is in the selection of bassist and drummer to accompany Coleman and Cherry. On the Contemporary set, the accompanists are Shelly Manne and either Percy Heath or Red Mitchell, superb rhythm men. But Coleman's playing lies limply on top of their conventional playing. The drummer and bassist on the Atlantic disc are youngsters—Charlie Haden and Billy Higgins—who seem capable of adapting to the Coleman idiom. Their presence gives a cohesiveness to Coleman's ideas (all pieces on both discs are originals by Coleman), and the potentials of his approach become much more apparent. Although there is little indication that Coleman is particularly aware of pre-Parker jazz, traditionalists may be fascinated by the similarity between the lamenting wail that Coleman creates on Lonely Woman and the plaintive New Orleans dirges recorded by the Eureka Brass Band and the Young Tuxedo Band.

Benny Goodman: "Benny Goodman Rides Again." Cleo 1440, $3.98 (LP).

The Goodman big-band and small groups heard here appear to be the same as those on Goodman's earlier Happy Session (Colombia CL 1324), but this is a much brighter and more consistently swinging record. It is, in fact, the best new disc Goodman has made in many years, although in a sense it is not new at all. The big-band selections are Goodman successes of the early Forties (Mission to Mars, The Tilt in the Skies Again) played with solid ensemble cohesion but not quite the bite of the original recordings. Goodman, however, seems to have regained some of his old vitality in these pieces and plays with more warmth and interest than he has shown in a long time. The small-group selections are less derivative, and the presence of pianists Andre Previn and Russ Freeman creates a different climate than the old Goodman small groups had. Goodman's playing is

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Vic Dickenson and Joe Thomas: "Mainstream." Atlantic 1303, $4.98 (LP).

Of the two groups featured on this disc, the one led by trumpeter Joe Thomas arouses the most immediate interest because of its relatively adventurous personnel. In addition to Thomas, an all-but-forgotten onetime Jimmie Lunceford trumpeter, it includes trombonist Dick Wells, tenor saxophonist Buddy Tate, and clarinetist Buster Bailey. But, except for a long ad-lib blues, its performances are ragged and humpy, and only Tate and Johnny Latman, a second trumpeter, solo effectively. Thomas and Wells contribute their only interesting work on the blues, but even here they are overshadowed by the lithely swinging Tate. In Dickenson's group, which is granted only two selections, are Buck Clayton, Hal Singer, and Herbie Hall, all playing with quiet purposefulness; but the most provocative man in this outfit—a pianist Al Williams, whose tasteful and piquant fills are of inmeasurable help to both solos and ensembles.

Ella Fitzgerald: "Sings the George and Ira Gershwin Song Book." Verve 4024/28, $4.98 each (Five LP). (Also available in a cardboard box, $25; in a walnut box, $100.)

For a feature review of this album, see p. 63.

Miles Davis: "Jazz Track." Columbia CL 1268, $3.98 (LP).

The score created by Davis for a French film, Elevator to the Scaffold, occupies one side of this disc. It is unusual in that Davis, working with a French group which includes pianist Rene Utrrgger, tenor saxophonist Barney Wilen, and bassist Pierre Michelot, improvised these performances while watching the film. The result is a score that is freer than those cut to fit film sequences. Davis makes extensive use of his slow, soaring, musical lines to produce a fitting lonesome and lost effect. This mood is sustained through most of the score, but Davis and his associates keep shifting it just enough to avoid monotony. Wilen and Utrrgger have slight opportunity to blow, but Michelot is a mountain of rhythmic strength and has one brilliantly developed solo which is just about as far from the usual show-off bass solo as one can imagine. The disc is filled out by three pieces by Davis' late sextet which have a leftover quality about them.

Continued on page 90.
erotic in these pieces, running from flowing inventiveness on "Whispering" to an unforged collection of phrases on "You Do Something to Me."

Gigi Gryce: "Nica's Tempo." Savoy 12137, $4.95 (LP).

This is a mishmash given positive interest by four quartet selections which make up one side. The quartet—Gryce, alto saxophone, Thelonious Monk, piano, Percy Heath, bass, Art Blakey, drums—plays two relatively mild and melodic Monk works, one of his dry quirksome pieces, and Gryce's graceful Nica's Tempo with more cohesive drive than Monk's recent quartets have shown. Part of this can be attributed to the superb rhythm team of Heath and Blakey, part to the playing of Gryce (who seems much more suited to the Monk idiom than Charlie Rouse, Monk's regular saxophonist). Gryce, in fact, plays exceptionally well, showing a lovely, singing tone and a fine sense of structure both on these pieces and in the selections by a big hand on the other side. Aside from Gryce and a brief glimpse of pianist Horace Silver, however, these big-band pieces are pretty routine. Singer Ernestine Anderson makes two appearances which will do her growing reputation no good.

Johnny Hodges and His Strings: "Play the Prettiest Gershwin." Verve 8314, $4.98 (LP).

The soft, sometimes sticky side of Hodges dominates this set of almost too familiar Gershwin tunes, recorded in Germany with the Stuttgart Light Orchestra. Even in his most purple passages, however, Hodges manages to inject implications of musical sinew so that, although these overly pretty performances fall into the mood music category, they are very superior mood music.

Billie Holiday: "The Billie Holiday Story." Decca DBX 161, $7.98 (Two LP). "All or Nothing at All." Verve 8329, $4.98 (LP).

Billie Holiday's recording career falls into three distinct sections which, by chance, happen to coincide roughly with her recording periods with three different labels. She was with Brunswick-Columbia during the early, ground-breaking, zestful days, with Decca in the moody middle years, and with Verve in the fading days. For a two-disc, commemorative set, Decca has managed to put together some top-drawer Holiday singing (Lover Man, PorGY, Don't Explain, Good Morning Heartache, among others) along with a few less memorable pieces, all made between 1944 and 1950. Her accompaniments, unfortunately, are almost all utterly lacking in imagination and are generally inappropriate. The Verve set might be classified as a middle-ground representation of her last years—not as dispiringly wrong as some LPs she made in the Fifties and yet not quite as good as the one hopeful flower of her final years, Songs for Distingue Lovers, Verve 8257.

Ahmad Jamal: "The Piano Scene of Ahmad Jamal." Epic 3631, $3.98 (LP).

The recordings on this disc were made several years ago when Jamal's instrumentation consisted of his piano, Israel Crosby's bass, and Ray Crawford's guitar (since replaced by Vernell Fournier's drums). There are suggestions of things to come in the prominence given Crosby's bass in a few of these pieces, but by and large they are closer to the traditional piano-led trio format than Jamal's later work. Here Jamal is out front most of the way, playing more overtly and less sketchily than he does now. He shows himself to be unusually sensitive to dynamics, a romantic with a swinging beat, and an urge toward variety. His playing here is less hampered by mannerisms than it is now although the group as a whole is not as dynamic as his present trio.

John Lewis: "Improvised Meditations and Excursions." Atlantic 1313, $4.98 (LP).

The mixture of fine precision and intense, innate rhythm—the unfailing characteris-

ics of John Lewis' piano playing—is given more overt display than usual in this collection. There are ad-lib performances of strongly melodic standards like "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes, Yesterdays, and so forth" along with two of Lewis' own tunes with backing supplied by Con-
nie Kay, drums, and Perry Heath or George Davidier, bass. Either way, this is a practically nonpareil trio, and the per-

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John Lewis: "Odds Against Tomorrow."

United Artists 4061, $3.98 (LP).

John Lewis’ second film score (his first was for No Sun in Venice, recorded on One Never Knows, Atlantic 1284) employs a twenty-two-piece orchestra made up largely of musicians not associated with jazz. This second score is more closely allied to the action of the film than Lewis’ first and, consequently, has the fragmentary quality common to utilitarian film scores. Although it takes on the texture of jazz only occasionally, it has many of the distinguished markings of Lewis’ work (including one of his typically lovely melodies, for an incident titled Skating in Central Park). It is imaginative, skillfully conceived and executed music and is far from the routine Hollywood scoring, either in the Tionkin sense or the garish pseudojazz of Elmer Bernstein. But, because of its nature, it is at best only a tantalizing sampling of ideas that cry out for further development.

Modern Jazz Festival. Harmony 7196, $1.98 (LP).

This appears to be a collection of leftovers originally recorded for the Dawn label by the Jazz Modes and Mat Mathews, and groups led by Joe Puma, Randy Weston, Paul Quinichette, Zoot Sims, Bob Brookmeyer, and Tony Scott. For a culling of this nature, the disc holds to a good level, particularly in the work of the Modes, Weston, and Sims, but it adds no new laurels for anyone.

Kid Ory: "Plays W. C. Handy." Verve 1017, $4.98 (LP).

This is one of the lesser groups with which Ory has recorded lately. Trumpeter Teddy Buckner gives it a firm lead voice and some crackling solos, but Caughey Roberts’ clarinet work is trivial and hackneyed. Ory, at seventy-two, seems as sturdy and dauntless as ever, although some of Handy’s tunes are becoming threadbare through repetition. Fortunately, this set includes a few Handy items which are relatively fresh and have a charm which belies their obscurity—Harlem Blues, Friendly Blues, and Way Down South in particular.

Johnny Rae’s Afro Jazz Septet: "Herbie Mann’s African Suite." United Artists 4042, $3.98 (LP); 5042, $4.98 (SD).

Presumably because of contractual complications, Rae, a vibraphonist, is listed as leader of this group although the recording focuses on the composing and performing talents of flutist Herbie Mann. Mann’s flute playing is apt to be pale and stiff in the usual jazz context, but in a rhythmic setting dominated by three African drums and supplemented by the strong jazz rhythms of drummer Philly Joe Jones, found on one side of this disc, Mann seems to have finally found a stimulus and support that urges him to a really virile flute attack. He is at his best on the Esy Morales classic, Jungle Fantasy (mistitled Sortimo on both liner and label), and Sonny Rollins’ St.

Thomas Jones drops out on the second side, made up of four originals by Mann African rhythms which come out as neither jazz nor satisfactory Africanisms.

The River Boat Five: "Take the Train.

Mercury 20422, $3.98 (LP); 60094, $4.98 (SD).

The River Boat Five is a pretty dismal Dixieland band but it takes on unexpected life when it shifts into small-group swing with only undertones of Dixie. Most of this disc displays the group in its swing style, warm, lusty, high-spirited playing which makes the change to shallow, shrill corniness on a pair of Dixieland numbers all the more inexplicable.

Horace Silver Quintet and Trio: "Blowin’ the Blues Away." Blue Note 4017, $4.98 (LP).

Horace Silver’s present group (Blue Mitchell, Junior Cook, Eugene Taylor, and Louis Hayes) has reached a point of cohesion achieved by none of the earlier Silver teams. The ensembles are blistering and crisp; both Mitchell on trumpet and Cook on tenor saxophone have solo styles which reflect a wry, driving bite; and Louis Hayes has developed into a really brilliant drummer. Silver remains one of the most consistent and vital jazzmen playing today, and on the whole this is the most fully realized LP he has made.

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Giulietta Simionato, Del Monaco, Ugo Savarese, Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Errede, cond.

LONDON A 4326, Three LP; OSA 1304, Three SD.

—Mancini, Miriam Pirazzini, Lauri-Volpi, Carlo Tagliabue. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Previtali, cond. CETRA 1226. Three LP.

La Traviata (1853)

It seems to me that there is in Traviata a special kind of subtlety that seldom occurs in Verdi’s work prior to Don Carlos. This consists in the ability to convey a character’s inner emotional state, as opposed to the more superficial mood conveyed by the opera’s mask. “Or son trans quilla,” insists Violetta in Act II (“Now I am calm”), but the music tells us that she is only guarding herself. In Act III, Violetta’s pathetic little “Ora son forte, ceilt!” (“I am strong now, do you see?”) is better than the most beautiful conceivable setting of “Now I am weak, but will make a last effort.” Verdi is scarcely ever given credit for this sort of commentary. And Verdi’s deliciously brittle choruses are pointed reflections on Persian high life, but the tunes are so good that the reflections are ignored.

The Victor performance under Monteux is, so far as I am concerned, the best available in nearly every respect. The conductor gives his sin- a-plenty of leeway without for a second becoming lack- all is crisp, delicate, and balanced. His solists fit perfectly into this scheme. Carteri’s voice is precisely the right timbre, light but never pallid, with just an overtone of the dramatic. She is technically secure, and her characterization has both fragility and backbone, without precis- ity. Valletti is so clearly superior to the other recorded Alfredos that little com- ment seems necessary; impeccable mu- sicianship plus a voice of burned quality, capable of fine tuning, makes for an admirable performance. The role of Ger- mont fits Warren like a glove, and when this baritone is set to a congenial task, he has no equal. All elements are knit and blended; the sound is excellent.

Toscanini’s hard-driven performance has its moments, but I cannot accept his approach to the score. Albanese and Peer are such difficulty wrapping themselves about the Maestro’s unflag- ging tempos that there is no room left for anything else. This is a shame, since Al- banese is an affecting Violetta under nor- mal circumstances (even here, she sustains the mood of the last act), and Peer need not have sounded as wooden as he does. Merrill is in resplendent voice, but is just a good-sounding baritone, instead of Germont. The 1940 off-the-line recording is decent, but cramped.

London has Tehbaldi, fine recording, and that is about all. It is true that the soprano’s musicianship is often care- fully for “Sempre libera”; however, there are three more acts to the opera, and she sings them magnificently. Time and again the sheer beauty and power of the voice sweep the performance along; the hushed pianissimo of “Dite alla giovine” and “Ad- dio del passato,” or the impassioned full- voice of “Amami, Alfredo!” Poggi is a whiny Alfredo, Protti a fair-to-middling Germont, competent in the duets, less so in the aria. Molinari-Pradelli’s work arouses neither enthusiasm nor grave complaint from me.

Angel’s version has next to nothing to recommend it, wretchedly and eccentric by Serafin, a half, formed Violetta by Stella, a blatant Alfredo from Di Stefano, and a bullish Germont in Gobbi. Certra’s is an utter bore from beginning to end, for which Santini is to blame, since his solists, though routine (including, in this instance, Callas), are pleasant enough, and with a bit of fire from the pit could turn in an acceptable Traviata.

—Rosanna Carteri, Cesare Valletti, War- ren. Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Piero Monteux, cond. RCA Victor LM 6040. Three LP.

—Licia Albanese, Peerce, Merrill. NBC Or- chestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond. RCA Victor LM 6003. Two LP.

—Tebaldi, Gianni Poggi, Protti. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Roma), Molinari-Pradelli, cond. LONDON A 4314. Three LP.

—Antonietta Stella, Di Stefano, Gobbi. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Serafin, cond. ASCAL 3128. Two LP.

—Callas, Francesco Albanese, Savarese. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Or- chestra, Gabriele Santini, cond. CETRA 1246. Three LP.

Simone Boccanegra (1857)

There is small hope of Simone ever be- coming a really popular opera. The events on stage are confusing enough, but in addition we are expected to be acquainted with happenings at a far remove in time and place. Simone is also unfortunate in that it opens uninterestingly. But Verdi kept a clear eye for his characters, and when personal relationships replace politi- cal events as the subject matter, Simone takes on a glowing grandeur and an air of tender sadness. The Council Chamber Scene is one of the most impressive Verdi ever penned (it was inserted in the re- vised version of 1881, thanks to Boito) and the entire last act is on his highest level of composition. When we come to know Simone and Fiesco well, we can recognize this opera as one of Verdi’s finest creations.

Although the individual elements of the Capitol version seem much superior to those of the Certra, they do not suc- ceed, in giving much more impact to the work. Gobbi is immense in the big dra- matic moments, and moving in the death scene, but how I wish he could maintain the flowing line of the lyrical passages! De los Angeles, despite her intelligence and lovely voice, is not really a satisfac- torily Amelia; she seems to hold back much of the time, to etch out the line, instead of sweeping through with a fire of life. I love the voice is well suited to Camorpa’s abilities, but he is a not a dramatic tenor, and has heavy going in “O inferno!” The Fiesco of Christoff poses a problem. He renders some of the piano phrases stum- mingly, and there seems to do every- thing correctly; yet his performance does not quite come off; his voice is too cutting in quality, his attack too phlegmatic. Moreover, he constantly thickens Italian vowel sounds, and fails to use the explosive consonants for effect. Santini seems to have good ideas about the score, but things do not quite cohere—his singers are not old ensemble partners, after all. Capitol’s sound is better than average, but the review copy had miserable surfaces, dotted with pits and scratches.

The older Certra album has a somewhat slapdash atmosphere. Stella and Bergonzi were young, inexperienced per- formers at the time of the recording, so the soprano’s work has not a spark of life, though the voice should be ideal for Amelia, and the tenor, since become a suave singer, wails a great deal. Silveri, as usual, brings an enviable sensitivity to the music, but his voice is beset by a bad tremolo and dryness of quality. Petri’s voice is not rich enough, but he is knowl- edgeable and original in his approach. The Paolo on both recordings is Monach- eschi, and he sings a great deal better for Certra than for Capitol. Molinari-Pradelli integrates his performance better than Santini, but the sound doesn’t do the orchestra justice.

—Victoria de los Angeles, Giuseppe Cam- pagnol, Gobbi, Boris Christoff, Walter Monachesi. Rome Opera Chorus and Or- chestra, Santiti, cond. EMI-CAPITOL GCR 7126. Three LP.

—Stella, Bergonzi, Silveri, Petri, Monach- eschi. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Molinari-Pradelli, cond. CETRA 1231. Three LP.

Un Ballo in Maschera (1859)

In my judgment, there is no Verdi opera in the repertory with a worse libretto than Ballo. The poet of the case, Som- ma, is generally absolved of all responsibil- ity, since the censor wreaked such havoc with the scenario. And to be sure, Somma

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La Forza del destino (1862)

The big problem in any performance of Forza is that of which scenes to leave in, and in what sequence. The idea of producing the opera complete, in the order indicated by Verdi in the revised edition of 1869, seems to have occurred to no one. Cuts are also made on each of these recordings, though London's slashing is negligible. I will grant that Forza is a long opera, and a wearing one, but I think that cutting invariably detracts from some character's stature, tends to obscure motives, and confuses the story line. The choruses cannot be dropped, because they are musically strong, and provide necessary relief from the overwrought tale of destiny's force.

Eyebrows may be raised over my preference for the wartime Cetra album, and certainly I would be happier if more of the music had been retained and the recording were of more recent origin. But Cetra's singers comprise the best all-around cast. Masini and Stignani hold an edge over the other Alvaros and Preziosillas; Caniglia, Tagliabue, and Paserio, veterans even then but still in peak condition, hold their own with the best of the more recent singers. Most important, Gino Marinuzzi provides firm, fiery leadership, and all hands throw themselves into the work. This is a performance, not a studio reading.

The London set is an excellent one, well recorded in both the monophonic and stereo versions. Tebaldi brings an Alva, Maria Callas a Leonora, and Joan Sutherland a Leonora; Simonov has some troubles with pitch, but her voice is of large caliber. I do not at all like Del Monaco's incessantly loud Alvaro. He does make an effort at shading; however, and occasionally the voice is velvety when brought to the proper stride, as with "No, d'un' imene il vincolo." The warm-voiced Bastianini is especially good in the Inn Scene, and never less than first-class. The splendid bass and mellow portrayal of Cetra's performance is comfortable and capable. Verna is a surprisingly good Amelia, with more body of tone than is her wont, and considerable temperament.

Tassinari's work, too, is steady, if not very contralto-ish. Tagliavini is blessedly straightforward most of the time, and I expect never to hear Riccardo with either Peerless' or Di Stefano's. Valdengo is a smooth Renato with construction in the upper register. The Oscar is squeaky. Questa never stirs things up, but his conducting is not dull, and the whole performance is squeezed onto four sides without grave mishap.

—Callas, Barbieri, Eugenia Ratti, Di Stefano, Gohbi, Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Antonino Votto cond. ANCEL. 3557. Three LP.

—Herva Nelli, Claramean Turner, Virginia Haskins, Peerce, Merrill, NBC Orchestra, Toscanini, cond. RCA Victor LM 6112. Three LP.

—Maria Caruso, Veronica Antonio, Maria Erato, Tagliavini, Giuseppe Valdengo. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Questa, cond. CETRA 1250. Two LP.

Batti is in rapport with their roles, and Votto parses the performance well. The sound is fine.

 Toscanini's leadership is, as one would expect, extremely clear and tense, and he brings home tellingly countless points usually passed over. But the singers let him down. Nelli is a colorless Amelia, very much extended by the vocal demands of the role. Turner's Ulrica is a raw creation, while Haskins is nearly inaudible as Oscar. By 1954, Peerce's voice had gone into decline, and all his musicianship cannot make up for strangled, nasal tone. Merrill sings along stolidly, innocent of any attempt to create mood or variety of color.

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Siepi add up to a fine Guardiano, and Fernando Corena is an exemplary Melitone. Molinari-Pradelli's reading of the Overture is somewhat routine, but his is incisive the rest of the way, and chorus and orchestra distinguish themselves.

Cialli fans will not be disappointed in the Angel set, for Leonora is one of her best recorded roles. Despite Tucker's not too audible self-pity, he is the best of recent Alvares, singing with fat tone and good legato line. Tagliabue and Rossi-Lemeni are below par: the former is simply too far over the hill, and the latter reveals weakness below the staff and hootiness above it. Serafin has plenty of drive, and makes the most of mood changes and dramatic opportunities.

Victor's performance, though "chosen" by the Metropolitan, is happily not the nonsensically slashed yet production. But, though I am apparently in a minority, I find Milanov's Leonora saddening. Her voice sounds pushed and hard most of the time, and the pianissimo, while not gone, is thinning. She has had some triumphant evenings in this role, but Victor has waited too long. Di Stefano takes another giant step backward with his Alvaro—in addition to everything else, the pitch is now beginning to sag. Warren sounds shaky in recitative, but is fine in the "Son Pereda" and "Urnita futile," and positively sensational in some of the climaxes (his high B flat effects a total eclipse of Di Stefano's). Tozzi, lighter in timbre than Siepi, sings with extraordinary ease and command, but Elia tries a hit too hard with Preziosilla. The sound is bright and clear in both editions, but the stereo separation is too extreme for me.

—Maria Caniglia, Elbe Stignani, Galliano Masini, Tagliabue, Nicola Rossi-Lemeni. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Milan), Molinari-Pradelli, cond.

CETTA 1236. Three LP.

—Tebaldi, Simionato, Del Monaco, Ettore Bastianini, Siepi. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Milan), Serafin, cond.

CETTA 1344, 1345, 1346. Three LP.

Don Carlos (1867)

This opera usually inspires me to a lively sentiment of Méry and Du Locle, who not only trampled on Schiller, but failed to provide Verdi with a unified, intelligible substitute. Actually, their libretto for Don Carlos could easily have been an outstanding one. It is easy to see what has happened to Rodrigo in translation from play to opera, but of equal interest is the reduction of the Eboli/Carlos relationship, and the replacement of the final scene in the Queen's chamber with the embarrassing coup de théâtre of Charles's ghost's appearance. In the scenes where

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the drama is on an adult level Verdi has written music of such dark penetration, such emotional persuasiveness as to place this at the pinnacle of music-drama. But where his libretto leads him to worse-than-conventional operatic staginess, the music takes on a corresponding tone; the trio for Eboli, Carlo, and Rodrigo, for example, is effective only as an ordinary scene-ending ensemble. But Philip is one of opera's great characters, and the Inquisitor a towering figure of tyranny. And Verdi's music almost always goes to the psychological nub of the situation.

My choice of the Cetra over the Capitol album is based largely on the spirit of the performance. The ladies are pretty worn-sounding (particularly Caniglia, shrill on top and flattening frequently), but their status as prime donne is confirmed in every phrase. I also have much admiration for Rossi-Lemeni's performance. The voice is black and full, the characterization perceptive—this is one of his earliest recordings, and probably his best. The tenor Picchi is sometimes adenoidal and thin-sounding, but generally adequate. Silveri has his role in hand, but seldom produces a firm, resonant tone. Neri powers his way impressively through the Inquisitor's big scene. Previtali starts slowly, but catches fire in the second scene. Cetra's sound is sometimes blurred, but otherwise acceptable.

Capitol's Stella and Nicolai vocalize at least as well as their Cetra counterparts (Stella, in fact, rather better), but never really sink their teeth into the music. Christoff is effective, but less idiomatic than Rossi-Lemeni; and while Picchi is not an ideal Carlo, Filippeschi is no bargain, either, with his heavy, strained vocalism. Cobbi must be accounted the better Rodrigo, his hollow tone above E flat notwithstanding; his handling of the plea to Elisabetta in Scene Two and of "Per me giunto" is extremely smart, and he is steady of voice. Neri is less authoritative than in the Cetra version. Santini lends vigor to the proceedings, aided by bright, clear, but rather shallow sound. This three-disc version is as complete as Cetra's four-record set.

-Caniglia, Stignani, Mito Picchi, Silveri, Rossi-Lemeni, Neri. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Previtali, cond.

CDTRA 1234. Four LP.
-Stella, Nicolai, Mario Filippeschi, Cobbi, Christoff, Neri. Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Santini, cond.

EMI-CAPITOL GCR 7165. Three LP.

Aida (1871)

These six Aidas all have points of interest. I have heard complaints that the Perlea recording for RCA Victor is too obviously studio work, and it is a valid observation. There is a detachment about most of the singing, and the individual voice parts are sometimes stressed at the expense of the total effect. But I like Perlea's firm hand, the slightly overmixed engineering (appropriate for Aida, I think), the wonderful sound of the Rome chorus, and nearly all the singing. Milanov's Aida has not quite the bloom that it had around 1951-52, and I have heard her do "Rit.. na sinceror" to better ef-

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feet than she does it here. Her Nile Scene, however, could hardly be improved upon, and the same can be said for the final duet. Bjoerling is light in tone, but the voice is so pliable and resonant, the artistry so secure, that he is actually more "dramatic" than most heavier tenors. Barbieri uses her big voice effectively as Amneris, while Warren's Amonasro, excellent in the Grand Scene, becomes a little chattery in some of the Act III haranguing. Christoff's Ramfis is a trifle rough.

Both Cetra sets seem to me good renditions of the score. The new performance interests me more, largely for Pirazzini's very strong Amneris and the exciting Radames of Corelli. This tenor's voice is not perfectly balanced, but it is healthy and virile, capable of considerable variety. He is not an artist of Bjoerling's stature, but he is a true tenore robusto, and apart from Bjoerling the best Radames on LP. Verna's Aida lacks character, but has no other serious failing; Guelfi barks too much as Amonasro, though his equipment is awesome. Neri is a dead Ramfis. The older Cetra version has the conducting of Vittorio Gui (more exciting than Questa's), and another fine Amneris, Simionato. Manzini, an uneven singer, is a more dramatic Aida than Verna, and Panerai's Amonasro is solid, if occasionally strained. Neri sounds fresher here than on the later recording, but is still not well cast as Ramfis. Filippeschi is the harsh Radames.

I take violent exception to Serafin's full-speed-ahead reading on Angel; while he is no faster than Perlea, he seems to be outdistancing his performers—the chorus frequently leaves phrases in half-finished condition. Callas handles the music outdistancing is here than Verna, and Pane'ai's Amonasro a singer, Amneris, Simionato. Mancini, an uneven condition. Callas handles the music outdistancing is here than Verna, and Pane'ai's Amonasro is solid, if occasionally strained. Neri sounds fresher here than on the later recording, but is still not well cast as Ramfis. Filippeschi is the harsh Radames.

London's set is shortly to be withdrawn in favor of a new stereo recording under Von Karajan's direction, and it is just as well, for Tebaldis's Aida is its only real asset, and she will undoubtedly do it even better on the new version. Stignani is faded, Del Monaco crude, the others undistinguished.

"Cut off a man's head and then try to recognize him if you can!" wrote Verdi to Ricordi when I Lombardi failed in Milan, and in the Toscanini album we have a headless Aida—a magnificent, unique demonstration of the orchestral score, lacking only the singers. The female side of the cast is hopelessly weak, and only Tucker brings any real life to his part. Verdi would have given the Maestro a proper scolding.


-Verna, Pirazzini, Franco Corelli, Giangiacomo Guelf, Neri. Radiotelevisione
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—Callas, Baraberi, Tucker, Gobhi, Giu-
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dengo, Norman Scott. NBC Orchestra,
Toscanini, cond.
RCA Victor LM 6132. Three LP.

Requiem (1874)
The Requiem takes us straight into Ver-
di's last period as a composer, and I am
not being whimsical when I say that with
this work he at last got hold of a good
libretto. The Mass for the Dead is pure
drama, unencumbered by expositional de-
vices; every phrase carries emotional
import. In consequence, Verdi was able
to write a continuous line, one "number"
beginning precisely where the spirit of
the previous one ends. To be honest, I
find the Sanetius cemetary scene curiously
in its final measures, but apart from
this short section, the text is set to music
intense in feeling, artless in its complete
technical command. Surely no other com-
poser has painted quite so vivid a picture of
the "Dies irae, dies illa," nor presented
quite so powerfully the "Rex tremendae
majestatis.

The force and iron control of Tos-
canini's leadership carry the day, and his
version is easily the choice among the
available three. (But I understand that
the prewar HMV album with Caniglia,
Stignani, Gigli, and Pinza, under Serafin,
is scheduled for another incarnation in
the near future on Angell's "Great Recor-
dings of the Century" series.) The tempos
stroke are like shots, and the whole tex-
ture is clarified in the best Toscanini
fashion—listen, for example, to the com-
panionment for the ensemble rendition
of the descending line, "Quam olim Abraham
promissidi et semini eis." Nelli gives her
all, but just does not have the authority
for the "Libera me." Barbaberi is smoother
of voice than she has been lately, and the
Di Stefano of 1951 was in infinitely bet-
ter shape than the Di Stefano of the An-
gel series. Siepi, of course, is excellent, if
at times almost too relaxed. The sound
minimizes some of the climaxes, but is
otherwise quite good.

Decca's release makes an interesting
complementary version. The reflection
sections, such as "Ouid suni miser," are
heavenly rendered, and Fricasy's read-
ing has fine balance and precision
throughout. He does not have the drive
for the more cataclysmic portions, how-
ever, and so I cannot call his performance
a very satisfying one. The soloists, all ex-
cellent musicians, are in general too light-
touched for this music, especially the
heady tenor, Helmut Krebs. The sound is
somewhat distant and lacking in dynamic
contrast.

100

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Angel's should have been a superior Requiem, but isn't. The sound leaves much to be desired, being dry and cramped, and leveling highs, as on the climactic "omnes ante thronum." De Sabata drags things in the early sections, and there are little evidences of sloppiness here and there; I draw attention to the unaccompanied duet in octaves at the opening of the Agnus Dei, where Schwarzkopf is allowed to carry over a phrase while Dominguez, assigned to the same notes and words on the lower pitch, sneaks in a breath. A small thing, but such details should be caught in a recorded version. Schwarzkopf is one of our outstanding sopranos, but sounds thin here; the mezzo Dominguez is adequate but undistinguishable. Di Stefano is his familiar self in this performance, ramming his way through the high-lying bars, and sounding about as devotional as Frankie Laine. Siepi is once again the welcome bass.—Nelli, Barbieri, Di Stefano, Siepi, Robert Shaw Chorale; NBC Orchestra, Toscanini, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 6108. Two LP.

Maria Stader, Mariam Hadley, Helmut Krebs, Kim Borg. St. Hedwig's Choir, RIAS Symphony Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, cond. DECCA DX 118. Two LP.—Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Ornella Dominguez, Di Stefano, Siepi. Choruses and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), De Sabata, cond. ANGEL 35230 B. Two LP.

Otello (1887)

There is no concise comment that one can make about this opera which is not manifestly inadequate. I can only observe here that in Otello we have a remarkable summation of all that is best in Italian romantic opera.

Toscanini's performance, on the RCA set taken from the 1947 broadcasts, is considerably larger than the sum of its parts. From the first shattering tutti through the final leaden chords, the Maestro's progress is inexorable; once the winch has tightened, he simply does not let go. Listening to this rendition is a genuinely cathartic experience, provided it is not repeated too often. There is much criticism of Nellino Vinay, and I would be the last to deny his vocal shortcomings. Yet I like his Otello, for he is attuned to the character, keenly aware of the least detail of emotional significance. He may be less than hair-raising on "Esultate!" but he is most moving in the monologue and final scene. Valdengo's light-textured, modest-sized voice is hardly the ideal organ for Iago's music, but he sings well within his limits, and never lets things down. Nelli, I am afraid, does sag, and in Act III this is serious. Excepting the wiry Cassio, the supporting roles are well done.

The Cetra effort is by no means negligible. Although Capuana does not build the massive choruses with Toscanini's touch, he leads with expansiveness and élan. Broggini is an exquisite Desdemona, vocally fresh and interpretively sensitive. Gielgud's tenor is dark but clear, with open production at the top; except for some ill-advised hamming at the close, his Otello is aurally believable. But the dominating performance is the Iago of Tieghi, aching and tough-sounding, ample of voice. He towers over Valdengo and Protti. The supporting performers are excellent, the recording very alive, with imposing masses of choral and orchestral sound.

Tehalbi is the star of the London set, and though in some ways I prefer the more committed portrayal of Broggini, Tehalbi has an amplitude of tone that cannot be brushed aside. Del Monaco has his rousing moments, but I hope he is given a chance to re-record his Otello, which he has improved beyond all measure since the time of this production. Protti is a choppy, obvious Iago, almost lost in the shuffle, and Errede's conducting is droopy. London's sound has the edge over the other companies.—Nelli, Ramon Vinay, Valdengo. NBC Orchestra, Toscanini, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 6107. Three LP.—Cesare Broggini, Carlos Giachmanhot, Tadeo, Maria Cini, cond. Accademia Chorus and Orchestra, Franco Capuana, cond. Cetra 1352. Three LP.—Tehalbi, Del Monaco, Protti. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Errede, cond. LONDON A 4312. Three LP.

Falstaff (1893)

The second child of Verdi's old age is to all appearances a goldy, exuberant offspring, but under the surface, in tones of...
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gray rather than black, he is mournful, nearly as melancholy as the Moor. Falstaff is truly funny, but it is penetrated by that potent melancholy and pathos that is the quality of the greatest comedy, whether spoken (Midsummer Night's Dream), sung (Meistersinger; Nozze di Figaro), or simply played (City Lights). Even as we laugh, we fight to hold back tears; indeed, the closing statement of the work, the astounding fugue, buffers us cruelly from mirth to a resigned tristesse, then back again.

The Cetra effort is best forgotten, in view of the competition. It presents steady singing by Carteri as Alice, and vibrant vocalism from Taddei, the Falstaff, but the remaining women are awful, and Saturno Meletti is severely taxed as Ford. The sound is old, and with such forces Rossi cannot risk impetuousness.

The Angel album is my own favorite, though the Toscanini version is a strong one. Von Karajan has charge of a group of virtuosos, led by Ghobbi, a memorable Falstaff. The baritone conveys not only the absurdity of the role, but the poignant, too—the monologue at the opening of Act III is steeped in sadness. All the Merry Wives are excellent, though Barbieri overdoes Quickly, and while Panerai is a disappointing Ford (his "E sugna" is literal note reading), the other male members of the cast are satisfactory. Von Karajan does things to a turn, and the orchestra and chorus have a definite sheen. The top-notch sound is little better in stereo than it is in the monophonic edition.

Toscanini squeezes the last ounce of turbulent gaiety from the score, and at some points, notably the finale of the first scene, leaves Von Karajan far to the rear. Nelli is certainly better suited to Alice than to Aida, and her companions are well cast, Stich-Randall being at least Moffo's equal as Nanetta and Elmo less a burlesque Quickly than Barbieri. Valdengo is a superb imitation of Falstaff, but does not quite achieve Ghobbi's identification with the part. Guarrera's heavy-handed antics are no improvement on Panerai's underplaying; the lesser singers are good, with an outstanding Dr. Cajus by Gabor Carelli.

The close of the fugue brings us to the end of Verdi. It seems easy enough to follow the ups and downs of the half-century-plus from Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio. But just how they bring us to Falstaff is an enduring mystery.

Schwarzkopf, Nan Merriman, Anna Moffo, Barbieri, Ghobbi, Panerai, Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra, Von Karajan, cond.

Angel 3552 C/L, Three LP; S 3552 C/L, Three SD.

—Nelli, Merriman, Teresa Stich-Randall, Che Elmo, Valdengo, Mauro Guarrera, Robert Shaw Chorale, NBC Orchestra, Toscanini, cond.

RCA Victor LM 6111. Three LP.

—Carteri, Pagliughi, Taddei, Saturno Meletti, Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Rossi, cond.

Cetra 1207. Three LP.

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HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE
The following reviews are of 4-track 7.5-ips stereo tapes in normal reel form.


Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond.
- **Vanguard VTF 1605** (twin-pack). 93 min. $9.95.

The economic significance of the new (four-track) tape era is obvious when one compares the cost of this cornucopia reel with that of the same program on two stereo discs ($11.90) and that of the previous (two-track) tapings of the symphonies, only ($26.90). What is even more important, only the price has been cheapened: the present versions sound if anything slightly cleaner, brighter, and more natural than the two-track tapes, and notably better in definition and low-frequency solidity than the stereo discs.

Boult's performances themselves have been widely admired in whatever media they have appeared. I myself prefer more robust and tightly integrated readings of these particular works, but even I find it hard not to respond wholeheartedly to their freshness and almost feminine charm. At any rate, there is a rich abundance of both musical and sonic attractions here.

**Bernstein: West Side Story:** *Ballet Music*

| Orchestra, Robert Prince, cond. |
| - **Warner Bros. BST 1240**. 44 min. $7.95. |

Divorced both from its stage action and its original-score song and choral contexts, the rowdy *West Side Story* ballet music is likely to be much too strenuous for tender ears, especially as recorded here in almost completely separated stereo channels and with the most razor-edged of closely miked wide-range recording. But those who can stand it will find fascination in this sharply focused view of every detail in the score—in which the intricately rhythmized "jump" from "The Dance at the Cyn" and the piquant Scherzo opening of the "Ballet Dream Sequence" must surely rank with Bernstein's most striking and original achievements as a composer. Prince's own work (played by the same anonymous but obviously first-rate orchestra, conducted with the same precision and intensity, and recorded in no less sharp detail) was far better received by jazz reviewers than by "serious" critics when it first appeared about a year ago in disc editions.

In general I too question the genuine artistic significance of its attempts to utilize jazz techniques and sonics. Nevertheless, the experiment still strikes me as an unusually interesting one; and while the first three movements seem somewhat arbitrary and pointless without the ballet action for which they were created, the final Theme, Variations, and Fugue has much more inherent continuity and achieves quite impressive dynamic momentum and dramatic force. And the extremely ingenious scoring, with its wide variety of wind and percussive timbres, is—perhaps for tough-eared sound fanciers at least—as exciting as it is vivid.

**Mahler: Das Lied von der Erde**

Grace Hoffman, mezzo; Helmut Melchert, tenor; Orchestra of the Southwest German Radio, Hans Rosbaud, cond.
- **Tambores/SMS S 17.64** min. $8.95.

The Mahler centennial year (he was born on July 7, 1860) hardly could be inaugurated more happily than with the release of this fine tape, which for the first time in any recording medium does full justice to the richness of the composer's perhaps most appealing masterpiece. Incomparable as the Ferrier-Patzak-Winter monophonic version always will remain, the technology of 1952 dealt less adequately with the orchestral than with the vocal demands of the score; and while the Vox stereo release of the present performance supplied spaciousness and lucidity of detail, it did so only at the cost of two discs (the Vox LP took only one) and an unfortunate side-break in the "Abschied" movement. In the present taping the reel-to-reel comes at the close of the fifth movement, *Der Trunkene im Frühling*, so that the long "Farewell," with its haunting orchestral interlude, flows uninterruptedly from its ominous introduction to the inexpressibly poignant "Ewig... Ewig..."

There is no need to repeat the earlier praise of Miss Hoffman's lovely voice and artistic restraint, the more workaday robustness of Melchert, or the breadth and strength of Rosbaud's conducting. They will never efface memories of Ferrer, Patzk, and Walter, but that inevitable failure is richly compensated by the lucidity and expansiveness with which Mahler's scoring felicities are caught in perfection in gleaming stereo sound. There is no excuse, however, for the omission of a text booklet.


Boris Karloff, narrator (in *Peter and the Wolf*); Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Mario Rossi, cond.
- **Vanguard VTC 1601**. 45 min. $7.95.

Karloff does surprisingly well with his narration for Peter, but it is highly question-able whether the composer would have approved of featuring the spoken program so prominently and with so much sonic presence that the gay music itself seems merely illustrative and excessively episodic. The recording (stereosonic, sharply detailed, and glittering) adds further realism at the cost of a more appropriately fairy-tale atmosphere. This treatment is of course far more suitable for the *Lieutenant Kije* Suite, but since the usually perceptive Rossi here seems to have no inking at all of the music's satirical humor, his brilliant virtuosity is wholly on the surface. Admirable, then, as both works indubitably are for sonic vividness, neither interpretation is likely to move or satisfy any but the most casual and impressionable listeners.

**Shostakovich: Symphony No. 6, Op. 54**

London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond.
- **Everest T4 3007**. 33 min. $7.95.

The Shostakovich Sixth is probably one of the last works I should ever have imagined as appealing to Sir Adrian Boult—or if it did, that he could bring to it either the passionate eloquence (in the broadening Largo) or rambunctious gusto (in the incongruously appended Scherzo and Finale) that he does here. I'm not at all sure that he succeeds in unlocking the enigma of the immensely long first movement, but he makes it more than ever moving; and if he, like everyone else so far, fails to explain the composer's sudden shift to the extrovert zest of the two succeeding movements, he certainly makes

*Continued on next page*
TAPE DECK

Continued from preceding page

them more zestful—and far less vulgar—than they ordinarily sound.

In any case, we can thank him not only for bringing the Sixth back into the active discography, but for a performance which in the present open and powerful recording will be hard indeed to excel. Lavishly praised when it first appeared in a stereo disc almost a year ago, its tape version with its high-end brilliance even better balanced by the superb low-frequency clarity and depth of which tape alone seems capable, is both a delight to one’s ears and a provocative introduction to the puzzling contradictions of the symphony itself.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 4, in F minor, Op. 36

Mannheim National Symphony, Herbert Albert, cond.

LIVINGSTON 4T 4. 43 min. $8.95.

Played much as it must have been played by a German provincial orchestra under a nonvirtuoso conductor in the 1880s or 1890s, Tchaikovsky’s familiar showpiece is here given an old-fashioned relaxation, some romantic warmth, and some nicely dark-colored wind-instrument playing—but also a phlegmatic stodginess and lack of continuity and dramatic point which make it sound singularly characterless. The performance bored me intolerably. To make matters worse, the recording is unusually low-level and bottom-heavy, and there is a disconcerting reel-turnover break in the slow movement.


The extramusical interest of this release is its unidentified origin. As far as I know, Anderson has conducted his own works only for Decca records; can the Stereophonic Music Society have obtained tape rights to some of his earlier, now withdrawn, masters for that series? In any case, the recording, although clean, sweet, and moderately stereosonic, doesn’t sound of recent vintage, and it certainly cannot match that of Femnell’s Anderson concerts for Mercury, Vol. 2 of which was reviewed here only last month. Despite this, however, and even despite the obviously small size of his anonymous orchestra, the composer’s readings of thirteen of his popular genre pieces (including a Plink, Plank, Plunk unmentioned on the reel box) will have a special appeal for listeners who believe that the high-powers of Femnell and Fiedler reading lesser works of their ingratiating charm. I can’t quite agree, myself—at least for the more overly showy divertissements—but I must concede that Anderson does bring a unique rhythmic grace and lyric expressiveness to the gentler numbers.


Hip youngsters may sneer “Square!” but San Francisco’s answer to Meyer Davis’ East Coast society orchestra will delight their less sophisticated and energetic elders throughout the 1950s. For programming consists of no less than sixty-two tunes—among them almost every favorite of the past. There are no vocals, just a few waltzes and Latin-American rhythms and even a couple of moments of well-diluted big-band swing, and generally a smooth variation between businesswoman’s bounciness and nostalgic romanticism. The recording, too, in well-spaced and blended stereoism, authentically conveys the atmosphere of a delectable dance-evening “atop Nob Hill.”


A round dozen of the best-known movie theme songs, all notable for the unusual freedom from fanciness in their rich big-band soundings, the romantic warmth and yet vital lift in Hunter’s performances, and the sumptuous stereo sonics. Particularly interesting are the very Wild Is the Wind, the imaginative Variations on Colonel Bogey, the beautifully played Love Theme from La Strada, and the atmospheric Old Man and the Sea; the
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TAPE DECK
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whole program, in fact, is one of the best—and most tastefully restrained—of its kind ever to come out of Hollywood.

"Secret Songs for Young Lovers." André Previn, piano; David Rose and His Orchestra. M-G-M ST 3716, 37 min., $7.95.

In the ingeniously arranged Young Man's Lament, the combination of Previn's deft piano playing with Rose's some twenty-five-man string section, plus a rhythm group, is imaginatively exploited, and one wishes this were done more often. Even in the more conventional mood-music performances here, the typical alternations between wailing gloom and robust exultation do tend to get a bit tiresome.

I should have welcomed more of the variety provided by the little balalaika-accordion-violin-guitar ensemble alone in its vibrantly exciting dance pieces. The recording itself is clean, but excessively dry, and the markedly differentiated stereo channels rather unnaturally separated.


Bikel has seldom been more versatile and persuasive than in this rhapsodic gypsy program, but except in the most striking performances here, the typical alternations between wailing gloom and robust exultation do tend to get a bit tiresome.

I should have welcomed more of the variety provided by the little balalaika-accordion-violin-guitar ensemble alone in its vibrantly exciting dance pieces. The recording itself is clean, but excessively dry, and the markedly differentiated stereo channels rather unnaturally separated.


Whoever the "notorious Ira Ironsides" may be, he surely remembers the frenetic Twenties better than most of their current musical archeologists. His rowdy banjo-dominated versions of Sheik of Araby, Varsity Drag, Barney Google (I never thought to hear that one again!), Black Bottom, Ain't She Sweet, and seven other unifying period pieces are unflaggingly invigorating and often surprisingly virtuosic too. In the present markedly stereoscopic and powerful recording the program makes an appropriately razzling-dazzling clutter too, and I relished every moment of it.


By all the data this is the same program as the "Strauss Concert," conducted by the Waltz King's great nephew, which I reviewed only last month in a Vox SD version; but it here sounds astonishingly sweeter sonically and less markedly spotlighted in details. Evidently the touch of harshness I ascribed to the "recording" earlier should have been blamed on the disc processing. And while the young conductor himself still seems self-con-

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Continued from preceding page

two popular suites drawn from it and have thus lost much of both this music's true grandeur of architectural design and its incomparable evocative magic.

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

van Cliburn, piano; Symphony of the Air, Kiril Kondrashin, cond.

RCA Victor KCS 4020. 35 min. $6.95.

At this late date there is nothing new to be said about so widely known a best seller as van Cliburn's Tchaikovsky First, except to note that the present edition compares quite favorably with the two-track 7 1/2 ips taping of October 1958 in every respect save that of background hiss, which as in all cartridge (slow-speed) tapes is somewhat more noticeable (although to my ears, at least, neither bothersome in itself nor as conspicuous or annoying as the rougher-grained surface noise of all but the very best—and freshest—of stereo discs). And as between the SD and cartridge-tape versions of the present work, I should say that except under ideal disc-playback conditions the tape is likely to be considered preferable.

"Cugat in Spain."

Xavier Cugat and His Orchestra. RCA Victor KPS 3053, 29 min., $5.95.

Marked stereoson and recording brilliance can't compensate for the dry acoustics and coarse playing in these heavily plogging, raucously jangling versions of a dozen mostly familiar Spanish pops pieces—not excluding a disarrangement of Falla's Ritual Fire Dance.

"Love Is a Swingin' Word."

Sid Ramin and His Orchestra. RCA Victor KPS 3028, 34 min., $5.95.

Here brilliant and broadsound recording is effectively supported by somewhat fancy big-band arrangements of popular love songs: a program heard now in its entirety (in contrast to the two-track taping, October 1959, which included only the six "B"-side selections). Most effective are the rollicking Latin-American-styled Love and atmospheric Love Is Here To Stay.

"When You Come to the End of the Day."

Perry Como, His Orchestra and the Ray Charles Singers. RCA Victor KPS 3043, 35 min., $5.95.

Quasi-religiosity, but done here with somewhat suaver, expressiveness than is often the case. The soloist is recorded with exaggerated presence, while the broadsound stereoson captures only too clearly every detail of the fancy orchestral, "angelic" choral, and organ accompaniments, and their occasional pretentiously emotional climaxes.

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New HF53 2-Way Speaker System Semi-Kit comple- te with factory-built 1/4" veneered plywood (4 sides) cabinet. Bellows-suspension, full-inch excursion 12" woofer (22 cps res.), 8" mid-range speaker with high-internal damping cone for smooth response. 3½" cone tweeter. 2¼ cu. ft., ducted-port enclosure. System Q of 0.9 for smoothest frequency & best transient response. 45-14,000 cps clean, useful response. HFD 24", 12½", 10¼" fin. lminated birch $47.50. Walnut, mahogany or teak $59.50.

HF51 Bookshelf Speaker System complete with factory-built cabinet, Jensen 8" woofers, matching Jensen compression-driver exponential horn tweeter. Smooth clean bass, crisp extended highs. 70-12,000 cps range 8 ohms. HFD 23" x 11" x 9½". Price $59.50.

HF53 Omni-Directional Speaker System (kit incl.) HFD. 36", 15½", 11½" "Eminently musical" HIGH FIDELITY "Fine for stereo" — MODERN HiFi. Completely factory-built Mahogany or walnut $119.95. Blond $144.95.

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From the High-Fidelity Newsfronts

The Institute of High Fidelity Manufacturers is sponsoring another High Fidelity Music Show in Los Angeles this month (Jan. 13-17, Pan-Pacific Auditorium). Presumably, the show will be key to the same theme as the New York exhibit last October—"Decorate Your Home with Music." Are you listening, ladies?

What the women of America think of high-fidelity sound is of prime concern to manufacturers in this industry. And they believe they know what the women of America think. First of all, women do not like loud sound. In keeping with their gentle nature, they prefer music softly played. Secondly, they cannot abide the sight of "naked" components. And, if the components have wires strung between them in plain view, the sight is doubly offensive. Hence, the "Decorate Your Home with Music" theme.

Worth noting also is a second important High Fidelity Music Show to be held this month in San Francisco (Jan. 23 through 26, The Cow Palace). This second West Coast show is being sponsored by the Magnetic Recording Industry Association. Don't let the MRIA tag fool you. This is not a show devoted only to tape recording but, to use MRIA's term, an "all-industry" affair. That is to say, all the Los Angeles exhibitors will trek up the coast to show their wares. If the MRIA has any opinions on how to satisfy the housewives of America, it hasn't gone on record with them.

Preoccupation with the ladies' criticism of high-fidelity sound could be misconstrued as some obscure form of male chauvinism. Not so. Rather, it appears in merchandising manuals under the heading "Broadening the Market," and can be summed up as follows: "let's design equipment to appeal to the women and we'll be able to sell more to the men"—or to state it more directly,—"if the women like it, they'll let the men buy it."

There are several observations we'd like to make on this subject.

First of all, publicity prior to and during the October show in New York made much of five "decorator rooms," which integrated stereo music systems with chic and chintzy surroundings. Women, as well as men, completely ignored this conspicuously placed exhibit although they flocked into the Audio Fidelity demonstration room close by. It's worth pointing out that Audio Fidelity's major attraction was a half-hour lecture by the firm's president, Sidney Frey, who played excerpts from his stereo disc catalogue. The audiences—one-third of them women—showed little inclination to run even when Frey cranked up the gain on his "Locomotives: Steam and Diesel" to room-shattering level. The ladies, who were not handcuffed to their husbands, even seemed to enjoy the program.

Commenting on the "decorator rooms," one New Yorker correctly told us: "The rooms may have been decorated with stereo but not for stereo. In only one of the rooms was it possible to sit in the stereo sound area."

The second and by far the more important observation we'd like to make on the subject of "women and high fidelity" is this: intense interest in décor and what the ladies supposedly think could lead to compromising the product in a business that grew quickly because of its search for the best possible way of reproducing sound.

Here's an example. Recently, we spoke to a manufacturer who is trying to "broaden the market" by placing all components in a cabinet.

"What about feedback?" we wanted to know. "Won't the speaker vibration be picked up by the cabinet and transmitted to the tone arm, cartridge and needle? Seems you fellows were awfully particular about that a couple of years back."

"Well," said the manufacturer, "it's not as important as we used to think it was. After all, speakers on one side of the room can cause vibration in an equipment cabinet on the other side."

This sounded to us—as it must to you—as if the manufacturer were fence-straddling. We would prefer to have him give results of test procedures proving his point, rather than brush the question aside with an offhand comment.

To sum up, women may be very interested in the appearance of high-fidelity equipment, but that does not mean they are indifferent to the quality of the sound. We believe that the 60.3 per cent of our readers (according to a recent survey) who are married will agree with the above. Neither are the men electronically-minded brutes with so little regard for aesthetic considerations that they buy anything regardless of its appearance. We must recognize in passing that components today are much handsomer than they were five years ago.

We think the IHFM would be interested in an actress friend who called on us recently to fix her component rig. She wouldn't know a baffle. Continued on page 116
Norelco Continental 400
Stereo Tape Recorder

SPECIFICATIONS (furnished by manufacturer):
A 3-speed stereo tape recorder with built-in left-channel speaker, accessory right-channel speaker, and built-in preamplifiers and power amplifiers. It may be used to record four monophonic tracks, two in each direction. Speeds: 7½, 3½, and 1½ ips. Capacity: 7½-inch reels. Inputs: left and right microphone channels, left and right high-level channels. Outputs: for left and right extension speakers and for left and right amplifiers (low-level outputs). Also connection for stereo headphones to monitor inputs. Signal-to-noise ratio: 55 db or better. Crosstalk: 55 db down. Wow and flutter: 0.15% at 7½ ips. Dimensions: 18½ by 15½ by 7½ in. Weight: 55 lbs. Price: $399.50. MANUFACTURER: North American Philips Co., Inc., 230 Duffy Ave., Hicksville, L. I., N. Y.

At a glance: An excellent, all-round recorder providing fine fidelity and exceptional flexibility.

In detail: This test report is being written in two parts. One of the High Fidelity staff members (C. F.) took the Norelco home for a couple of days of experimentation and study, and for general listening tests. Then the recorder was transferred to the Hirsch-Houck Laboratories, where basic electronic measurements were made. The H.-H. results will be given at the end, under the heading of "test results." Let's start with C. F.'s comments . . .

This is an attractive, easy-to-handle, pleasant-sounding recorder, that functions smoothly and has several unusual features. The features . . . well, down under the handle, on the left side of the recorder, is the input connections panel. There are two phone jacks (of standard U.S. design) for left- and right-channel high-level inputs; they are marked radio/phone. The phone would be crystal or ceramic, not magnetic. There is a single phone (not phone) jack for stereo microphone. This connection can be used with a monophonic microphone jack, and which channel it feeds to depends on the setting of a selector knob on top of the recorder. Another phone jack, for stereo headphones, is connected to monitor inputs.

On the other side of the recorder are the output connections. There are four phone jacks here; two are for speakers, to be operated by the power amplifiers built into the Norelco. The other two are low-level, for connection to external amplifiers. A switch on this panel cuts out the built-in speaker, which is connected to the left channel. The AC power cord, by the way, is in a hole under the bottom of the recorder, covered by a little trap door.

Now . . . let's attack the dashboard. Up between the reels, to the rear, is a four-digit counter, operating off the supply reel. A 1,200-foot reel counts up to almost 1,000 . . . and takes a whisker under two minutes to wind fast forward or rewind.

Tape is threaded straight through, and very easily.

There are nine stubby piano key levers, plus three buttons. Extreme left is PLAY. Next is RECORD, but you have to push a red button above it first. Then comes PAUSE, which does that and does it fast and soundlessly. The PAUSE button is released by pushing the red button above it. The three center levers are REWIND, STOP, and FAST FORWARD. They may be "played" . . . that is, you can go from REWIND to FAST FORWARD without damage. Finally, there are three levers at the right which select speed and which— we discovered belatedly— turn the machine on when depressed. A little button to the left turns everything off. Just below the three center levers there is a sensitive recording level indicator.

At the extreme front are the knobs. The two at the left are to control input level for microphone and radio. The two inputs can be mixed, and their levels adjusted separately. The third knob from the left is the function selector. It has four positions. The first is PA, which connects inputs to loud-speaker. And it also does a cute trick: it snaps out any lever controls which may be depressed. Thus if the PLAY lever is down (it catches down, normally, to be released when the STOP lever is depressed), turning the function selection to PA releases the PLAY lever, and so on.

The second position of this knob is STEREO, and that's perfectly straightforward. The third position is marked 1-4 and the fourth, 2-3; between these two positions is the word MONO. These two positions make it possible to record four monophonic tracks on one tape. One position gives you track #1 going and coming, with the #1 coming being equal to #4. Similarly, the other position gives you #2 coming, which becomes #3 when the tape is flipped for its return trip. We'll come back to this in a couple of paragraphs; we must first finish going across the board.

In the center of the forward row are two buttons. Both slide laterally. The left-hand one is marked Viewing. If you record . . . wind back . . . play back to a preselected point . . . push the PAUSE lever . . . push the RECORD lever . . . release the PAUSE lever and apply a second signal (voice or music) then the first recording will be partially erased and the second ap-
plied over it. Hence the dubbing; dubbed in over the first. Cute trick, yes? Thus you can put voice over music either by simultaneous recording or by subsequent dubbing.

The next button has an R+L position (to the left) and a simple L position, to the right. When the function selector knob is in its stereo position, this knob is automatically sprung to the L position to feed the left channel to the built-in speaker. When the function selector is in either of its monophonic positions, this button may be put in R+L position and it will then blend left and right channels, for monophonic playback of stereo recordings.

The three knobs to the right are: volume, which is ganged, both channels being affected equally. (Same principle is used on input level controls, etc.) Next is balance, and that’s what it does, between the two channels. The third is a clutched tone control, each channel being separately adjustable but, once set, the upper and lower sections of the knob can be turned together.

We did a good deal of listening to music recorded over the Noreloco. About two-thirds was monophonic, picked up from a good FM station nearby. The sound was excellent all the way along and A-B tests against the original broadcast (versus taped version) were almost entirely indistinguishable. Stereo tests were not too conclusive because we simply had to dub from discs onto tape and then compare; the tapes sounded as good as the discs, but this in a sense is putting the cart before the horse. We’d rather leave the judgment of performance to the Hirsch-Houck tests.

The Noreloco comes equipped with a stereo microphone and we make it singular because it is only one plastic case with two microphones positioned in the cross-fire arrangement that is moderately common for European recordings. We didn’t test it at all conclusively. Yes, we talked and walked around while talking; it picked up the motion and blended it nicely. We didn’t think the family grand piano sounded quite as good as with a pair of microphones set up according to the more usual U.S. arrangement but more experimenting is indicated. It does have the great advantage of being compact and simple to use; it cannot provide the flexibility—not the complexity—possible with two separate microphones.

Test Results
To test the playback frequency response of the Noreloco recorder, we used a prerecorded tape employing standard NARTB recording equalization (the NCB Alignment Tape, recorded at 7% ips). Up to the 10-kc upper limit of the tape, the recorder’s response is quite good, except for a distinct rise in low-frequency response. The Ampex 5563-A5 Alignment Tape yielded similar results.

We measured the over-all record/playback frequency response by recording through the radio input, at a level 20 db below maximum recording level (the level for which the indicator tube closes). The playback output was measured at the preamplifier output jack, with the tone controls centered (the position for flat response, according to the manual accompanying the recorder). This procedure was performed at all three tape speeds.

The response curves plotted from these tests show a pronounced rolloff of both high and low frequencies, compared to the results obtained with the prerecorded tape. This must be due to deficiencies in the recording equalization, especially noticeable below 100 cps, where the playback equalization is greater than normal, yet the over-all response falls rapidly. The frequency response falls somewhat short of specifications in the instruction manual, although the recorder is usable to over 10 kc at 7% ips and over 7 kc at 3% ips. The low-frequency rolloff is not noticeable when using the small internal speaker, but becomes apparent when an external amplifier and good-quality external speaker are used.

To check the performance of the built-in amplifiers, the frequency response to the NCB Alignment Tape was measured at the speaker output, using a resistive load. It proved to be quite the opposite of the response at the preamplifier output, with a loss of low frequencies, and rising highs. We measured the action of the tone controls at both extremes of rotation. Strangely, there was no detectable boost action at the clockwise limit, merely a 1.5 db increase in all levels. At the other extreme a drastic rolloff above 200 cps made recorded speech nearly unintelligible.

Intermodulation distortion was measured by recording 60 and 5,000 cps, mixed in a 4:1 ratio. We fed the playback to an IM Analyzer, and the recording level was varied, from indicated maximum downward. The IM proved to be appreciable even 10 db below maximum level. We then measured the IM of the amplifier alone in the PA position of the function selector; this too was high at all outputs. Over most of the frequency range an output of some 5 to 6 watts could be obtained with a fairly undistorted waveshape as seen on an oscilloscope.

The signal-to-noise ratio was measured as 42 db to 48 db, depending on the settings of the recording and playback level controls. The average was −46 db relative to maximum recorded level. This was all hum, with tape noise being far below the hum level. The manufacturer’s specification of a 55-db s/n ratio seems rather optimistic for a 4-track machine. We consider the measured 46 db to be excellent for a 4-track recorder, and in fact it is comparable to the s/n ratios of some good-quality two-track recorders.

Stereo crosstalk, rated at −50 db or better, was easily that good at 1 kc. We could not make an accurate measurement, but crosstalk was well below the hum level.

We received a pleasant surprise when we measured wow and flutter, which at 7% ips were 0.02% and 0.06% respectively. This is the performance one expects of the finest professional machines, and is completely outside the range one measures on home tape machines. At the 34 ips speed, we found wow and flutter to be only 0.04% and 0.09% respectively. To top it off, at 1% ips, a speed usually reserved for recording baby’s first words or dictating correspondence, the wow and flutter were each only 0.1%.

In sum, although the distortion and over-all frequency response of the Noreloco 400 when its internal amplifiers and speaker are used are not as good as its superb tape deck’s performance, it is capable of making good-quality stereo or monophonic recordings, and should deliver excellent results when playing commercially recorded numbers through a good-quality pair of external power amplifiers and speakers.

H. H. Labs.

REPORT POLICY
Most equipment reports appearing in this section are prepared for us by Hirsch-Houck Laboratories, a completely independent organization whose staff was responsible for the original Audio League Reports. Their reports are signed: H. H. Labs. Reports are published exactly as they are received. Neither we nor the manufacturers of the equipment tested are permitted to delete information from or add to the reports, to amend them in any way, or to withhold them from publication. Manufacturers may add a short comment if they wish to do so.

On equipment that demands more subjective appraisals (such as loudspeakers), the reports may be prepared by members of our own staff. Such reports are unsigned. The policy concerning report publication and amendment by the manufacturer is the same as that for H. H. Reports.
Leak "Point One"
Stereo Preamplifier

SPECIFICATIONS (furnished by manufacturer):
A complete, two-unit stereo amplifier system consisting of a preamplifier-control unit and remote power amplifier.

POINT ONE STEREO PREAMPLIFIER provides input selection of five sources, including microphone and two high-level sources. FUNCTION SWITCH positions include stereo pickup converted to monophonic, as well as the usual stereo, stereo reverse, either input channel to both speakers. Other controls include rumble filter and ganged bass, treble, and volume control. Harmonic distortion less than 0.01% at 125-mv output (sufficient load when used with matching Leak power amplifiers). Price: $119.50.

STEREO 50 POWER AMPLIFIER: Output: 25 watts per channel. Hum and noise: 80 db at 3 db below 20 watts. Frequency response: ±0.5 db 20 to 20,000 cps. Specifically designed to match Leak preamplifiers. Price: $199.


At a glance: Though they are sold separately, the Leak "Point One" stereo preamplifier and Stereo 50 power amplifier are so designed that, used together, they form a high-quality stereo amplifying system with ultraconservative design and craftsmanship, of a caliber found on only one domestic make of high-fidelity equipment. However, neither is likely to work well with typical American components. [This drawback has now been corrected. See manufacturer's comment below.—Ed.]

Although the Leak units lack some of the gadgetry and flexibility found in American stereo amplifiers, their electrical performance is generally excellent and their listening quality leaves nothing to be desired.

In detail: The "Point One" preamplifier is designed for use with any two Leak mono power amplifiers, or with the Stereo 20 or Stereo 50 power amplifiers. The associated power amplifier supplies the power, and the preamplifier controls it for the entire system. The full rated output from the preamplifier is 0.125 volts, sufficient to drive any Leak power amplifier to full output, but much too low to drive an American amplifier. Since a 4- to 5-
millivolt signal is required at the magnetic phono or tape head inputs to develop an output of 0.125 volts, the gain of the preamplifier is very low by our standards.

The gain of the power amplifier, however, is much higher than we are accustomed to finding, so that the combination of the two has about as much gain as any comparable combination of American units.

When used with the Stereo 50 power amplifier, a single cable from the preamplifier carries power and signals to the power amplifier. A separate cable carries the AC line voltage into the preamplifier, where it is controlled by the switch on the volume control.

Inputs are provided for a stereo (or mono) pickup, tape heads, microphones, tuner, and one extra high-level input. Level-set controls (ganged for both channels) are provided for phono, tuner, and extra inputs. The Leak amplifier's sensitivity on its nominally high-level inputs is much greater than that of domestic amplifiers: less than 30 millivolts are required for 10 watts output from the Stereo 50 power amplifier when it is used with the "Point One" preamplifier. (This is because most British tuners have relatively low output levels, so it is imperative to adjust the level-set controls properly. Clear instructions are provided for this adjustment.)

When used with a pair of mono amplifiers, the preamplifier obtains its power from the left-channel amplifier. A separate output jack supplies the signal to the right-channel amplifier. Tape recorder outputs are also provided, ahead of the volume control but after the controls and equalization.

Tone controls are of the feedback type, with boost or cut characteristics hinged at about 200 cps and 3 kc. This type of control is most effective, yet has little or no effect on the middle frequencies. No loudness control is provided, but the tone control characteristics are admirably suited for loudness compensation. An effective rumble filter takes over below 100 cps, leaving most of the program unaffected.

Phono equalization deviates considerably from the RIAA characteristic, and there are significant differences between the two channels. Although the tone controls would be capable of reasonably good compensation for these errors, this is not feasible because...
The distortion contributed by the preamplifier would be very difficult to measure, much less hear.

The power amplifier is nominally a dual 25-watt unit, with a pair of EL34 tubes in each channel output stage. The tubes and other components are operated far below their ratings and should give long and trouble-free service. Our tests showed only slight difference between the channels, each of which was capable of an output of at least 30 watts. The 1,000 cps harmonic distortion was less than the inherent distortion of our test equipment up to 10 watts output, and was only 0.2% at 25 watts. The low-frequency power-handling ability of the Stereo 50 was somewhat below its mid-frequency rating, but at levels of a few watts the 20 cps harmonic distortion was under 0.2%.

We measured hum and sensitivity on the combination of preamplifier and power amplifier. Except on the tape input, the hum was entirely inaudible, being from 60 to 60 db below 10 watts output. The gain is high enough for even low-level magnetic stereo cartridges.

The power amplifier's chief weakness is a tendency toward instability with capacitive loads. The scope sketches show the effect on a 10-kc square wave of a 0.05-mfd capacitor shunting the 8-ohm resistive load. A large capacitance, such as would be presented by certain electrostatic speakers, drastically reduces the high-frequency power output. Our conclusion is that the Leak Stereo 50 should not be used with electrostatic speakers, though it will perform admirably with any conventional speakers including low-efficiency types. The damping factor is high, being in excess of 20.

The construction of the Leak units is superb. All parts are mounted on boards, with neatly cubed wiring. It is the sort of construction one expects to find on the finest laboratory instruments. The power amplifier is large, uncluttered, and well ventilated.

H. H. Labs.

**MANUFACTURER'S COMMENT:** The "Point One" stereo preamplifier has been designed for use only with Leak stereo and monophonic amplifiers. However, the Leak amplifiers may now be used with any American preamplifiers. The Leak Stereo 50 and Stereo 20 amplifiers, and the TL/50 Plus monophonic amplifier are all presently equipped with gain controls, enabling them to function excellently with preamplifiers of other makes. This is a new feature, and was not included at the time of testing. Naturally, all other American stereo components, such as tuners, record changers, turntables, microphones, and tape recorders can be used with Leak equipment and will give full performance in accordance with their own capabilities.

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**Empire 88 Stereo Cartridge**

**SPECIFICATIONS** (furnished by manufacturer):


**MANUFACTURER:** Audio Empire Division of Dyna-Empire, Inc., 1075 Stewart Ave., Garden City, L. I., N. Y.

At a glance: The Empire 88 is a moving-magnet stereo cartridge offering relatively smooth response and good channel separation throughout most of the audio range. Its listening quality is pleasant and free from audible distortion or peaking.

In detail: The moving-magnet principle is being adopted by more and more stereo cartridge manufacturers, and the Empire 88 is one of the most recent designs to be offered.

The Empire 88 features an easily replaceable stylus with low moving mass and high compliance; it is free from magnetic attraction to turntables, and has low susceptibility to induced hum. Its output is fairly high for a stereo cartridge, being approximately 6 millivolts per channel at a stylus velocity of 5 cm/sec at 1,000 cps.

The cartridge was tested in an "Empire 98" arm. The low-frequency resonance was approximately 10 to 15 cps. We determined this with the aid of a sweep frequency record covering from 100 cps to 10 cps. The resonance was very slight, amounting to a broad 2.5 db rise, followed by an abrupt falloff below 10 cps.

The stereo performance was measured by means of the Westrex 1A test record. The two channels exhibited very similar response characteristics, and were free from sharp peaks. The stereo channel separation was very good up to about 6 kc, and adequate even at the higher audio frequencies.

The mono response, with the two outputs paralleled, was very smooth out to well beyond 16 kc. The freedom from sharp resonances no doubt contributes to the easy listening quality and low noise level which we observed during listening tests. We found that at least 4 grams of tracking force was necessary for clean reproduction of the loudest passages on stereo records. Operated in this way, our general listening impression was of a smooth, well-rounded sound, free from any stridency or shrillness.

H. H. Labs.

**MANUFACTURER'S COMMENT:** The Empire 88 "Stereo/Balance" cartridge is truly an outstanding buy among high-fidelity stereo components. This cartridge has excellent stereo characteristics.
channel separation, extremely wide-range frequency response, with wonderfully clean sound reproduction, as you have determined in your laboratory tests. The extremely low dynamic mass and unique stylus lever design of the Empire 88 "Stereo/Balance" cartridge virtually eliminate record or stylus wear, an important fact to consider when purchasing a stereophonic phonograph cartridge.

**Blupunkt AM-FM-M Auto Radio**

**SPECIFICATIONS** (furnished by manufacturer): This transistorized auto radio covers not only the AM broadcast band but also the FM band and a marine band range from 2.13 to 2.75 mc. Two push-button station selectors are provided for FM and two for AM bands. Incorporates tone control. Dimensions: receiver, 7¾" wide, 3" high, and 6½" deep, excluding knobs; power pack: 7½" x 3½" x 1½". Prices: $137.50; cost of installation kit averages $20, varying according to car model. Auto 2800 aero; $80.00. **MANUFACTURER:** Blupunkt, West Germany. **IMPORTER:** Robert Bosch Corp., 40-25 Crescent St., Long Island City 1, N. Y.

This is a most unusual car radio, in that it provides coverage of the FM band. It is the second such instrument tested by **High Fidelity**; both were imports. One American manufacturer makes a converter (a good one, too) but, we believe, this is all the equipment that is available, as far as FM car radio reception is concerned.

The fidelity of the Blupunkt is above average. Both AM and FM sound much better than we had anticipated; and, if one switches to a larger speaker than the one provided, there is a substantial improvement in the sound. The radio has provision for two speakers, so the second one is no problem.

We tested the Blupunkt primarily around the Great Barrington area, and on a trip to and from New York City. Although FM reception is very difficult around Great Barrington, and in the Berkshires generally, we were able to receive an FM station—audibly, and not always with sufficient limiting—from forty-five airline miles away, and over a good many intervening hills. Driving to New York, the FM dial became decidedly busy.

The AM section proved to be astonishingly active—not just on the way to New York, but around Great Barrington itself. Lots of stations, good fidelity, an occasional squeal as stations collided with one another.

Let's see...the set is compact, can fit almost anywhere. The transistor section is normally attached to the rear of the main tuning section, but can be detached if desired. There are two push buttons on FM and two on AM. They are very easy to set. The fifth push button is for the marine band.

No installation instructions were furnished with the radio. For best results it would be well to have the job done by a competent service man. The set operates on either 6 or 12 volts, positive- or negative-grounded. Care should be exercised here; even though we specified the make of car in which the set was to be used, we had to change the strapping on a transformer to get the necessary positive ground connection.

All in all, this is a very competent auto radio, with interesting extra features (especially for lovers of FM programming) whose value will have to be determined by the prospective user.

**NEWSFRONTS**

*Continued from page 111*

batter but she likes good sound and she likes it loud.

When the rig had been put back in working order, we were about to replace the wooden panel that enclosed her tuner and amplifier on a shelf.

"Dah-hling, don't put that front thing back on," she said. "Those gadgets—do you call them amplifiers?—look so cheery when the tubes and bulbs and things light up. Kind of like a Christmas tree, don't you think?"

Haydn's *London Symphony* has a playing time of 26 minutes plus or minus 2 minutes and 10 seconds, depending on the orchestra and the conductor. *Schumann's Romances* (Op. 28) takes 4 minutes, plus or minus 48 seconds.

These facts may have little meaning to the average concertgoer but the tape enthusiast who records his own music from FM can save tape and, therefore, money, if he knows the approximate playing time of a specific musical composition.

The playing times of about 1200 classical compositions are now available in a little booklet *Timetable for the Classical Repertoire* ($2.75). Compiled by William Colbert, who manages a chain of high-fidelity retail outlets under the name Audio Exchange, *Timetable* should also prove useful to concert managers and classical disc jockeys.

In a short, pithy introduction, Colbert points out that many recordists have tapes in their libraries which can accommodate additional short works. Knowledge of time can mean savings in tape, and a more compact library.

Performance time given in the booklet results from averaging out the times of as many performances as the author could find of a given work. In compiling the list, he discovered that orchestral works seldom vary more than plus or minus 10%, whereas solo performances may differ by as much as plus or minus 20%. Because operas are often cut, the performance time may vary greatly. Times of operas which are part of the compilation are set down in parentheses for this reason. Wisely included in the booklet is a table of running times of various tape lengths at different speeds.

Eighteen stereo amplifiers are evaluated in a 64-page book, produced by the American Audio Institute (AAI), Paterson, New Jersey ($2.50). The booklet is detailed and comprehensive. It contains 128 tables, 574 test ratings and 162 performance curves describing the specific characteristics of the 18 units. Also included is a detailed description of the various tests performed on each amplifier.

The book will appeal to readers of various interests. Engineers who study such factors as control calibration, stereo crosstalk, etc., will find many tables and charts to study. The reader new to high fidelity can gain an education and learn what characteristics to search out in buying equipment. The person who already has a stereo amplifier tested by AAI will learn more about the unit he owns and, perhaps, enjoy its use more by having more knowledge of it.

While the publication is not fancy in terms of appearance or printing, it is packed with knowledge. What it lacks in lavish formality it makes up for in subject matter.

**RALPH FREAS**

**HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE**

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To prevent your FM antenna from splitting and tearing, make a round hole at the base of the V with a paper punch (above). This works just as well where a ribbon TV lead-in is attached to the antenna. (Right) Attach a Mueller B22 dual clip to your soldering iron's power cord, then use it as a vise to hold work firmly while it is being soldered. Clip can be bought for less than 50 cents. (Lower right) When inside-handle threads get stripped off your plastic-handled test prods, wrap tip threads in coarse thread, then screw the handle back in place. (Below) Use aluminum foil to catch metal chips and drops of solder; this way they won't get mixed up in high-fidelity gear, and you'll save yourself a lot of trouble.
A Preview of New Equipment

Two German Recorders Introduced
Two models of Harting recorders, made in West Germany, were introduced recently in New York. The Model HM-4 is an all-monophonic record/playback unit with built-in power amplifier and speaker. The HM-4-S includes an additional playback preamp, for stereo playback through a radio or high-fidelity system. An accessory recording preamp converts the HM-4-S to stereo record. Prices are $264.95 for the all-mono unit, and $355.95 for the HM-4-S.

New Line of Harman-Kardon Kits
The Citation I is the first in a new line of Harman-Kardon kit components. The twelve knobs and four slide switches furnish complete control over all preamp and stereo functions, including tape monitor, contour, and phase reverse. Tone controls are step type, separate bass and treble for each channel. A matching power amplifier completes the line of kits, which are also available factory-wired.

Transcription Arm Has Cuing Device
Fairchild's new transcription arm incorporates a cuing device which permits precise locating of record grooves before lowering the stylus onto the record. Cartridge slide is removable, and there is a spirit level built into the base. Rear overhang is only 2 3/8 inches; only one hole is needed to mount the arm on turntable or changer. Price: $34.95.

To Protect Your Records
A surer, safer method of raising and lowering the pickup on automatic record changers or manually-operated turntables is embodied in the Magic Finger, which supports the pickup during raising and lowering operations. The Magic Finger is easily attached to any turntable base, and does not interfere with normal operation of automatic changers. It is made from styrene and nylon. $4.95.
Compact Speaker System by Leonhardt

The 1H-80 measures only 11 inches high by 20 wide and 9¾ deep, yet is a full-range speaker system with a frequency range stated to extend from 35 to 18,000 cycles. Some models are equipped, at an additional cost of $8.00, with a frequency range selector which produces an apparent increase in bass response. Without the selector, prices are $54.95 unfinished and $59.95 with walnut finish.

Cartridge with 3 Styli

The Pickering Collectors' Series of cartridges is based upon the Model 380 Stanton Stereo Fluxvalve. Styli are interchangeable, so the Model 380E at $60 includes three styli: for stereo, 1P, and 78s. The 380A includes a single stereo stylus, and sells for $34.50. It is recommended for transcription arms, whereas the 380C, at $29.85, is recommended for changers requiring 3 to 7 grams.

Turntable Has Built-In Stroboscope

To complement its line of stereophonic high-fidelity components, Channel Master has introduced a 4-speed turntable and transcription tone arm, the turntable of heavy cast aluminum, with electronically balanced 4-pole motor. A built-in, illuminated stroboscope provides a continuous check on speed—which can be adjusted by a friction-free eddy-current vernier. The tone arm is nonresonant at all audio frequencies, features a plug-in head and an arm rest shutoff switch. Price: $64.95; with furniture finished mahogany base, $79.95.

For Better Balance in Stereo

To aid in balancing speaker units, Kinematix has developed a twin-signal tone generator. The unit generates a constant tone of 1,000 cycles which can be switched from one amplifier to the other in a stereo system. Balancing can be accomplished quickly by ear but best results are achieved with a balance meter, another Kinematix product. The signal generator, called Twin-Tone, retails for $12.95.

Transis-Tronics Offers 2-Year Guarantee

So sure is the manufacturer of the quality of this all-transistor stereo amplifier and preamplifier that it carries a two-year unconditional guarantee of materials and workmanship. Known as the TEC-25, it provides 25 watts continuous per channel at well under 1% harmonic distortion. The preamp section includes full control and switching facilities. May be operated from 110 volts AC or 12 volts DC.
NEW GOLDEN AGE
Continued from page 37

even the timeworn melodramatics of Il Trovatore fresh and moving, and she has so much vocal facility that the most difficult passage work Verdi ever wrote holds few terrors for her. These are only three. There are others. There is the wondrously warm Licia Albanese, a singer of marvelous lyric beauty. Her Violetta stands with the finest. There is Victoria de los Angeles, with a voice of crystal, whose Manon and Mélisande and Marguerite in Faust are memorable creations, and who can work wonders with Puccini and Verdi as well. There is Zinka Milanov, still capable of the most exquisite singing. There are Leonie Rysanek, Janine Micheau, Ehe Stig- nani, Nell Rankin, Christa Ludwig, Renata Scotto, Clara Petrella, Giulietta Simionato, Herva Nelli, Rosanna Car- teri, Mary Curtis-Verna, Phyllis Curtin. There is, in short, a world of sopranos and mezzo-sopranos, impressive as a group and as individuals. From Aida to Tosca to Marguerite to any role you care to mention, there is more than ample talent available.

Even that trade-mark of the Golden Age, florid coloratura, work has its exponents. de la Fin de la main a song Bel- lini's 1 Puritani or La Sonnambula, for example, or Stella the cabalista following "Tacea la notte placida" from Il Trovatore, or De los Angeles the Rondo Finale from Rossini's La Cenerentola. For pure vocal pyrotechnics play Mado Robin's recording of the Mad Scene from Thomas' Hamlet with its fantastic high G. Or Rita Streich's rendition of Zerbinetta's aria from Ariadne. Closer to home, catch Roberta Peters on a good night doing Lucia di Lammermoor, or Lily Pons, a quarter of a century after her debut, singing the "Bell Song" from Lakmé. Grant, if you like, that voices are the essence of opera; if so, opera today can be proud of that essence. And it can hoist other distinctions. Even without Toscanini, we can number among contemporary conductors musicians of genuine stature. In recent years house orchestras have enjoyed the direction of men like Tullio Serafin, Fritz Reiner, Herbert von Karajan, Josef Krips, Erich Leinsdorf, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Georg Solti, George Szell—and the list is far from complete. Fifty years ago worship of the virtuoso singer had almost relegated opera to the status of a circus side show; today, it has been restored to music.

Restored, I should say, to music and to drama. Throughout the world opera houses are now quick and alive with

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Not to long ago the mahatmas of hi fi were solemnly preaching avant loud- speaker enclosures that "the bigger the box, the better the sound." Since the advent of stereo, this catch-phrase is no longer heard. The reason, obviously, is purely commercial. The monaural market was able to swallow one big box, but the stereo market couldn't swallow two.

Since necessity is the mother of invention, this situation created a galaxy of new cre- ations. Though they had never thought of it before stereo, or even said it couldn't be done, there suddenly appeared a rash of small boxes, even "shell-size," all with the most astonishing attributes. They were "even better" than their big brothers. Actually, they were nothing more than smaller versions of the same old bass-reflexes and folded-horns with their inevitable boom and distortion.

Some time before this stereo-forced miniaturization, an entirely new and compact loudspeaker enclosure was invented ... an invention of such outstanding novelty and merit that few claims ... all that were asked ... were allowed by the Patent Office. Equally valuable foreign patents were also granted. The principle was inventing, logical and scientific, and should appeal at once to anyone who has perception enough to grasp the idea.

The best loudspeaker enclosure is, obviously, the totally enclosed cabinet because it is entirely neutral and distortionless. In lieu of this, or takes from, speaker performance. Unfortu- nately, it must be large (20 cubic feet) or the enclosed air acts as a cushion upon cone movement, thereby impairing reproduction. The Bradford Baffle, by its patented pressure relief value, eliminates this air pressure, and can, therefore, he made compact ... only a few inches larger than the speaker itself ... without sacrificing any of the perform- ance values inherent in the large infinite baffle. Furthermore, there is no cabinet reso- nance, boom or distortion. For side by side comparison, the Bradford Baffle was and is the only compact cabinet fully equal to, or better than, the large enclosures, either before or after stereo.

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If you love music, unalloyed, if boom and distortion shock your nervous system, and if you have ever stopped to wonder how the "bigger the box the better the sound" advocates can now promote "shell-size," bass- reflexes and folded-horns that are "even better than ever," write for literature. Bradford Audio Corporation, 27 East 38th St., New York 16, N. Y.

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NEW GOLDEN AGE

Continued from page 120

the sense of theatre. No longer can managers allow any old set, any old staging. Not more than a few decades ago it would have been unthinkable to give stage directors anything like the free hand recently enjoyed by such nonoperatic craftsmen as Alfred Lunt, Margaret Webster, Cyril Ritchard, and José Quintero. Experienced opera men, like Herbert Graf and Dino Yannopoulos, have eagerly seized upon the new opportunities offered them and revitalized the tirelest war horses. The Metropolitan has even gone to the extent of hiring Japanese theatre people to restage Madame Butterfly, with results that are authentic, touching, and beautiful. From Don Carlo to Così fan tutte the repertoire is being infused with new dramatic cogency. In Europe the situation is even more pronounced. With Gauber Reumert, Wolfgang and Wieland Wagner, Carl Ebert, and Margherita Wallmann wielding unprecedented power.

Again, where during the Golden Age could a designer of the genius of Eugene Berman have found employment? His settings for Don Giovanni are superb, and they spring naturally from the growing realization that opera is more than a singing contest. Bern- man and his colleagues—men of talent and experience like Oliver Messel, Cecil Beaton, Rolf Gerard, Howard Bay, Donald Oenslager, and Horace Armistead—now contribute to a total stage picture that is something more than a painted backdrop in front of which an over dressed soprano and a tenor in tights hurl B flats at one another.

These developments are all to the benefit of opera as an integrated art form, a conception which has communicated itself to performers too. Only rarely now is a singer given a role for which he is physically unsuited. Opera stars keep their weight down, and by and large they can act. There are scores of current performances that are exciting for sheer theatrical effectiveness, above and beyond any vocal resource: Callas as Tosca, Stella as Butterfly, Ramon Vinay as Otello, Frank Guarrera as Cugelmo, Tito Gobbi as Sparia, Nell Rankin as Princess Eboli, Boris Christoff as Boris, Cesare Siepi as King Philip. Against a list like this, the fascinations of a Mary Garden take on only an isolated significance.

Finally, keep in mind that the Golden Age derives a good portion of its luster from the polishing process of memory. It was probably not as great an era as its apologists would have us believe. For every Giusep-
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Audio Products Section

GENERAL ELECTRIC

January 1960

de Luca there were a dozen Pasquale Amatos, in fact barely adequate. For every lovely Lina Cavalieri there were a dozen vocally passable ugly ducklings. Remember that Amelita Galli-Curci often sang flat, that Antonio Scotti's acting had to compensate for his singing, that Gigli often displayed the most atrocious taste, that Rosa Ponselle could trill but couldn't handle runs and had a variable sense of pitch. Remember the generally deplorable sets and amateurish acting. Remember, in short, that no age, whatever its grandeur, is wholly Golden.

All in all, production for production and voice for voice, I would far rather be a subscriber to Rudolf Bing's Metropolitan than to Maurice Grau's or Giulio Gatti-Casazza's. In those days too, in the days of Caruso and Marcella Sembrich and Emmy Destinn and Emma Eames, people were saying, "They don't make singers like they used to." Enjoy your nostalgia for the past, but don't let it blind you to the gold in the present.

STEREO

Continued from page 54

noise level of the system lest they be masked.

5. Appropriate Reproduction Level. It is common for owners of monophonic systems to operate them at levels which to the ear equal or exceed the original sounds. Thereby they seek to bring out all the instruments, to avoid the apparent loss of bass at low levels, and to re-create the vibrancy of the original performance. Are such levels necessary for stereo? Authorities basically agree that the stereo illusion is at maximum when the reproduced level is close to the original one. But this does not mean that the reproduced level has to be fully as loud. And it does not mean that for comparable realism the level must be as loud in stereo as in mono. It means simply that a reasonable approach to the original level makes for the most satisfactory stereo illusion.

Summary

Stereo, as a means of reproducing the "whole" sound, seeks to impart the sensations of directionality, spaciousness, and solidity. The illusion it creates is the aural equivalent of a three-dimensional image, possessing a high degree of definition. For the maximum in realism, stereo, like mono, depends upon low noise, low distortion, wide and smooth frequency response, wide dynamic range, and a level of reproduction similar to that of the original sound.

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THE PAVILION

Continued from page 44

conditions, but I’ve found a way to recall him to order, by threatening to plant cabbages instead of flowers... .”

Pepinna’s garden still flourishes, a row of roses and other flowers along the western side of the house, just outside the two master bedrooms. As I looked at the orderly flower beds, I thought also of other passages in her letters and in Verdi’s, describing their life at the villa.

“Get up at five and go out after quail,” the composer wrote to a friend in the late 1850s, “I fire a few rounds at the birds, who are not so foolish as to fall into the net. We eat lunch; I take a look at the workmen; I nap a little from one until two; afterwards we tend to household matters and write letters; we dine and take a walk until nightfall, then home again, a little chat, and then to bed... to rise the next morning at five. But now there is so much going on, it’s impossible to be bored.”

But domestic life at Sant’ Agata was always serene. When I walked past the lake again, I recalled an in- cident described by Pepinna in a letter to Countess Maffei (July 18, 1869):

“Thank God, it’s all over. And since it is, there’s no use in my trying to make a palpitating-tragic description of it. But you must know that the mud puddle, the infamous mud puddle, was very nearly converted into our tomb. The old proverb is right when it says never trust dead water. Verdi was in the boat and was hold- ing out his hand to help me step down into it. I planted one foot in the boat, and as I was setting down the other, the boat overturned and down we both went to the bottom of the lake, really, the bottom! Verdi—thanks to God, to chance, or to his presence of mind—feeling the boat lightly touch his head, was able to raise his arm and strongly push back that kind of sepulchral lid. This movement somehow helped him to stand up, and in

High Fidelity Magazine
this position, with incredible vigor, assisted by Corticelli, he extracted me from the water, where I was lying, unable to move, held down by my silk dress, frightfully swollen. . . . I can't tell you the alarm and despair of my poor sister. . . . I was about to lose my senses, when I opened my eyes and found myself supported by Verdi's arm. He was standing there with the water up to his neck. . . . It was only later that I learned what had happened, and then I was seized with terror, thinking of Verdi and the consequences that this sad and involuntary bath could have had for him and for art. . . . Tell Giulio [Ricordi] about the incident. . . . but for Heaven's sake, save us from the newspapers and their false exaggerations."

Though the character of the villa is Verdi's, the house is also filled with the unique personality of Peppina, that rare mixture of strength and submission. When I stepped back into the bedroom, I thought of her death. Verdi died away from Sant' Agata, in his hotel room in Milan, but Peppina died here, in her own room, on a cold winter afternoon in November 1897—just the time of year that she hated in the country. And on a foggy morning, at dawn, her body was carried out of the villa—"no flowers, or delegations, or speeches," her will had specified—to be buried in Milan.

Even when he was away from Sant' Agata, as he was much of the time, Verdi had the house always on his mind, harassing his agents with letters and instructions.

Continued on next page
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- Relco + Challenger
- Wallenstok
- General
- Mirecord
- Clear-Steer
- Ray-O-Vac
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- Sherwood
- Acewood
- Fisher
- Bangor + Look
- Dynatone
- H. H. Scott
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