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a report on free-lance recording orchestras

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A Reply to Mr. Robbins Landon

SIR:  
"A Pox on Manfredini" (High Fidelity, June) also casts a pox on those who buy recordings in order not to listen to them, the big news item in this field being that those who formerly didn't listen to Mozart are today not listening to baroque music. Since there have always been people who needed music to talk over, the whole matter becomes inconsequential, to say the least. That a listening marathon to baroque music on records will show up some second-rate composers and some second-rate music, I don't doubt for a moment. I believe, however, that for all this music to have been recorded at least once is a good thing, and not a bad thing. What better way is there to find out what is and what is not first-rate? Who is to say what remains on library shelves and what doesn't? We have had enough sad experiences with editors of printed music who decide so easily which are the "best" Haydn quartets, which compositions by Bach rate inclusion in a volume of "selected" works, and which Schubert symphonies should become the "best known." I believe we must try to do away with this same faulty selection process in recording. Most of us could lead rich, full, musical lives without the "forty-some editions currently in the catalogue" (High Fidelity, June, page 65) of the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto, Op. 23. I firmly believe, however, that any music worth printing is worth recording, at least once. Yes, I know that this means that a lot of second-rate music would be recorded, but so would a lot of first-rate music which we never get a chance to hear.

Mr. Robbins Landon reports a friend's reaction to the Library of Recorded Masterpieces as being as follows: "All that Vivaldi business—the five hundred concertos on 292 LPs—is just nonsense. Degenerate. It's another symptom of our civilization's sickness: five minutes before twelve; how Spengler would have laughed..." We have just finished making an index record for our first set

Continued on page 10
Can You Afford 15 Hours to Build The World's Best FM/Multiplex Tuner?

Fifteen hours. That’s all it takes to build the world’s best FM/Multiplex tuner.

Citation has the “specs” to back the claim but numbers alone can’t tell the story. On its real measure, the way it sounds, Citation III is unsurpassed. And with good reason.

After years of intensive listening tests, Stew Hegeman, director of engineering of the Citation Kit Division, discovered that the performance of any instrument in the audible range is strongly influenced by its response in the non-audible range. Consistent with this basic design philosophy—the Citation III has a frequency response three octaves above and below the normal range of hearing. The result: unmeasurable distortion and the incomparable “Citation Sound.”

The qualities that make Citation III the world’s best FM tuner also make it the world’s best FM/Multiplex tuner. The multiplex section has been engineered to provide wideband response, exceptional sensitivity and absolute oscillator stability. It mounts right on the chassis and the front panel accommodates the adapter controls.

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Citation III is the only kit to employ military-type construction. Rigid terminal boards are provided for mounting components. Once mounted, components are suspended tightly between turret lugs. Lead length is sharply defined. Overall stability of the instrument is thus assured. Other special aids include packaging of small hardware in separate plastic envelopes and mounting of resistors and condensers on special component cards.

For complete information on all Citation kits, including reprints of independent laboratory test reports, write Dept. HF-9, Citation Kit Division, Harman-Kardon, Inc., Plainview, N. Y.

The Citation III FM tuner—kit, $149.95; wired, $229.95. The Citation III MA multiplex adapter—factory wired only, $89.95. The Citation III X integrated multiplex tuner—factory wired, $319.90. All prices slightly higher in the West.

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- High Uniformity—uniformity within ±100-foot reel is within plus or minus 1/4 inch. A new oxide formula and special selectivity of oxides protect recording heads from wear and prevent abrasion.
- Humidity and Temperature Protection—special coating, priming, and binding techniques help keep Tarzian tape in new condition longer in ordinary good tape storage conditions.

Given great sound in the first place, Tarzian Tape will keep it for you, and give it back undiminished and undistorted. It is a tape of truly professional fidelity, worthy of your most valued recordings, at a price that lets you use it for all your work (or play).

The proof is in the listening...of course. But you can see the smooth, tightly bonded oxide surface that doesn’t flake, that does run smoothly without abrasion and without contributing to wow or flutter. Hold a reel to the light. You can see that Tarzian Tape is wound on the reel at perfect tension. You’ll find a written replacement guarantee in every box. The box is well made, with ample identification space. You’ll see that the tape is factory sealed in a plastic bag, with labels and a tape-end clip included.

Try Tarzian Tape. Summon the keenest and most discriminating ears you know. Tarzian Tape has what they, and you, will appreciate—highest fidelity! Available on standard 3-, 5-, and 7-inch reels and in professional lengths on reels or hubs, 1/2 or 1 mil acetate. Ask your dealer. If he cannot supply you, send us his name and we will see that your needs are promptly supplied.

Helpful new booklet free on request: "The Care and Feeding of Tape Recorders.

Note: Tarzian Tape on Du Pont Mylar base will be available shortly. Your inquiry is invited.

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CIRCLE 91 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Continued from page 8

of twelve Vivaldi records, containing fifty-two pieces. I decided to take another hard look at them with my eyes (and an ear) to discovering the degeneracy of all. I’m sorry to say I couldn’t find any. I wouldn’t advise a present-day musician to listen to all fifty-two pieces seriouism. They were never intended for that kind of listening. I’d advise listening in groups of four or five pieces, eight as the outside limit. What would you then hear? You’d hear a bewildering variety of musical ideas, instrumentation, and forms. Perhaps this is why J. S. Bach also found this music so attractive. You would also find authentic performances (and authentic scores) of many pieces which have come down to us only in corrupt versions.

One aspect of this Vivaldi project which no one has mentioned publicly yet is the effect on young students of music. I would have given much as a young student to have heard many of these pieces and to have had the score available to play on the violin. When I think of youngsters all over this country who play flutes and piccolos, oboes, clarinets (yes, Vivaldi wrote for real clarinets), we have three of these pieces in our first volume), bassoons, horns, trumpets, violins, violas (the viola d’amore concertos go nicely on the viola), cellos, and even double basses, and think of what a big event in their lives meeting this music on records, and with scores, could be. I feel a bit proud of the whole idea, and not a bit degenerate. It doesn’t feel ‘five minutes before we’re off’ at all, and if Mr. Spengler were around, I might say to him, “Wouldn’t you like to try this piece on your recorder? It’s lovely. I like it.”

Max Goberman
Library of Recorded Masterpieces
New York, N.Y.

Sir: Mr. Robbins Landon’s article tempted, at first, to provoke a rising of blood pressure and a bristling of hair. However, a second reading convinced me of the propriety of some of his points. There does seem to be a trend recently to extol slavishly anything written in the baroque (“barocco”) period. This unqualified acceptance does not extend to other facets of eighteenth-century civilization, as might logically be expected. Perhaps this relates to certain sociological and psychological tendencies of “us moderns.” We do not accept eighteenth-century politics in such a fashion because we are too “realistic.” We do not accept eighteenth-century art and architecture in such a fashion because our taste for “simplicity” is too “refined” to savour the decorative aspects of a Boucher or a Neumann. Nor do we accept the wit of a Voltaire, the intense sentiment of a Stendhal, or the florid ecstasy of the early romanticists. Eighteenth-century philosophy is too moralizing, too con-

Continued on page 12
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Circle 44 on Reader-Service Card

LETTERS
Continued from page 12

House?”, and Mr. Tepfer’s article on high fidelity servicing (High Fidelity, July) rang a bell with me. This is a serious problem, and I hope that your magazine will continue to call attention to it.

If your subscribers who live outside a metropolitan area think that they have a corner on service troubles, let them hear this plaint of one who lives within a fifteen-minute subway ride of mid-town Manhattan.

I make it a habit to write the manufacturers of components that I own, asking their recommendations for service of their equipment in the New York area. Several of them mentioned a service organization in Manhattan. Consequently, when trouble developed with one of my tape recorders, I decided to take it to this recommended concern. The problem was that when the function selector was in the “Record” or “Playback” position, the take-up reel would occasionally stop turning, and tape would pile up between the capstan and the take-up reel. Otherwise, the machine was working well.

The service outfit kept the machine for three weeks. The charge was $37.89, of which $35 was for labor. And although the specific trouble had been corrected, the machine came back with a new assortment of symptoms involving maladjustments in the braking mechanisms that it had never had before. It is now almost impossible to halt a fast wind without breaking or stretching the tape.

Shortly after this experience I encountered a friend who was fuming about a tape recorder service job on which the charges were even higher than one of his machine also came out of the shop in worse condition than it went in. Who did it? The same highly recommended outfit that took me for a ride.

The service organization referred to above probably has an impressive array of test equipment, else it would not be recommended by so many component manufacturers. I have several service jobs that need doing, but I want no more of the outfit that I tried once before. I am willing to pay for really expert service, and I know that such service comes high. Yet here, in the largest city in the world, with hundreds of so-called repair shops for electronic equipment, I don’t know where to turn. I hope you will continue to highlight this problem until the manufacturers do something about it.

Joseph H. Chuille
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Telefunken’s “Discovery”

Sir:
Your Central European correspondent, Kurt Blaukopf, recently mentioned that Telefunken had “discovered” in its

Continued on page 16

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LETTERS

Continued from page 14

letters

archives recordings by Fritz Heimann on the Arp Schnitger Organ in the Eosander Chapel at the Charlottenburg Palace (HIGH FIDELITY, May, page 16). I don't know when this information was lost, but it must have been recently, for these recordings were published on 78 rpm as TE-2710/3, and on LP as Capitol-Telefunken P8079, and thus were available in the early 1950s.

A.F.R. Lawrence
New York, N.Y.

Correction and Amplification

Sir:

Robert C. Marsh's article on "The Best of Beecham" in your June issue was an interesting and thoughtful appraisal of Sir Thomas' contribution to the recording art. But he has erred in stating that the Beecham Messiah has been deleted from our catalogue. In fact, the Messiah recording continues to be a very active catalogue item, and I cannot imagine how Mr. Marsh got the impression that it had been deleted.

Although I disagree with Mr. Marsh's critical comments on the Beecham Messiah, I believe that criticism boils down to matters of personal taste and I offer no argument to his views. In this connection, however, it is interesting to read the review of the Messiah that appeared in the Gramophone Magazine. Gramophone says: "There has been nothing like it before and there probably will be nothing like it again. This is not the recording of the month or even the year, but of the century."

Obviously, this statement will not alter Mr. Marsh's opinion, as his comments have not altered my own view. But I would appreciate your advising its readers that the Beecham Messiah is very much a part of the RCA Victor catalogue and will continue to be, we hope, for a long time to come.

John Kayes
RCA Victor Records
New York, N.Y.

Through an inadvertence, the catalogue numbers of the last Beecham Messiah and the conductor's old performance in Victor's LCT series were confused. Mr. Marsh would also like to have it understood that his remarks were not intended as depreciation of the present set, but only as observation to the effect that the score has been reorchestrated, and that the results are controversial.—Ed.

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Don Taylor, 39 Cross Street, Smithtown, N. Y. "Neither Larry nor I are speed demons because we're very meticulous about wiring and soldering. So I was even more surprised when it took me 50% more time to finish my kit. My problem began when I tried to separate the parts. The resistors were in boxes, but not in any logical way: identical resistors often wound up in different boxes. The instruction book was clumsy to work from. It caused wasteful mistakes. Once I lost 20 to 25 minutes because I misread a tiny key that meant not to solder a certain connection. A lot of the fun of kit-building was lost when I had to spend time making up for shortcomings of the packaging and the instruction manual.

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Anna Moffo
Meet a new Italian opera star from Wayne, Pennsylvania

Anna Moffo, whose last season's Metropolitan debut in La Traviata caused a sensation of the sort that does not happen every year, is a young woman who gives the impression of possessing the vigor and the gifts to reach any goal she cares to set herself. This I comment on only because, having heard reports of the melting delicacy of her Violetta, and knowing she sings with an almost introspective tenderness, I was somewhat unprepared to encounter the commanding figure Miss Moffo turned out to be. She told me that while growing up (in Wayne, Pennsylvania) her main interest had been not singing but hockey, and it is easy to see that she would have made a good front line player: she is tall and broad-shouldered, moving with the decisiveness of an athlete and the grace of a professional actress.

Fortunately, hockey lost its hold on Anna Moffo when she won a Curtis Institute scholarship, with almost no previous training and with only one aria, "Un bel di," thoroughly in hand. In 1955 she went to Italy on a Fulbright fellowship, and from that point on matters moved very quickly. Her first stop was Venice: while she was there an Italian soprano scheduled to sing several Casella songs in concert fell ill, and no local singer could sight-read well enough to take her place. Miss Moffo, however, could sight-read ("there is much better training in things like that in the United States") and did so, with great success. After Venice came Rome, where—almost simultaneously—she "found a marvelous husband" and became a celebrity practically overnight.

The occasion for both events was a Rome television production of Madame Butterfly. When Miss Moffo arrived at the studio for the audition, the dramatic director took one look at her statuesque frame, shook his head firmly, and walked out of the room. Exactly what happened after that is a little vague, as Miss Moffo tells it, but within three days she had the role and was engaged to the director. "It happened very fast," she admits. "We went to a movie. Have you ever been to an Italian movie house? It is bound to lead to something." Her husband, who has a Ph.D. in law but prefers dramatics, continues his work in Rome while his wife pursues her career. "I’m glad he doesn’t follow me around," she said. "It is much better for him to keep up his work there."

It would be quite a chore, in fact, to follow Miss Moffo around, for she has made it plain that she intends to keep moving. She does not want any single opera house to become "home," and prefers singing the same opera in different houses to giving many performances of it in any one of them: in this way a role matures, she feels. There is also another reason, about which she is quite frank. A singer is most appreciated when she is not too readily available. With invitations from every major opera house in the world, an artist in Miss Moffo’s position can afford to be choosy; bearing in mind, perhaps, the fate of some other prima donnas who have relied too confidently on the affections of a home audience and found themselves eventually out in the cold. Miss Moffo is not going to run the risk of becoming an old shoe.

Having already, at an age in the neighborhood of twenty-six, sung in many different productions on many different stages, Anna Moffo has had a chance to evaluate the operatic scene on a broad scale, and one shortcoming she has encountered everywhere particularly disturbs her. "Singers are such awful hams on stage. What we really need to do is loosen up and act." This is true in Europe more than in the United States—Italy is the worst of all. "The we on Miss Moffo’s part was purely editorial, for one of the notable things about her interpretation of both Violetta and Gilda in New York was the sensitiveness with which she portrayed the whole character—accomplished by skillful acting in addition to sheer vocal finesse. "Well, I try, but particularly hard in Europe," she said. "And I don’t believe in this Stanislavsky business... you have to project, all right, but you..."

Continued on page 24

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CIRCLE 77 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

www.americanradiohistory.com
ANNA MOFFO

Continued from page 22

must listen to yourself at the same time.

"There are times on stage when being able to act is a godsend. If I'm standing next to a tenor with a frog in his throat—and I can't tell you what it feels like to stand there while someone is in trouble—I want to do anything, turn cartwheels, to divert attention. The audience doesn't leave saying how good the soprano was, you know; they say how awful the tenor was.

"Of course acting is much easier if the character is at least intelligent. But take somebody like Micaëla—can you honestly think of anyone more obnoxious? And Gilda! But costumes help. They make a great difference, and if I don't feel right about the dress I'm wearing, I can't really get into a part. Even when I'm recording I try to wear to the studio the kind of clothes that seem to suit the character."

Having arrived at the subject of records, Miss Moffo did not hide the fact that her feelings about them are mixed.

"I was keen about stereo at first, but it makes recording awfully difficult. You can't sing much better if you're standing still. If something goes wrong on stage, it usually happens while you're moving, and the purpose of a record is to do better than a live performance. When you have to walk around among microphones, it's that much harder.

"You may not have thought of this, but records have made a singer's career much more difficult than it used to be. The perfection of a record can't be equaled in any one stage performance. Your fans memorize every note on the record and then come backstage after a live performance and say, "But why did you take a breath in such-and-such a phrase? You never did before." It means you have to stay ahead of your records. So far, I've been able to. I listen, sometimes, to older records I've made and think, how terrible, how could I have done that?"

However critical Miss Moffo may be of past recordings (and I have yet to hear of an artist who isn't), they have only contributed to the reputation which is spreading on all sides. But as for the singer's own views on fame: "I still don't believe it," she says. "I'm hanging on to the end of the trail."

SHIRLEY FLEMING

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FOR COMPLETE TECHNICAL INFORMATION ON THE PILOT 200 AUTOMATIC FM MULTIPLEXER OR THE PILOT 100 SEMI-AUTOMATIC FM MULTIPLEXER, PLEASE FILL OUT AND MAIL COUPON.

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SEPTEMBER 1961

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Only McIntosh amplifiers will deliver the full advertised power* at the lowest harmonic distortion of any currently available nationally advertised amplifiers in the McIntosh power class, at all frequencies, 20 cycles through 20,000 cycles.

We challenge any other manufacturer to prove that his power amplifier in the McIntosh power class, will deliver full advertised power at all frequencies, 20 cycles through 20,000 cycles at less than 0.5% harmonic distortion.

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3. Techtronic #502 Dual Beam Oscilloscope.

Careful, diligent research, meaningful design considerations and meticulous manufacturing produces the highest quality equipment. When you buy McIntosh—you know you are buying the best. Only McIntosh is the best.

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CIRCLE 69 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

During the winter of 1939–40 René Nicoly, like thousands of other young Frenchmen, was bored with army routine and the drôle de guerre. So he organized some concerts—and since his soldier audiences were largely untaught, prefaced the performances with short lectures on the works programmed. Then came the French disaster of June, and he went back to his old job with the music publisher Durand. In occupied Paris he organized some more lecture-concerts, this time for lyceé students. Soon, helped by prominent musicians and Pathé-Marconi, he found himself leading a crusade—his friends called him Peter the Hermit. In 1942 the movement, powered by the fervor of 20,000 youngsters in Paris alone, broke through Nazi red tape and became a formal organization: Les Jeunesse Musicales de France.

Today, Nicoly is president of the most effective cultural do-good association I have ever encountered. His J.M.F. functions in French and formerly French territory from the Somme to the Congo, and an international federation created in 1945 by an alliance with a similar movement in Belgium now includes nineteen nations (the total has been jumping as ex-colonies get new charters). More than 1,400 educational concerts were given in France during the past season. J.M.F. members, most of whom are between sixteen and twenty-five (although the upper age limit is thirty) pay less than $2.00 (the amount varies according to region) in annual dues and around 75 cents per concert. A subsidy of $60,000 a year has been granted by the government, and smaller sums have been allocated by local administrations.

No Pedagogy Here. The organization now has a record club and offers special ballet, opera, and drama evenings. But the core of its activity is still what it was in the sad Paris of twenty years ago: a thoroughly adult concert plus comment and discussion in which artists, critics, and audience participate. Composers are often present, and the questions asked them are apt to be candid. Recently a boy politely raised his hand and addressed Poulenc: "Monsieur, don't you think Wagner and Debussy have made the task of their successors impossible?" Poulenc dodged, and remarked later: "It's a mistake to arouse sincerity."

The other day I found Nicoly in his office above the Salle Gaveau, surrounded by concert programs and young delegates from the provinces, busy as a curé on bazaar day. He was off to Rabat to see how the Moroccans were making out. "Now don't confuse us," he said, "with music-appreciation teachers. We leave solfeggio to the schools. We are not pedagogues, we are stimulators. We are trying to create and inspire a musical public for the future, and to provide an audience for contemporary composers and young musicians."

For the Happy Few. The Boîte à Musique is a small record shop in Montparnasse that makes its own wares under the label BAM. Compared to the big international record companies, it is the disc equivalent of a Paris bistro: a family enterprise with a special flavor. It exports enough to be known to any alert dealer in the States, however, and American listeners may be interested in a surprisingly large catalogue that contains only one Beethoven item and a lot of rare oriental, medieval, baroque, French classical and avant-garde music. The shop's best sellers are ballads sung by the Left Bank troubadour Jacques Douai, who even has a noticeable fondness for uncommercial composers like Guillaume de Machaut.

BAM's president is M. A. Lévi Alvarès, son of the founder. But since he is also the firm's music editor, recording supervisor, and sound engineer, browsers are likely to find, as I did recently, M. Alvarès' wife and her mother tending store. The younger Mme. Alvarès outlined their policy: "We are self-indulgent artisans. We try not to do what has been done, which means that we tend to avoid the nineteenth century. People are always telling us how wonderful our choices are, and then we may sell only a few hundred records. But we do what we like, and some of our more exotic things go quite well—people like to escape. And years from

Continued on page 34
UP, DOWN, SIDEWAYS ... the important difference in an Audio Dynamics' cartridge can be felt with your fingertips

Put your finger to the stylus tip of an Audio Dynamics' Stereo Cartridge. Move that tip around ... What you feel is compliance. In Audio Dynamics' ADC-1, it is $20 \times 10^{-6}$ cms/dyne minimum. This compliance, along with a tracking force of less than one gram and an effective stylus mass that measures less than .5 milligrams, represents a design breakthrough by Audio Dynamics' engineers. Result? Now, for the first time, by using any model ADC cartridge, the following five essentials of true stereo reproduction are yours:

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Quality stereo cartridges are designed to suppress undesirable peaks and distortions in the high frequency range. These occur when the stylus mass resonates with the vinyl disc. To suppress resonance, since mass cannot be readily reduced, most cartridges are heavily damped.

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In one remarkable stroke, Audio Dynamics' engineers lowered the effective stylus mass to just one-half milligram, eliminating forever the previous plaguing need for heavy damping. This spectacular development makes it possible for the stylus tip to resonate with the vinyl disc at a frequency so high, your ear never hears it. Response is smooth ... the sound clean and "transparent."

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With stylus mass lowered and heavy damping eliminated, high compliance and linear suspension are achieved. This results in tone arm resonance so low it is of no consequence. Only the undistorted recorded bass tones come through.

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When a stylus is stiffened by damping, a heavy tracking force is required to prevent mistracking and breakup. This causes distortion and record wear. But high compliance and low stylus mass permit Audio Dynamics' cartridges to track at an extremely low force. Tested by Hirsch-Houck Laboratories the ADC-1 registered a tracking force of $\frac{1}{4}$ of a gram. You can forget about distortion and record wear!

**Essential #4—Proper Channel Separation**

With resonance removed from the audible range, nothing prevents the stylus from following the groove wall's direction of motion. Audio Dynamics' cartridges attain 30 decibels of separation in the critical 50-7000 cps range. Wandering of sound from speaker to speaker is eliminated.

**Essential #5—Reduced Surface Noise**

Lack of resonances results in greatly reduced surface noise. The diamond stylus of an ADC cartridge also contributes to this virtue. It has been selected from perfect crystals, super polished and the sides oriented so only the hardest surfaces touch the grooves.

Many, many plays later, when it is necessary to change the stylus, you'll find the entire assembly comes out with a flick of your finger. No tools or special skills are required.

These five essentials for true stereo reproduction result from high compliance, low tracking force, and low stylus mass — qualities inherent in all Audio Dynamics cartridges.

Experience for yourself the performance advantages provided by Audio Dynamics ADC-1 and ADC-2 stereo cartridges! Hear them at your dealer today.

The ADC-1 for high quality tone arms—$49.50.
The ADC-2 for high quality record changers and tone arms—$37.50.

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CIRCLE 14 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
Now... an FM tuner with multiplex built-in!

New H. H. Scott FM Stereo Multiplex Tuner

uses Wide-Band design for top performance

Here it is! No adaptor needed! The world's first Wide-Band tuner designed specifically for multiplex... H. H. Scott's new Model 350 FM Multiplex Stereo Tuner. The FCC, in its recent acceptance of FM stereo multiplex, said that the approved system "...like any multiplex transmission system, will increase energy transmission at the edges of the channel involved. Accordingly, for optimum stereophonic reception, the (tuner's) bandwidth... must be considerably greater than that of monophonic (tuners)..."*

From your very first design... the revolutionary 310A... H. H. Scott incorporated substantially wider IF bandwidth than conventional tuners. This gave better selectivity and usable sensitivity. The new 350 incorporates this same exceptional circuitry allowing reception of even weak multiplex stations with amazing clarity. You get other benefits, too — the 2 MC Wide-Band detector provides superior rejection of interference and complete freedom from drift. The Wide-Band design of the IF's and detector give the new 350 a remarkable usable sensitivity of 2.5 μV measured by stringent IHFM standards.

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Usable (iHF) Sensitivity: 2.5 μV, 10 tubes, 11 diodes. Famous H. H. Scott silver plated front end. Tuning meter. Performance matches FCC transmission specifications. Can receive either monophonic or stereo multiplex programs. Special circuitry for perfect stereo tape recording. Dimensions in hand-some accessory case 15⅝" W x 5¼" H x 13½" D. Matches styling of all H. H. Scott amplifiers. $199.95 ** or case extra.

*see paragraph 36, FCC Report and Order, Docket no. 13506, 4/10/61. Emphasis ours.

**slightly higher West of Rockies.

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CIRCLE 92 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

NOTES FROM ABROAD

Continued from page 32

now. I suppose, someone will walk by the place and say, 'I remember now, those people recorded Gesualdo and musique concrète.'"

Specialities of the House. For those whose French is fair, one example of BAM's enterprising list might be La Relentie, a powerful surrealist poem by Henri Michaux, recited by Germaine Montero to the accompaniment of surrealist noises by Marcel van Thielen. This is French avant-garde in top form. Also in good form are flutist J. P. Rampal and the Ensemble Baroque de Paris, on a disc of charming French eighteenth-century music—Couperin, Lecq, and three relatively unknown composers: Mondonville, Corrette, and Bois- mortier. Shinichi Yuize, playing the koto, stars in Japanese seventeenth- and nineteenth-century pieces, recorded during a recent UNESCO conference in Paris. This will give an idea of BAM's variety. "Pour the happy few," Mme. Alvarès said.

ROY MCMULLEN

MILAN

The enterprising Paris firm of Lumen has now entered an agreement with the Milanese firm of Angelicum, whereby most of the big projects planned by either firm will be made together, "in co-production." The Vivaldi Magnificat Osseensis, recently discovered in Prague (and just published by the Universal Edition, Vienna), has already been issued on a disc also containing the Nisi Dominus (Psalm 126); the Coro Polifonico of Turin is joined by the Angelicum Orchestra of Milan under C. F. Cillario (Lumen AMS 25, a 12-inch LP). Pier Francesco Cavalli's Mesta concertata for double choir, orchestra, conducted by U. Cattini, is another new Lumen-Angelium set (two discs, Lumen AMS 14/15). Next year the two companies issue their most ambitious album to date: Haydn's oratorio Il ritorno di Tobia. Written in 1774, Tobia is a large-scale work of which Haydn was very fond. He revised it ten years later, and it is this version that Lumen and Angelicum will use. The conductor will be Riccardo Allorto.

Red in the Ledger. Elsewhere in Milan, things are not so rosy. The recording project of the Ricordi publishing firm, which began so brilliantly (inter alia with Callas' Medea and the Paisiello Barber of Seville), has run into serious financial trouble. A recent talk with Dr. Ricordi, the young scion of the famous family in charge of its recording activities, suggested that something was wrong. There were no new projects for the coming season. How were the operatic albums selling? Dr. Ricordi (understandably, as it developed) begged the question; but it turns out—not very well.

Continued on page 36

HIGH FIDELITY Magazine
this Amplifier is NOT what we claim it is!

H. H. Scott's published specifications on the 222B Stereo Amplifier are not correct! Nor are the published specifications for any H. H. Scott component. Actually, units off our production line far outperform our claims.

A good example is a recent production run of 222B amplifiers.* Actual measured specifications were as follows:

- Power — 16 watts per channel (published specifications 15)
- Total harmonic distortion 0.6% (we claim only 0.8)
- Hum 19 mv (we state 25 mv).

H. H. Scott tuners also exceed their advertised specifications. "High Fidelity Magazine" says the 314 FM tuner "is very sensitive and stable and meets or exceeds the manufacturers specifications in every respect... Its sensitivity, rated by IHFM standards, is 2.5 $\mu$V according to Scott and 2.2 $\mu$V by our measurements".

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CIRCLE 56 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

NOTES FROM ABROAD
Continued from page 34

Produced in splendid albums (the Paisiello is one of the most beautiful album productions I have ever seen) and recorded with the best artists Italy has to offer, these works, despite highly favorable comment in the press, just don't sell well enough to cover the enormous production costs.

Originally the Paisiello was planned as the first of a whole series of settecento Italian operas; and what a series it would have been! But even the Italians are not interested... I talked to the manager of one of Florence's biggest shops. "We've sold half a dozen sets," the clerk said, "but you won't believe it: most of the buyers thought they were getting the Rossini Barber. Some of them came back the next day and angrily asked what kind of a joke Ricordi was playing; but some told us they played the set, realized their own confusion, and kept the album just the same. I don't see how Ricordi can go on with it," he concluded, "unless they can get their costs back from abroad. We Italians won't listen to that which we don't know."

Another Bohème, and Another... In Rome, Erich Leinsdorf has recorded a new Bohème (Moffo, Tucker, Merrill, Tozzi, Costa, Maero) for RCA Victor. The conductor told us: "I wanted to have a young-sounding cast, the kind that can really recapture the magic spirit of Bohemian Paris. You can't do that, for instance, with X [and he mentioned a famous Italian prima donna]: she's got a gorgeous voice, but she just doesn't sound young any more; and that's what Bohème needs." RCA is also doing a new Walküre (with Birgit Nilsson), and the day Leinsdorf finished recording in Rome, he flew off to London to start on Wagner. Decca-London was in Rome this summer, too; Sutherland fans will be pleased to hear that the "coming prima donna of them all" (as Italians now refer to her) has recorded her new famous interpretation of Lucia. DGG has also invaded the Italian recording world. The German firm, which is becoming one of the most powerful in Europe, has decided (quite rightly) that Italian operas ought to be recorded south of the Alps. It has signed a contract with the Milan Scala to do a number of works, and in Florence it began taping Bohème in the new Teatro Comunale (it has among the finest acoustics of any European opera house) about a week after RCA had finished its version in Rome. In the DGG production, Gianni Poggi is Rodolfo and Renata Scotto is Mimi. I had a talk with Engineer Giuntoli, who supervised construction of the Florence theatre. "We don't understand," said Giuntoli, "is why the recording companies go on doing the same things over and over. Two Bohèmes in one season in Italy, and seven others available. Who keeps buying them?" It's a good question. No doubt RCA and DGG know the answer. H. C. ROBBINS LANDON
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SEPTEMBER 1961

CIRCLE 88 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

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CIRCLE 24 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE
A Splash That’s Almost Wet

Some pages rearward of this one comes a castigation, by my old and good friend Edward Tatnall Canby, directed against monophonic record snobs. It is very much worth reading. It was ETC who introduced me to postwar high fidelity and, I think, to the odd dichotomy it has brought into music lovers’ homes. Canby is, of course, both a working musician and an audio editor, and it has always annoyed him, as it does me, that people of artistic pretensions are so often either timid or disdainful about technical innovations that really have been devised for their own delectation.

Many felt that way about microgroove and about high fidelity now they feel so about stereo. They didn’t want, quote, all those wires and watts, and they had a sort of proprietorial loyalty towards their old shellac Carusos and Weingartners. Against the latter sentiment I have no complaint; Caruso and Weingartner are treasurable acquaintances. But—at least in home music—every technological advance brings an advance in the art of listening, and I mean in both supply and enjoyment.

Go back briefly to 1948. There were then very, very few complete operas on dealers’ shelves. Within two years thereafter Dario Soria, through tape and microgroove, made available an enormous bulk of the Italian lyric stage, not always in performances of highest artistry, but much better than nothing, and marvelously inexpensive. This was purely a product of technology’s victory over economics, and it has not stopped.

Stereo has stepped in where monophonic high fidelity left off. There was a disturbed period between, naturally. There always is; the horse did not yield readily to the internal combustion motor. But sound is a medium which, more than any other, can benefit from technical progress, and further it is the medium most closely connected with the learning and symbolic logic that goes on in our heads. Deafness retards intellelction even more than blindness does.

We have a tremendous heritage of beauty and pleasure in sound, much of which has hardly been explored, let alone put forth for public enjoyment. Only for a short generation has it been possible to print sound accurately; letters and pictures had a long head start. Now we have words and music too, and—since stereophony began—with verisimilitude that can almost confound the ear.

Of course the verisimilitude varies, as Mr. Canby would not contest. I do not think two-channel stereo can adequately convey the Berlioz Requiem; one would need four channels and four speakers (and perhaps one’s own cathedral). It can convey Beethoven’s Wellington’s Victory, though, and here I must put in a note of repentance. It was I who first suggested Mercury’s making this great piece of gunpowdered male naiveté. And I do enjoy it. But it has unfortunately helped spread the notion, already too common, that stereophony exists mainly to deliver huge noises.

It does not. Realism can be small as well as large. In fact, I think it is more real that way. Further, I think recording directors are also aware of this, or at least are beginning to be. I am put in mind of several things that I have been most fascinated by on stereophonic records, thinking more or less at random (which is the way I usually think) through my last couple of years’ listening. There has been lately, for instance, the disc of six concertos for two organs by Padre Antonio Soler (1729-1783), performed for Columbia in the Cambridge Busch-Reisinger Museum. The organists were E. Power Biggs, whom everyone knows, and Daniel Pinkham, known to some record fanciers as the man who first gave us Purcell’s Fairy Queen. They sat at opposite organs; Biggs at the Fenton he had ordered from Holland, Pinkham at a little, impudent Hess portative (both genuinely baroque). The two men had the time of their lives playing these gay dialogues, and so do their listeners. My point is, I doubt very much that this record would have come into being had stereo not existed. Maybe the same could be said of a London pair of wonders, Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass. The splash in the pool of tears is almost magically wet. The exchange between Alice and the White King makes you forget you’re listening to a machine; they’re there. There are other gems that I think probably would have been fashioned, stereo or no stereo, but that are much the better for stereo—Beethoven’s Serioso Quartet by the Budapests, with the high and low strings talking to each other. For instance, stereo is making the living room, more than ever, the music room.

John M. Conly
SOME OF THE FINEST SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS IN THIS COUNTRY HAVE NEVER GIVEN A PUBLIC CONCERT. THEY HAVE NO PERMANENT CONDUCTORS. EVEN THEIR PERSONNEL CHANGES RAPIDLY FROM ONE WEEK TO THE NEXT. YET FOR ALL THEIR PROTEAN CHARACTER, THESE ORCHESTRAS ARE LOVED BY CONDUCTORS, RECORDING DIRECTORS, AND MUSIC LOVERS ALIKE. THEY GO BY SUCH NAMES AS THE COLUMBIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, CAPITOL'S CONCERT ARTS ORCHESTRA, AND THE RCA VICTOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—AND THE SAME MAN MAY PLAY IN ALL THREE DURING A SINGLE WEEK. THESE AMORPHOUS GROUPS, MADE UP OF FREELANCE MUSICIANS UNAFFILIATED WITH ANY PERMANENTLY ORGANIZED ORCHESTRA, PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN TODAY'S RECORDED MUSIC MAKING.

THE AESTHETICS OF THE FREE-LANCE ORCHESTRA (NEVER CALL IT A "PICKUP" GROUP WITHIN A MEMBER'S EARSHOT) ARE A MATTER FOR SOME DEBATE. OLD-LINE CRITICS TEND TO INSIST THAT A PERMANENT BODY SUCH AS THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC OR THE BOSTON SYMPHONY DEVELOPS A UNITY, A MUSICAL INTEGRITY, A CHARACTERISTIC "PERSONALITY" THAT AN AD HOC GROUP ASSEMBLED FOR A SINGLE RECORDING SESSION AND THEN DISBANDED CAN NEVER HOPE TO MATCH. PROONENTS OF THE FREE-LANCE ORCHESTRA, ON THE OTHER HAND, MAINTAIN THAT SUCH OUTFITS FAR SURPASS THE PERMANENT GROUPS IN FLEXIBILITY, VERSATILITY, AND GENERAL ALL-AROUND TONAL SKILL.

THE CONTROVERSY FLARED INTO THE OPEN LAST WINTER WHEN ROBERT LAWRENCE, WRITING IN THE SATURDAY REVIEW, DISCUSSED THE RECENT BRUNO WALTER RECORDINGS OF BRAHMS SYMPHONIES IN A WAY THAT DID MUCH TO RAISE BLOOD PRESSURES AT THE OFFICES OF COLUMBIA RECORDS. LAWRENCE WAS GENERALY IMPRESSED WITH DR. WALTER'S READINGS, BUT LEVELLED A FIERCE BLAST AT THE ORCHESTRA HE WORKED WITH—UTTERING SUCH PRONOUNCEMENTS AS, "THE COLUMBIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA IS SIMPLY NOT OF DR. WALTER'S STATURE." HE WENT ON TO PRAISE INDIVIDUAL INSTRUMENTALISTS, BUT COMPLAINED THAT THE ORCHESTRA LACKED ENSEMBLE.

THIS CRITICISM BROUGHT A HOT REJOINDEER FROM COLUMBIA RECORDS, WHERE THE NONHOMOGENEITY OF THE

BY ROBERT SILVERBERG
Can a free-lance orchestra assembled for a recording match one of the venerable giants named for their cities—Boston, Philadelphia, Vienna? Some authorities say yes.

Philharmonic

Walter orchestra was angrily denied. According to Schuyler Chapin, director of Columbia’s Masterworks Division, “If there’s such a thing as musical integrity, this orchestra shows it. Walter had the final word when we put it together for him, and thinks it’s a wonderful group. It’s tailor-made for him.” Mr. Chapin’s colleague John McClure, Music Director of Columbia Records, added a few pertinent facts about the Walter orchestra: “Far from being a group pasted together overnight, this orchestra has been playing together for Bruno Walter for years. It’s ninety-eight per cent the same outfit that did the Beethoven symphonics with him. The first bass player died, and we switched timpanists—but otherwise it’s absolutely the same. The personnel remains consistent from one session to the next, and Dr. Walter has approved of each man personally. He also thinks it’s one of the finest orchestras—as a body—that he’s ever conducted.”

Columbia’s problem is, of course, rather special. The company has on its roster two distinguished elderly conductors, Walter and Stravinsky, both of whom live on the West Coast; its mainstay orchestras are the Philadelphia Symphony and the New York Philharmonic. Instead of transporting two rather fragile gentlemen eastward or an entire orchestra westward, Columbia decided to build its own orchestra in Los Angeles—a group of instrumentalists who can be called together frequently for specific Walter or Stravinsky recording projects.

I have no wish to get involved in the dispute between Messrs. Chapin and McClure on the one hand and Mr. Lawrence on the other in the matter of the Columbia Symphony. Rather, I find interesting the general phenomenon that just such groups (playing under house names or sometimes no name at all, as “Leopold Stokowski and His Symphony Orchestra”) are so widely employed in today’s recording. In the case of the Bruno Walter orchestra—which is also used, in augmented form, by Igor Stravinsky—the
personnel is drawn largely from the Los Angeles Philharmonic, with a sprinkling of men from the excellent Hollywood film studio orchestras. Other orchestras used by various companies draw on a large pool of talented and unaffiliated instrumentalists—including such soloists-in-their-own-right as violinist Ruggiero Ricci, violists Emanuel Vardi and Walter Trampler, flutist Julius Baker—who may serve as first-desk men one day and show up as back-desk men on another.

Why are such orchestras used instead of "regular" ones?

There are a variety of reasons. Established symphony orchestras have enough work to do preparing their concert hall pieces, without taking on big new assignments solely for recording purposes. But if a large company decides to record a little-known work not in the regular season's program of the orchestra it has under contract, it can readily put together its own orchestra for the occasion. Smaller companies do not usually have contractual arrangements with a top-rank orchestra in the first place; and rather than sign up a second-rate outfit whose one distinction is the permanence of its organization, most prefer to assemble a group of unaffiliated musicians who in ability, if not collective reputation, can match any of the first-line established orchestras. Thus we see listed on record labels such names as The M-G-M Orchestra, The Kapp Sinfonietta, and Audio Fidelity's London Virtuoso Orchestra, among others.

Classical artists & repertoire men are often very much on the side of the free-lance orchestra. For instance, Capitol Records' Richard C. Jones, who frequently supervises sessions with the Capitol Symphony Orchestra and the equally ephemeral Concert Arts Orchestra, goes on record as saying: "A free-lance group has tremendous range and versatility. These are men who have played everything from rock-and-roll to Schoenberg, and do it all equally well. And you can hand-pick your orchestra so that what you've got, in essence, is nothing but first-desk caliber right down the line. I frankly don't think you can match this kind of performance in most of the major organized orchestras."

Conductors, too, often prefer using such groups. Leopold Stokowski, a man of powerful and often unconventional interpretative opinions, would rather build his own orchestras from scratch than struggle to remodel someone else's orchestra to his own tastes. (He abhors the term "pickup," by the way.) Another advocate is Morton Gould, who says, "When I have a choice, I'll take the free-lancers every time. They have a stamina and virtuosity that you never find in an established orchestra. For example, if I'm working with the latter, we don't get down to recording music until the last half-hour of a three-hour session. And if I use a set orchestra, I have to take the bad with the good—the trumpeter who's past his prime and gets paid simply for sitting in a chair and fingering his instrument, the violinist who's really not very good but who doesn't spoil things because he doesn't play. I can get the same sound out of eighteen or twenty free-lance violinists that it takes thirty-six men in many symphony orchestras to produce. Give me the virtuosos every time. There's an excitement that they generate the minute they start to play that carries over to the finished recording."

The construction of a free-lance orchestra involves the use of a contractor, usually a musician himself, who undertakes to assemble a group of his colleagues to fit a recording company's requirements. The big companies draw on the services of a small group of contractors. Victor uses former NBC Symphony violinist Harry Lookofsky; Capitol another violinist, Julie Held. Bruno Walter's Columbia Symphony Orchestra was assembled by Philip Kahgan. For East Coast free-lance sessions, Columbia often uses bassoonist Loren Glickman to act as contractor.

The contractor begins putting his orchestra together six weeks to two months ahead of the scheduled recording date. Mr. Held carries a thick notebook listing hundreds of musicians he can tap. "I go for the same key men each time," he explains. "Of course, some are already booked for other dates, and some may be going on tour or on vacation when I need them. But I try to get the same first-desk men, when possible, and then I fill in the back rows from my little black book." (This procedure no doubt has something to do with the cohesion and spirit free-lance orchestras develop; most of the musicians are known to each other and have played together many times before.) Each musician is paid $60 for a three-hour session, and the contractor receives an additional $60 for assembling the orchestra, taking care of bookkeeping details and such matters as social security and income tax deductions. If he cares to, the contractor may also play in the orchestra, thus earning double pay. But on more complex jobs he usually coordinates affairs from the sidelines.

New York and Los Angeles are the two centers of activity for free-lance orchestras. In each city, a floating pool of unaffiliated instrumentalists goes from job to job as needed. Few of them play classical music exclusively. One day they may do a popular
number with Elvis Presley, the next day a difficult chamber work by Stravinsky, the day after that rhythm work in a jazz outfit.

Many of America’s outstanding musicians prefer the free-lance life to the security of an orchestral contract. They enjoy being their own masters, working as often or as infrequently as they choose, and not having their personal lives disrupted by orchestral tours. The chief incentive for becoming a free-lancer, however, is an economic one. “Free-lance work is vastly more lucrative than playing in a regular orchestra,” cellist David Soyer said recently. “The average player in the Philharmonic makes about $150 or $175 a week. I can earn that much in a single day, if I want to take on three or four sessions.” Sylvan Shulman, once a first violinist in Toscanini’s NBC Symphony and now a free-lancer much in demand, amplified: “I can do as many as ten recording sessions a week. Then, with my television work included, a good week can bring me as much as $1,000. Of course, some weeks are busier than others. Perhaps a week or two may go by without a single date.”

Shulman went on, “The toughest problem a free-lancer faces is that of scheduling. It’s possible on a good day to do three, and perhaps four, sessions. Suppose I schedule four sessions a day, with half an hour leeway between them. The sessions often are for different companies, in different studios in different parts of the city. There’s always the possibility that one session will run overtime, or that I’ll get held up in traffic. If everything works out properly, I can make $240 that day. On the other hand, if I allow an hour’s leeway, I may have to turn down one of the dates.”

But there are rewards for the free-lancer other than monetary ones. An instrumentalist with a regular orchestra often plays a circumscribed repertory—a melancholy annual round of Brahms, Beethoven, and Tchaikovsky, with perhaps a little Mahler or Berlioz thrown in during appropriate commemorative years. The free-lancer leads a livelier life, recording music of a much more varied kind. The daily challenge of unusual music keeps the free-lancer’s talent sharp and his spirit refreshed. Scarlatti or Berg or Bruckner—“With us, these are almost in the standard repertoire,” says Sylvan Shulman. Thus, a player like flutist Arthur Gleghorn not only takes part in the Bruno Walter standards, but in such projects as Robert Craft’s recording of the complete Webern.

The free-lancer does not always know in advance what particular work he’s being hired for. He may learn that “Robert Irving will be doing some ballet music for Capitol,” or then again he may be told only what time he is to show up at the studio. Oboist Robert Bloom says, “Some men will ask the contractor what they’ll be playing. Others don’t much care. Bach, Hindemith, Rachmaninoff—it’s all the same to them.” Free-lancers cultivate a kind of cold-blooded professionalism that endears them to conductors and recording supervisors. They pride themselves on being able to handle any challenge put before them.

There is no prior rehearsal time for a free-lance orchestra. The men show up cold, and play from sight. At the beginning of the recording session, the conductor explains his ideas about the music, a short warm-up takes place while the engineer is setting his balance controls, and then the Ampexes begin to twirl. Union regulations permit only fifteen minutes of music to be recorded in one three-hour session, so there is plenty of time for retakes and polishing as the session continues. Even so, using a free-lance orchestra is more expensive than using an established group which has already rehearsed and performed the music to be recorded. If the Philharmonic, say, has done Mahler’s Third under Bernstein at Carnegie Hall one week end, it can record it the following week with a minimum of additional effort. The conductor of a free-lance orchestra has to build his interpretation right on the spot, an often time-consuming procedure.

Free-lance recording is nothing new. As far back as fifty years ago, members of the Philadelphia Orchestra were taking time off to cross the river to Camden and do the third Leonore Overture or a fragment of a Beethoven symphony under the nom de disque of the Victor Concert Orchestra. In 1911, the Beko Company of Germany began promoting a series of orchestral records played by the Meister Orchestra, billed as “the first orchestra formed specially for the purpose of playing for recording,” and other such groups have flourished here and in Europe ever since. But the big boom in free-lance musicianship has, of course, come in the past twenty years.

The use of free-lance orchestras creates some amusing anomalies rarely suspected by the average record buyer. The Columbia Symphony Orchestra used by Walter in Los Angeles is 100% different from the identically named orchestra assembled on the East Coast from time to time by Loren Glickman and used to record items not in the repertoire of the Philharmonic or the Philadelphia (as the recently taped Boris excerpts with George London). Similarly, a Capitol record with the

Continued on page 132
by Edward Tatnall Canby

A musician takes to task the folk who affect contempt of stereophony because it was devised by engineers

Stereo for the Man Who Hates

The man who hates stereo, oddly enough, seems often to be a real music lover. The man who has become an out-and-out devotee is likely, at least in my experience, to be one who knows relatively little about music itself.

This is an interesting paradox and for me a bothersome one as well, because I myself am a music lover and a musician who is so thoroughly convinced of stereo’s values in purely musical terms that I rarely hear any recorded music in other than the stereo form these days. When I listen to a monophonic disc, now, it honestly sounds strange to me, false and lacking in realistic impact, until, of course, I readjust my ears to its musical values. Easy enough—for mono records contain a world of great music; the point is that I must make the adjustment from my own “standard” of reproduced sound, stereo, to a sound that already for me is inadequate in fundamental respects, for all music. I mean all music, with no exceptions.

In terms of musical effectiveness, stereo is a much more fundamental advance than was the microgroove record, which merely added the conveniences of long play and improved technical quality. The gain in stereo is unique, and it is over and beyond merely perfect electrical and mechanical faithfulness to the original sound signal. I cannot think of any recorded music, whether symphonic or chamber, whether for solo guitar, harpsichord, jazz trio—or for the Mighty Wurlitzer or a band of Mexican marimbas—that is not potentially better listening in stereo than in mono. After long experience, this is so utterly, incontrovertibly evident to me that it is hard for me to understand how any listener could reach any other conclusion. And yet it does not seem to be at all evident to other musical ears just as good as mine. Why?

I am speaking of my more informed musical friends. There are others, too, those who enjoy music and like high fidelity, who go for some heavier classics and a good deal of pleasant music—from Beethoven to My Fair Lady and on to Mantovani, with a Bach Brandenburg Concerto and some Guy Lombardo thrown in; I do not mean these people, who seem to have no trouble with stereo at all. I mean people who really know their Brahms and their Chopin, their Schütz and their Schein, their Mozart and their Carl Philipp Emanuel, who enjoy one conductor and dislike another, perhaps, after many dozens of listenings and years of comparisons. These people are musically literate and they go to concerts of all sorts too. They have highly sophisticated record collections and they often sing, or play the piano or the oboe, on the side. Their tastes are as varied as you can imagine, but their musical experience and know-how is very real. They are the core of the informed musical audience for today’s recorded music.

To a man, almost (if my friends can be taken as a fair cross section) they distrust or simply ignore stereo. And it isn’t necessarily because it costs too much—though that may be a given reason. (My less musical-minded friends of similar incomes seem to have no doubts on this point.) The feeling goes much deeper. So deep, in fact, that only a considerable span of unhurried, top-quality stereo listening can persuade them that stereo is, indeed, good for them—for the music which is meaningful to their ears. And how is one to listen to stereo when one will not even try it?

I present two probable reasons for the music-minded person’s antipathy to stereo. They form a mildly vicious circle, since one feeds directly into the other. The first is a matter of status. Antistatus is the better term for what I have in mind. The second is simply education. Education in stereo listening.

Status, standing, keeping-up-with-the-Joneses, has taken on an immense complexity in our day. We are all touched by it one way or another, whether through a passion to keep up with the latest in gadgetry or a fond impulse towards Danish Modern in living-room
Stereo

Stereo, unfortunately, has taken on the character of a status symbol in terms of the home music center, part of our living. Some of us have taken the hint too literally, too flashily, and too loudly. Stereo has been made into a fine vehicle for many degrees of relative crassness in this statuslike fashion. Sometimes it is downright hard to live with. Musical people who are offended by this unjustified treatment (and who are uneducated as to stereo’s real potential value) simply rebel against it. They will have none of it—and their minds are usually made up before they have so much as been able to hear any true stereo within their own area of interest.

Moreover, this antistatus reaction has plenty of healthy musical precedent, to which I could not myself be more sympathetic. It is true, definitely, that even a “squawk box” can project Beethoven to a good listening musical ear! The person who says that for him a fine recorded performance is a fine performance without stereo to help it, is absolutely right. Our forebears could appreciate Caruso on a horn phonograph just as well as we can enjoy him today in his reborn microgroove form. The “message” gets through, in spite of the extraneous hash of meaningless sound that comes along for the ride. Yes, stereo is not absolutely necessary for basic musical communication between you and your records. Nor, for that matter, is high fidelity. Any old fi will do. And so we cannot very well argue with the man who puts this gambit forward to oppose his own use of stereo equipment. It’s a very familiar argument. It covers up a very large feeling of antistatus, which is merely the other half of status. Too bad that stereo should have become so involved in this genuine reaction against crassness and crudity in home musical sound. It does not merit it.

For to enjoy stereo you must hear it—not merely once, not merely in a quickie demonstration (nothing could be more likely to prejudice you against it), but, as the phrase goes, “in depth,” at length, at leisure,
and, of course, under good circumstances. Stereo's best values are subtle ones. It has a capacity for nu-
ance limited only by music itself—which is limitless.

It is obvious that stereo also has a fine capacity
for crudeness, for blatant "ping-pong" sound that
does less than nothing for any music worth listening
to. Let us take that for granted. Stereo has no will of
its own in any case, but is always what it is made into
by those who use it. It can be crude, and in its crude
form it can offend a musical ear into a quite prop-
perly violent antistatus reaction.

What is much more important, I think, is to un-
derstand that by their very subtlety, stereo's finer
values will not jump forth instantly on first hearing
—no matter how good the musical ear! One must
learn to listen to stereo, as one has learned to listen
to music itself. For the really demanding ear, then,
estereo is a serious matter of higher education-in-
listening, probably more serious than most of us have
imagined. Musical knowledge, however subtle, ear-
sensibility to music, however highly developed, is
no guarantee that stereo will make itself understood in
musical terms a priori. One must learn to hear the
things that stereo can do for music.

There, I think, you have the crux of the problem.

For it does not occur to most musical people that
on first contact the finer points of stereo will prob-
ably escape them! I mean the musical points, the
stereo effects that heighten musical communication
and meaning. The plain fact is that good stereo, on
first try, is more likely to register a total blank on the
highly musical ear than on the less complex and more
objective mind of the person who just hears what he
hears, in front of his nose. I have seen it happen.

Time after time I've had sophisticated people tell me
outright that they could find no difference at all be-
tween stereo and mono sound—when my own ear
told me that the difference was immense.

It is not easy for people with good ears and minds
to accept this. It comes as a bit of a shock and
wounds the musical vanity. All sorts of tact must be
summoned up to convince a person of strong convic-
tions that he can't hear what you hear, but that if he
tries long enough, maybe he'll learn. Only the
weaker-minded go along meekly. The rest fight back.

Ear education, then, is what we need, if we are
musical but will have none of stereo: experience—
personally, and at length, and under good con-
ditions—listening to music that is loved and under-
stood, hearing it again and again until stereo takes
over of its own accord and begins to do things for
it, until the music speaks through the stereo medium
more clearly than ever in its mono form. That's how
I have come to stereo, in any case. I do not think
there is any other way for the highly musical lis-
tener. Time, patience, a willingness to wait, to accept
a lack of results, an apparent absence of effect for
a long time, an open-ear attitude to go with an open
mind, receptive to whatever the senses will in due
course bring forth, when good and ready—these are
the requirements for musical ear training in stereo
perception. The more you expect out of music, nat-
urally, the longer it will take.

And when you have made this effort and taken
this time, what will you find that stereo does for
music?

Words are always risky in describing musical
sensations. Let me look first at the stereo principle,
the stereo additive: two sound channels, now, instead
of one; two loudspeakers. Like many people, I was
once under the mistaken impression that stereo from
two loudspeakers would project two images. I imag-
ined double Heifetzes, pairs of Rubinstein's. I fore-
saw two Isoldes, one on each side of my room! It
seems a reasonable danger, after all, and it would
be very bad for music. That was awhile back. When
I first discovered that a speaking voice out of two
"binaural" loudspeakers—this was before stereo—ac-
tually appeared to come from a single point in space
midway between them, I was on the road to con-
version. A monophonic voice will always appear mid-
way between two speakers that are in phase and of
equal volume. So will a stereo voice, if it is recorded
in the middle in the first place. Just one voice, not
two. One Isolde, not two. One piano—even from
stereo speakers.

Stereo thus began in the middle for me and spread
out sidewise. It's a good way to think about it, for
the same will be true for you if your system is in
good working order and your speakers properly posi-
tioned. Monophonic music, on the other hand, will
be entirely in the middle—all of it. Look at it this
way. Mono music, for some seventy-five years, has
given us never more than one dimension for listen-
ning. And that one, the dimension of distance, is pro-
foundly inaccurate in terms of literal feet and yards.
But it is there, and in a highly imaginative way, for
it allows us to envision a "space" for our music to
play in. We invent the other dimensions; they do not
exist in any monophonic recording. Now, after all
these years, stereo brings us all of two dimensions,
one more added to the earlier one. It has the same
happily casual relationship to the "facts," measurable
distances and directions. Very vague indeed. It also
has the same ability to stimulate the inventive imagi-
nation, but now in new ways, via new clues un-
known to mono. That's all. It is plenty.

All home reproduction of music is basically an
imaginative illusion, derived from a few tangible
clues. It is not literal in any sense except the narrow
one of an accurate mike-to-speaker signal transmis-
sion. We do not hear a concert hall; we imagine one.
Fortunately for us, imagination can always soar far
beyond literal facts. The more fertile the imagination
—the more varied the experience and knowledge be-
hind the imagination—the better are we able to capi-
talize on what we hear reproduced. We are grasping
in our demands. Give us an inch and we take an ell.
We can hear Beethoven out of a pocket transistor
radio, but only because we fill out our picture by
the active working of our imaginative faculties. If
one-dimensional sound has been able to give us so
much, then presumably Continued on page 134
If you collect recordings of Italian opera, it's likely that a good many of them are conducted by a cherubic octogenarian named Tullio Serafin.

Maestro Serafin

The round little man, with the shuffling pace of the very old, moved along the corridor of Rome's Teatro dell'Opera, heading for the door to the orchestra. Though it was hot midsummer, he was wearing a light topcoat and the black fedora traditional among Italian musicians of a certain generation, those of the immediately post-Verdi years. Behind him came a tall woman with a broad, kindly face, but a forbiddingly protective manner.

"That's Tullio Serafin," a friend said to me. And I went over to ask him for an interview.

Frankly, it takes nerve to ask an eighty-two-year-old man to give you some of his time, especially when he is a working musician with a crowded schedule that might exhaust a man of half his years. I was understandably reluctant as I introduced myself and explained my assignment.

"I'm not much for talking," he said, resigned, "but call me tomorrow."

This first meeting took place just before an RCA Victor recording session of Otello, and as Maestro Serafin disappeared then into the orchestra, I found my way up to a box from which I was to be allowed to watch the recording. From the box, the sight of the house was unfamiliar and a little depressing, with the seats all removed from the main floor and the shirt-sleeved orchestra spread around below the hanging microphones. But as Serafin came in, there was a change in the atmosphere. The Rome opera orchestra is an unruly bunch, capable of rising to heights with conductors they like and equally capable of playing with small regard for the man standing in front of them. As Signora Rosina, the tall woman who I had learned was Serafin's housekeeper, took
his hat off for him and helped him to remove his coat, the orchestra began to grow more silent, and when he climbed up on the podium, they were already completely attentive.

In a soft voice (inaudible in the box where I was), he began to speak to them, occasionally humming a passage of the scene that they were to record. At one point, the men all laughed. Then the little red light came on, and engineer Richard Mohr announced the take. They began. A false start. The horns were too loud. Again. This time they were too soft. *Mezzo forte,* the Maestro repeated patiently, and the third time they sailed past the tricky area safely, progressing into the scene.

Unlike many conductors, Serafin prefers to record whole scenes at a time, without interruption where possible. As the music unfolded, the depressing, mothball atmosphere dissolved still further, and the Verdian spell began to work. The bare hall became *l'isola di Cipro.* At the same time, the spell of the music had its effect on Serafin, too. He was no longer the gentle old man who had so slowly come into the room; he was a vigorous and dynamic worker, alive to every nuance in the music, to every shade in the singers’ voices. He conducted the long and tiring session standing up (as he conducts always, for recordings, rehearsals, and performances).

At a brief pause after the take, Serafin climbed down from the podium and sat on a little chair. As the faithful Signora Rosina came over and put his hat back on him, members of the orchestra gathered around and again, cursing my distance, I could hear them laugh. For nearly ten years, until the Germans occupied Rome during the war, Serafin was Artistic Director of the Rome Opera (a period Roman opera fans look back on as a golden age), and many of the men in the orchestra had worked with him then. These first recording sessions were, then, also a kind of reunion.

Later, when the recording began again, with the usual starts and stops, I observed how Serafin asked no concessions for his advanced age, and seemed to ignore it himself. When he wanted to discuss a minor matter of pronunciation with the tenor Jon Vickers, he stepped down from the podium and picked his way through the jungle of music stands, before Vickers had time to get off the stage and over to him.

Though his aim was to record whole scenes, Serafin refused to overlook any detail, and in a later session he spent some time going over with baritone Tito Gobbi the pronunciation of Iago’s phrase “*quell’immondo fato*” in Act II. Serafin felt that Gobbi had been neglecting the double “t,” pronouncing the word as “*fato*” (destiny) rather than “*fatto*” (deed).

“No, no,” Serafin insisted. “Boito wasn’t talking about anything abstract like destiny, he meant the foul deed, the . . .” and here the Maestro used a good Roman word that in English would be spelled with four letters. Gobbi laughed and pronounced the second “t” more clearly next time.

Serafin’s apartment, where I went to see him a few days later, is in a dun-colored building in Parioli, the smart residential section of Rome. “I bought this house in 1933,” he told me, showing me into the living room, “when I came back after several years in America.”

The furnishing is in the high style of that period, especially the imposing bar, with its tubular chrome chairs and its parchment lamp shades stamped with cocktail recipes in English. The living room is naturally dominated by the piano, and my eye ran at once to the silver-framed pictures of Verdi and Wagner. Everything was neat, and the place looked like the house of a man who isn’t home much.

Before coming to talk to Serafin, I had tried to read up on him, but I discovered that, despite his long and illustrious activity, little has been written about him. A laconic entry in Grove’s *Dictionary* gives the main facts (born in Venice, 1878; studied violin and composition; after conducting in various Italian towns, appointed conductor at La Scala in 1909; later appointed musical director at the Royal Opera, Rome; frequent guest in the major cities of Europe and America). There are also many laudatory references to his work in Irving Kolodin’s book on the Metropolitan and Harold Rosenthal’s on Covent Garden. But there are few colorful anecdotes, temper tantrums are nonexistent, and feuds are outnumbered by friendships.

Even people who have worked with Serafin find it hard to put their deep esteem into words. “He’s marvelous with singers,” the American tenor Herbert Handt said to me; and an official of the Rome Radio (a sweet, gray-haired lady) said simply: “He’s an angel.” And there is, in fact, something cherubic about him. When he comes out on the stage after
a performance, with his affecting little waddle, he looks like a beardless Santa Claus.

Writing to Von Hofmannsthal from Rio de Janeiro in 1920, Strauss referred to him as "the excellent Kapellmeister Serafin"; later, in his Recollections and Reflections, speaking of the first performance of the Rosenkavalier in Italy, at La Scala in 1911, the composer wrote: "Serafin had rehearsed the opera faultlessly."

I began talking to Serafin about Strauss, whom he had known well and a number of whose works he had conducted. When I mentioned the notorious Scala Rosenkavalier, the Maestro smiled. "It was my first year at La Scala," he said. "Everything went fairly well till the beginning of the third act. Then there were sixteen minutes of whistling and yelling. I've never heard anything like it. Sixteen minutes! But I went on, and at the end they applauded...."

His smile broadened and his eyes twinkled: "Strauss said to me afterwards: 'You aren't a man, you're Der Teufel.... And this is no audience, it's a Kindergarten....'"

I mentioned the Rio performance, and Serafin quoted Strauss again. "The Marschallin was superb. . . . Muzio. . . . Strauss took me aside and begged me to help him convince her to sing Salome. He said: 'Oh, to hear Salome just once with a beautiful voice!'"

Then we talked about America, where Serafin conducted at the Met from 1924 to 1933. "First I lived at the Hotel Ansonia, then I took an apartment on Central Park West, meraviglioso posto. But we went on tour, everywhere. And since those days I've been to Chicago and Dallas and San Francisco. Then in 1952, I went to the City Center, too... a small theatre without money, but you can do good things there."

In Italy, in fact, Serafin has not limited his activity to the big theatres, but has done much interesting work in the smaller and more progressive houses. After conducting the first Italian Parsifal at La Scala, he took the work to Parma. And in recent years he has conducted often in Genoa and Palermo (where he helped introduce Joan Sutherland to the Italians two years ago).

At the beginning of our meeting, Serafin lived up to his self-definition of not being a talker, and I had to prompt him with questions. But after a while, our interview turned delightfully into a conversation, and he rambled easily and fascinatingly over a variety of topics.

Finally we got around to talking about records. In recent years ("They discovered me again at eighty!") Serafin's record making has been prodigious. In addition to a number of operas for Angel and Capitol featuring Callas and De los Angeles, he has recorded for Columbia-Philips (Linda di Chamounix), for Mercury-Ricordi (Medea), for London-Decca (La Bohème, Madama Butterfly, Meistofele, and Cavalleria rusticana), and for RCA (the Otello in which I watched him at work).

The Otello was uppermost in his thoughts the morning we spent together, and he was pondering a phrase in the opening scene, after the "Esultate," when the tenor sings "dopo l'armi lo vinse l'uragano." The question in his mind was the place where the tenor should breathe. Traditionally, tenors take a breath after "vinse," but the sense of the Italian would indicate the pause after "armi."

"Of course, Tamagno always sang it with the breath after 'vinse,' but he managed not to break the phrase somehow." Then, to my surprise, Serafin sang in a vigorous, if cracking voice, the phrase as Tamagno always sang it. With a sudden shock, I realized that Serafin must have heard the original Otello, not on scratchy old records as I had, but on the stage of La Scala, as Verdi had.

"Yes, when I played in the orchestra as a young man, he was at La Scala," Serafin confirmed. "A wonderful Otello, but even finer in Guglielmo Tell. Poor man, how he suffered...."

"Suffered?" Continued on page 133

When he mounts the podium for rehearsal, the men, already silent, become more attentive than sometimes they seem in performance.
The Murderous Prince of Madrigalists

The author is our prime authority on Carlo Gesualdo di Venosa, who never could separate his three great passions — love, death, music.

Gesualdo's name was well, if not widely, known a decade ago, but his music was only legend; the unreadable scholars said it was unsingable. At present, Gesualdo's name ranks next to Monteverdi's among composers of the late Renaissance, and his music will soon be as well known as his biography. What are the reasons for this change? The interest of modern composers (Stravinsky, Dallapiccola)? The discovery of music four hundred years old that is in no sense archaic and which is often profoundly contemporary? The discovery of a new and "striking" personality among the many vaguely limned sixteenth-century composers? Or the purely musical pleasure of certain groups of singers and their wish to share it? I can answer only for myself, and only from my own experience. My own passion dates from a chance view of a friend's transcription of Aestimalus Sum. Seeking further examples, I learned that only a few pieces existed in modern reprint and that these few were to be found in badly edited, defunct publications. The Library of Congress owned the 1613 complete score edition, however, and this could be microfilmed and rewritten in a more familiar notation. I did just that, and during a period of about a year, "transcribing" Gesualdo became a suspense-charged late-night diversion. The 1613 edition is handsomely engraved and easy to read; the "transcriber" has only to rewrite the shapes of the notes and rests and occasionally to transpose a few clefs.

I thought to learn an idiom and its formulas—the characteristic harmonic procedures and the lengths to which Gesualdo might be expected to go—but Gesualdo's "characteristic" devices turned out to be new in every piece. I discovered the really ardent beauties of the music only when I began to work with singers, and to sing it myself. Performance technique—the feeling for vocal color, ensemble, and so forth—and even the problems of pronunciation (when to sound the second syllable of a word with two syllables, and one note)—develop only from performance. Since madrigals exist for their singers' pleasure above all, and not for audiences, the community of singers must criticize themselves and find their own character; madrigal singing is a game of very close cooperation. My singers sang for their delight, and for the excitement of being first in a long time to discover the music.

At that time (1953), I couned myself a highly privileged person. I was enjoying the daily company of Aldous Huxley, who has a discerning musical sense and who is a keen amateur. Mr. Huxley was intensely interested by what I said about Gesualdo and he soon began to attend my rehearsals. He translated the texts of the madrigals for me; he detected literary allusions; and he came forward with the thesis that Gesualdo must have written most of them himself. I asked Mr. Huxley to prepare a lecture on Gesualdo and to read it at a Los Angeles concert dedicated to Gesualdo's music. He consented, and because of the lecture, and its author, this first all-Gesualdo concert was a coup de foudre that was even taken on tour.

Mr. Huxley has told Gesualdo's story far better than I am able to do, but like all good tales, it can be told in another way, and is always worth retelling.
by two eminent family connections in the Church, for one of his maternal uncles was the Archbishop of Naples, and another was the great Charles—later Saint Charles—Borromeo.

Don Carlo’s father may also have been a composer. In any case, he kept a musical court, which thus encouraged the younger Gesualdo’s precocious passion for music and led him to become a singer and lutanist as well as a composer. In 1578, Torquato Tasso joined the Gesualdo circle, and in the next few years that unhappy poet wrote some forty texts for his young patron. (Only eight of Gesualdo’s settings have been identified, but the composer may have borrowed and shaped to his own purpose additional canzoni by Tasso.)

When Gesualdo set out from Venosa for Ferrara, he was marked by events of a strange and shocking nature that had transpired during the three preceding years. In 1586, he had married his first wife, Donna Maria d’Avalos, a handsome woman, as her portrait in S. Domenico Maggiore, Naples, still indicates. (Donna Maria is buried in this church, her wedding to Gesualdo took place there, and her death occurred in the house across the street.) Don Carlo was her third husband. The first had expired from having too often reiterated “i congiungimenti carnali”—or so a gossip said, though one doesn’t quite see how that is possible. The second was granted a Papal divorce. Don Carlo, for his part, had shown no inclination to marry, but the death of his only brother required him to produce heirs as well as airs. Donna Maria had given proof of fecundity, and as Gesualdo’s first cousin she was also regarded as dynastically suitable.

Neapolitan society could not have been surprised when she began to compensate for her new husband’s neglect, but Gesualdo appeared to be surprised. During the night of October 16, 1590, he returned from a hunt, like King Mark, and discovered his wife and the young Duke of Andria in fragrante peccato. At his command, the lovers were stabbed to death. Even more horrifying than the murder, however, is the fact that it does not appear to have been a crime passionel, unless Don Carlo had merely intended a surprise party and had then lost his reason: the testimony gathered by the Viceroyal Court of Inquiry shows that Gesualdo had been aware of the lovers for a long time, that he had carefully set the trap and as carefully planned his retreat.
But the court papers that have been reprinted (Turin, 1888) indicate that popular opinion and sympathy were not on the side of Gesualdo's honor.

Gesualdo fled to his country castle in the hill town still bearing his name and located about seventy miles east of Naples. The murderer feared reprisals, evidently, even though his wife's relatives were also his relatives, for the slopes were razed beneath his fortress and the castle readied for a siege. Doubt as to the paternity of his infant son is then supposed to have assailed Gesualdo who, according to the story at any rate, murdered the child too. (He died by suffocation due to violent rocking in a swing! "Oh, how I love to go up in the sky/Up in the sky so blue . . . ")

The elder Gesualdo died in 1591 (no suspicion as to undue cause of decease at the time), and Don Carlo became Prince of Venosa. The new Prince's Neapolitan enemies must have been reconciled soon after, for he had returned to the city of his crime by the beginning of 1592. One year later the Prince began to court a new Princess. Leonora d'Este, the object of his suit, was the only daughter of the Duke of Ferrara. A medallion portrait of her survives, and one wonders if it had been sent to Gesualdo, except that the Principessa's puffy face—an excessive pituitarist?—is so very unprepossessing. Why did Gesualdo marry her? For that matter, where did she get the courage to marry him? Her dowry was high, but Gesualdo's own guarantees of settlements on their first-born son were higher still, and the marriage contract indicates no need of money on his part. The reason could only have been that Ferrara attracted Gesualdo more than any other city in the world by reason of its musical preeminence and that an alliance there would have been his first choice. Gesualdo had abandoned his first madrigal style and "set himself to the imitation of Luzzasco, a man he greatly admired and praised"—this by his own word. Luzzasco Luzzaschi was one of the musical ornaments of Ferrara. The marriage terms were settled in the fall of 1593, and sometime thereafter, Gesualdo embarked on the journey described above.

Ferrara at this late date was still a resplendent Renaissance city and its court was the last true court of the high cinquecento. (When, only a few years after Gesualdo's marriage, the Duke died without male issue, Ferrara and all of its territories were escheated to the Pope.) Ferrara's sixteenth-century musical history is the richest in Europe. The pattern of the musical "camerata" had been established by Isabella d'Este, in Mantua, Ferrara's sister-state and sometimes political bulwark against Venice, Florence, Milan. Isabella, that super-bluestocking bitch, was herself a musician and therefore an exacting patroness. Isabella's musical court was the model for Ferrara's, just as her Mantegna room was the model for the Bellini-Titian room ("Feast of the Gods") in the Castello Estense.

The servants of the Ferrara court were trained musicians who kept lutes, cembalos, and other instruments in tune and ready for immediate use. The Ferrarese courtiers wrote madrigals, played musical instruments, sang. Josquin, Obrecht, Brumel, Palestrina, Lasso, Cipriano, Marenzio had worked in Ferrara. Now, at the moment of Gesualdo's arrival, the most "advanced" musicians in Europe were there, for Ferrara was also the focus of the chromatic experimenters and of the new theorists following Vicentino. Scholars are now in some agreement that equal semitone temperament, allowing for exact enharmonic exchanges, was in practical use at the beginning of the sixteenth century. By the middle of that century, several types of keyboard instruments with minute divisions of the octave were also in existence. One of these, the archicembalo, was said to measure no fewer than thirty-seven differentiations of pitch to the octave. Indeed, the archicembalo seems to have been as great a curiosity to composers of Gesualdo's time as the electronic synthesizer is to composers of our time. Gesualdo would naturally have experimented with it, and with other new instruments, while in Ferrara. He would also have heard much new music there, including the later music of Luzzaschi. But though little is known of all this, one does know that after Ferrara the characteristics of Gesualdo's own Mannerism were to become ever more pronounced and the means of producing them even more extreme.

Don Carlo and Leonora were married in the Castello Estense on February 21, 1594. They retired afterwards to the Palazzo Diamanti, and some days later moved to the Palazzo Marco Pio. The nuptial festivities included a visit to Venice, after which, sometime in May or June, the Prince and Princess returned to the Kingdom of Naples. Leonora was not happy with her husband, however, and her complaints about his infidelities and other peculiarities of conduct regularly reached her brother, Cardinal Cesare d'Este, of Modena. At one point Cardinal Cesare sought and obtained Pope Paul V's consent for a divorce. The marriage did not terminate this way, however, but with Gesualdo's death on September 8, 1613, in his country castle. The great musician-prince was buried in the Gesu Nuovo, Naples, where he is still remembered by a plaque.

What sort of person was Gesualdo di Venosa, and why should this be a pertinent question to ask? The person is important, I think, because he has identified himself with the passions of his subject matter in an altogether new and exceptional way and because he speaks to us so personally about those passions in his music. The pieces of the portrait are relatively complete—for a composer of that period—though this is because he was Prince of Venosa, of course, and Continued on page 130
Here's the one and only speaker system you will ever want:

We could list the new CLASSIC's complete specifications. We could commission a poet to describe the sound and the cabinet. Both good ideas, but quite inadequate to the task, for the new CLASSIC is a living instrument. You must hear it to know why it is the most important speaker system available today. You must compare it to all other makes to eliminate any doubt that here is the only system you will ever want.

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Use RCA Red Seal Tape for all home recordings including your favorite music—symphony, opera, pops, jazz. Then listen to the most glorious reproduction of home recorded sound you have ever heard.

RCA Red Seal Sound Tape is available in all popular reel sizes (3”, 4”, 5” and 7”), all popular lengths (300, 600, 900, 1200, 1800 and 2400 feet), in acetate, Mylar® or tensilized Mylar bases. For a descriptive flier write to RCA, Section 1-74-MT, Commercial Engineering, Harrison, N. J.

Start now to get more out of hi-fi. Look for this bright new package at your dealer. If he doesn’t yet have new Red Seal Tape, ask him to order it for you. Then get set for a new experience in sound!

RCA Electron Tube Division, Harrison, N. J.

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The Most Trusted Name in Sound
The Magic Medium

The Second World War left mankind with a memory of horrors, a legacy of troubles, and a handful of benefactions. Magnetic tape is one of its few truly estimable by-products. The Germans developed it as a wartime propaganda tool; it was later "liberated" and further refined by the Americans; and it is now to be found in constant use in every quarter of the globe and in every conceivable set of circumstances.

Magnetic tape, of course, had been preceded by other methods of recording sound. But tape made the art of recording into an everyday accomplishment. With it you could capture sounds as easily as you could capture images with a camera. You had merely to flick a switch and set the reels in motion: a thin ribbon of metallic-coated plastic, winding off from one reel and on to the other, would somehow or other seize and hold for infinite replayings any and all kinds of sound. The medium was indeed magical.

It is no wonder, then, that tape has been rapidly capturing the imagination of the Compleat Fidelitarian. And hence this special section—which explores some of the avenues to its varied fascinations.
On May 5 of this year, some people captured on magnetic tape the sound of history being made as the launching of America’s “first astronaut” in a Redstone rocket ballistics shot was broadcast. The sounds of lift-off—the count down, the rocket’s roar, the reports on the capsule’s occupant—combined all the elements of high human drama. This, then, was a made-to-order subject for home recording. With the simple twist of a dial, the tape recordist could look forward to reliving the suspense and excitement of the occasion. And in view of tape’s virtual indestructibility, he could expect to pass on to his children and his children’s children a document of extraordinary historic interest. Yet, for all this, it would appear that relatively few recorder owners taped the event from the audio of their television sets or from a radio receiver. Why didn’t they?

According to well-informed sources, most of the more than 3,000,000 tape recorders in homes today repose “out of the way” in closets, awaiting occasional use as whim suggests. For this reason, when a recording possibility suddenly comes along (a broadcast of a great musical performance, a play, a significant public occasion), the chance to tape it is often tossed away because the necessary preparations appear too troublesome. Indeed they can be troublesome. First, of course, the recorder must be removed from the closet. Then it must be opened and set up in a convenient place. Its AC cord must be plugged in, which often means first finding an extension cord. A reel of blank tape has to be placed on the recorder’s spindle, and patch cords (or other connection) attached to the voice-coil terminals of the receiver’s loudspeaker, or a cable connected to the main receiving system’s “tape feed” facilities. The power is finally turned on, recording level set, and speed selected. Unhappily, by the time all this has been done, the astronaut may be halfway down the Caribbean or the Boston Symphony well into the second movement of the Eroica.

The obvious solution is to be prepared—so that a flick of a switch will start things rolling when an interesting opportunity presents itself. And such preparedness does not mean that one’s living room must take on the electro-mechanical aspects of a recording studio. With a little planning, today’s tape equipment can be integrated into a high-fidelity system with the same ease as a tuner or turntable.

Of the two considerations basic to such an installation, physical placement and electrical connection, the former is limited only by one’s imagination. In general, however, three installation modes are commonly used: vertical (or “rack”) mounting, sliding drawer mounting, and lift-top cabinet mounting. Each has specific advantages.

The rack-mounting method makes most sense if the recorder is to be located at a higher than waist level on a shelf or in equipment cabinetry. In addition to giving an appearance of professionalism, this mode has a simple practical virtue. As the recording proceeds, one can tell at a glance from
IN A CABINET "WELL"

This cabinet's tape recorder "well" accommodates the recorder in its case. The hinged cover (not shown) of this Ampex 960 is easily removable and replaceable should the recorder be taken from the cabinet and transported for a special recording project outside the living room.

the comfort of an easy chair how much tape has been used and how much blank tape remains on the reel. Some recorders, however, do not perform well in this vertical position, and most of those that do require rubber reel holders, placed over the protruding spindle, to hold the reels firmly in place.

A sliding drawer mounting makes for neatness and compactness, but it demands some skill and knowledgeability on the part of the installer. Ball-bearing chassis slides are essential here—and these have specific limitations of "slide travel" and "load capacity." Available at audio dealers, chassis slides have a slide travel that ranges from 7 1/2 in. to 14 1/2 in. with a load capacity between 30 and 50 lb. The longer the slide travel, the lower the load capacity will be; thus, a chassis slide that pulls out only 7 1/2 in. will be able to carry 50 lb., while 30 lb. is the limit for a slide that pulls out 14 1/2 in. One typical (and popular) self-contained record playback combination tips the scales at 38 lb.; some weigh more, many less. If the cabinet structure permits easy access to spindles and controls, a slide travel of 7 1/2 in. may be perfectly adequate.

The lift-top cabinet mounting actually is the simplest way to house a tape recorder if one already has a cabinet suited for this use. Cutting a "well," into which the recorder's "mechanics and electronics" will fit snugly, presents no great problem. Most recorder manufacturers provide a template for this purpose. The owner of a self-contained portable unit ought to use a cabinet deep enough to accommodate the entire unit in its case. For recording outside the home, it is then quite simple to remove

AS A PULL-OUT DRAWER

In cantilevered construction, long slide-travel of the tape deck or record changer can result in bad weight distribution. Because of this cabinet's design, the drawers do not have to slide far for access to components.

RACK-MOUNTED

The angle-mounting (85 degrees from horizontal) allows this Bell T-221 tape deck to function better than it would at 90 degrees. The folding doors close off the installation from view and keep everything dust-free.
the machine and tote it along. Some manufacturers make matters even easier by providing portable models that can be easily removed from their carrying case and refitted into the home installation.

One final word about the physical placement of the recorder: with due regard for the restrictions of the three basic modes described above, there's plenty of opportunity for devising your own arrangement. Thus, a recorder may be installed at chairside, or in a drawer under an end table, or vertically on a bookshelf (happily, most recorders have a narrow profile). In the final view, convenience of operation should be the main consideration.

With today's recorders, electrical hookups are no more complicated than the physical installation. Any possible complexity stems from the variety of equipment available and the consequent flexibility of installation. For example, some manufacturers produce a simple deck with nothing but record/playback heads and the tape transport mechanism—no electronics. Other variants include: heads and transport with playback preamplifiers; with record and playback preamplifiers; with preamplifier functions as well as power amplification. Finally, there is the record/playback unit complete with everything, including dual loudspeaker systems.

The buyer of a deck, sans electronics, is able to play recorded tapes through a component system. To record, however, from a microphone or other program source, demands the addition of recording heads on the tape deck, as well as a recording preamplifier. The "tape record" function with its special gain, equalization, erasure, and bias voltage is not included in any of the regular high-fidelity amplifiers. But these additional parts can be obtained to convert a "playback-only" deck to a recorder. Before attempting such conversion, consult the manufacturer of the deck for his specific recommendations—which, for best results, often will involve equipment of the same make.

To make a recording other than from a microphone, the question is from what point in the sound system to tap the signal to be recorded. Within a high-fidelity component system, there may be several possible "tap off" points, depending on built-in "tape-feed" or tape output facilities. Generally, the best place to tap off is as close to the signal source as possible. The further a signal travels through a system, the more chance there is for the signal to be distorted. In recording an FM radio broadcast, therefore, the best tap-off point is at the tuner. This presupposes that the tuner has a tape output jack in addition to its regular amplifier-feed jack, as indeed many tuners do.

The next possibility for tape take-off in the component chain, and the one that permits recording of all signals handled by the system, is a stage in the preamplifier. Since almost all preamplifiers, as well as combination or integrated amplifiers, are built with a tape output, this is the most likely tap-off point. For those who do not own a component system, the tape take-off can be made by patch cord connections to the voice-coil terminals of the loudspeakers. While not the best place to capture a signal, this method is better than placing a microphone in front of the speaker—a practice which provides very poor results acoustically and is to be avoided.

Now that we have stereo FM broadcasting (multiplex signals), a good deal of home recording will go to producing "instant stereo" recordings in the living room—a prospect that would have been viewed as wildly futuristic less than ten years ago.

Of course, recording quality will be only as good as the electronics in the recorder. If the recorder is outfitted with record preamplifiers and is of good quality, the best plan is to stick with the built-in electronics. If the recorder is just average, the wisest course would be to bypass the electronics as far as possible and use only the tape transport and record head. You would then have to provide the record preamplifier. (Kit builders will be interested to know that such units are becoming available in do-it-yourself form).

One final word. Every recorder is provided with a "record level" meter of some kind, a handy recording aid but hardly an ultimate guide to good recording. More effective in judging recording quality is a set of monitor headphones. Even an inexpensive pair will prove extremely helpful, since they shut out random noise and allow the recordist to hear only what is being put on tape. This is as effective as having a sound proof recording studio in the home—and it's a lot less expensive.
Anyone can be a sound engineer

Aside from its use commercially as the master recording medium from which both discs and "pre-recorded" tapes are made, and for a wide range of functions in business and industry, miles of ribbons of magnetic tape are regularly spun out and reeled in for the personal pleasure of countless tape recorder owners. The uses to which tape can be put by the amateur recordist are limited only by his imagination and skill, and most equipment or raw tape producers will, at the drop of a capstan, supply him with dozens of other ideas based on the unique advantages of a machine that captures sound with at least as much ease and convenience as a camera takes pictures and with the added advantage of releasing what has been "taken" without the bother of further developing or processing.

But like any really rewarding pursuit, tape too makes certain demands on its enthusiasts. The recordist's first care, of course, is the choice of what tape to use.

Tape today is divided into two main classes, according to the plastic backing on which the oxide coating is affixed. (This coating is magnetized to store sound and permit its reproduction by the playback head.) The type most widely used has a cellulose acetate backing, although the more recently developed polyester-backed tape ("Mylar")—stronger, more durable, less subject to humidity and temperature, and also somewhat more expensive—is coming up fast in popularity. Many experts hold that the acetate type suffices for home recording; others insist that the added cost of Mylar is warranted for all recordings of any serious value regardless of how amateur is the recordist's status.

The thickness of the tape represents a compromise between the length that may be coiled on a reel (and thus its playing time) versus its ultimate fidelity and physical strength. In assessing these variables, the choice for most serious recording chores would seem to be a 1 1/2-mil (1,200 feet on a 7-inch reel) acetate tape, or a 1-mil (1,800 feet on a 7-inch reel) Mylar. One can get acetate in the 1-mil thickness too, but its relative economy may not compensate for its deficiencies in strength and fidelity. Mylar at 1 1/2-mil is, of course, the strongest tape made and should exhibit the best response characteristics. For maximum playing time the choice would be 1/2-mil thickness tape (2,400 feet on a 7-inch reel); with its "tensilized" Mylar backing, such a tape can be strong as well as long—though no great claims ever have been made for its fidelity of response.

Often a deciding factor in settling on a particular kind of tape is the anticipated length of a specific "run" or recording chore. This time can be estimated on the basis of the standard 7-inch reel, with its 1 1/2-mil-thick tape of 1,200 feet providing just one hour of playing time for monophonic recording at two-track operation at 7.5 inches per second speed. From these figures, it is fairly easy to reckon other playing times. Thus, the same tape used at half that speed (3.75 inches per second) would naturally provide twice the playing time, or two hours. For stereo, the playing times would be halved: thus, one-half hour for dual-track stereo.
At left, tape heads are demagnetized and then (directly below) cleaned to improve response. On underside of chassis a worn belt is discovered which should be replaced. In bottom photo, the pattern formed by the tape's edge on the reel is studied for signs of mechanical defects in the tape recorder.

at 7.5 inches per second speed. Similarly, for other thicknesses of tape, the figures vary proportionately. Thus, the 1-mil tape thickness permits 1,800 feet to be coiled on a 7-inch reel, and all figures are accordingly fifty per cent greater. For those disinclined to mathematical calculation, a convenient playing timetable is provided on page 66.

Having selected your tape, it remains for you to scrutinize your recorder, its workings and its electrical relations to other components in the sound system. New recorders as a rule need little or no close attention, although sometimes certain adjustments should be made after shipment. If such are required, they probably will become apparent soon after your first trial run with the machine. Generally these are covered in the equipment instruction manual or—if they result from defects—can be handled under a new equipment warranty. Older machines or units that have not been used for some time should get a fairly thorough going-over, which may include technical work beyond the average owner's scope. (One professional recordist's plan for such work accompanies this article on page 65.)

At the very least, and with any recorder, there are a few simple precautions one can take to assure good results. First, study the instruction manual as closely as if you had to pass a stiff examination on its contents. Refer to the parts of the equipment as they are described in the manual and learn the recommended sequence of operational steps. Avoid the temptation to plunge ahead and push buttons, recalling the recordist's adage that only fools rush in where professionals fear to thread. Above all, learn the difference between the "record" control and the "play" control; operating the former when a recorded tape is on the deck will neatly erase its contents.

Chances are that a recent purchase will have clean heads. Even so, and certainly after perhaps ten to fifteen hours of use, the heads should be cleaned and demagnetized. To clean a tape head, gently swab it with a "Q-tip" that has been dipped in carbon tetrachloride or a similar commercial preparation. While doing this, incidentally, it's a good idea to clean in the same fashion the various parts about which the tape moves, such as guides, capstans, and pressure wheels. To demagnetize the heads, use a head demagnetizer—available for a few dollars at most radio supply stores.

Some experts advise running a reel of tape at fast rewind before actually recording onto it, so that it will feed better during the recording process. And to make certain the tape is completely free of unwanted sounds, use a bulk eraser to wipe it clean electrically. This device can, in seconds, erase a
complete reel of tape much more effectively than could be done by running it past the erase head (which will happen in any case during the recording). A decided benefit in re-using a previously recorded tape, the bulk eraser also is credited with being able to reduce residual noise even on fresh tape.

Next, check all interconnections with other components, including of course your program source. Make certain that if your recorder has more than one signal input receptacle, the correct one is being used. You should not, for instance, plug the tape-feed cable from the amplifier into the recorder's microphone jack—neither the gain nor the equalization provided would be electrically correct. Make certain also that you have not set up a signal feedback loop in which signal paths return on themselves to create squeals and howls. This can happen if cables are incorrectly connected, or if the wrong operating controls are used. Actually, most tape recorder instruction manuals cover these points adequately, but the beginner—and the first-time user of a new machine—would do well to double-check.

Determine how you will monitor your recording. Generally there are two methods for listening during the recording process, depending on the combined facilities of the tape recorder and the rest of your

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**Some Tips from a Professional**

1. Inspect the recorder for obvious signs of damage or deterioration. Remove it from its housing and look for such danger signs as rust spots on moving parts, broken belts and pulleys, and the like. Rust spots may be removed by rubbing gently with very fine steel wool. Broken (or lost) belts and such can be replaced with new parts from the manufacturer. Generally, tape recorders are permanently lubricated, and no attempt should be made to relubricate them. Any adjustments you make should be only those specified in the manufacturer's literature.

2. It will probably be desirable to replace all tubes with new ones. If possible, get the latest low-noise equivalent types, but don't change the basic types themselves.

3. Thread a reel of tape onto the machine. Turn on the power and check mechanical operation by operating the recorder in its various fast forward, rewind, play, and record functions. If the machine has been stored for a long time, there may be some defects. You may, for instance, find "coasting" (when switching from fast forward or rewind to stop, the reel may continue to spin, driven by the belt rather than by the motor which has been shut off); reel slippage, due to poor brake tension; poor stopping and starting characteristics; or poor tracking. This last shows up as an irregular pattern formed across the edges of the tape as it winds onto the take-up reel. Thus, for an inch or so, the tape will lap on smoothly; but at some point its edge will seem to protrude. A slightly irregular, or occasionally irregular, pattern is of no significance, but a highly irregular pattern—or one in which there actually is an open space between the windings — can cause momentary distortion, as well as the "mashing down" of the tape's edge. Curing any of these difficulties—if they are not spelled out in the instruction manual—is best left to a competent service technician.

4. The alignment of the tape head—or its position with respect to the tape—is critical to the recording's response. This position has been adjusted at the factory. Often the adjusting screws are set to prevent misalignment, and marked over to indicate their original correct position. Normally, realignment will not be required. If the heads are misaligned, the recorder will suffer a marked loss in high frequency response. As it happens, a similar loss in response also can be caused by dirt, scratches, or nicks on the head. It is thus not always correct to attribute this loss solely to misalignment. Of course, if the heads show signs of possible shape to have been disturbed, realignment would be called for. One way to determine misalignment would be to play a given tape on another recorder of similar vintage and quality as your own, and A-B performance on both. A sure way is to use an alignment tape with its specially prepared test tones. Although the instructions for many such tapes call for the use of some electrical indicator (a VTVM, for instance), fairly adequate alignment can be made simply by ear. The recorder instruction manual generally indicates which screw to turn to adjust the head. If it does not, then the manufacturer feels alignment need not, or should not, be performed by the owner.

5. Most tape recorders (except the very cheapest and oldest) use an AC signal for recording bias and for erase voltage. Usually the frequency of this signal is around 30 kc for low- and medium-priced machines. Modern, professional recorders may use signals on the order of 60 kc. In any case, to do its job correctly, this signal must be of proper amplitude as well as have a characteristic sine-wave shape. While many recorders do include adjustments for optimizing the AC bias and erase signals, no attempt to use them should be made unless the instruction manual cites the required electrical values and you are equipped with a good AC-VTVM and oscilloscope to determine those values. Obviously, this area of refurbishing a tape recorder, in particular, is best left to the professional technician.

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**September 1961**
sound system. One method is to listen to the signal at the moment when it is impressed on the tape; in other words, the tape recorder is in “parallel” with the power amplifier and loudspeaker of your original sound system. While adequate, this method does not really let you know—at the time—just what the tape recorder itself is making of that signal. The more professional way of monitoring is to listen to the signal immediately after it is recorded, from the tape recorder itself. Since this method puts the recorder between the signal and its playback channel, it is sometimes known as the “series” monitor technique. It requires that the recorder have separate record and playback heads and that the control amplifier or preamplifier (as the case may be) for the rest of the sound system have a tape monitor function, usually identified by a switch on the front panel. With this technique, you can audition the results of the recording as it is being made and thus know at once whether all is well or whether something is amiss. Details on this type of hookup are found in the instruction manuals—for the control amplifier or preamplifier if it has a tape-monitor switch, and for the tape recorder itself if it has separate record and playback heads.

For live recordings, monitoring (by either technique) is best done with headphones, since the sounds from a loudspeaker, in proximity to microphones, can set up a nasty feedback loop of howls and distortion. What’s more, it is virtually impossible for anyone to perform against the same sounds leaping at him an instant later from a loudspeaker. Live recordings can be monitored with loudspeakers, of course, if the performer and microphone are acoustically isolated from the playback equipment, as in a studio divided by soundproof walls with the performer on one side and the recordist and his equipment on the other, but these conditions can hardly be met in the average home.

Before starting the actual recording, try a brief trial run, mostly to determine the correctness of the points thus far described, as well as to determine how to adjust the input signal level control during the actual recording. Although the recorder’s signal level indicator (meter or tube, as the case may be) is a fairly accurate guide, you may find that the points of overload and distortion will vary with different kinds of tape. It is important in any case to adjust this input level before the recording starts; readjusting signal level during the recording will produce erratic volume on the finished tape. Of course, you always can “ride gain” during the recording for a deliberate effect, such as fading in and out, but even so your maximum and minimum signal levels should be determined and known beforehand.

If the recording is a live one, check the placement of microphones from the standpoint of desired acoustic quality as well as with regard to their tendency to pick up stray noises. Remember that the sound of the passing car which you scarcely noticed when a guest was playing your piano may, when picked up by a microphone and recorded on tape, sound outright obtrusive.

If you’re recording from discs, tapes, or a broadcast, play safe and start the recorder before turning on the program source. It’s much better to waste a foot or so of tape than to risk losing part of a program you want. There is now little for you to do except to note from time to time the signal level indicator and—if you want to take advantage of its convenience—note the tape index counter which will continue to run as long as the reels are spinning. This counter allows you to pinpoint exact portions of the recording; thus, the number 165 might indicate the end of the first movement of a symphony, or number 241 might signal the end of an act of a play, and so on.

When the run is over, stop the machine. If the recording has been finished before the complete reel is used, you can do either of two things: you can cut off the unused tape, rewind the recorded portion onto another (smaller, if indicated) reel, and label it; or you can simply indicate on the original reel where the program

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**PLAYING TIMES FOR SEVEN-INCH REELS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tape Type</th>
<th>7.5 — ips Speed</th>
<th>3.75 — ips Speed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monophonic</td>
<td>Stereo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-Track</td>
<td>4-Track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Standard”; 1½-mil, 1,200 ft.</td>
<td>1 hr.</td>
<td>2 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Long Play”; 1-mil, 1,800 ft.</td>
<td>1½ hrs.</td>
<td>3 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Extra Long Play”; ½-mil, 2,400 ft.</td>
<td>2 hrs.</td>
<td>4 hrs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table can serve as a guide in estimating the kind of tape needed for specific recording chores from the standpoint of timing. Note that the term “2-track” actually refers to half-track recording, in which the tape is used first in one direction of travel and then in the other (hence “two” tracks). In 2-track stereo, both halves are used simultaneously. Similarly, “4-track” recording refers to the use of one-fourth of the total tape width; thus “four”-track stereo really indicates the normal two channels of stereo, but first in one direction of tape travel, then in the other. This technique allows for the greatest possible playing time at 7.5 inches per second, presently the industry standard for stereo tapes. The slower speed of 3.75 ips may be used when longer tape playing time is needed.

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66 HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

www.americanradiohistory.com
Magnetic Thunder for Macbeth

Amateur theatres with Broadway standards—says the author, speaking from experience—need tape recorders from start to finish of a production.

When you leave the city to live in the country year 'round, as we did three years ago when my company—Reeves Soundcraft—built its magnetic tape plant in Danbury, Connecticut, your city friends don't actually send flowers or notes of condolence. They slap you on the back, shake their heads, and say, "Well, good luck, feller." (It is perfectly clear that they don't expect you to have any.) Then they add, "Now, when you want to shop or really dine out, come on in and we'll take in that new restaurant on Fifty-Second Street, everything from champagne cocktails to caviar." (Sherman, Connecticut—pop. 820—has no bars, and sturgeon do not live in our lake; but it's only ten minutes to the shop where we buy our caviar and champagne.) And then the city man's clincher: "How are you going to get along without the theatre?" (They may not bother to see a play a year themselves, but they pity non-New Yorkers who can't.)

But we can. We have "the theatre," the Sherman Players. People come to our productions from other towns, and if we give eight or ten performances of a play, our audiences far outnumber the total population of our village. I know that one can hardly enter a barn in this part of the country without stumbling over a thwarted Hamlet, or pass a Town Hall without hearing choir voices singing (somehow) The Mikado. But the Sherman Players are different. We are not summer hams or sunshine dabblers. We are not stage-struck yokels content to play bit
Ladies in Retirement: a hit in Connecticut too.

parts ourselves and call in third-rate Broadway actors for starring roles. We have found some surprising talent right here in the town and in neighboring communities. One or two of our actors have been tapped for Broadway, and turned Broadway down. We are "amateurs" in the true sense of the word, "lovers" of the theatre. And we can recall that we did get a column-and-a-half review of Our Town in the New York Herald Tribune.

We have a charming little playhouse, the Sherman Union Church, built in 1837, later used as a library, and finally abandoned. The Sherman Players saved it from falling down. Becoming a nonprofit corporation in 1948, we leased it from the town for a dollar a year, and put back all profits into repairing and strengthening the building. It seats only ninety, but we are now, by our own labor, adding thirty seats and a backstage building, with, believe it or not, real dressing rooms. (Up to now, we have had to climb out back doors by ladder, in order to cross to the other side of the wings, and actors dressed in the nearest corner, behind a screen if they were overfussy. The ladies of Ladies in Retirement, wearing the full skirts of the Eighties, got stuck and dangled from the ladders.) Our proscenium is being enlarged from fifteen and a half feet to twenty-two feet, the stage depth is being increased from nine feet to twenty-two feet, and we shall have fourteen-foot wings. And our lights and curtains will be the best that we can buy.

Even more important, our tape recorders will be numerous and of the highest quality. Tape, in fact, is one of the most important elements in our success. We use it in many ways: before rehearsals, during rehearsals, for overtures and music-between-the-acts, for mood music and for off-stage sound effects, and, finally, for the complete record of the play which goes into the archives.

Even when we are not preparing a play, we are likely to be sitting around on the floor of one an-

other's houses talking about plays, reading plays and poetry, tapping our voices and criticizing the playback. These tape sessions are the finger exercises of dramatics. Then we tape rehearsals too, so that, without too much prodding from the director, we can hear what was wrong with our inflections, our volume, and our timing.

Those who learn better by ear than by eye can tape the whole play from a reading, listen until their own lines are learned, then erase their own voices and replay the tape, inserting their lines live. All this at home and at leisure. If you pop into a friend's house in Sherman without knocking, you may hear a third act echoing from the kitchen or the bathroom, above the sound of splashing waters. If so, it is more polite to sit down and wait for the curtain than to sing out "Terrible!" or even "Bravo!"

For off-stage sounds, tape is indispensable and infinitely versatile. In the touching graveyard scene in Our Town, perhaps our most successful venture, we had the added effect of real moonlight on real gravestones outside the doors of our little church. But we felt, though I doubt that Thornton Wilder wrote them in, that we needed crickets. And if it meant some nights of crawling through briars and setting up a recorder, only to have the creatures cease singing, well, ars is longa and life is not too brevis. Our taped crickets added a fine, thin eeriness to the voices of the dead upon the stage.

We needed a church bell for Our Town, too. But our town bell clanged too slowly, and the tone did not seem quite right. We all took to going around whacking with a hammer every metal object that we saw. Finally, we hit upon (literally) a circular sawblade. When we reduced the speed of the tape four times, it made a perfect church bell. Reducing speed lowers pitch, of course.

Betty Bailey discovered that whanging the conical metal squirrel guard on her bird-feeder produced a roll of thunder that would have made Zeus green with envy. This we taped, and then re-taped, reducing speed from fifteen inches per second to three and three quarters.

The music to be played before the opening curtain and between the acts is selected by the director, to suit his idea of the mood or atmosphere of the play. Usually we buy records and tape them the first time they are played, to reduce needle scratch. Occasionally we tape live music played by local musicians. Sometimes we need to "dub in" music. Few of us are expert musicians, but we can fake the fingerwork on a piano, or "lip" a lyric, if you don't watch too closely. A tone-deaf leading lady can sing with the voice of Renata Tebaldi or jazz it up like Lena Horne, though it is usually wiser to choose voices that are not so well known.

Bad music is another matter. In Ah Wilderness the young son and daughter of the house sing and play the piano in the next room, faltering as kids do. Well, those of us who could sing or play, even badly, could not act these roles—we were the wrong ages. We wound up with a dignified, though high-
voice, lawyer singing on tape for the boy, and a middle-aged lady, many years out of practice, playing the accompaniment as badly as required. For the bar scene in the same play we had to get a piano tuner to untune a piano. Shirley Hughson played it as a pianola, to stunning effect. Thanks to tape, we did not have to move the untuned piano—or Shirley—into the Playhouse.

For *Joan of Lorraine* we taped the off-stage crowd—a group of us muttering "rhubarb" in many voices. We also recorded the sound of a "falling bridge," by setting up on the hardwood floor a small bridge made of wood splinters and pulling it over with a thread while breaking match sticks near the mike, as the tape turned at fifteen inches per second. Played back at three and three quarters, it sounded like the crash of heavy timbers. The crowd tape and the bridge tape were then simultaneously re-recorded on a third recorder. When *Joan* opened, you would have sworn that a victorious French army had just captured a bridge in the wings.

Speaking of French voices—tape helps us with foreign accents. We can call on several polylingual citizens to make tapes for us to imitate. And for special voice sounds, like that of the ghost wife in *Blithe Spirit*, the tape recorder can be used as a direct mike, or with the special echo or sound-chamber device. For telephone voices we mount a small speaker on stage near the telephone, record the voice, and play it back minus most of the high frequencies. Telephone bells and door bells and radios, incidentally, are easier to tape than to set up on stage.

Then, above all, there are soliloquies—yes, even in modern plays, sometimes. But without William Shakespeare and Maurice Evans, they can be pretty funny. (Some heretics in the audience even chuckled at *Strange Interlude*, done with the best Broadway talent.) In *Ah Wilderness*, for instance, a young man walks along a lonely beach and thinks out loud of youth and love and death and destiny. Our young man was a good actor, but the scene just didn't come off. So we taped it, set him on the beach under dim lights and told him to walk and *think* the words as they came from his taped voice off-stage, with no movements of his lips. It turned out to be the high spot of the play. I should even venture to say that if tapes had existed in Elizabethan England, Shakespeare would have been first to use them.

All taped sound effects for a play must be on one tape, made in time for use in rehearsal. Each sound effect or bit of music is separated, in sequence, from the others by a white "leader tape" marked with the act, scene, and page number of the script. Particular care must be taken with splices so that they do not break during performances, and one must always have a duplicate tape in case of accidental erasure or other damage. The preparation of these tapes may take several weeks. *Joan of Lorraine* had ninety-seven taped sections.

The job of the tape player is as arduous as that of the prompter. He—or she—must sit in the balcony at a point from which all action on stage is visible. He will not only have to be exact in timing, but careful to switch the sound to the right speaker among several that may have been installed on stage or before the proscenium.

For general sound effects, like those of the soliloquy, ghost voices, and the off-stage trains in *Brief Encounter*, we headed a directional speaker towards the back wall, whence sound would rebound to the audience with no directionality. The actors in *Brief Encounter* turned their heads one way or another, to heighten the effect of trains pulling in and out.

There are some tricks about making the final tape of the complete

*Continued on page 137*

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*The Sherman Players have no makeshift equipment. Here, the light control booth with sound effects recorder: the operator, Mr. Frank Rogers.*
BY R. D. DARRELL

A True Treasury on Reels

Some expert advice on building a basic tape library

When you've reached the happy conclusion that "sound on tape sounds best," you have great adventure before you—but adventure that you will probably find more permanently satisfying if in building your tape library you do a bit of preliminary planning. The following step-by-step approach is suggested as a means of achieving both a varied collection of repertoire and one representative of tape's vast powers.

First Stage

The novice to tape collecting might very well start off by acquiring some manufacturers' "samplers," since such tapes provide the most musical quantity and variety for the money—a vital consideration in getting a collection off to a fast start and supplying immediately a wide range of program materials. The best of these are United Stereo Tape's "Popular," "Classical," "Jazz," and "Sound" samplers (RQ 401/04), which are only $3.95 each, as are Bel Canto's STDX and several SMS demonstration tapes; the justly famous "Journey into Stereo Sound" (London LPM 70000) and "Sounds in the Round" (Concertapes 3001), $6.95 each; Mercury's DEMS 3 and Westminster's WTC 144, $7.95 each.

Several other miscellanies are real bargains if you also have a use for raw tape (they are obtainable only in packages including one reel each of unrecorded and recorded tape, for which you pay the standard raw-tape cost plus $1.00). The three from Audio Devices ("Blood and Thunder Classics," etc.) feature symphonic favorites; the three from Reeves Soundcraft ("Dixieland Jamfest," etc.) specialize in jazz; and there probably are, or will be, others.

Standard programs in bargain-price ($4.95 or $4.98) series are particularly tempting for the beginner, although they merit any tape fancier's investigating: notably the whole Richmond catalogue, but especially Alwyn's Peer Gynt/Sleeping Beauty coupling (RCE 40005), Katin's Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky Piano Concertos (RCH 40002-3), and Stapleton's Top Pop Instrumental Hits" (RPE 45020) . . . . Omega's 800 series of pop and jazz programs . . . . and the Teleatro catalogue, especially for its fine Porgy and Bess (TT 411) and Holloway's Carmen Suite/Bolero coupling (TT 409).

Higher-priced, but also genuine bargains for sheer quantity per dollar, are Livingston's "Masterpiece" cornucopias of miscellaneous symphonic works. Most of these are uneven in performance and technical quality, but each provides a 100-minute-long concert for $10.95. Of some eight reels so far, the first (100-1) remains the best buy for its inclusion of an outstanding (at any price) Tchaikovsky Pathétique conducted by Mathieson.

Second Stage

Because a good deal of a new owner's tape playing will surely call for display concerts to audiences of family and friends, surefire attractions, spectaculars, and outstanding technical as well as musical masterpieces ought to be among the first desiderata. (Unless otherwise stated, the prices for all tapes cited from here on are $6.95 or $7.95 for pops, light music, and jazz reels; $7.95 or $8.95 for classical and celebrity reels.)

Invaluable both for magnetic appeals to all kinds
of audiences and as stimulating stereo tape appetizers are the following:

- Trapp Family's own Sound of Music selections (Warner Bros. WST 1377), far more piquantly charming than the slickly histrionic Broadway-cast version.
- Robert Shaw Chorale's "Christmas Hymns and Carols" (RCA Victor FTC 2026), in ideally fresh-voiced and heart-warming a cappella performances.
- Medallion Concert Band's "Sound of Musical Pictures" (Medallion MST 47001), amusing revivals of old-time "descriptive" pieces (Hunt in the Black Forest, etc.) with vividly realistic stereo effects.
- Leroy Anderson's delectable light-symphonic genre pieces, brilliantly conducted by Fennell (Mercury STB 90043), more genially by the composer himself (Decca 78865 and 78954).
- Mantovani's "Operetta Memories" (London LPM 70041), most sumptuously songful yet least schmaltzy of all the suave Briton's best sellers.
- Lane's "Pop Concert U.S.A." (Epic EC 808); Fiedler's "Song of India" program (RCA Victor FTC 2041); and of course the latter's scintillating Offenbach Gaîté Parisienne and Khachaturian Gayne Ballet Suite (RCA Victor FTC 2045); all representing the most effervescent of summer-symphony music making.
- Boskovsky's "Vienna Carnival" and "Philharmonic Ball" (London LOL 80039 and 80062), Straussian favorites with the authentic Wiener lift and vivacity.
- Russian divertissements by the Soviet Army Band and Choir (Angel LSL 35411) and the Moiseyev Dance Ensemble (Artia ASTA 501), which blazingly demonstrate these celebrated groups' powers to fascinate listeners all over the world.
- Weavers' "At Home" (Vanguard VTC 1624), my own favorite balladeers in perhaps the most consistently engaging of their many recorded programs.
- Broadway Show successes, of which the most rewarding first choices surely are Meredith Wilson's endearing homespun Music Man (Capitol ZO 990, $8.98) and the incomparable Lerner and Loewe My Fair Lady and Camelot (Columbia 310 and 344), priced at $9.95 each.
- Count Basie's "Basie!" (Roulette RTC 502) and the Ellington and Hodges "Back to Back" and "Side by Side" (Verve VSTC 209 and 237), outstanding examples of jazz which embraciously command the liveliest admiration of both hip and square listeners.
- Some of the sonic spectaculars most likely to impress, rather than terrify, potential stereo tape converts are:
  - "The Queen's Birthday Salute" (Vanguard VTC 1602), with clarion Herald Trumpeters, a thundering-by mounted band, and a 21-gun cannonade dramatically documenting in sound one of the most colorful British spectacles.
  - Morton Gould's Beethoven Battle Symphony (RCA Victor FTC 2006), realizing at last the stereo potentials so prophetically prefigured in an 1813 display piece designed for Maelzel's "Panhumoricon.
  - Von Karajan's Tchaikovsky (1812 Overture), Berlioz, Liszt, Sibelius, and Weber program (Angel LSL 35614), superb interpretative as well as sonic rejuvenations of long lashed warhorses.

- Dick Schory's "Wild Percussion and Horns A-Plenty" (RCA Victor FTP 1056), inspired explorations of the poetic (as well as dramatic and motional) resources of percussion in an authentically big-auditorium ambience.
- Terry Snyder's and Enoch Light's vogue-setting "Persuasive and Provocative Percussion" series, of which the most arresting single example is perhaps Snyder's "Persuasive, Vol. 2" (Command 808).

Turning to symphonic masterpieces in exceptionally thrilling recorded performances, even the briefest, most arbitrary honor roll cannot exclude:
- Ansermet's Debussy La Mer and Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune, coupled with the Ravel Rapsodie espagnole (London LCL 80013), the quintessence of French musical impressionism.
- Szell's Dvořák Fourth (Epic EC 806), a matchless fusion of heart-warming melodism, interpretative lyricism, and sonic luminosity.
- Walddie's Haydn Military and Clock Symphonies (Vanguard VTC 1609), persuasive evidence that scholarly authenticity can be galvanized by interpretative vitality—and that eighteenth-century orchestral sonorities profit as much as, if not even more than, those of today from stereo air-spacing.
- Monteux's Ravel Daphnis et Chloé (London LCL 80034) and Stravinsky Pêtrouchka (RCA Victor FTC 2007), in the still incomparable illuminations of the ballets' first conductor, as well as in the complete scores of which the more familiar suites provide only tantalizing abridgments.
- Reiner's Rimsky-Korsakov Scheherazade (RCA Victor FTC 2017), a miraculous restoration of the original Russian fairy-tale colors and excitement.
- Krips' Schubert Ninth (London LCL 80043), the "symphony of heavenly length," which can be clocked in fifty-five minutes, but in sheerly angelic music making—as well as a triumphant affirmation of the human spirit—is quite immeasurable.
- Stokowski's Wagner Tristan and Isolde (Columbia MQ 309), concentrated into a tone poem which represents the conductor's most successful "symphonic synthesis."

No less delectable are some sure-to-reward first ventures into concerto, chamber, and solo repertoires:
- Gervase de Peyer's angelic Mozart Clarinet Concerto and Barry Tuckwell's two rollicking Horn Concertos (London LCL 80053), which, with the breezy Horn Quintet and piquant Oboe Quartet by members of the Fine Arts Quartet with guests John Barrows and Ray Stull (Concertapes 3016), are perhaps the most inviting gateways to the realms of Mozartian magic.
- Narciso Yepes' Rodrigo Guitar Concerto (London LCL 80010), one of the most piquant novelties in the guitar, chamber concerto, and Spanish repertories.
- Janigro's "Eighteenth-Century Concert" (Vanguard VTC 1617), contrasting the gracely lyrical Christmas concerto grosso by Corelli and Torelli with that roosting early children's spectacular, the Leopold Mozart Toy Symphony long attributed to Haydn.
- Sviatoslav Richter's Beethoven Appassionata and Funeral March Sonatas (RCA Victor FTC 2069), impressive demonstrations of both the magisterial pianist's and composer's eloquence.

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

**EQUIPMENT REPORTS**

**Acrosound S-1001 Stereo Preamplifier**

**AT A GLANCE:** The Acrosound S-1001 stereo preamplifier is one of the most versatile and easy-to-use preamplifiers on the market today. It is available either as a self-powered unit (S-1001 SP) or as a unit designed to draw its power from a power amplifier through a connecting cable (S-1001). It is also available either factory-wired or as a kit. Prices: self-powered factory-wired, $129.50; self-powered kit, $79.50; externally powered factory-wired, $114.50; externally powered kit, $69.50.

**IN DETAIL:** The Acrosound S-1001 operates very well as a complete audio control center, with appropriate controls for complete switching functions. The input selector is an eight-position rotary switch. The first three positions permit equalization of a phonograph cartridge to either of the 78, LP, or RIAA recording characteristics. The fourth position is a second phono input with RIAA equalization. The fifth position selects an input from a tape head equalized to the standard NARTB equalization curve. The sixth position gives stereo reproduction from the AM-FM system of broadcast while the seventh position provides for stereo reproduction using the new FM multiplex system. The eighth position is an auxiliary input, suitable for piezo-type phonograph cartridges or other high level sources.

The output function selector is a seven-position rotary switch which controls the signal's electrical path between the last stages and the output jacks. It has positions for listening to the left or right channels only; listening to stereo sources monophonically (mixing two channels together); or listening to monophonic sources through both channels. The particular output function is nicely portrayed in a matrix of six panel lights, easily seen from a distance, which provide a graphic view of which sound channel is being fed from the amplifier channel.

An input is also provided for a microphone superimposed on the left channel when using an FM or auxiliary input, and is very useful for mixing a microphone with any other material for mono recording.

High level inputs and outputs are provided for a tape recorder, and a very useful "center channel" output is provided, with its own level control on the rear panel.

Other controls on the Acrosound S-1001 include separate bass and treble controls for each channel, one volume control and one balance control, rumble and scratch filters, and loudness and phase reversal switches.

The low level amplification of each channel is a two-stage feedback pair, the first stage being a high-gain low-noise pentode. The gain of this stage is about 300, and the output of this stage is cascaded into a triode section in the same envelope with a gain of about 14. This tube is a 7199 pentode/triode, and its heater is supplied with DC from a selenium rectifier and filter capacitor contained in the preamplifier. Feedback equalizing networks are used to obtain the proper playback characteristics for phono and tape head.

The medium level amplifying section utilizes the high mu triode of a 7247 dual triode in a modified tone control of the Baxendall type. Although the usual Baxendall circuit has a gain of unity, a dissymmetrical arrangement
has been used in the S-1001 preamplifier to obtain a gain of 6. The Baxendall stage is followed by a unity gain amplifier stage that is similar to the conventional cathodyne phase splitter. Normal output is taken from the cathode side in each channel in a manner similar to the cathode follower output, and phase reversal is obtained in the right channel by taking the output from the plate side. The output impedance of the preamplifier is about 2,000 ohms with the output taken from the cathode, and about 12,000 ohms with output taken from the plate.

Tests run at the United States Testing Company, Inc., on a factory-wired self-powered version indicate that although the performance of this preamplifier was not spectacular, it would do nicely for all but the most exacting applications. With the tone controls in the flat position, frequency response was measured to be flat from 20 cps to 20 kc within 1.4 db on the left channel and 1.9 db on the right channel. For a rated output of 1.5 volts at 1,000 cps, the low level inputs (phono and tape head) have a sensitivity of better than 2 millivolts and the high level inputs have a sensitivity of approximately 0.5 volt.

Acrusound claims that hum and noise in the phono and tape head position is 60 db below 1.5 volts output, whereas USTC measured 45 db on each channel (which is still quite acceptable). In the high level positions the hum and noise was better than 70 db below 1.5 volts output, and completely inaudible at full volume. The bass controls provided approximately 14 db of bass boost and 22 db of bass cut at 20 cps, with a crossover frequency of about 400 cps. The treble controls provided 9 db of treble boost and 18 db of treble cut at 20 kc, with a 2,000-cps crossover.

A very effective rumble filter reduces 30 cps rumble from 16 db at the rate of about 9 db/octave. The scratch filter operates at the rate of about 4.5 db per octave and cuts an 8-kc signal approximately 6 db. A loudness control provides about 13 db of bass boost at 30 cps and about 5 db of treble boost at 20 kc.

The tape equalization was fairly close to standard. The RIAA disc equalization was off at the higher frequencies, giving only 9 db of cut at 10 kc instead of the standard 13.7 db. The extra "brightness" in sound that results from this can be compensated by reducing the treble tone control.

Harmonic distortion of the preamplifier is completely negligible through the tuner or auxiliary inputs. Through the phono inputs, the lab measured 3.3% harmonic distortion at 20 cps with 1.5 volt output and a 2-mv input. At 1 kc the lab measured 1.3% distortion and at 20 kc 2.5% distortion, which is less distortion than that introduced by many phonograph cartridges. As the signal level was increased, the per cent distortion also increased, and for a 10-mv signal into the RIAA phono input, the distortion in a 1.5-volt output signal rose to 10% at 20 cps and 11.5% at 20 kc. Harmonic distortion at 1,000 cps with 10 mv input was 1.1%.

Acrusound claims that crosstalk between channels is better than 50 db down at 1 kc and better than 40 db down at 15 kc. Although on the high level inputs USTC found the crosstalk between channels to be better than 56 db at 1,000 cps, 15-ke crosstalk dropped to 35 db on the high level inputs and went down to as low as 22 db at 15 kc and 34 db at 1 kc on one tape head input. The preamp's relatively high impedance output (2,000 ohms) may cause a problem when one uses long lengths of cable connecting the preamplifier to the power amplifier. Acrusound says that output cables up to 10 feet in length may be used without adversely affecting the performance of the preamplifier. The lab checked to find out what effect a 50-foot length of shielded wire would have on the high frequency performance of the preamplifier and found that it caused a 6-db loss in signal at 20 kc and a 3-db loss at 10 kc. USTC also checked to determine how well stereo balance was maintained at various listening levels and found that the variation in output level between channels was as great as 6.7 db from low volume to high volume. This of course could easily be corrected by using the balance control.

After a variety of listening tests using the Acrusound preamplifier, the general conclusion was reached that music played through the S-1001 suffered very little in the translation. Considering its relatively low cost and useful features, it is felt that many stereo enthusiasts will find that the S-1001 will suit their needs perfectly, and provide years of pleasurable listening.
Bell T-338 Tape Recorder

AT A GLANCE: Bell Sound's T-300 series of tape units is built around the same basic tape transport: the models differ with respect to head arrangements for different needs. The transports may be purchased without a matching record/playback preamplifier; however, the preamp (Model RP-320) is required for recording and is a logical choice for playback, although the playback function can, of course, be accomplished via suitable inputs on an external preamplifier.

The unit tested consisted of the Model T-333 transport (4-track stereo record/playback; 2-track stereo playback), and the Model RP-320 stereo record/playback preamplifier. Assembled in a Model 300-CC carrying case, the entire system is designated as Model T-338. It comprises a generally high quality, easy-to-operate, handsome stereo tape system for home use. Price: $369.95.

IN DETAIL: The tape transport will operate at either of two speeds. 3 3/4 and 7 1/2 inches per second, and will accommodate a maximum reel size of 7 inches. The movement of the tape is accomplished through the use of three 4-pole induction motors, one each for the take-up and the supply reels and one for the tape drive capstan.

The necessary braking action and tape tension is accomplished electro dynamically through the application of a DC voltage to the motor windings which is obtained from a self-contained transformer and full-wave rectifier power supply.

Operation and speed selection are accomplished via "piano" type keys. Suitable interlocks assure that the tape is brought to a stop when switching from one mode of operation to another. An automatic stop is provided to halt the take-up reel after the tape has ended in either the recording or playback modes. In the stop, rewind, and fast forward positions, tape lifters keep the tape away from the magnetic heads. In the play position, felt pressure pads keep the tape against the heads. In the model tested at United States Testing Company, Inc., three heads were used: one for 4-track erase, one for 4-track record/playback, and one for 2-track playback.

In actual operation, the "piano" type keys were found to be conveniently laid out and easy to use. All transport functions could be accomplished with one hand. The keys furnished positive action, provided they were positively and fully depressed. The transport of tape was accomplished smoothly, with sufficient tape tension to avoid spillage but low enough to preclude tape stretching or breakage. Braking action was fast, and the fast forward and rewind functions were good, offering proper take-up torque and a minimum of strain on the tape.

In the slow speed position, the actual speed was found to be within 0.3% of the nominal speed of 3 3/4 ips. In the high speed position, the actual speed was 2.4% higher than the nominal speed of 7 1/2 ips. Although the latter is considered high by professional standards it is quite adequate for a home recorder.

Both wow and flutter in this transport were very low, and inaudible when playing back a 3,000-cps test tone. Actual measured values for wow and flutter were 0.08 and 0.16 per cent respectively, at a speed of 7 1/2 inches per second.

In general, USTC found that the whole transport system exhibited the smoothness and quality of operation which is characteristic of systems using separate motors for the capstan and the take-up and supply reels. It is commendable for the simplicity of its mechanical system, which should provide a good deal of service with a minimum of care and delicate adjustment.

The RP-320 record/playback amplifier included with the tape transport contains two identical amplifiers for the two stereo channels, and a bias and erase oscillator. Each channel is used as either a recording or playback amplifier through suitable switching and is provided with an individual recording level meter, volume control, microphone input jack, and an interlocking "record" button to prevent accidental erasure. All of these are mounted on the front panel of the transport and are grouped in a pleasing and functional manner.

The output of each amplifier and an additional high level input for each channel are available through standard jacks mounted at the rear of the machine. A monitor jack, suitable for monitoring the stereo signal through a pair of stereo headphones, is also mounted at the rear of the machine.

The first and second stages of each amplifier use a high-gain ECC83/12AX7 twin triode, with tape equalization being accomplished within these stages. This is followed by an ECC81/12AT7 twin triode, the first half of which provides additional gain for the audio signal, feeds the recording heads in the record position, and serves as a high impedance output of the amplifier in the playback position. The second half of the ECC81/12AT7 is used as a cathode follower to drive the recording level.

REPORT POLICY

Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and listening tests. Data for the reports, on equipment other than loudspeakers, is obtained by the United States Testing Company, Inc. of Hoboken, New Jersey, a completely independent organization which, since 1880, has been a leader in product evaluation. Speaker reports are based on controlled listening tests. Occasionally, a supplementary agency may be invited to contribute to the testing program. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. No report, or portion thereof, may be reproduced for any purpose or in any form without written permission of the publisher.

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meter and to supply a low impedance output for a set of headphones. The bias oscillator for the recorder uses an ECC82/12AU7 twin triode in a push-pull arrangement.

The power supply utilizes an EA80/6V4 rectifier tube in a full-wave arrangement for supplying the plate voltages, and a separate selenium bridge rectifier to supply DC voltage to the filaments of the amplifier tubes.

The measured sensitivity of the amplifier (for maximum recording level as indicated on the recording level meter) was found to be approximately 3.4 millivolts at the microphone input and 130 millivolts at the high level input. The signal-to-noise ratio at 7½ ips was better than 35 db referred to a 1,000-cycle signal recorded 10 db down from the maximum indication of the recording level meter. At normal listening levels the noise is completely inaudible. Crosstalk ratio between channels was better than 50 db which indicates excellent stereo separation. The erase heads reduced the recorded signal by approximately 40 db, which is adequate.

The over-all record/playback frequency response, at 7½ ips, for a recording made at 20 db below maximum recording level, was uniform within 4 db from 18 cps to 15 kc and within 2 db from 100 cps to 15 kc. Response at 3½ ips was essentially the same, which for this speed might be considered outstanding. At higher recording levels, the high frequency response is limited by tape saturation which, of course, is to be expected with preemphasized signals. This saturation does not normally occur when recording music, since most of the power of an orchestra occurs at the lower frequencies.

Playback equalization, using the Ampex Standard Alignment Tape 5563, at 7½ ips was found to be in accordance with the NARTB standards. The playback curve for the 2-track head was quite uniform, being within plus or minus 1.2 db from 300 cps to above 10 kc.

Although no over-all distortion figures are published in the technical description of the T-338, the amount measured on our test sample seemed normal for this type of equipment. Thus, at maximum recording level, harmonic distortion at 1,000 cps was 3.8 per cent. At a recording level of minus 10 on the recorder's VU meter, distortion was well below 2% throughout most of the range, rising to 4% at 50 and 14,000 cps. At 20 db below maximum level (the normal average signal intensity with peak loudness at maximum levels) distortion was considerably lower.

In general, USTC reports that the record/playback amplifier is constructed very well, and contains complete provisions for bias oscillator balance, bias level adjustment, record equalizer adjustment, and record level meter calibration. The Bell installation and operation manual is complete, well written, and provides detailed step-by-step instructions for all electronic adjustment. It contains some helpful suggestions for operation and care of the recorder as well as helpful hints to aid the owner in trouble-shooting, should the need arise. All in all, the T-338 constitutes a good high quality recorder which would complement many home audio systems very well.

Citation III FM Tuner
Revere T-11-4 Tape Deck
Rek-O-Kut N-34H Turntable
AT A GLANCE: The Fairchild 440-2K is a two-speed, belt-driven turntable sold in kit form. Assembly was judged to be comparatively simple, representing not more than three hours’ work. The finished unit, which looks handsome and runs smoothly, may be used for 33 1/3- or 45-rpm discs. Either speed is variable by the user over a range of a few per cents of the nominal setting. Price: $55 (includes pre-drilled mounting board).

IN DETAIL: A minimum number of parts is used in the design of this turntable. The platter itself is of cast aluminum and, with its shaft, weighs 4.7 pounds. It is driven by a four-pole induction motor via a very flexible rubber belt mounted around its periphery. The motor shaft has a machined two-step pulley for effecting the two speeds. Speed changes are made very smoothly and rapidly by a push or pull action on a knob above the mounting board. This knob operates wire “fingers” beneath the turntable, which slide the belt from one step to the other on the motor pulley.

The motor is designed to drive the turntable at a somewhat higher than nominal speed. To compensate for this, electro-magnetic braking is applied to the motor which brings the unit to the correct speed. A DC voltage of between 0 and 2.5 volts can be applied to the motor windings to set the speed exactly to its correct value. This DC voltage is obtained from a selenium rectifier mounted beneath the turntable; it is controlled by a 100-ohm potentiometer whose shaft extends through the mounting board.

This kit was assembled at the United States Testing Company, Inc., which reports that all necessary parts—including a pre-drilled, unfinished plywood mounting board—were included. Instructions supplied with the kit were adequate; assembly was simple and took about three hours. After assembly, the turntable was given the 24-hour break-in as recommended by the manufacturer and then subjected to a series of performance tests, conducted by USTC. The net results of these tests indicate a very worthy component. To begin with, the speed of the turntable was found to be quite easily adjusted to exactly 33 1/3 rpm using the paper strobe disc supplied with the kit. At the 33 1/3-rpm nominal speed setting, the actual speed could be varied by the control from 32.95 rpm to 34.23 rpm. At the 45-rpm nominal speed setting, the actual speed similarly could be varied from 44.41 to 46.08 rpm.

The inclusion of the variable speed feature might, at first glance, seem to indicate some sort of compensation for line voltage variations. If so, it would hardly be needed in this turntable, since its average speed remained constant despite fluctuations in supply voltage, varying in fact by only 0.15 per cent when the input line voltage was varied from 100 volts to 125 volts. A more likely use of the speed variation feature would be found in terms of specific applications for individual users. For example, amateur musicians who play along with a record for practice, often have to adjust the speed to compensate for slight variations in tune-up pitch. In any case, the speed adjustment is there, and it works satisfactorily. For those not interested in obtaining the special effects provided by the variable speed feature, there is of course the strobe disc which permits exact settings of 33 1/3 and 45 rpm. Since the speed of the 440-2K can be so easily varied, it would be a good idea for the user to fasten permanently the strobe disc (a touch of rubber cement would do) to the platter—or at least keep it in a safe place for future reference.

Rumble was measured at minus 55 db from the level of a 100-eps tone recorded at 1.4 cm/sec; it was completely inaudible on any recordings listened to. Flutter was clocked at a very low constant value of 0.03 per cent. Wow was found to be generally in the range of 0.1 to 0.4 per cent, with the meter showing an occasional reading of 0.26 per cent when a 3,000-eps constant test tone was played. It was not noticeable during the playing of regular discs, including those with piano passages.

The turntable has good running torque and comes up to speed from a dead stop in approximately 1/4 revolution of the platter. The hum field above the platter is extremely low; at normal playing levels it is doubtful that it would be heard through even the most sensitive pickups.

In sum, the 440-2K is a very successful version of the same manufacturer’s Model 440 and a worthy addition to the growing number of quality components becoming available in do-it-yourself form. For those willing to take the time building it, the 440-2K represents a saving of $14.95 over its factory-built counterpart.
IT'S NO SECRET that London Records has had great success with its broadspread stereo recordings of classical music and that Command Records has done notably well with its sharply separated stereo recordings of popular music. So what's happening this fall? London is coming out with a line of ping-pong-like pop records, and Command is introducing a series of non-gimmicked classical records. It all goes to show that a good thing is a good thing.

London's pop program is called Phase 4 Stereo. It's being promoted as the latest development in a sequence that began with "concert hall realism" (Phase 1) and then progressed to "separation of sound" (Phase 2) and "moving sounds" (Phase 3). In the latest phase, says London, "arrangers and orchestrators rescore the music to place the instruments where they are musically most desired at any particular moment and make use of direction and movement to punctuate the musicality of sounds. . . . The musical arranger (who up to now was accustomed only to writing musical figures in the conventional way on ordinary two-dimensional manuscript paper) now has to envisage the sounds he hears in his head as they relate to each other in the extra dimension of space afforded by stereo reproduction."

In addition to the use of custom-made stereo scorings, London's Phase 4 program also relies on four-track master tape. This, we're told, permits far greater flexibility than the usual three-track tape. To insure utmost definition and clarity of separation, London's engineers recorded the four channels piecemeal. Thus, for Ted Heath's "Big Band Percussion" the first session yielded only Tracks 1 and 2, on which the percussion instruments were recorded playing at opposite sides of a large, reverberant studio. The percussionists were then sent home and the saxophone players brought in. These donned headphones and recorded Track 3 (left) while listening to the playback of the first two tracks. Then the saxophonists withdrew to make way for the trombonists, who recorded Track 4 (right) while listening via headphones to Tracks 1, 2, and 3. Only in this step-by-step way says a London spokesman, was it possible to maintain complete separation in a big-band recording. Had the entire Heath ensemble been recorded at one time, "leakage" from one channel to another would have seriously "diluted" the stereo effect.

London's most ambitious production in the initial Phase 4 release is a record called "Pass in Review," which features the marching and parade music of several countries recorded "as if the listener were actually on the reviewing stand, watching and listening to the marchers pass in review." This too was built up piecemeal—drums on Track 1, woodwind on Track 2, brass on Track 3, special effects on Track 4, plus three extra tracks for crowd noises and "dim." The movement of the marchers from left to right was accomplished electronically; the musicians themselves remained comfortably seated in Walthamstow's Town Hall while playing.

High Fidelity will review this record and other Phase 4 discs next month.

COMMAND RECORDS is initiating its classical catalogue with five releases, four of them taped in Paris and one in Pittsburgh. "We're appealing," says Command's president, Enoch Light, "to the most discriminating musical buyer in the world. These records have not been made for sens-

Headphoned Ted Heath with his trombonists.

London's four-track recorder (in background).
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CIRCLE 16 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
Some Crude, Quirky, and Moving New Englanders

by Alfred Frankenstein

Sometimes it seems as if everything worthwhile has been recorded on microgroove at least once, if not two or three times, and for a new release to break through to a great school, style, or tradition for the first time on long-play records is a rare event. Now, in "The American Harmony," it has been accomplished—by Irving Lowens, musicologist of the Library of Congress, Fague Springmann and his University of Maryland Chapel Choir, and Washington Records.

"The American Harmony" provides eighteen compositions by fourteen composers of the New England singing-school era, which covered roughly, the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first few years of the nineteenth. These singing-school composers were fervently religious men and they wrote a crude, strong, wonderfully joyous and sometimes remarkably tender music, full of modal effects and strange, quirky, "original" harmonies. One of them, William Billings, is, of course, very well known, not necessarily because he was the best of the group, but because he was shrewd enough to deposit copies of all his publications in the Harvard library, where they are to this day: the work of the others is not preserved complete at Harvard or anywhere else, and has been recovered only in fragmentary form.

Billings was discovered about thirty years ago, and some of his works were republished at that time. Not long thereafter, a few of them were exquisitely recorded on three 10-inch 78s by a group of madrigal singers led by Lehman Engel. This Columbia set is one of the milestones in the discography of American music. The madrigalesque style of the singing is more delicate, refined, and sophisticated than is proper from a strictly historical point of view, but it brings out many extraordinarily beautiful things in the music. The singing-school composers were forgotten in New England by 1825, but they have never been forgotten in the South, and there are some prodigious, hair-raising performances of their music in an album of 78s which George Pullen Jackson made for the Archive of American Folk Song in the Library of Congress at the Alabama Sacred Harp Convention in 1940. A genuine folk chorus of white-skinned Americans is a rarity on records, and this is the best thing of its kind we have.
The records of Engel and Jackson are the only ones of any size or importance previously issued in this field. Since their time the reputation of Billings has grown immensely, and the LP catalogues have recently come to include such works as William Schuman's New England Trio and Randall Thompson's Peacable Kingdom, and several pieces by Henry Cowell called Hymn and Fuguing Tune. But while Billings has become one of the focal points of a national style among contemporary American composers, his own music has been missing from current record lists.

The approach employed by Lowens and Springmann is neither so refined as that of Engel nor so folksy and forthright as that of Jackson's Sacred Harp singers. In some respects it is more authentic than either. The chorus is bass-heavy, in the old New England way; the tenor carries the tune; some of the women sing the tenor part an octave higher than written and some of the men sing the soprano part an octave lower, so that there are actually six strands of sound but only four written parts.

Among composers represented are Billings, with two pieces, Daniel Read, with three, and Jacob French with two. Supply Belcher (my favorite among composers' names). Jacob Kimball. Simeon Jocelin. Timothy Swan. Lewis Edson Jr., Justin Morgan (the man who gave his name to the Morgan horse), Oliver F. Ralston, Simeon Coan, Jeremiah Ingalls, an anonymous composer, and an almost anonymous one known only as Dean are drawn upon for one composition each. The selection was obviously made to exhibit the range of the style, which is not wide but is interesting. The naive grandeur of it is especially noteworthy in French's anthem The Heavenly Vision (which Jackson's Sacred Harp singers ascribe to Billings); the bouncy brilliance of it in Belcher's Inhabit; the quiddity and crankiness of it in Swan's China; the moving, quiet simplicity of it in Read's Mortality; and the overwhelming reverential inspiration of it in the same composer's Sherburne.

In his notes, Lowens speaks of all this music as strikingly analogue to American primitive painting, and that is true; one thinks at once of the stern, naively rendered, immensely powerful faces of New Englanders which were being painted at the same moment by artists like William Jennys, Winthrop Chandler, and Reuben Moulthrop; but these composers, because they were dealing with religious themes, which New England's theology barred to the painters, have an extra fervor all their own. The real analogy is with another painter of the same era who could not have existed then in America. His name was William Blake.

The recording is very fine indeed. Stereo, of course, is particularly effective for choruses.

**THE AMERICAN HARMONY**

University of Maryland Chapel Choir, Faune Springmann cond.

- **WASHINGTON** WR 418. L.P. $4.98.
- **WASHINGTON** SWR 418. SD. $5.98.

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**Listening to the playback.**

**Thirty-four Recorded Scheherazades, But Ansermet's New One Stands Out**

by R. D. Darrell

With thirty-four recorded Scheherazades currently in print, nineteen of them in stereo, it is obvious that a new one must be extraordinary indeed to warrant a critic's special attention. Yet in one, somewhat Irish, sense, the only thing truly extraordinary about the new version from Ansermet and the Suisse Romande is that it is a recording: what we actually hear, through rather than in or on it, is no more—and only fractionally less—than a first-rate orchestral performance in an acoustically first-rate large auditorium.

Perhaps only a musician or experienced conductor can fully appreciate this ultimate triumph of audio technology: its self-effacement. Disciple appeals for sonic sensationalism have been so overstated in recent years, and most home listeners have become so accustomed to reproduced sound larger or thicker or brighter or sharper than life, that they may well have forgotten, if they ever knew, the inimitable natural proportions, tang, and warmth of the real thing. Like many other audiophiles, I too have delighted in many of these ever more brilliant flights of aural imagination and technical ingenuity; but it has taken the present recording to jolt me into realizing that the re-creation of authentic orchestral sonorities in their natural hall habitat is always, if less melodramatically startling, far more richly satisfying.

Whether this milestone (as the Gramophone's reviewer, Edward Greenfield, claims) marks "another break-through of the sound barrier," or (as I'm more inclined to believe myself) a subtle refinement in and more relaxed mastery of technical means is not very important.

What is significant is the result itself—a closer approximation of a live concert hall performance than I've ever heard via records before and had only dreamed might ever be possible.

The supreme naturalness of the sonic qualities is unmistakable right from the beginning, with its brazen solidity of trombone and tuba tone. It is evident throughout in the refreshing freedom from glassiness and "whistling" in the high-string registers (so long a characteristic of high-fidelity recording and reproduction that most of us have come to accept it as inevitable). But it is perhaps most striking of all in the sudden, superbly expansive, volumetric opening-up of the Allegro non troppo maestoso section of the finale and in the apocalyptic gong roar of the climactic shipwreck.

To appreciate fully what "natural" orchestral sound and dynamics involve here, one must know from concert hall experience not only the main tunes, colorings, and effects in Scheherazade, but the subtler details of its instrumentation. Mr. Greenfield cites as most remarkable to him the opening violin solo in the second movement, which in the previous Ansermet recording (and indeed all modern ones) is accompanied by "a sort of very faint whistle hovering faintly round each note," whereas the solo in the new version is entirely free from such a "disturbing aura." I am no less impressed by the delicate timbre (but not phrasing) differentiations in the flute's echoing of the solo violin's roulade (p. 32 of the Eulenberg miniature score) . . . the resolution of the kettledrum's double grace-noted "drag" strokes (p. 52) . . . the golden distance of the warmly romantic piano horn phrases (p. 93) . . .

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High Fidelity Magazine
the clean-cut distinctions between the first violins' whirring non-legato echoes of the immediately preceding legato flute's cadenzalike phrase (p. 112-3) and between that and the violins' later (p. 134) repetition of the same phrase in a higher register, but this time legato too... the infinitesimal yet unmistakable differentiations in timbre among the pianissimo triangle, tambourine, snare drum, and cymbals in the scherzando last four bars (p. 151) of the third movement... and the ethereal purity of the solo violin's open-string harmonics in the closing pages (257-9) of the finale. These distinctions I cite almost at random from the multitudinous similar felicities.

Now, none of these features would seem at all extraordinary to an attentive concert hall listener: they seem so marvelous here simply because they never have been captured before with such unstressed vividness and natural lucidity. Even such ultrabrilliant technical miracles as London's famous Rheingold and the recent Reiner Scheherazade for RCA Victor now seem contrived when directly compared with the freshness, sweetness, and lucent air-spacing of a near perfect replica of a live performance.

As for Ansermet's interpretation and the Suisse Romande players' performance, the conductor's reading (infinitely superior to the earlier routine one with the Paris Conservatory Orchestra) must be ranked with the uniquely individual one by Beecham and the more broadly powerful one by Reiner, and the playing is surpassed—if it all—only by the latter's more precise, but less serenely gracious Chicagosans. About the electrifying Prince Igor dances which fill out the second side, I need only say that everything remarked about Scheherazade applies equally to them.

Of stereo qualities as such, one is never specifically conscious of them, since one instinctively compares the transparency and spaciousness here (the latter for its depth and perspective no less than in breadth alone) with concert hall experience rather than with other recordings in which one is more aware of the engineering involved. For that matter, only a still ineradicable whiff of preëcho at the beginning of the first and last movements of Scheherazade makes me consciously aware of its disc processing, which in all other respects never seems to obtrude as an intermediary between listener and orchestra. Of course, all the intermediaries (never excluding our own home sound systems) do remain in actuality, but the present release brings us closer to concert hall authenticity than the art of sound recording and reproduction has ever carried us before.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Scheherazade, Op. 35
+ Borodin: Prince Igor: Polovtsian Dances

Lorand Fenyes, violin; Choeur des Jeunes et Choeur de Radio Lausanne (in the Borodin); Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond.
• LONDON CM 9281. LP, $4.98.
• • LONDON CS 6212. SD. $5.98.

To Make Choice Hard—
A Second Stereo Dutchman

by Herbert Glass

WAGNERIANS may well consider 1961 to be the year of The Flying Dutchman. In March, Angel's release, with Fischer-Dieskau in the title role and Kohnstamm conducting, showed just how good this work could sound given interpreters of skill and understanding. Now, only six months later, another Dutchman, again with a magnificent cast, comes our way from RCA. Extended

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Baritone London.

September 1961

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Conductor Dorati.

www.americanradiohistory.com
evokes to the very maximum the intensity inherent in their relationship.

The remainder of the cast conform to the high vocal and dramatic standard set by the two central characters. Giorgio Tozzi’s Daland is wonderfully vital in characterization and marvelously sung—in fact, it is the only Daland among the several recorded representations available to give us any clear portrayal of what that character really is. Karl Liebl’s gentle, mellifluous tenor makes the “Italenesse” of Erik’s music most apparent and totally winning. His range is not great, but the quality of the voice is ravishing and the singer’s intelligence is ever in evidence. To these distinguished performances Lewis contributes a charming Steer froma, while his manner is perhaps a bit too gentlemanly and his top notes not negotiated with the greatest of ease, he is patently an experienced and dramatically aware artist. Rosalind Elias handles the only minor part capably.

A final word of praise is richly deserved by the engineers, who have been extraordinarily perceptive of the precise sonic mood required by this singular interpretation. The stereo sound is expansive and deep, with the singers somewhat removed from us in space, in judicious balance with the orchestra. Separation of instrumental timbres is successfully achieved, and the excellent Covent Garden chorus benefits greatly from the clarity afforded by stereo. The recording also provides some striking stage effects: e.g., the fearful crash of the anchor plunging into the water as a wave dashes against the side of Daland’s ship (following the Steer froma’s song), and the busy whir of the spinning wheel coming at us from the left channel in the “Spinning Chorus.” In fact, everyone involved in the production is to be congratulated. This Flying Dutchman represents recorded opera at its best.

WAGNER: Der Fliegende Holländer
Leonic Rysanek (s), Senta; Rosalind Elias (ms), Mary; Karl Liebl (t), Erik; Richard Lewis, Lewis; The Steer froma; George London (b), The Dutchman; Giorgio Tozzi (bs), Daland. Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Antal Dorat, cond.
- RCA VICTOR LM 6156. Three LP. $14.94.
- RCA VICTOR LSC 6156. Three SD. $17.49.

It must be made clear that this is a great performance captured with the technical imperfections of a recording made from a live concert. (Furtwängler’s death denied us a Ninth with the refinements of studio engineering.) The podium creaks, the horn burbles, the audience coughs, and the words of the chorus run together—but the disc remains one of the major musical documents the tape recorder has given us.

Of the various transfers issued here and abroad, this seems to be the most successful equalization of the tape original. The tubby quality that marred some of the releases is gone, yet there is adequate bass to support a firm ensemble line. In general, frequency emphasis has been moved up, clarity is improved at times, and quiet surfaces give Furtwängler’s eloquent pauses their proper effect. (The next best transfer job was RCA Victor’s for their now deleted first American edition.) R.C.M.

BEETHOVEN: Trio for Strings, Op. 9, No. 2
†Schubert: Trio for Strings, No. 2, in B flat
†Berlioz: String Quintet, No. 4

The present disc gives us a complete set of the Op. 9 trios from this incredible group. It is obvious in everything they do that they are themselves filled with delight in their results, and, indeed, why not? The technical problems of this music are so simple for artists of this caliber that they can concentrate on matters that make chamber music a unique form of expression, a synthesis of instrumental lines, adding up to more than the sum of the parts. The Bach pieces are short but splendidly achieved. The Schubert is a flood of youthful melody, here beautifully sung and providing an ideal foil for the Beethoven. The engineering, particularly in stereo, is outstanding. R.C.M.

Continued on page 84

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SEPTEMBER 1961

CIRCLE 37 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

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BEETHOVEN: Variations on “Ich Bin der Schneider Kakadu,” Op. 121a
†Brahms: Trio for Piano and Strings, No. 2, in C, Op. 87
Albeneri Trio.
• • MUSIC GUILD S 9. SD. $4.87 to members; $6.50 to nonmembers.

Neither of these works is duplicated in Schwann, although we’ve had both in the catalogue in the past. The Beethoven is a robustly good-humored work, characteristic of both the composer’s later years and his salty jokes. Since the Albeneri Trio plays it with an affectionate regard for its good and bad points, this performance should see us through nicely even if we have to wait another thirty years for a new version.

It’s good too to have the Brahms back, particularly in a performance that catches the ripe Brahmsian manner so well.

Technically this is the best stereo reproduction of a piano trio I’ve heard. The three performers are beautifully placed across the listening room and project vividly as individuals. R.C.M.

BERG: Lyric Suite
†Webern: Five Pieces, Op. 5; Six Bagatelles, Op. 9
Juilliard String Quartet.
• RCA VICTOR LM 2531. LP. $4.98.
• • RCA VICTOR LSC 2531. SD. $5.98.

When Alban Berg’s Lyric Suite first came out on records, not long after its composition in 1926, it seemed like the last word in puzzling modernism. Its six movements, with their striking tempo indications—Allegretto gioiiale, Andante amoroso, Allegro misterioso, Adagio appassionato, Presto delirando, and Largo tranquillo—seemed the last word in musical expressionism. Returning to it today, in this elegant performance and recording, one finds it no more problematic than a string quartet by Brahms. It also, I am shocked and sad to report, seems a bit of a bore.

The superlatively beautiful pieces by Webern, however, are certainly not a bore. The Five Pieces were written in 1909 and the Six Bagatelles in 1913, but they are still modern music in a way that the Lyric Suite can never be. And they are stunningly beautiful. After hearing a good performance of Webern, I want to hear no music at all for a while.

A.F.

BERLIOZ: Symphonie fantastique, Op. 14
Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Vladimir Golschmann, cond.
• VANGUARD SRV 120. LP. $1.98.
• • VANGUARD SRV 120 SD. SD. $2.98.

If Vanguard was seeking to show off the fine quality of its sound on this low-priced demonstration disc, it has succeeded admirably. The monophonic edition may be classed as first-rate, the stereo version as outstanding. Instrumental definition is generally very clear (one can actually hear the characteristic buzz of the contrabassoon in the first statement of the Dies irae in the finale), while distribution and blending are quite life-like. Golschmann’s reading is something less exciting. Except for the slow movement, which he treats most expressively (and which Vanguard splits in the middle between disc sides), his is a decidedly businesslike approach, thoroughly acceptable but without much inner fire. P.A.

BORODIN: Symphony No. 2, in B minor; Prince Igor: Polovtsian Dances
Chorus of the Society of Friends of Music (in the Dances); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik, cond.
• • CAPITOL G 7249. LP. $4.98.
• • CAPITOL SG 7249. SD. $5.98.

Kubelik’s highly respectable readings of both these colorful works may not set the world on fire, but they are correct in every detail. I personally prefer the added snap that Jean Martinon put into his interpretation of the Symphony in his recent recording for RCA Victor. In both the present mono and stereo recordings the chorus in the Polovtsian Dances sounds too distant, though it enjoys a better sonic spread in the two-channel edition. P.A.

BRAHMS: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in B flat, Op. 83
Gyorgy Sandor, piano; Southwest German Radio Orchestra (Baden-Baden), Rolf Reinhardt, cond.
• • Vox PL 19090. LP. $4.98.
• • Vox STPL 510990. SD. $4.98.

The performance here is highly satisfying, certainly one of the better versions available. Both Sandor and his conductor

CIRCLE 51 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
adhere to the solidly Germanic tradition of Brahms playing, and they give a highly extricating reading graced by a firmly held basic tempo, a robust tonal framework, and a certain degree of poetry. The pianist is a strong technician; and if he drops or smears a few bass notes, that is forgivable in view of the over-all flair of his interpretation. The stereo recording is clearly defined, and it holds a bit of warmth; I would like to have this disc second only to the stereo readings of Serkin and Rubinstein. H.G.


BRAHMS: Trio for Violin, Horn, and Piano, in E flat, Op. 40

Benita Valente, soprano (in the Schubert); Michael Tree, violin (in the Brahms); Myron Bloom, horn; Rudolf Serkin, piano.

• COLUMBIA ML 5643. L.P. $4.98.
• • COLUMBIA MS 6243. SD. $5.98.

The Brahms Trio, presented here in Columbia’s series of Marlboro chamber music discs, receives a fine-grained interpretation, beautiful in tone, with carefully balanced ensemble, yet plenty of spirit. One could not ask for a more appropriate reading. The same is true of Schubert’s Auf dem Strom. Written for soprano, horn, and piano, this work is one continuous lyrical outpouring, and although it is somewhat repetitious and rather long, it contains some exquisite music, especially for soprano and horn, the latter playing far more than a mere obbligato. Benita Valente has a lovely lyric soprano voice, which she uses intelligently; and again, as in the Brahms, the ensemble work is above caviar. The recording, made in a rustic studio at Marlboro, gives the illusion of spaciousness and resonant depth without sacrificing presence. P.A.

BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 9, in D minor

Hamburg State Philharmonic Orchestra, Joseph Kellner, cond.

• TELEFUNKEN TC 8043. L.P. $1.98.
• • TELEFUNKEN TCS 18043. SD. $2.98.

Like Schubert’s B minor Symphony, Bruckner’s Ninth is among the most complete of unfinished symphonies. Although he lived and composed only three of his projected four movements, the two slow movements surrounding a scherzo make a work that is surely an expressive and often deeply moving entity. Kellner, however, does not always bring out all the expressiveness and power in the score. His slow movements are inclined to be a trifle weak at times. heavy-handed at others, and lacking only conviction in its scherzo, also heavy, fails to provide much of the necessary contrast. (While the scherzo in Bruno Walter’s recent Columbia recording is also a bit slow-founded, that conductor infuses the entire symphony with much greater warmth and meaning.) The sound on the present disc is clean but is without much depth or resonance, particularly in the monophonic edition. P.A.

CARTER: Symphony No. 1
Haieff: Divertimento

Louisville Orchestra, Robert Whitney, cond.

• LOUISVILLE LOU 611. L.P. Obtainable on special order only.

Elliott Carter has come forward in recent years as a composer of very abstruse and formidably musical works; it is a little surprising, therefore, to discover that nineteen years ago he wrote a symphony whose thematic material, in his own words, “suggests the characteristic beauties of Cape Cod ... and something of the extraordinary cultural background of New England which this landscape brings to mind.” This statement may be a bit naive, but the music is not. It is perfectly beautiful, with proper bows in the direction of Mr. Ives and Mr. Copland, but maintaining its own rather light-textured, rhythmically very inventive style from start to finish. The finale is especially magnificent, particularly from the rhythmic point of view; this should make one of the greatest dance scores of the century. Mr. Balanchine—and other choreographers—please notice.

The Divertimento by the Russian-born American Alexei Haieff, presented on the other side, is, like so much of that composer’s music, entertaining but lacking in distinctive character. The performances from the Louisville Orchestra under the baton of Robert Whitney seem to be most authoritative, and sonically speaking the recording is good enough.

Continued on page 88

artists and accolades

VIRGIL THOMSON: The Flown That Broke the Plains; The River. Orchestral Suites. Symphony of the Air cond. by LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI. VRS-1071 & VSO-2085

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These limitations were of such a minor nature that they would be of no consequence in normal, run-of-the-mill recording situations. But Command's recordings have always been designed for an especially discriminating and demanding audience, true connoisseurs of sound. Because of this, it is Command's policy to seek out every possible advance in sound reproduction, no matter how marginal it may seem or how costly it may be.

Perfect, Unadulterated Sound

In attempting to achieve perfect, unadulterated sound reproduction, in the recording of large orchestras, even the most advanced tape techniques are faced with two mechan-
ical limitations which create minor distortions that affect the ultimate purity, freedom and fullness of the reproduced sound. These two limitations are hiss and flutter. Flutter, caused by the path taken by the tape through the tape machine, creates a distortion so slight that most listeners would not be aware of it. But to the connoisseur of good music, it is evident that some peculiar non-musical sound is present, something mechanical. High frequency flutter creates raspiness in violins or in other instruments, a sound that is not quite as clean as it should be.

A more serious limitation of tape is its physical dimensions. Most stereo recording is done on ¼-inch tape (two channels) or ½-inch tape (three channels). In either case, each stereo track is less than half the width of a monaural track on the same tape and there is a proportionate decrease in the ratio of signal to noise. That is, the noise level is raised and this increased noise level results in tape hiss. Moreover, since tape is only 1/5 mils thick, very often at least an infinitesimal amount of print-through is bound to occur and this, too, has a slightly degenerating effect on the sound.

Superb Recording
Despite the combination of both flutter and hiss, it is possible to do excellent recording on tape. But Command's goal is not just excellent recording. Its goal is superb recording. And the slightly unreal instrument sound resulting from the intermodulation effect of flutter and hiss stood in the way of that goal.

In 35 mm film, Command's engineers saw a solution. Film has no flutter because it runs on a closed circuit loop and is held tightly against the recording head. It is able to carry the equivalent of three ¼-inch tape tracks with more than enough space between each track to guarantee absolute separation of channels. And because the film is 5 mils thick, the possibility of contamination by print-through is negligible.

The result is a milestone on the road to absolute perfection in recorded sound: A signal-to-noise effect that is absolutely ghostly. There is no background noise whatever!

New Ear Perceptibility
But film did more than provide solutions to the minor drawbacks of tape. It also opened up new possibilities. The much wider track used on film offered tremendous, previously unheard-of leeway in dynamics—and as a result distortion was reduced to a bare minimum. The wider track on film allowed for tremendous peaks and transients, factors which make for wonderful ear perceptibility. What sounds your ear is willing to receive is conditioned by the presence or absence of transients. Lack of transients results in a distorted sound. When the ear hears distortion, it closes down just as the eye responds to a bright light by contracting. When sounds are lacking in transients, you hear less. The amazingly clean sound on film gives the ear a wonderful feeling of well-being, makes it increasingly receptive so that you actually hear more.

Film, of course, has been used for recording sound for motion pictures to be reproduced in theatres. But it has never proved satisfactory for recordings in the distinctly different circumstances of home use. This was a basic flaw in choosing film as a solution to the limitations of tape.

But, just as Command's engineers expanded the value and scope of tape recording, they applied their creative skills to the roadblocks that faced them in 35 mm film and, one by one, solved them. To do this, they had to make adaptations in equipment at almost every step of the recording process.

Utter Clarity and Truth
For the first time it is possible to record with utter clarity and truth from triple piano (ppp) to triple forte (fff). Even in a full crescendo, the individuality of each instrument is preserved, not lost in a mass of sound. With the orchestra playing fortissimo, it is now possible to give the full spectrum of sound with absolutely clean musical color.

The one hitch in this glorious vista of sound developed by Command's engineers was cost—film recording (cost of material) is an appalling ten times as expensive as tape recording. Were the results worth this vast difference in price?

Enoch Light, originator and producer of Command Records, decided that the only way to find out was to test film recording under the best possible circumstances.

For his recording studio, he hired Carnegie Hall which is recognized by sound experts and master musicians alike to have the finest acoustics in the world. He took advantage of the Hall's natural acoustics by using the auditorium as a big sound chamber (it is part of Command's highly successful recording technique to use only true, natural sound). Normally from one to three microphones are dropped from the ceiling of the auditorium to record an orchestra. But Light used fourteen microphones with a twelve-position control board to give proper perspective to each instrument or group of instruments in relation to the whole orchestra.

Tremendous Sonic Leeway
For his orchestra, Light brought together more than sixty of the most skilled musicians in New York including many who were thoroughly familiar with the special recording techniques used by Light to create his unique Command Records in the past. Arrangements were written by Lew Davies that deliberately exploited the critical point of sound, using the full extremes of every instrument in all timbres and in all colors.

The musicians, keyed up by the excitement of the astonishing results they heard in the first playback, played at the very top of their form. The precision, the impact, the intonation in their playing and the balance that the musicians established among themselves reached a level of high perfection that matched the superb acoustics of the Hall and the brilliant fidelity of the miraculous recording technique for which they were playing for the first time.

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The development of stereo from 1958 to “phase 4 stereo”

Since the introduction of the revolutionary stereo record in 1958, the art of recording has undergone a radical evolution.

**Phase 1 stereo:** “Consort Hall Realism.” In this phase, stereo recordings attempted to recreate a true stage presence. The instruments were placed “soundwise” in their normal positions, but with the effect that for the home listener they appeared to come from an imaginary sound-stage array between the listener’s two loudspeakers. The recording itself was not normally perceived as “stereo.” The result was that London’s “first” (full frequency stereo phonograph) offered the most advanced and finest edition of “concert hall” sound ever heard on records.

**Phase 2 stereo:** “Separation of Sound.” In this phase, starting in 1958, it was proved that an orchestra could be “split in half” [right and left] and both “left” and “right” sound could be perceived as coming from the center. “Separation.” Sounds emanating from two loudspeakers lent themselves to a seemingly infinite variety of reproduction, and other strictly mechanical processes and technical capacity with the sound of the so-called pyrotechnics it was that followed... bongos jumped off the speakers while light phones and trumpets answered back and forth through the technical “null” that was in command, the technique was the end-in-itself.

**Phase 3 stereo:** “Moving Sounds.” In this phase (1961), it was demonstrated that the sounds of a whole section of an orchestra or a single instrument could be moved and followed by the listener’s ears as the sounds passed through the left and right speakers and back again electronically... In certain operas, a single comedy recording, the voices could be followed moving one after the other in a true-to-life stage presentation.

**“Phase 4 stereo”:** In this phase (1962), arranging and recording techniques were used to recreate the music to the instruments where they are musically most desired at any particular moment and for the listener to be made aware of the musical sounds recorded upon the stage to punctuate the musicality of sounds. The effect is new-interest—more listening pleasure. "phase 4 stereo” recording (and this is also the case with all” phase 4 stereo” music) includes the arrangement—the music itself—of the sound and the music was recorded actively. Recording in this manner was made possible because of the new “4 Track Master recording system. Now, for the first time, the musical arrangement was given maximum musical capacity which to work, and with which to create new musical experiences almost indefinitely. To advantage of this new musical framework afforded him, the musical arrangement now has to envision the sounds he hears in his head as they relate to each other in the extra dimension of space afforded by stereo reproduction: the musical arrangement has to create new forms of musical annotation and scoring to convey his musical concept. Through a complicating technique of scores, switches and duals, the music envisioned by the arranger comes to life as the engineer captures on a 4 Track Master tape, the complete and true musical concept. Now, on the table of Track Master tape, the four tracks of sound have to be assigned in the reduction to two channels of sound which eventually reach the listener via his two-channel stereo receiver. Halle and ultimately through two his loudspeakers.

Look for the stereo series featuring the “4” design on the label. It is your guarantee of more sound—more interest—more entertainment—more participation—more listening pleasure.

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**COPLAND: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra**

[v] Menotti: Concert for Piano and Orchestra

Earl Wild, piano; Symphony of the Air, Aaron Copland, cond. (in the Copland); Jorge Mester, cond. (in the Menotti).

- VANGUARD VRS 1070. LP. $4.98.
- VANGUARD VSD 2094. SD. $5.95.

The Copland concerto, composed in 1926, is very young Copland, of the jazz period, but the fingerprints of the master are all over it, and it is a most en-dearing monument to its period. The Menotti is a buoyant, melodic, neo-classical sort of piece, at least in its fast movements: its lyrical slow movement drops the neoclassical pretense, but the whole thing is pleasant listening, at least once. Wild does a terrific job of playing, the orchestral part is just as well done, and the sound is first-class. A.F.

**COUPERIN: Les sons des Tempeurs**

Alfred Deller, countertenor; Wilfred Brown, tenor; Descriptor Dupré, viola da gamba; Hurry of the organ. [v] VANGUARD BG 298. LP. $4.98.
- VANGUARD BGS 5039. SD. $5.95.

These three settings of portions of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, for the Wednesday of Holy Week, were published by Couperin in 1714. The fine two are for a single voice with continuo; in the third another voice is added. The music is of a striking gravity, with long melodic lines and simple but affecting harmonies. Deller sings with his customary care in phrasing and skill in ornamentation, and since his lower register is called upon a good deal here, there is more variety of color than is usual with him. In the third and finest of the Lessons, Brown complements his partner well, even managing to produce the vocal ornaments in the same way. The performance of this Lesson, it seems to me, is superior to that on Westminster, owing to Brown's superiority to the second tenor there, but a choice between the two recordings with respect to the first two Lessons, one can only guess whether one prefers a tenor (Hughes Caunedo in the Westminster) to a countertenor. My own choice is a recording by two French soprano, Hijain Society discs; no longer available. The choice in both versions of the present recording is first-rate. N.B.

**COWELL: Symphony No. 7—See Kerr: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra.**


Orchestre de la Sociétée des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, Hugo Rignold, cond.

- RCA Victor LM 2485. LP. $4.98.
- RCA Victor LSC 2485. SD. $5.98.

This makes the tenth coupling of these two ballet suites in the current catalogue, and there are many more that have come and gone—which would seem to indicate that if there is anything we don't need, it's another Sylvia-Coppélia combination. Nevertheless, this new version is welcome. Our experienced ballet conductor, has combined the dance and concert elements of the music most eloquently here. What's more, he has exquisitely polished playing from this Paris orchestra, which has been reproduced in previously bright colors in both mono and stereo. P.A.

**DONIZETTI: Operatic Highlights**

Don Pasquale: Con è gentil (Aristodemo Giorgini, 1); Tornami a dir (Maria Galvany, s; Giorgini, l). L'Elisir d'amore: Una furtiva lagrima (John McCormack, l); Overture, (Fernando de Lucia, l); Ernesto Badini, b. Lorenzo Bargi. Di pescatore ignobile (Carlo Albani, l); Come è bello (Maria de Macchi, s). Lucia di Lammermoor: Cruda, fנטשua staminia (Riccardo Stracciari, b); Tu che a Dio (Hippolito Lazaro, l). Linda di Chamounix: Ambo nati (Mattia Battistini, b); Un buon servo (Moscosia, s; Battistini, l). La Finta Giardiniera: ‘Alleluja' ( Aureliano Pericle, l); A tanto amor (Staccari). Maria di Rohan: Bella è dol vsessito (Gino Manoli, b). La Figlia del reggimento: La nostalgia (Enrico Clemente Dominici, l). Pollito: Di quel suoni lagrima (Maria de Macchi, s). Don Sebastian: In terra solo (Alfred Piccioni, l).

Various solosists, named above.

- ETERNA 739. LP. $4.75.

If I think back seven or eight years to the time when the current enthusiasm for Donizetti, Bellini, and Rossini was just getting under way, I can remember hearing the first recordings of their operas and reflecting that in a way it was important to have the music on disc, the at- tempted revival of interest would never succeed, simply because the singers were not good enough. The revival has cer-tainly taken place, but I can’t quite dis- lodge the original feeling; it still seems to me that, whatever the histrionic and musical merits of the singers engaged in contemporary of the singers engaged in contemporary presentations, they are not giving the com-poser his vocal due. Tones that are honed or quadrents that are scattered with “h’s,” high-lying phrases marked “dole” that are sternly muscled out—these have no place in Donizetti.

A listening of the two Battistini selec- tions here will demonstrate what I mean. I am not referring to the ornamentation, which is assiduously kious, but to the simple, easy, uninterrupted flow of re- laxed melody, unbroken and completely at the artist’s command. It is also present in the aria’s sung by Bongini and especially by his magnificent “A tanto amor,” which can stand with Battistini’s and Magini-Coletti’s— in the perfectly turned “Una furtiva lagrima” of John McCormack, and in the “In terra solo” of Alfred Piccioni. To a lesser extent, it is present also in the Don Pasquale ex- cept for Giorgini and Galvany, though the “Tornami a dir” is by no means one of the soprano’s better discs. And I have not even mentioned the deliciously sung “O difunta lagrima” by Ernesto Badini, on which the sound is surprisingly good. On the other hand, Lazaro’s
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We will be glad to send you a reprint of Ken Winters' article, discussing his choice of components for a stereo system in the medium-price range. Other lists of preferred high fidelity equipment are also available on request: a reprint of Downbeat magazine's "Picks of the Year" in stereo components,* and a description of four stereo systems,** each selected for Gentlemen's Quarterly by a different audio expert as the ultimate in quality.

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*AR-2a's chosen for medium-price system, AR-3's for luxury system 
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"Tu che a Dio" is a disgrace to that artist’s reputation, and the contributions of Manoli and Dominici won’t win any prizes, either. The sound, in general, is quite tolerable, but I am puzzled by Eterra’s apparently incurable habit of fading the sound at the end of each selection; in some cases, there is simply no need for this. C.L.O.

DVORAK: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 53


• TELEFUNKEN TC 8046. LP. $1.98.

• TELEFUNKEN TCS 18046. SD. $2.98.

The American violinist Joan Field has a sweet tone but not a very forceful interpretative style. As a result, she is more at home in the unsung romantic Beeethoven Romances than in the richly romantic Dvořák Concerto (where, in addition, her intonation is not always letter-perfect). Rother’s support is more than adequate, and the sound in both mono and stereo is quite good. But there are better versions of the Beeethoven by Grumiaux and Heifetz, of the Dvořák by Milstein and Martzy. P.A.


Jan Panenka, piano; Smetana Quartet (in the Quintet); Libor Hlaváček, violin; Josef Hála, piano (in the Humoresque and Mazurek).

• SUPERAPHON LPV 114. LP. $5.98.

The novelty on this record is the Mazurek—or Mazurka—which now appears for the first time on record. Composed in 1879 and dedicated to Sarasate, this brief work for violin with either orchestral or piano accompaniment is in style and spirit an extension of the composer’s Slavonic Dances. The technical demands on the soloist are not overly great, though there is a long succession of double stops in the principal section. I imagine that this little piece might have emerged as something a bit more exciting had it been played with more polish by Hlaváček and had it been dressed up with orchestral accompaniment. As for the far more important Piano Quintet, it receives a well-integrated performance that captures the spirit of the music and delivers it forthrightly. The recorded sound is well balanced and reasonably faithful. P.A.

FAURE: La Bonne Chanson, Op. 61


†Debussy: Sonata for Violin and Piano, No. 3, in G minor

Berli Senofsky, violin; Gary Graffman, piano.

• RCA VICTOR LM 2488. LP. $4.98.

• RCA VICTOR LSC 2488. SD. $5.98.

Two of the loveliest, most sensitive of French violin sonatas are here performed with interpretative flexibility and considerable tonal warmth by two young American solo artists who find immense pleasure in sitting down for a session of chamber music. Their approach to the melodic Fauré Sonata is ideal; in the Debussy, I would have liked slightly less rhythmic freedom and more suggestion of mystery. For instrumental balance and tonal fidelity, I prefer the mono version. In stereo, the tone appears less rounded, particularly in the piano. In that version too the violin is distinctly on the left and the piano just as distinctly on the right. There is no "hole in the middle"; yet some of the feeling of chamber music rapport is missing. P.A.

FETLER: Contrasts—See Schuller: Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee.

GLINKA: A Life for the Tsar (highlights)

Vera Firssova (s), Antonina A. Ilyin (t), A Soldier, Ivan Petrov (bs), Ivan Susanin. Chorus and Orchestra of the Bolshoi Theatre, Vassily Nebolsin, cond.

• MK-ARTA 1554. LP. $5.98.

A generous helping of music from this noble opera. Petrov’s bass does full justice to Susanin’s towering "They Guess the Truth," though it does not eclipse recent versions by Reizen and Christoff. Vera Firssova has the kind of cool, clear, full-bodied voice that characterizes a good German Hochsopran. It is absolutely even and free, and a joy to hear in both of her demanding arias. The overture is given a spirited reading. I would suggest that every operaphile own a copy of the complete (or nearly so) Capitol edition, unless Markovich. For those who are in search of a highlights album, though, the present version is an admirable choice. The sound is fine for the soloists, and never less than sufficient, though one could wish for more depth and clarity in the mighty closing scene for chorus. C.L.O.

HAIEF: Divertimenti—See Carter: Symphony No. 1.

HANDEL: Sonatas, Op. 1: No. 2, in G minor; No. 4, in A minor; No. 7, in C; No. 11, in F

Ferdinand Conrad, recorder; Johannes Koch, viola da gamba; Hugo Ruf, harpsichord.

• ARCHIVE ARC 3158. LP. $5.98.

• ARCHIVE ARC 73158. SD. $6.98.

Of the twelve sonatas for a treble instrument and continuo that were published as Handel’s Op. 1, four are marked as for the recorder, and it is this quartet of works that is offered here. No. 4 is an especially attractive sonata, and the others have some points of interest, such as the occasional thematic independence of the bass line. Mr. Conrad plays them skillfully and adds many ornaments (there are some amusing ones in the Presto of No. 2); dotted rhythms, and brief fill-in figures, in accordance with baroque practice. Good sound. N.B.

continued on page 92

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SEPTEMBER 1961

www.americanradiohistory.com
**HANDEL: Tenor Arias**


Kenneth McKellar, tenor; Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Sir Adrian Boult, cond.

- **London** 5603. LP. $4.98.
- **London** OS 25234. SD. $5.98.

The Scottish tenor does not give us the vocal excitement of Crooks, or the penetration of Webster Booth; but he has his own contribution to make with these wonderful arias. His voice is of the right sort—light and flexible, but not white. He handles it expertly, carrying off the runs with dash, and sustaining the long, soft phrases with ease. The voice has enough metal for the extended dramatic recitative preceding "Waft Her, Angels" (which is movingly sung), if not quite enough for the call to "Sound an Alarm."

I do not care much for the rather nervous-sounding "Where'er You Walk" (this is probably Boult's fault more than McKellar's); but for the advanced conservatory Italian employed in "Ombra mai fu"; otherwise, there's nothing to complain on of this disc. Most impressive of all are the "How Vain Is Man" (a notorious temperament which gave even Booth a run for his money) and the Messiah selections—the news that McKellar will be the tenor on a new Boult Messiah with Sutherland is altogether welcome. Boult's accompaniments (excepting the aforementioned "Where'er You Walk") are incisive and well paced, London's sound topnotch. C.L.O.

**HAYDN: Mass No. 10, in B flat ("Theresienneste")**

Anny Felbermayer, soprano; Dagmar Herrmann, contralto; Julius Patzak, tenor; Alfred Poell, bass; Choir of the Vienna State Opera and Vienna Symphony. Clemens Krauss, cond.

- Vox DL 700. LP. $4.98.

This set is at least ten years old and sounds it. But we have on records to introduce us to one of Haydn's greatest works. H. C. Robbins Landon feels that the six Masses of the years following 1795 represent a continuation of Haydn's symphonic writing in which, as his student Beethoven was to do at the close of his career, Haydn turns to voices as the extra dimension needed to bring fulness to his noblest ideas. Those who glory in eighteenth-century music and missed this edition on its first trip through the catalogue are therefore advised to acquire it while the opportunity lasts. It conveys in its best moments the solemnity and strength of Haydn's most mature and deeply felt idiom. R.C.M.

**KERR: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra**

- **Cowell: Symphony No. 7**

Wolfgang Stavonhagen, violin; Imperial Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of Tokyo (in the Kerr), Vienna Symphony Orchestra (in the Cowell), William Strickland, cond.

- **Composers Recordings CRI 142. LP. $5.95.**

Here is as interesting a contrast as American music affords. The Cowell, like all of that master's later work, is bland, tuneful, folk-like, and eminently entertaining; it is Ives with the notes in all the right places. The Kerr, on the other hand, is knotty, highly dramatic, strongly influenced by the 12-tone system, but not orthodox in its use of the 12-tone principle. It is a work of strong individuality and great expressive power, and is the first major work by its composer to appear on discs. Harrison Kerr is sixty-four years old and has been dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Oklahoma for many years, and so it is high time. A.F.

**KODALY: Háry János**

Magda Tisztay (ms), Orsze; Judit Sandor (ms), Marie Louise; Endre Rösler (t), Knight Ebalszsin; Imre Palló (b), Háry János; Oszkar Maleczky (b), Old Marci; Andor Lendvay (b); Lajos; György Melis (b), Napoleon; others (in speaking parts); Chorus: Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, János Ferencsik, cond.

- **Qualiton HLPX 1023/25. Three LP. $17.94.**

To American record collectors, Kodály's Háry János has always signified a witty and colorfully orchestrated suite, drawn from an opera which, one assumed, an American would never have the chance to hear short of a trip to Budapest. Now, thanks to Arthia's important "Cultural Exchange" program, through which an extensive catalogue of Russian and Czech recordings have already been made available, we are presented with an authentic version of the complete work, recorded under the Qualiton label in Hungary.

The first thing to make clear is that Háry János is not an opera at all—it is a play with incidental music. The second is that the album contains no translation, and though Peter Varnai's accompanying essay is intelligent and informative (if
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CIRCLE 43 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
not a model of English syntax), it is no substitute for the text of a work which, unfamiliar in itself, is in an unfamiliar language as well. The actors seem to be having a fine time for themselves, and their good will is contagious; still, we'd like to be in on the fun.

The play's story is concerned with the legendary exploits of Háry János, a pompous but endearing braggart. The Contes d'Hoffmann structure is used, with a prologue and epilogue set in a village inn, and Háry's exploits taking up the intervening acts in flashback form. In his first exploit, Háry settles a border incident. A Rutulian sentry who is in a bad mood (this side of the border is dark and icy, the Hungarian side cheerful and sunny) is allowing no one passage over the frontier—and this includes the Princess Marie Louise herself, with her retinue. Háry puts matters right by simply yanking the sentry's watch house to the Hungarian side of the border. (This is rather reminiscent of the old story of the Soviet commissar who, faced with certain liquidation because a broken-down locomotive cannot meet its schedule between two towns, simply orders the names of the towns officially switched every four hours, thus placing the train in the right station at all times.) This feat so impresses the Princess that she invites Háry and his peasant sweetheart, Osze, to Vienna, where she shows a decided preference for Háry over Sir Elbasián. The latter arranges a war with Napoleon, sure that Háry's death will result. Háry, however, defeats the Grande Armée single-handed, and dictates a humiliating peace to a cowed Napoleon. Marie Louise determines to marry Háry, but on the very day of the wedding Háry cannot help expressing notions for his best home-folk. The Emperor grants Háry's wish to leave, and Háry, after pleading with the Emperor to cease oppressing his people, moves on to his greatest adventure—he returns to the village of Nagyabony and to Osze.

Much of the music, most of it based on Hungarian folk themes, is introduced to those acquainted with the suite. Several of the movements—notably the striking of the carillon and the battle with Napoleon—are rather rewrite and inventive. There is a lovely little minuet song for Marie Louise, and a haunting duet for Háry and Osze—"Tiszin innen, Dunai-Tul" ("River Danube Boy, Be Thyself"). The final choral hymn to the Hungarian people is also moving, and nearly all the music has a definite charm. The performance sounds to me like a splendid one, well sung and played, and acted with gusto. There have been more brilliant renditions of the orchestral sections, but they would not integrate as well with the play as the present one. The set's Háry János. Dr. Imre Palló was the creator of the role in 1926. This makes him an old man now, and he vocalizes amazingly well, in addition to creating a characterization that comes through even this considerable language barrier. The recording, made in 1958, is of top quality.

C.I.O.


Leonid Kogan, violin; Philharmonia Orchestra, Kirill Kondrashin, cond.
* • Angel 35721. LP. $4.98.
* • Angel S 35721. SD. $5.98.

Once the technical intricacies of the Lalo have been solved, its easy romanticism presents few musical difficulties. It follows, therefore, that the work ought to "play itself," and the fact that it so often fails to do so is chiefly the result of the shopworn, pedestrian writing that so many of our leading virtuosos are reluctant to part with—those only too familiar throbs, scoops, and shibbery wails. This fine new performance by Kogan (in an earlier edition he was accompanied by Charles Bruck and the Paris Conservatory Orchestra) follows on the heels of RCA Victor's superlative Szereny-Hendel disc. Of the other stereo versions which also present this work in its complete, five-movement form, Menuhin's (Capitol) has an attractive lyricism and homespun grace (although it sometimes is battered by this violinist's "Serenata" mannerisms), and the R河ggero Ricci is brought excessively to the fore on his disc (London), with the cith sequence that its tone sounds rather nasal and threadbare. The choice, it seems to me, lies between Kogan and Szeryng. The latter favors a lean, scintone (à la Heifetz, but musically purer), and his muscular, angular phrasing imparts dynamism rather than lyricism to his interpretation. He also finds his solos; and provides clean-lined, square-cut support. Kogan's sound has a more conventional warmth and sweetness, although he is far removed from the honeyed rich one favored by Stern,

Continued on page 96

CIRCLE 97 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

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High Fidelity Magazine
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CIRCLE 70 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
Oistrakh, et al. There is more emphasis on line and nuance in Kogan’s interpretation, and Kondrashin matches the soloist’s style with a light-textured, beautifully piquant orchestral color. Since both competing discs are splendidly engineered in both the one- and two-channel versions, which you choose will depend largely on the kind of violin tone you favor. I believe I prefer Szigeti. It is worth pointing out, however, that the Angel disc offers a bonus of the little Tchaikovsky piece, performed magnificently.

LEHAR: Schön ist die Welt (highlights)
†Millöcker: Die Dubarry (highlights)

Lotte Rysanek (s), Elisabeth; Christine Spierenburg (s), Mercedes; Karl Terkalel (t), Georg; Horst Heinrich Braun (b), Sascha; Leo Hepple (b); King; et al. (in the Léhar). Christine Spierenburg (s), Marie-Jeanne; Else Liebesberg (s), Margot; Karl Terkalel (t), Kéné; Karl Weber (b); Brissac (in the Millöcker). Chorus of Radio Vienna, Vienna Grand Opera, Karl Richter, cond.
• Eric LC 3758. LP. $4.98.
• Eric BC 1117. SD. $5.98.

Both of these operettas contain some charming numbers, and they are presented here in an idiomatic and spirited fashion. Karl Terkalel sings his romances well in both works, and Lotte Rysanek (a sister of the more famous Leonie) sails through her portion of the Léhar quite engagingly. Else Liebesberg and Karl Weber also are charming in their Dubarry duets, particularly the bouncy "Wean verliebte hummeln gehn" and the exhilarating “Reisen wir durchs Liebesland.” In sum, an entertaining fifty minutes’ worth of schmaltz. C.L.O.

LISTZ: Sonata for Piano, in B minor; Sonetto del Petruca No. 104; Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 12, in C sharp minor; Etudes d’exécution transcendante: No. 10, in F minor

Agustin Anievas, piano.
• ST/AND SLPL 407. LP. $4.98.

Agustin Anievas, a recent graduate of Juilliard, has been the recipient of several prizes. He made his Town Hall debut in New York City two years ago, and at that time he received a glowing press for his interpretations of Liszt. Hearing this disc makes one realize why.

These performances are unusually emotional for Mendelssohn’s little salon pieces. Anievas evokes a different frame for each one, and many of her dramatic innovations are effective and resourceful. For example, she skillfully differentiates between the lilting sharpness of the first Vereinigte Gondel Song, and the flowing longueur of the other two. Her angular hesitations in the Spinning Song give the music impetus and profile. Most of her readings are as convincing as they are imaginative. Her moist, rounded sound makes the material more touching and extended, and this characteristic of her playing remains consistent throughout.

In sum, an entertaining fifty minutes’ worth of passion. C.L.O.

MENDELSSOHN: Songs Without Words (14)

Guionnau Novaes, piano.
• Vox PL 12000. LP. $4.98.
• Vox STPL 512000. SD. $5.98.

Novaes is one of the few pianists now before the public who stress theonal values of the instrument. Under her fingers the music pleads, caresses, and almost purrs. She also uses the pedal more generously than is the general custom nowadays, and this too largely accounts for the moody, rounded sound she produces.

These performances are unusually emotional for Mendelssohn’s little salon pieces. Novaes evokes a different frame for each one, and many of her dramatic innovations are effective and resourceful. For example, she skillfully differentiates between the lilting sharpness of the first Vereinigte Gondel Song, and the flowing longueur of the other two. Her angular hesitations in the Spinning Song give the music impetus and profile. Most of her readings are as convincing as they are imaginative. Her moist, rounded sound makes the material more touching and extended, and this characteristic of her playing remains consistent throughout.

In sum, an entertaining fifty minutes’ worth of passion. C.L.O.

MENNIN: Symphony No. 5—See Rodrigo: Concerto galante.

H.G.

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HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE
-This is the Mozart Mass with the elements most likely to make for widespread appeal, and Markovitch’s performance employs them with great effect. His earlier version for Decca was notable, and this is likely to supplant it without difficulty. The engineering is striking, the orchestra plays well, and the vocal forces are particularly good. Nonetheless, I wish the resonance had been better controlled so that the text could be followed. If this recording had been more tightly focused sonically, it could very well have been a great one instead of merely a good one.

Professor Allard of the Paris Conservatoire plays Mozart’s Concerto as if it were a work of Ravel’s and written for saxophone at that! Brooke’s version (with Beecham) gives us the wit, the gaiety, and the bubbling busonervisms (the latter word comes from Leonard Bernstein) that Mozart surely intended here.

MOZART: Quartets for Strings: No. 18, in A, K. 464; No. 19, in C, K. 465; No. 20, in D, K. 499; No. 21, in D, K. 575; No. 22, in B flat, K. 589; No. 23, in F, K. 590

Bartch Quartet.
- Vox VBX 14. Three LP. $7.95.

These performances of the last six quartets of Mozart, issued on single discs in the course of the 1950s, are now brought together in an inexpensive “Vox Box.” In my opinion they are a bargain. This foursome of players seems strong in each member, and it plays with subtlety, smoothness, and refinement. There are moments when it does not rise to the greatness of the music—the opening Adagio of K. 465 lacks the depth and mystery it can have, and the dialogues between first violin and cello in the slow movement are not as ecstatic as they should be—but by and large the performers do justice to these wonderful works.

Except for some continuous background noise in the second movement of K. 590 the sound is perfectly acceptable. There are no bands between movements in K. 464 and 465 (doubtless because there was no room for them), and Side 6 contains K. 589, although the label calls for 390 to appear there (the music for which is on Side 5, labeled “K. 589”).

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CIRCLE 35 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

High Fidelity

Richter and Firkusny play the original score.) I find that Firkusny generates more drive and contrast in his performance than Richter managed on his Artia disc. The Columbia Richter, however, is something of a special case. It was made at an actual recital, and it has a white-hot inspiration which I feel that no artist could reach in the confines of the recording studio. Even the thin, brittle piano tone on that disc assuages the car in a hypnotic way which the far mellower DG engineer fails to do. But if the Columbia release remains, as I once wrote, "the greatest performance of the Pictures I have heard, ever," this new release runs it a close second.

The Jeux d’eau and Miroirs excerpt No. 5 are lucid and shimmering. The Alborada del graciocis is also finely played in a similar style, but I feel that this piece should be more vibrant and athletic (rather more on the order of the old Lipatti recording). These works, like the Mussorgsky, have been exquisitely reproduced.

H.G.

OFFENBACH: Orphée aux Enfers (highlights in English)

Soloists: Chorus and Orchestra of the Sadler’s Wells Theatre, Alexander Faris, cond.

• ANGEL 35903. L.P. $4.98.
• • ANGEL S 35903. SD. $5.98.

June Bronhill is a delectable Euridice, and Alan Crofou a wryly funny King of the Boeotians for the duration of his one song. The music itself, of course, is lifting and bracing, and is well played here by the Sadler’s Wells orchestra. On the other hand, the joke wears pretty thin quick, and the English lyrics seem merely clever solutions to an impossibly coy problem. The Concerto Duet, in fact, bears a disquieting resemblance to one of those dreary TV skits in which classical heroes are shown to be (ho, ho!) domestic strawheads. In any event, nearly all the music is available elsewhere (and not merely as segments of Giselle Pasipinciple—there are vocal excerpts on Pathe and Renaissance). Angel bills this as “Offenbuck’s Racy Romp.”

C.L.O.


PROKOFIEV: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 3, in C, Op. 26

+Ravel: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in D (for the left hand)

John Browning, piano; Philharmonia Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond.

• CAPITOL P 8543. L.P. $4.98.
• • CAPITOL SP 8543. SD. $5.98.

John Browning’s unbridled performance of the Prokofiev masterpiece captures to perfection the caustic bite so essential to this music. Like Van Cliburn in his recent RCA Victor release, Browning favors rather leisurely tempos; but whereas Cliburn merely uses the easy pace I have ever heard, with stodgy results, the present artist takes advantage of the leeway thus given him to furnish tremendous accent and stress. Furthermore, Browning’s phrases are shaped with conviction and character, and he re-

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The performance of the Ravel emphasizes the dynamic, ruthless side of the piece. With Browning at the helm, one is constantly reminded of huge metal structures, skyscrapers, welding machines, and other uniquely twentieth-century phenomena. Samson François, on his Angel disc, also gives a most dynamic rendition, but his reading is tempered with a bit more color and nostalgia than Browning’s. Either way is valid.

Leinsdorf and the Philharmonia give fiercely efficient orchestral support to Browning, with the brass in particular, notable for its extraordinary lung power. The piano-orchestra balance is exemplary (that of the Ravel certainly better achieved than in the François recording). The stereo has brilliant details but the LP perhaps more aural subtlety. H.G.


RAVEL: Jeux d’eau; Mirrors: No. 4, Alborada del gracioso; No. 5, La vallée des cloches—See Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition.

RIEGER: Concerto for Piano and Woodwind Quintet, Op. 53
‡Poulenc: Sextet for Piano and Woodwind Quintet

Frank Glazer, piano; New York Woodwind Quintet.

• CONCERT DISC CS 221. SD. $5.98.

Riegger’s Concerto has a magnificent finale in the vigorous, intensely rhythmical manner of his famous New Dance: the other two movements sound as if they had been written to pad the piece out. The famous sextet by Poulenc scarcely requires comment; it is in the extremely tuneful, wide-eyed, false-naive manner with which this composer won his reputation, but which, for better or worse, he has since outgrown. Performances are first-class and recordings are out of this world, as woodwind recordings are likely to be. A.F.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Scheherazade, Op. 35
‡Borodin: Prince Igor: Polovtsian Dances

Loran Fenyves, violin; Choeur des Jeunes et Choeur de Radio Lusanne (in the Borodin); Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Ernest Ansermet, cond.

• LONDON CM 9281. L.P. $4.98.

For a feature review of this recording, see page 80.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: The Tale of the Invisible City of Kitezh

N. Rozhdestvenskaya (s), Fevronia; V. Pavlovsky (t), Prince Veselovsky; D. Tarkhov (t), Grishka Kutema; Ivan Petrov (bs), Prince Yuri; et al. U.S.S.R. Radio Chorus and Orchestra, Vassily Nebolsin, cond.

• MK-ARTA 209 D. Four LP. $23.92.

We now have two of Rimsky-Korsakov’s...
significant fairy-tale operas in complex Russian versions—Tsar Saltan and Invisible City of Kitezh. Let us hope that Snow Maiden, Sadko, and Le Coq d'or will follow soon. In Kitezh, Rimsky-Korsakov was obviously attempting a most ambitious and important work. Its plot is too complex to recount here, but it resolves itself into this pattern: a young maid, Fevronia, lives with the animals of the forest and is at harmony with Nature and Earth. The young Prince Vsevolod encounters her while on a hunt. They fall in love, and he decides to call her to Kitezh and marry her. As Fevronia's train proceeds towards Great Kitezh, however, it passes through Little Kitezh which is attacked and destroyed by Tartars. Fevronia is taken prisoner, and with her Grishka, a drunken cynic without hope or faith. Grishka betrays the City of Kitezh by leading the Tartars to it, but the prayers of Prince Yuri and the people, and the faith of Fevronia, are rewarded—a golden mist descends about the city, hiding it from view. Though the city is invisible, its reflection appears in the Lake Svety Yar; the Tartars, seeing this, flee in confusion. Kitezh is transformed into a heavenly city: Fevronia is summoned by the birds of Paradise and Happiness, Alkonost and Sirin, to an eternal life.

The essential conflict is between Fevronia and Grishka; if Rimsky proposed beauty as the ultimate good in Tsar Saltan, he proposes faith as the ultimate good in Kitezh. Grishka is a memorable figure. If he does not have the monumental stature of the great villains of the German or Italian lyric stage, it is because he does not act from evil strength, but from evil weakness—abject faithlessness and fear. His chief weapon is a cynical mockery, and he invokes not the deities of the underworld, but the miseries of the human condition. It is hard to restrain the feeling that he has the best of the argument (imagine what Brecht and Weill would have done with this material! One can view the whole thing as a well-orchestrated humbug), but that is inescapable. For Rimsky and his librettist, Vladimir Belsky, are apparently saying that salvation lies not through rationality (Grishka is the only rational character in Kitezh, unless we count the Tartar chieftains), but through an irrational faith that can be explained only in its own terms. The sound of the ocean that washes the enchanted Buyan pérdues Saltan; in Kitezh, it is the sound of the city's bells, combined with themes associated with Fevronia and her forest, that strikes the keynote.

Musically, the work is more consistently interesting than Saltan, even if it does not reach quite the level of that work's final interlude. The entire opening scene, consisting of a long solo for Fevronia and an even longer duet for Fevronia and Vsevolod, is exceptionally beautiful; Yuri's utterances have great nobility: Grishka is sharply characterized in the music; and the closing act, in which Fevronia feels the return of Nature's powers and is transported to the heavenly Kitezh, is magnificent. Fortunately, the three leading roles are very well taken, though the singing is less well than in the other roles. Particularly notable as Yuri, ruler of Kitezh, though his low notes make a rather poor showing. The soprano, N. Rozhdestvenskaya, has a bound, lush voice that one would not at all mind hearing in Verdi and Puccini. D. Tarkhov has a steady tenor, pinched but live-sounding, which is perfectly suited to Grishka's music, and his vocal acting is superb. V. Ivanovsky also is a serviceable tenor for the role of Vsevolod, and the other soloists — especially First-Father — are excellent.

The orchestra and chorus under Nebolsin do their work well enough, but the sound leaves much to be desired. There is considerable distortion on the high end, if I found the use of the high filter imperative), and a long scene between Fevronia and Grishka is totally ruined by the poor recording. In general, though, not even this negative factor, nor the regrettable absence of a libretto, can offset the enjoyment that this work of Rimsky's operas operable should derive from the work. C.L.O.

RODRIGO: Concerto galante  
†Mennin: Symphony No. 5
Grace Whitney, cello (in the Rodrigo); Louisville Orchestra, Robert Whitney, cond.
LOUISVILLE LOU 613. LP. Available on special order only.

The blind composer Joaquin Rodrigo has a fine, baritone feeling for folk music and the courtly atmosphere of the distant past in Spain. He has expressed this particularly well in a series of works for guitar and orchestra, one of which, the Concierto de Aranjuez, is a masterwork and very popular to boot. The Concierto galante is rather similar—light in vein and in orchestration, full of folk tunes and nostalgia but surprisingly "modern" at the proper moments. Rodrigo takes nothing too seriously except the craftsmanship with which his singing view of things is much appreciated. The performance, with the Louisville Orchestra's first cellist as soloist, is excellent, and the recording may well be the best in the entire Louisville series.

Peter Mennin's Fifth Symphony, on the other side, is impeccably clean in texture, perfectly proportioned, and as zestful and invigorating as a cold needle shower on an August day. It is the very model of the modern American symphony of the more conservative persuasion, with its roots in Harris and Hindemith. That type of thing is becoming history now—the symphony was written in 1950—but some moments of other species, like this one, may appear with time. The performance is first-class and the recording adequate. A.F.

SCHOENBERG: Verklarte Nacht, Op. 4
†Fauré: La Bonne Chanson, Op. 61

Martial Singer, baritone (in the Fauré); Marlboro Ensemble.
COLUMBIA ML 5644. LP. $4.98.
COLUMBIA MS 6244. SD. $5.98.

One of Columbia's series entitled "Chamber Music from Marlboro," this disc offers Verklarte Nacht in its original sextet version. The sextet version is more plastic, colorful, and expressive than the high for string orchestra which one commonly hears, and the present performance is full of rich and dramatic expression. But that kind of novel interpretation or recording, it reminds me of nothing so much as one of those still lifes wherein here and there does a football and apples as big as Volkswagens.

The version of La Bonne Chanson provided here will interest lovers of Fauré. The famous song cycle is re-
corded in a most unusual arrangement, with a string quartet added to the piano in the accompaniment. According to the jacket notes, this version was advertised on the cover of the original voice-and-piano edition but was never published, and Singher possesses a unique set of manuscript parts for it. To my taste, adding the strings does the cycle no good at all. Fauré tends to be oversweet in his songs, and the fiddles only make La Bonne Chanson that much more saccharine. The performance of this work is quite good, however, and so is the recording.

A.F.


**SCHUBERT: Deutsche Messe, in F; Kyrie; Salve Regina**

Regensburger Domspatzen and Cathedral Choir; Bavarian Radio Orchestra, Theobald Schrems, cond.

- Deutsche Grammophon LPM 18676. LP. $5.98.
- Deutsche Grammophon SLP 138676. SD. $6.98.

Schubert’s German Mass was written when the composer was about to enter the final year of his brief life. It is in German rather than Latin, and the form is more like a series of hymns or choral verses than the usual sung Mass. Parts of it are very beautiful, although the total effect is quite different from that of most Masses by a great composer. If simplicity, sincere faith, and fine melodic writing will suffice to please you, this is a work easily cherished for its abundance of those virtues. The performance is a very good one, made all the more effective by exceptionally successful recording.

The two other works come from Schubert’s sixteenth and seventeenth year, respectively, and are chiefly of interest for what they prophecy of the masterpieces to come.

R.C.M.

**SCHUBERT: Octet for Strings and Winds, in F, Op. 166**

Harold Siegel, double bass; Fine Arts String Quartet; Members of the New York Woodwind Quartet (David Glazer, clarinet; Arthur Weinburg, bassoon; John Barrows, horn).

- ConcertoDisc CS 220. SD. $4.98.

With the possible exception of the Mozart Clarinet Quintet, I can think of no chamber music work with more universal appeal for novice and aficionados alike than the Schubert Octet, despite the fact that it is one of the longest chamber works in the entire literature. Nor can I imagine a more felicitous performance than that accorded it on this record. Not only is it full of the proper joie de vivre with which this music abounds, but each member of the ensemble plays with such expressiveness and beauty of tone that every note is sheer pleasure. The stereo distribution is most natural, too, without too much pinning of individual instruments. London’s earlier stereo recording by the Vienna Octet may be a bit more polished, but that version sounds routine when it is compared to the present really outstanding interpretation.

P.A.

Antonin Dvorak’s name is one of the most familiar in all music. Yet few have explored this master’s vast output beyond the “New World” Symphony. Even informed musicians were surprised and delighted to learn that Dvorak composed Nine Symphonies! Artia has now provided the adventurous listener with the unprecedented opportunity to discover a comparatively unknown world of musical treasures by making the complete Symphonies of Dvorak available on records for the first time. These, as well as many other musical masterpieces, are brilliantly and authoritatively performed by the leading conductors and orchestras of the composer’s native Czechoslovakia.

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**AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE**

Sept. 8, is the 120th Anniversary of the birth of Dvorak

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CIRCLE 10 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
Schubert: Trio for Piano and Strings, No. 2, in E flat, Op. 100
Alma Trio.
- DECCA DL 10033. LP. $4.98.
- • DECCA DL 710033. SD. $5.98.

This recording marks the stereo debut for the Schubert E flat major Trio, one of the supreme joys of the chamber music repertoire. Though the Alma Trio is a thoroughly routine ensemble, it plays this work in anything but routine fashion. There is attention to every fine detail, coupled with a good sense of phrasing and of dramatic tension where that quality is required. This Trio has long been in need of a modern recording, and the present one, clean-sounding in mono and naturally laid out in the stereophonic version, fills the bill very well indeed. P.A.


Schuller: Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee
†Felter: Contrasts

Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond.
- • MERCURY MG 50282. LP. $4.98.
- • MERCURY SR 90282. SD. $5.98.

This is the first recording to come out of the American Music Center’s Commissioning Series (a three-year experiment financed by the Ford Foundation) and it does not. I am afraid, reflect very highly on those—presumably the conductors of the participating orchestras—who actually managed the plan.

Gunther Schuller’s Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee is the cutest piece that has come along since people stopped writing songs on poems by Ogden Nash. A painting by Klee called Antique Harmonies brings out—you’ve guessed it—some antique harmonies. Klee’s Little Blue Devil inspires, of all things, a blues; and his Twittering Machine gives rise to some music that twitters. So it goes. Paul Felter’s Contrasts, on the other side, is a breezy neoclassical symphony in four movements. The first movement is especially brazen, after that the piece runs down like a clock, or at least to my ear it seems to.

Recording, as is always the case with Mercury and the Minneapolis Symphony, is as fine as it comes. The interpretation sounds excellent in both cases, and in both cases it probably is. A.F.

Seeler: Symphony No. 1, Op. 23
†Seeler: Elegy for Viola and Small Orchestra; Three Fragments from “A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man”

London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond. (in the Symphony), Cecil Aronowitz, viola; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Matyas Seiber, cond. (in the Elegy), Piers, speaker; Melos Ensemble, Dorian Singers, Matyas Seiber, cond. (in Three Fragments).
- • LONDON EL 267. LP. $4.98.
- • LONDON CS 6196. SD. $5.98.

Humphrey Seeler, who was born in 1913, and Matyas Seiber, who was born ten years before that, have both been fixtures on the English musical scene for many years: they have both worked performed at all the international festivals, and are generally among the best-known and most widely respected composers in Europe. Now the American public too will be privileged to reckon with them as major forces on the international scene, thanks to the present London disc.

The Symphony by Seeler (his first, written in 1952–53) is a 12-tone composition based on a row, first used by Werre, that goes back ultimately to B-A-C-H. It is a very large work—in one movement, four movements, in any case. It depends upon how you look at it—and it has the grand, heroic accent that characterizes a symphony in the great tradition. Gordon Stewart, who provides the jacket notes, calls Seeler a Romantic, and the depth, weight, and power of sound are romantic attributes, Stewart is certainly right. The Symphony also has the air (and, I am quite sure, the substance) of a profound intellectual achievement, and that also serves to place it in the great line.

For many years it seemed that Vaughan Williams alone was capable of providing British music with symphonies of truly major proportions, but it is apparent that Vaughan Williams has a successor. I hasten to add that Seeler’s idiom does not resemble that of Vaughan Williams in the slightest. If Seeler resembles anybody, it is Alban Berg, with whom he shares a similar gift for warm lyricism and gorgeous orchestral color within the 12-tone framework. My point is that the musical personality which finds expression here is as authoritative, individual, and commanding as that of the two earlier twentieth-century giants just mentioned.

Seeler’s Elegy, composed in 1954, is a rather short and quite beautiful piece, not in the 12-tone system, but basically tonal and akin in spirit to Hindemith’s famous Trauermusik, for viola and strings. His Three Fragments, dating from 1958, is, however, like nothing else on earth. In this work the speaker—here none other than the great Peter Pears—recites passages from Joyce’s novel in a manner related, if distantly, to Schoenberg’s Pelleas und Melisande. The second of the three movements is a very violent one labeled Fervor. Around this, however, are two slow movements in which the ensemble lays great stress on ecstatic, shimmering, and mysterious effects, with the heavenly pianissimo of a wordless chorus, the bright trembling of the vibraphone, and richly colored solo lines of flute and bass clarinet to the fore. This score, like the Searle symphony, employs the 12-tone system, and its lack of tonal center has much to do with its diffused, floating, ethereal effect.

In these three works is the music we have been waiting for through so many tedious hours at Composers’ Forum concerts, modern music festivals, and the like. We have put up with a lot of experiment in the hope that something fully ripened would result, and it has. If music like that of Searle and Seeler is what future generations will remember of modern music, our time will be extremely well served.

Performances are beyond criticism, and recordings are excellent. The Melos Ensemble tends to cover the speaking voice in the Fragments. Perhaps Seeler wanted that way; in any case a text sheet would not have been out of place, or at least some indication of the passages from Joyce that are employed.

STRAUSS, JOHANN II: "The Irresistible Mr. Strauss"


Philharmonia Promenade Orchestra, Henry Krips, cond.

- ANGEI 35873. LP. $4.98.
- • ANGEL S 35873. 78. $5.98.

The younger, "Australian" Krips must have an Indian sign on me: although I've never met the man or heard him in a live concert, on records he can do no wrong to my ears. The same qualities of illuminating insight, precisely planned yet never fussy organization of details, and resolutely vital orchestral playing that distinguished his earlier Waldbuehle, Suppé, and two "Viennese Dances" programs are still more evident here—where even the most familiar pieces are given limply fresh interpretative life as well as recorded performances which make most others (even by far more celebrated conductors) seem careless, pedestrian, or pretentious. Furthermore, Krips again spices his program with a discovery: here the long and varied, irresistibly danceable Quadrille on Verdi themes, to the best of my knowledge never recorded before. And for sheer charm of tonal coloring and warmth, plasticly contoured sonorities, the Krips-inspired Philharmonia Promenade Orchestra is quite incomparable either in Angel's purest monophony or its even more luminous stereo.

R.D.D.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: Don Quixote, Op. 35

Pierre Fournier, cello; Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond.

- EPIC LC 3786. LP. $4.98.
- • EPIC BC 1135. 78. $5.98.

There is no question that this set dominates the current listings, although that is a somewhat empty victory since the heaviest recent competition (Reiner's edition) has been withdrawn. It is therefore in order to add that Szell and Fournier offer a performance that would have remained praiseworthy even in such company as the composer's own recording of his wise and splendid score. Possibly the most successful large-scale set of orchestral variations ever written, Don Quixote is unique in its ability to present a cast of characters by purely instrumental means. It is a tragicomic opera without singers. For me, no other instrumental work of Strauss seems to wear so well—which is perhaps a way of saying that none of the rest strikes so deeply into human fundamentals and treats them so understandingly.

Szell obviously knows the score to the last dotted semiquaver, and he plays it...
forthrightly as a drama. Though in command of an orchestra that reflects him like a mirror, he produces spectacular results captured here in equally spectacular stereo. (The mono set is equally fine in its own way, but Don Quixote is a work that profits so much from the second channel of stereophony that it is distressing not to have it.) In his work here Pierre Fournier seems to me to be precisely the right soloist, a peer among his peers rather than a star on the stage.

R.C.M.


Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Anatole Fistoulari, cond.
- London CM 9287. LP. $1.98 (for a limited time).
- London CS 6218. SD. $2.98 (for a limited time).

Most of the better-known sections of this popular ballet are included in Fistoulari's bright, exceptionally clean-lined reading. Though he has had wide experience as a ballet conductor, he prefers here to treat the music in concert fashion. The recorded sound is very good, with considerable spaciousness imparted by stereo, and the special price is attractively low. P.A.


American Art Quartet (in No. 10); Roth Quartet (in No. 13).
- Contemporary M 6008. LP. $4.98.
- Contemporary S 8008. SD. $5.98.

Toch is always skillful and interesting, if not invariably the most inspired of contemporary composers. The best thing here is the totally enchanting slow movement of the Tenth Quartet, which was written in the far-off, innocent days of 1921, when an adagio reminiscent of Dvořák could still be presented at a modern music festival and could stir the interest of the audience. The Thirteenth Quartet is done in a liberalized twelve-tone style, but the style is almost liberalized out of existence. Performances of both works are quite delightful, and the recordings are very good. A.F.

WAGNER: Der Fliegende Holländer

- RCA Victor LSC 6156. Three SD. $11.98.

For a feature review of this album, see page 161.


WILDER: Quintets for Winds: Nos. 3, 4, and 6

New York Woodwind Quintet.
- ConcertDisc M 1223. LP. $4.98.
- ConcertDisc CS 223. SD. $5.98.

Samuel Baron's notes on this disc expend a great deal of space drawing a parallel between Alec Wilder and Anton Reicha, the nineteenth-century composer of some two dozen quintets for woodwind instruments. The parallel is very precise. A.F.

**RECATLALS AND MISCELLANY**

"THE AMERICAN HARMONY"

University of Maryland Chapel Choir, Fagge Springmann, cond.
- Washington WR 418. LP. $4.98.
- Washington SWR 418. SD. $5.98.

For a feature review of this recording, see page 79.

BUDAPEST MADRIGAL ENSEMBLE: Madrigals and Motets

Budapest Madrigal Ensemble, Ferenc Szekeres, cond.
- Montrose MC 2054. LP. $3.98.
- Montrose MCS 2054. SD. $4.98.

How can they get so many wonderful things on a single record? All told, there are twenty-five compositions by fifteen different composers here. The list of these compositions is delightful, and the best are truly magnificent.

The first side is devoted almost entirely to masters of the past—Sacchelli, Vian- daniti, Jannequin, Lassus, and Certon, of the sixteenth century; Gesualdo and Monteverdi, of the seventeenth; Giardini, of the eighteenth; and, rather unexpectedly, Liszt, of the nineteenth. (How many choruses of Liszt have you ever heard?) The modern composers, who fill the last two bands on the first side and all of the second, are all Hungarian—Bartók, Kodály, and the more recent Ferenc Farkas, Lajos Bardos, Laszlo Lajtha, and Emil Petrovic.

The greatness of the old masters needs no discussion here; perhaps their works are sung more beautifully in Heaven but they certainly are not anywhere on earth. Among the modern composers, Bartók, represented here with some of his incomparable folk song arrangements, and Kodály, who is represented with a variety of works, sacred and secular, remain supreme. The other writers are quite respectable; and if you never hear anything worse, your fate will be pleasant indeed.

The recording is as good as the singing, which is to say superb, but there was some surface scratch on the review copy.

A.F.

CLASSICAL INDIAN MUSIC

K. S. Narayananswami and Narayana Menon, veenas; Palghat Raghu, mridangam; Yehudi Menuhin, speaker.
- London CM 9282. LP. $4.98.
- London CS 6213. SD. $5.98.

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New York Philharmonic, Andre Kostelanetz, cond.
- COLUMBIA ML 5607. LP: $4.98.
- COLUMBIA MS 6207. SD: $5.98.

The varied fare on this record is typical of the sort of music Kostelanetz and the New York Philharmonic offer on their Saturday night pop concerts in Carnegie Hall. It is worth attention, if only for the two novelties it contains. The Tchaikovskiy Marche solennelle, properly pompous and with just a suggestion of the ballet in it, was written for the coronation of Czar Alexander III in 1883. It also concluded by the composer at the opening of Carnegie Hall in 1891. Walton's Johannesburg Festival Overture, also typical of its composer's output, is bright and robust. Save for a slowish reading of Fêtes, Kostelanetz performs all the music with verve, and Columbia has provided first-rate sound.

P.A.

MANUEL LOPEZ RAMOS: "La Guitarra Clásica"

- BOSTON B 216. LP: $4.98.

The young guitarist who makes his disc debut here was born in Buenos Aires in 1929, studied with Miguel Michelone, and has achieved with great success since 1952. It is quite apparent from the outset of this recital that he is a master of his instrument and a musician of importance.

The Segovia transcription of the Bach masterpiece is a tremendous tour de force. All the prodigious technical and musical demands of the original are present here, and added to them are the limitations of the strummed, rather than the bowed, instrument. Señor López is conscious of control of the technical problems, and projects our attention where it should be: on the music. He gives a vibrant, dynamic performance with color, control and rhythmic vigor. But in addition to the driving impetuosity of the playing, there is eloquent breadth and profundity.

The Castelnuovo-Tedesco Hommage a Boccherini Sonata was written for Segovia, and, as with the Bach Chaconne, it too has been recorded by that master. I found Lopez's rendition to be not one whit inferior. As a matter of fact, I rather prefer the slightly faster tempos and the more intimate, recorded sound and the present LP. The Tansman Barcarole is lilting and pleasant, the Ponce (which the composer passed off as a work of Berlioz) very well recorded and on the present LP. The Tansman Barcarole is lilting and pleasant, the Ponce (which the composer passed off as a work of Berlioz) very well recorded and on the present LP. The Tansman Barcarole is lilting and pleasant, the Ponce (which the composer passed off as a work of Berlioz) very well recorded and on the present LP. The Tansman Barcarole is lilting and pleasant, the Ponce (which the composer passed off as a work of Berlioz) very well recorded and on the present LP.

The briskly played introduction to Amelia Goes to the Ball is a welcome addition to the catalogue, and the Traviata prelude is neatly rendered. Otherwise, Mr. Schippers' addiction to crude underlining of bruss and percussion, and his selection of tempos that would have left Toscanini huffing far to the rear, are fatal to this music. The results are not even exciting, but merely nervous-sounding and rather ugly, with none of the affection or sense of good humor that should inform the Rossini, Smetana, and Mozart selections, or of the overall sweep that must be present in the Verdi or Weber.

The disc's gesture toward eclecticism is in the introductions to the Traviata and Don Quixote, discussed in the jacket notes as an alleged musical descendant of Wagner. It makes pleasant, maudlin listening. Its primary by Alessandro Scarlatti) urban and gracious. They are both played with complete fluency, wide dynamic range, and plenty of character. The swirling tempests of the Tárrega Etude, (very reminiscent of a Paganini caprice) are given with hair-raising brilliance and bring the disc to a rousing conclusion.

The sound is very close-to, and the guitarist's gutty, plangent fortissimo and cushioned dolce are splendidly captured.

September 1961

IGOR MARKEVITCH: Russian Orchestral Music


Lamoureux Orchestra, Igor Markevitch, cond.
- DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON LPM 19225. LP: $5.98.
- DEUTSCHL. GRAMMOPHON SLPM 136225. SD: $6.98.

Two novelties brighten this otherwise dismal disc. One is Francesca da Rimini in one of its very rare uncut performances. The other is a first recording of a late work by Anatol Liadov, the symphonic picture Fragment de l'Apocalypse, whose echoes of the Russian Orthodox Church recall Rimsky-Korsakov's Russian Easter Overture. But these are scintillant attributes which weighed against Markevitch's often colorless, often insensitive interpretations, into which sudden loud passages and instrumental imbalances are allowed to intrude. Furthermore, the execution of some of the difficult runs in Francesca is not all it should be from a major orchestra. Some matching colorless sound in mono is greatly enlivened in stereo, which is marked by fairly wide channel separation.

P.A.

THOMAS SCHIPPERS: Opera Overtures


Columbia Symphony, Thomas Schippers, cond.
- COLUMBIA ML 5638. LP: $4.98.
- COLUMBIA MS 6238. SD: $5.98.

The briskly played introduction to Amelia Goes to the Ball is a welcome addition to the catalogue, and the Traviata prelude is neatly rendered. Otherwise, Mr. Schippers' addiction to crude underlining of bruss and percussion, and his selection of tempos that would have left Toscanini huffing far to the rear, are fatal to this music. The results are not even exciting, but merely nervous-sounding and rather ugly, with none of the affection or sense of good humor that should inform the Rossini, Smetana, and Mozart selections, or of the overall sweep that must be present in the Verdi or Weber.

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The sound is very close-to, and the guitarist's gutty, plangent fortissimo and cushioned dolce are splendidly captured.

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"THIS DYNETIC® STYLUS IS PRECISION MANUFACTURED BY SHURE BROTHERS, INC."
From *Blues in the Night*, the opening number on this wonderful program of Harold Arlen songs, it is immediately apparent that the First Lady of Song has discovered a far more congenial field of show music in which to work than she covered in the Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Berlin, and Gershwin "Song Books." In those issues, her performances struck me as pleasant but superficial, as if she were possibly intimidated by the sophistication of many of the lyrics. To me, her singing there lacked the freedom, the poise, and the verve I associate with her work. It is a vastly different story where these Arlen songs are concerned. On all of them she sounds wonderfully relaxed, completely attuned to the feeling of every song, free to indulge in improvisatory flights dictated by her own appreciation of any number—and in the course of having a ball for herself, singing her heart out.

In a program of twenty-four songs, where everything is so absolutely right and where many of the performances merit the adjective "definitive," a reviewer can do little but mention certain performances which he considers outstanding. For proof that Miss Fitzgerald is a ballad singer without a peer, there is her deceptively simple and completely effortless singing of *Ill Wind*, one of Arlen's most beautiful songs, or the exceptional way in which she handles the long melodic line of *This Time the Dream's on Me.* Then
too it is certainly going to be a long time before anyone matches, let alone surpasses, Ella’s superb performance of The Man That Got Away, which some remarkable vocal coloration on her part invests with a feeling of weary disillusionment. And as a singer, she matches Arlen’s prodigious range as a composer, which runs all the way from ballads and blues to rhythm numbers and white spirituals. Both Get Happy and Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive fall into the last category, and Miss Fitzgerald sings both with a driving sense of fervor and emotion that can be literally felt. On the lighter side, I particularly admired her wonderfully fey performance of Let’s Take a Walk Around the Block, where she suddenly sounds as if she were a girl of twenty and somehow reminds one of Celeste Holm in Oklahoma (particularly in the verse, which bears some resemblance to I Can’t Say No). The singer is quite obviously thoroughly enjoying Harburg’s clever and very whimsical lyric.

In my opinion the titles mentioned above were the highlights of a marvelous program, but others will undoubtedly have their own favorites. In any case I can assure prospective listeners that there is nothing but sheer pleasure ahead of them. I might also mention that Miss Fitzgerald. God bless her, sings most of the verses to these songs. Other singers, please copy. In fact the only reservation I have about the whole production concerns the Billy May arrangements: they incline to be pretty brassy—in other words, his usual style—and although they seem reasonably well suited to most of the songs, there were times when I wished he were less noisy. But Ella and Arlen are completely triumphant. J.F.I.

A Quintessential Parisienne
In Songs of Agony and Ecstasy

"More Piaf of Paris." Edith Piaf; Orchestra, Robert Chauvigny, cond. Capitol T 10283, $3.98 (LP); ST 10283, $4.98 (SD).

ON A BLEAK DECEMBER DAY in 1959, the singing career of Edith Piaf reached a climax of sorts. Three surgical operations in that year alone had left her wan and exhausted for a scheduled concert at Dreux in northern France. At curtain time, a doctor hurried into her dressing room and administered a sustaining injection. Half an hour later she stood alone on the stage, a single spotlight picking her out amid total darkness. As always, she wore a starkly simple black dress and no jewelry save for a gold crucifix at her throat. And as always, her fee for the performance was a flat $1,000.

She sang her typical songs of ecstasy and agony in the brilliantly harsh voice as famed in Moscow and San Francisco as in her native Paris, but an air of weariness overhung her performance; several times she faltered noticeably. At intermission, Robert Chauvigny, her accompanist for seventeen years, announced that he would refuse to play if she insisted upon continuing. She insisted, saying, "Let me sing. I will die if I do not sing. I have nothing else in life." Her electrician wept.

On stage once again, she finished her first song. Then, midway through the second—Ouragan (Hurricane)—she collapsed. The curtain dropped, but almost immediately she rose to her feet and waved it up again. Before a hushed audience, she went on to finish her program. Immediately afterwards, she was rushed to a Paris hospital.

Such is the measure of Edith Piaf.

The post-World War II years, the years of her fame, have not been kind to her. Her romance with dashing French boxer Marcel Cerdan ended tragically when he died in an airplane crash en route to the United States. A subsequent marriage ended in divorce. She has been hospitalized times without number. Little more than a year ago, Paris Jour published a photo of her haggard face under the headline: Edith Piaf Must Stop! But she told Paris Jour: "If I stop singing, I die."
Recurrent illness curtailed Piaf's activities through most of 1960, but on December 30, in Paris, she made a smashing comeback before a crowd of more than 2,000—including several cabinet ministers. This recording now offered by Capitol, "More Piaf of Paris," was taped shortly after her triumphant return. And the record itself is a triumph, a witness that time and stress have only deepened Piaf's art. Her emotions—and her extraordinary projection of them—rage more fiercely than ever. Her voice is clearer, stronger, surer. In short, she has matured to greatness.

Part of Piaf's appeal—beyond her superb vocal qualities—lies in the fact that she is a quintessential Parisienne. Her father was a street acrobat, and she herself sang for her supper on many a street corner. Her voice rings with the vivid realities of these same streets. It is a cry from the pulsing heart of the real Paris—the Paris of drab faubourgs, zinc bars, shabby cafes; the Paris of hopeful midinettes and streetwalkers with grieving eyes.

This recording frames a typical Piaf program. "Ou ragan" is a spectacular curtain raiser: in it her voice shapes a kind of wild fugue on toi and amour, rising to an almost unbearable emotional crescendo. On the other hand, C'est l'amour qui fait qu'on s'aime is all soft-voiced chagrin. Perhaps the finest of her songs, however, is Cri du Coeur, a driving, catchy melody that provides a beautiful showcase for the wry, civilized heartbeat of Jacques Prevert's lyrics.

This is absolutely the finest album Piaf has ever recorded and it will long serve as a cornerstone for any collection of French chansons. Both versions are excellent, with stereo giving the orchestral accompaniment greater breadth and depth.

O.B.B.

"Jane Morgan Sings the Big Hits from Broadway." Jane Morgan; Orchestra, Frank Hunter, cond. Kapp KS 3247, $4.98 (SD).

The bare title of this recording gives no indication of the beauty and power that Jane Morgan has set herself. A compendium of show tunes written between 1904 and 1959, ranging from the Cohan corn of Give My Regards to Broadway to that epitome of Broadway sweetness, Rodgers' Sound of Music, the album also includes several songs originally written for male voice. Miss Morgan makes light of the latter problem, in richly sung versions of You'll Never Walk Alone and The Surrey with the Fringe on Top, and turns the rest of the program, a mixture of ballads and rhythm numbers, into a completely successful singing spree. In some numbers she is assisted by a male chorus, and throughout by the Frank Hunter orchestra in arrangements which, because of their emphasis on soft strings, might well have been written by Axel Stordahl. J.F.I.


Here certainly is one of the world's great choruses. On the strength of this recording it may fairly be said that the future of the chorus is well assured. Director Bogdan Babich has shaped these eighty voices into an instrument of taut discipline and breath-taking virtuosity. This program, taped in Carnegie Hall, preserves an actual performance of the chorus during a recent American tour. Their selections range from Carl Orff's Catulli Carmina through American, Russian, and Italian folk ballads to a stunningly sung group of Yugoslav traditional airs. Of the last, perhaps the most haunting is the religious anthem Vspojte Gospopi (Sing Unto The Lord a New Song), which recalls certain musical configurations of Leos Janacek's dazzling Slavonic Mass. Top-drawer engineering too.

O.B.B.

"My Gypsy Love," Frank Chacksfield and His Orchestra. Richmond B 20093, $1.98 (LP); S 30903, $2.98 (SD).

Virtuosos as they often are, native gypsy fiddlers seldom can match the sleekness of Chacksfield's string players and never are gathered together in so large a choir. Moni's Cuardia, the Gypsy Moon, and Tzigane are particularly well played here, where the always rich Chacksfield orchestral colorings are often effectively spiced by the unique metallic twang of a cymbalum, but all the selections are effectively done. Throughout, the warmly-luent recording matches the best standards of far more expensive releases, in its more sharply focused and higher-level monophonic edition no less than in its airily atmospheric stereo version. Either one is a "best buy" in light musical entertainment. R.D.D.

"The Marches I Played on the Old Ragtime Piano." Eubie Blake, piano. 20th Century Fox 3039, $3.98 (LP).

The indifferent sound here cannot conceal the fact that this is some of the most exuberant and authentic ragtime piano playing to be found on records. Veteran Eubie Blake, who was playing ragtime almost sixty years ago, goes back for once basic in the ragtime's repertoire, the marches of Sousa, Bigelow, and Hall, and he plays them with a vitality and rhythmic strength simply amazing for a man of his years. Promoting variety in the program are two fine examples of what was once something of a ragtime player's specialty, "ragging the classics," applied on this occasion to Bizet's Toreador Song and one of Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words. On the final band, Blake talks about some of his personal piano "tricks"—back bass, his use of grace notes, his use of the left hand and its importance in ragtime. His talk is a fascinating little dissertation to wind up a highly unusual disc.

J.F.I.

"The Premise." Original Cast Recording. Vanguard VRS 9092, $4.98 (LP).

Heartening back four hundred years to the Italian commedia dell'arte and its tradition of spontaneous dialogue and acting, actor-director Theodore J. Flicker has blended this forgotten form with a spirit of broad satire to create something wholly new in modern theatre. In a Greenwich Village basement café (with no scenery and no props), Flicker and his troupe of three actors—Joan Darling, George Segal, and Thomas Aldridge—shape short sketches on the basis of a suggestion from the audience or a personal inspiration. Each sketch is improvised on the spot, and even repetitions on the same theme are never quite alike. Naturally, not every situation is developed with uniform skill, but when Flicker's sophisticated vignettes succeed, they do so explosively. The First Men on the Moon and A Famous TV Interview, for instance, are minor classics, and on the whole you will find "The Premise" original, stimulating, and frequently hilarious entertainment. O.B.B.


Although as a program of religious music this disc does not quite fit into the "Lighter Side" category, its sonic qualities are so outstanding that it warrants attention here on that basis alone. The small but robust male chorus sings well, the British band (apparently a free-lance group) plays with notable skill, and the intricate arrangements are conducted with marked precision and assurance; but what makes this program so exhilarating to audiophile ears is the truly magnificent bite, impact, and authenticity of its broadly recorded and reverberant sonorities. These are particularly impressive in the Leidzen transcriptions (Bach Toccata and Fugue in D minor, Lead Kindly Light, and the Duxology) for band alone. Yet the
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"The Hits of Benny Goodman." Benny Goodman and His Orchestra. Capitol DT 1514, $4.98 ("Diaphonic").

When this Goodman concert was issued in 1955 as B. G. in Hi-Fi (Capitol W 565), High Fidelity's reviewer J. S. Wilson praised it as "The best new recording done by Goodman in years." Now decked out in Capitol's latest technical development, "Diaphonic Sound," these swinging versions of standards from the Goodman book sound even more exciting than they did on the original issue. The new process has given them a fatter and more spacious sound, with good depth and even distribution from speaker to speaker. While not, of course, stereo (although it can be played only on stereo equipment), this reissue is highly welcome indeed.

“A Night with Rudolf Friml." Earl Wrightson: Lois Hunt: Orchestra, Frank DeVol, cond. Columbia CL 1630. $3.98 (LP); CS 4340, $4.98 (SD).

The two singers continue their exploration of the operetta repertoire, already productive of enjoyable concerts of Kern and Romberg. For the Kern songs this luciously sung program of show tunes by Rudolf Friml. With the solo numbers more evenly distributed than on the earlier issues, Miss Hunt emerges from her secondary role to one of equal importance with her partner. Her voice—a light, lyric soprano—is well suited to the soaring lines of Friml's early songs, and she is heard at her best in charming performances of Giunna mia and L'Amour, two covering of the Vagabonds is, of course, tailor-made for the rousing baritone of Earl Wrightson, and he turns in a stirring account of it, though he is just as effective in the jaunty Donkey Serenade and in evoking the tender mood of Ma belle. And when the singers combine their voices in a number of duets, mostly from Friml operettas of the Twenties, the result is light opera singing at its best. Substantial support from the DeVol orchestra, whose conductor has provided arrangements full of dexter touches. The Columbia sound is excellent, although the stereo version seems to have too much echo.

"Polynia Savrdi Sings of Greece." Polynia Savrdi, St/And SLP 405, $4.98 (LP). Polynia Savrdi's six solo etchings of these Greek traditional songs with the economy, understatement, and cumulative loveliness a Japanese artist gives to a painting. A piano and flute accompaniment subtly underscores the translucent beauty of melodies that fall upon the ear with a faint Oriental exoticism. Here is a truly unique and beguiling world of music. You will never regret entering it. Unhappily, neither texts nor translations grace the album. O.B.B.

"Swingin' Band." Carlton LP 12139, $3.98 (LP); STLP 12139, $4.98 (SD).

Whatever else may be said of Carlton's "Swingin' Band," it does not provide any personell information whatever, and even its jacket's technical notes (and illustration) are exclusively concerned with the Sound and Studio's monstrous "15-channel multidirectional automatic selector and stereo switcher" presumably employed here. But the anonymous performances (especially by the virtuosos if not especially imaginative soloists) exhibit almost overpowering gusto. Despite its frequent raucousness it is frantically jumping playing (in Everything I've Got Belongs to You, Southern Fried, Undecided, Little Girl, etc.) is mightily done, while the at least partially relaxed pieces (End of a Love Affair, Give a Listen, Baby Come Here) and the occasional quiet passages elsewhere are pleasantly attractive. But even the toughest ears are likely to find the strippiness excessive in nonophony; the stereo version, for all its acoustical dryness and exaggerated channel separation, makes them a bit easier to take.

"The Music of Jerome Kern." Melachrino Strings and Orchestra. RCA Victor LPM 2283, $3.98 (LP); LSP 2283, $4.98 (SD).

One again, as in his recent recording of Victor Herbert music, the English conductor shows more consideration for an American composer's music than do many of our domestic arrangers and conductors. These are, it is true, some of the most familiar of all Kern songs, but I have seldom heard them treated musically or tastefully. Over exemplary string arrangements, the Kern melodies float gracefully and pleasingly, in sound that is velvety smooth. Now, will someone interest Melachrino in lesser-known Kern—say, songs from the Princess Theatre musicals? That would be something to watch for.


The intriguing idea of letting the music go round and round so that it comes out here (left speaker) and later out there (right speaker), thus creating the illusion of revolving sound, is brilliantly successful on two bands of the stereo edition of this concert of light music. In the Waltz from Carmen and in Oscar Strauss's La Ronde the sense of circular motion is so vivid that one almost feels impelled to reach out to grab the brass band. Non-stereo owners will naturally be deprived of this experience, since the effect cannot be achieved on the mono version, but that should not prevent them from enjoying Irving's pertly Gypsy Clown's Dance, the lilting waltz from Khachaturian's Masquerade Suite, or even the Von Trapp Family's famous duet with Douglas Gamley which makes an Oberon to almost everyone named Strauss. (I'm afraid, though, that I couldn't find any musical ideas in Don Banks's Conny Island bearing any relation to New York's playground; to me, it all sounded like A Day on the Beach and The Naughty Song.) Anyway, the sound is extremely vibrant, but the merry-go-round stereo sound is vastly more impressive.

J.F.I.
“Souvenirs from Sweden.” Various performers. Epic LF 18010. $3.98 (LP). Sweden is cursed with the world's highest per capita suicide rate--due, claim most Swedes, to the long and gloomy winters. As though to compensate for this somberness, Swedish popular music is shot through with sunny melodies and the frothy rhythm of the waltz echoing throughout the land. Epic's neatly sliced cross section of present-day Swedish pop is, on the whole, a pleasant Northern fare. But flecks of haunting melancholy--notably Evar Täube's lovely "Pierina"--add effective counterpoint. Outstanding among the battery of popular performers gathered for this program is Ulla-Bella, whose mellow soprano caresses the ear. Superb sound. O.B.B.

“Carnival.” Selections. Living Strings. Johnny Douglas. cond. RCA Camden CAL 678. $1.98 (LP); CAS 678. $2.98 (SD). The British Douglas seems to be Camden's specially commissioned answer to the demand for a poor man's Mantovani or Melachrino. His quasi-symphonic orchestra (dominated by, but not exclusively confined to, strings) cascades and emotions earnestly enough, but generally sounds more phlegmatic and less polished than its high-powered chromium-plated models. Here, however, in excerpts from the Broadway show Carnival (released in the original cast recording by M-G-M), Douglas' group does proffer more attractive materials than in most of its earlier releases and is even stimulated to some vitality in a brisk "Yes, My Heart, heavily swinging Direct From Vienna" and a cerebral "Ratatoo Candy." Delicious Fish in which brightly pyramiding trumpets are effectively contrasted with suave cellos. The mono version is the better bargain, since the SD thickness at the low end and in channel balance lags on the port side. R.D.D.

“Welcome to Tyrol.” Epic LF 18013, $3.98 (LP); BF 19013. $4.98 (SD). As anybody who has ever attended a Folk-Fest in Innsbruck, Arlberg, or Kitzbuhel knows, the Tyrolese throw themselves into these affairs with such abandon that it soon becomes a question as to who is more exhausted, the performers or the audience. One of the pleasures of this recording is that the visual strain is removed, though the musical pleasure is retained. The record offers no performance of the strumorous Schuhplattler nor of any Alpenhorn contest, and I am a little puzzled by the appearance of Robert Thaller and His Gang, who hail from Linz—about as far from the Tyrol as Boston is from New York; but there is a good deal of regional folk music and yodeling (which seems a good deal less ear-splitting than I recall), either solos, and the inevitable and lovable oom-pah-pah music of a Tyrolean band. The recording is excellent, and adds much to the pleasure of acquainting oneself with the folk music of a fascinating corner of Europe. I.F.I.

“Harper's Bazaar's Secret Formula for a Beautiful New You.” Nicholas Kounovsky, narrator; Bernie Leighton Ensemble. Capitol WAO 1522, $5.98 (LP); SWAO 1522, $6.95 (SD). Here are physical fitness, weight reduction, and relaxation exercises competing with those sponsored by Good Housekeeping Magazine for Columbia last November and similarly issued in an elaborately illustrated album complete with

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No calorie guide and weight tables, advice on dieting, etc. The drills themselves seem less strenuous than those in the earlier course, but if faithfully carried out should contribute very much to the student's health and poise—if not necessarily to a "new beauty" comparable with that of the shapely bathing-gal on the album cover. What gives this instruction course its distinctive character is that—in contrast to the businesslike directions of the Misses Conway and Rice for Good Housekeeping—by the suave Kounsky are almost hypnotically chanted to Leighton's seductively rhythmic musical accompaniments. Few susceptible students are likely to resist regimes so persuasive, especially in the atmospheric warmth of stereo.

"Polish Folk Songs," Polish Folk Song Ensemble: Polish Army Song and Dance Ensemble: Artia A.LP 184, $4.98 (LP).

Buffeted for the past six hundred years by the military and political crosswinds of Central Europe, Poland has still managed to preserve a unique musical heritage. Here, handstampedly presented, is a generous sampler of polkas, mazurkas, folk ballads. The Polish Folk Song Ensemble and their counterparts from the Polish Army perform with gusto and authority. The generally excellent recorded sound suffers from slightly muffled passages here and there. Artia's annotation is unusually informative, including texts and translations. O.B.B.

"Exotique." Whittemore and Lowe, duo-pianists. Capitol P 8550, $4.98 (LP); SP 8550, $5.98 (SD).

In the repertoire of music originally written for piano four hands, few compositions qualify for inclusion in a program to be entitled "Exotique." Thus, the two-piano team of Whittemore and Lowe have had to rely on other works, either piano reductions of orchestral compositions or extensions of music originally composed for solo piano. It is perhaps not out of place to say that the latter are generally far more successful. It is almost impossible for pianos, even when available, to create the same sensuous impression as Debussy or Ravel's orchestrations. On the other hand, Cyril Scott's once popular but now rather neglected Lute Land sounds doubly impressive in its new attire, as does Griffis' imaginatively conceived White Peacock. Two works are played as they were originally conceived, Rachmaninoff's Tears, the third section of his Suite No. 1, Op. 5 for two pianos, and Arnold Bax's mystical Postcard Fantasia. The performances throughout are marvelously well integrated and compellingly musical; and Capitol provides an extraordinarily rich piano sound.


This time around Roger Williams displays his acknowledged technical prowess in a series of pop divertissements culled from the music of Rachmaninoff, Korsakov, Gershwin, and Leroy Anderson among other composers. On the whole, this is an appealing program, but one which might have been even more so had the pianist cured his love of rubato, which turns such a number as o mio babbino caro, for instance, in a pretty saccharine affair. I much preferred his simple performance of the Caribbean calypso song Yellow Bird, and of a French number (new to me) called The Song of the Rain, which the hall favored. On the whole the performance is distinctively pleasant, providing a little evening listening in the peeling of rubber sheet on the harpsichord. I'd prefer to forget another French song, Marie, Marie, in the course of which a male chorus desists solely of the plea, Marie, Marie...Write to Me, Write to Me...surely the nadir in poetic inspiration. As always, it is given the pianist rich and glowing recorded sound.

"Echos of Spain." Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra, Carmen Dragon, cond. Capitol P 8275, $5.49 ("Duophonic").

"Songs of Stephen Foster." Roger Wagner, Chorale. Capitol P 8267, $5.49 ("Duophonic").


This links three such disparate releases are their "duophonic" processing from best-selling monophonic discs, the first two of which date back to 1954, the third to 1955. It has been made available for comparison, but the evidence of a separate demonstration sampler (not for public sale) in which some of the Foster selections were new old and new editions testifies to various obvious sonic clarifications and broadenings. Yet even where improvement is most marked (in the Foster program and especially its better separated men's and women's voices), the limitations of the medium are evident in the lack of acoustical spaciousness and floating quality—the quintessential hallmarks of true stereo. The enhancement of the voices does not eliminate some of the original constriction, but scarcely to the point where even uncritical ears can accept them as meeting the best present-day standards. In any case, all this metamorphosis processing strikes me as pretty pointless when it is expended (as here) on performances by artists who are still active and quite capable of recording them in authentic stereo.

Despite all this carping, however, the productions themselves are interesting, particularly to historically minded disciples: Dragon's for its first examples of the conductor/orchestrator's rich, colored trademark, the Ives, de Mille, and Grant's La Jalousie, Ponce's Exaltation, Padilla's El Relicario, etc.), which remain dramatically persuasive, although his straight performances (of Spain's, the Ritual Fire Dance, and Goyescas Intermezzo) reveal all the mannerisms and little of the assurance that distinguished Dragon's mature career; Wagner's for delightfully vivacious readings of the livelier Foster songs, including the seldom heard Katie Bell and De Glendy Banks, which are far superior to the overly sentimental lyric airs; Baxter's as a pioneering, if now seemingly tentative, exploration of the currently fashionable pseudo-exotic and prominent-percussion genres. R.D.D.

"The Versatile Burl Ives." Burl Ives; Anita Kerr Singers; Orchestra, Owen Bradley, cond. Decca DL 4152, $3.98 (LP); DI 74152, $4.98 (SD).

Burl Ives, that citizen of many parts, returns to vynilite in an eclectic program that ranges from the recent to the cheek. A loving attempt to authentic American folk song. Ives is, as ever, wholly engaging. He has not chosen his selections with noteworthy

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“Rockin’ and Drinkin’ Music,” Symphony de Paris, Jacques Metchen, cond. Norwood NS 100, $5.98 (SD). A new company devoted its first release to “originals” by its director, Roy Harvey, known mainly by his radio and TV back-ground scores. Skillfully enough turned, if far too elaborately orchestrated (and further “enhanced” by naïve natural sound effects), these pieces are seldom as humorous as the determinedly comic titles and annotations would suggest, although at a farewell Overture Working Overtune, Demon Rum, a Bar Fly travesty of Rimsky’s Bee, and a heavily derivative Leroy-Andersonish Off the Wagon polka) they do boast consider-able vivacity. The real distinction here is supplied by the brilliantly precise, colorful, and quite straight-faced per-formances by a forty-four-man orchestra, vibrantly recorded in well-spread and differ-entiated stereoism, but too closely miked for much natural acoustical warmth.

R.D.D.

“Basin Street East.” Peggy Lee; Orches-tra, Joe Harnell, cond. Capitol T 1520 $3.98 (LP). My enthusiasm for these Peggy Lee per-formances is several decibels lower than that of her enraptured night club audience, whose frenzied applause has been literally included on this disc. Usually a fine and dependable singer, Miss Lee has adopted, perhaps especially for this occasion, a vocal style that sounds dis-tressingly artificial. It is composed of coy vocal tricks, a breathy delivery (I assume this is supposed to sound sexy), and what so many singers consider their natural prerogative, the extemporaneous aside. It all gets pretty tiresome. In addition, I find much of her material banal, and in the case of the Rodgers-Romberg Friml medley, ill-advised. Even in Fever, a Lee staple, she fails to generate much heat as in the torrid version to be heard on All Aboard Again (Capitol T 1366). Miss Lee is shored up by the often ex-citing work of Joe Harnell and his mu-sicians—for me, the best thing on the record.

J.F.I.

“Sea Shanties.” Male Chorus of the Robert Shaw Chorale, Robert Shaw, cond. RCA Victor LM 2551, $4.98 (LP); LSC 2551, $5.98 (SD). From a purely vocal standpoint, it would be almost impossible to fault this album of hauling, capstan and windlass, foc’sle, and historical sea shanties. The male chorus has been drilled to respond to its leader’s every demand and it produces a lovely resonant sound, both in those shanties sung a cappella and those with guitar accompaniment. At all times, the interior choral balances are beautifully contrived and controlled. But having ad-mired all this, I can’t become very en-thusiastic about the group’s exposition of the material. The bloodless and so-phisticated performances reveal a little of the rusticity inherent in these songs of the sea.

J.F.I.

September 1961
Percussion Italiano. Charles Magnante, accordion, and His Ensemble. Grand Award GA 257, $4.98 (SD).

The leader's deft accordion is predominately here, but Magnante is given spirited support by three mandolins, two guitars, bass, piano, and no less than four percussionists in Italian pop song arrangements which (except perhaps in Me Eyes and Marinina) are rather incongruously overloaded with the sonic equivalents of junk jewelry. The curious blend of schmaltz, bounce, and clarinet is somewhat dirty but very vivid and stereotypically recorded. R.D.D.


I first heard the 78-rpm originals of this disc in the middle Forties and found them immensely moving. Pete Seeger and a small ensemble had cut "Songs of the Lincoln Battalion" in 1942 for the Asch label, and in 1940 Keynote had released "Six Songs for Democracy," recorded in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War by a German chorus under Ernst Busch recruited from the International Brigades. Now, observing the twenty-fifth anniversary of the commencement of the Spanish Rebellion, Folkways has issued a reprisal of both these renowned albums on a single LP.

From 1936 to 1939, Loyalist Spain was a political nightmare: Communists, Anarchists, Socialists, etc. spent at least as much time sabotaging each other as fighting the common enemy under Franco. But the Spanish struggle against Fascism struck a responsive chord, and eager young men poured into Spain from all parts of the world to take up arms for the Loyalists. These are their songs. The German entries are martial in tone and possess a sinewy class consciousness lacking in their American counterparts. To the Germans, Spain was just one more front in the unremitting struggle of the proletariat, and their songs reflect this. For the American volunteers, however, the struggle was a crisis of conscience, and their songs—Jaruma Valley, The Young Man from Alcalà, etc.—tend to celebrate their own accomplishments. Among the German songs, incidentally, is the famous Peut Bog Soldiers and a lyric by the great poet Bert Brecht that—to put it charitably—is one of his least fortunate efforts.

Those songs not in English are translated in the accompanying booklet—sometimes unhappily. "El pueblo madrileño," for example, meaning simply "the people of Madrid," comes out "Madrid's anti-Fascist heroes." Throughout, one must allow for such excesses of political zeal. Nonetheless, through the muffled sound of this re-pressing and the disillusions of these forty-five years, these songs can still evoke an emotional response. The men who fought in the line in Spain believed in their fight. Their ultimate failure, and the idealistic betrayal merely add another dimension to their tragedy. O.B.B.

Accent. Latin Piano by Jan August: Orchestra. Mercury MG 20618, $5.98 (LP); SR 6066, $5.98 (SD).

There are one or two decidedly unconventional alliances in this excellent program of Latin-flavored music. Not the least surprising is the Russian-Jewish partnership of both Dark Eyes and Two Guitars, or Mario Lanza's old ballad, Be My Love, served up with a South-of-the-Border beat. The other numbers are in more conventional vein, and have been given a Latin accent many times elsewhere. Surrounded by violins, guitar, and clarinet, August indulges in some rather pretty pianism, although, for him, these seem to be rather subdued performances. Only in Diva, Eyes and El Cambiatero does he indulge in the sort of pyrotechnics for which he is so famous. The performances have a nice easy-to-dance-to beat, and there is also he represents who prefer just to sit and listen. J.F.I.

International Songs and Ballads. Frances Archer and Beverly Gile. St/And SLP 408, $4.98 (LP); SLS 7408, $5.95 (SD).

Unashamedly, Misses Archer and Gile devote their talents to the conversion of folk songs into art songs—and, on the whole, succeed. Their approach combines respect for the integrity of their material with a willingness to adapt it to broader horizons. Miss Archer's high soprano and Miss Gile's mezzo-soprano complement each other when they sing together, and each vocalist is a satisfying soloist. Their international program—which includes Vida de la gran abuela, which is very vividly performed in Spanish, and German standards—is highlighted by a Chinese lullaby called The Bamboo Flute and an American spiritual, Rock the Cradle Baby. The whole is a tasteful, musical—though not particularly moving—listening experience. The mono version rates high sonic marks, but the crisply separate SD is save for a slight echo, superb. O.B.B.

Viva! Montez. Bobby Montez and His Orchestra. World Pacific 1404, $5.98 (SD).

One of the most enticingly danceable and varicolored Latin-American programs I've encountered to date. There are only five players here: Montez himself on vibes, Carlos Avelar on piano, a bassist, and two drummers, but they play with immense gusto and tonal piquancy, and for good measure some of the vocalists' materials (all composed by the gifted leader) are delightful too, particularly the bouncing Tremendo Cha Cha, My Pal, Yvonne, and Heaven Knows. The markedly stereoscopic and vivid recording also is fine, but it is the musical spirit here which makes one shout "Viva, indeed!" R.D.D.

Through Sick and Sin. Fay De Witt: Orchestra. Joe Harrell, cond. Epic LN 3776, $3.98 (LP); BM 596, $4.98 (SD).

There will be a few male comedians always hurl their barbs in prose, while the female of the species prefer to lampoon their subjects in song. To this end, mind Anna Russell, Beatrice Lillie, Kaye Ballard—and now Fay De Witt, a young lady who, in a series of comic ditties, pokes fun at some of our modern foibles. Miss De Witt can be pretty strenuous in her attempt to drive home her humorous shafts, and I think her more successful in those songs where she underplays her material. Among these are Harold Rome's French with Tears; her acridulous love song with Buddy De Sylva, Uncle Sam's housing projects, 543987642; and her reminiscences about The Old Piano.

This is Fiedler's second recorded effort to combat aversion to classical music. The first, which appeared in 1954 as RCA Victor LM 1752 and is still in the catalogue, offered a great number of short snippets of music. This new album strikes me as much more sensibly planned. Each item played is either a complete entity, or a complete section of a larger composition. Two old Fiedler favorites, the overtures to Hérold's Zampa and Suppé's Faustita, should certainly appeal to even the most un receptive listener, and Tchaikovsky's Waltz from the Serenade for Strings and Grieg's The Last Spring should quickly break down any resistance that's left. I'm less enthusiastic about the inclusion of Liszt's blunted Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6.

The performances have all the usual Boston bustle, and they have been recorded in brilliant sound, the stereo edition in particular being a dazzler. And if you do like classical music, don't be put off by that title; this is a musical treat for you too.

J.F.I.

“The Persuasive Trombone of Urbie Green and His Orchestra.” Command RS 815, $5.98 (SD).

Now that trumpeter Doc Severinsen has been honored with a gala album of his own, his no less ubiquitous, talented, and versatile trombonist colleague well warrants the same starring opportunity. Green plays superbly, as always, in both the suave and driving styles at his easy command; his featured solos and ensemble passages with three other trombones provide exceptionally rich sonorities to exploit the full-blooded, ultra-stereoistic recording; and he is energetically backed by a seventeen-man band. But arranger (and fellow trombonist) Bobby Byrne has been unable to come up with as imaginative or as well-varied scorings as those he provided for Severinsen: however, the soloist's own virtuosity is sure to warrant the analytical study of every trombone specialist.

R.D.D.

“Brass Laced with Strings.” Vic Schoen and His Orchestra. RCA Victor LSA 2344, $5.98 (SD).

Most of the "stereo action" here (constant lateral motion of sound sources) is musically inept, although occasionally a pair of trumpets circling each other like wily puppies proves mildly amusing. But Schoen's interpretation of brass and string sonorities (with quartets of trumpets, trombones, and French horns pitted against a cello sextet) give considerable sonic distinction to the best of his not too fancy arrangements—some atmospheric Summertime in particular. Elsewhere there is effective contrast between the rich sentiment of Hello Young Lovers, Trees, etc., and the rowdiness of And the Band Played On and By Myself. Yet too often the brass tends to become raucous and the incessant to and fro motion detracts from rather than enhances the glittering clarity of the stereoism.

R.D.D.
Cannonball Adderley and His Orchestra: "African Waltz." Riverside 377, $4.98 (LP); 9377, $5.98 (SD).
The two Adderley brothers, Cannonball on alto saxophone and Nat on cornet, are heard here with a big band conducted by Ernie Wilkins, playing arrangements mostly by Wilkins (two are by Bobby Brookmeyer). The Adderleys had a more varied background than most current jazzmen before they settled in New York's predominantly small-group surroundings, and they work well in a big-band setting. Both know how to develop a solo with a band rather than against it. Nat's crisp, economical playing, with its occasional suggestions of Clark Terry, is becoming increasingly interesting as he divests it of the busy trivialities it once had, while Cannonball is continuing to edit his playing in a similar manner. Cannon also shows an unexpectedly warm and lyrical ballad style in an affecting performance of Smoke Gets in Your Eyes which, all things considered, is the best piece on a disc that turns out to be rather limited despite the good work of the two featured soloists. Wilkins' arrangements are heavy and repetitious, and neither the Adderleys nor pianist Wynton Kelly, the only other soloist who gets much space, can completely obscure their routine qualities.

Big Bill Broonzy: "The Bill Broonzy Story." Verve 3000/04, $25 (Five LP). The big, dour-looking Bill Broonzy was operated on for lung cancer in 1957 he completed the last of three recording sessions during which he talked informally about his life as a blues singer and the origins and development of the blues. He also reminisced about such blues-singing colleagues as Jim Jackson, Tampa Red, Leroy Carr, Big Maceo, Richard M. Jones, Leadbelly, Johnny Temple, Little Brother Montgomery, Georgia White, and Memphis Minnie. And he sang blues of all kinds, spirituals, work songs, pop songs—practically anything that might illustrate whatever point he wanted to make. The ten hours taped at these sessions have been edited to fit five discs, which provide an invaluable insight into a world that is only beginning to be opened up to outsiders. It is revealed here in the experience, the memories, and the singing of a man whose position in the post-Depression urban blues community is roughly equivalent to that of Bessie Smith among the "classic" blues singers of the Twenties. Broonzy's illness occasionally makes itself apparent in a harsh cough when he is talking or in a more moderate use of his voice than he might normally be expected to make. But he constantly thrusts his pain aside and sings out with typical vigor and intensity. In many ways, this set parallels the recordings Alan Lomax made with Jelly Roll Morton for the Library of Congress in 1938 (disc jockey Bill Rand- dle was the man behind the Broonzy production), throwing light on an era that is almost as misty as the old days in New Orleans that Morton described. But as a summation of Broonzy's work and as a documentation of latter-day blues this set has great historical importance and is, at the same time, a delightfully entertaining collection.

Dave Brubeck Quartet: "Tonight Only." Columbia CL-1498, $3.98 (LP); CS 8409, $4.98 (SD). This is a strange collection of odds and ends. Carmen McRae, an evenUnlike-lier Brubeck collaborator than Jimmy Rushing, is put through a variety of trials. They include a delectable attempt to cope with a song Brubeck wrote in 1943, a more successful move into an artsy-folksy area in a song written by Brubeck and his wife, another work by Mr. and Mrs. B. that strains her agility, and a fairly good attempt at rhythm singing in a duet with drummer Joe Morello. The selections by the quartet alone might be described as middle area Brubeck—lacking the soaring flights possible under the impetus of Paul Desmond's playing, but avoiding the depths of banality that Brubeck can plumb in his thumping moods. The relatively high price points are a piece written by bassist Gene Wright featuring his deft plucking, and another, by Brubeck, in much the same vein.

Kenny Drew: "Undercurrent." Blue Note 4059, $4.98 (LP). Pianist Kenny Drew forms a tremendously potent rhythm section with Sam Jones, bass, and Louis Hayes, drums, and distinguishes himself as a soloist by avoiding the current jazz piano banalities. He is a strong soloist who can dig in with both hands for dark, gutty effects, or play one hand against the other to achieve airily light textures. But the potential interest of this disc is diminished by the work of Freddie Hubbard, trumpet, whose solos constantly deteriorate into a series of empty runs, and Hank Mobley, a bland and uninteresting tenor saxophonist.

The John Glasea Brassei. Jazz Unlimited 1002, $4.98 (LP); $5.98 (SD).
Glasea's group on one side of this disc consists of two trumpets, trombone, alto horn, tuba, bass, and drums. Dick Cary's five closely woven arrangements for this ensemble lend themselves readily to swinging performances, and they provide Glasea with good opportunities for displaying his clean, brassy lyrical playing. On the other side a French horn replaces the alto horn, and the writing by Glasea, Johnny Carisi, and Bill Russo is far less provocative. Glasea, however, continues to play well. There is a great deal of low pressure pleasure here, particularly in the Cary arrangements.

Johnny Griffin: "Change of Pace." Riverside 368, $4.98 (LP); 9368, $5.98 (SD). For once, an album title can really be taken at face value. This is a change of pace—simply (for tenor saxophonist Johnny Griffin but as a jazz approach in general. Griffin has set up two situations in these selections: in one, he is heard on drums and two strings, the other bowed, the other plucked; in the second, Julius Watkins' French horn is added to the ensemble. Of the two, the group with Watkins is easily the more interesting because of the variety made possible by the contrast of the woody sound of the horn against Griffin's sharp, cutting saxophone, and because Watkins himself is an unusually consistent and provocative musician. The two basses create a strong background, and seem to point to a success in solu-
tion to the problem of supporting jazz horns with strings—the basses have the strength and the rhythmic force to fit into a jazz context, which the customary string quartet does not. The selections without Watkins have their moments, but much of the time they are, by force of circumstances, simply showcases for Griffin's blowing. Even these pieces, however, help to make this collection an unusually imaginative experiment.

"Gut-Bucket Trombone." Riverside 150, $4.98 (LP). Two Midwestern trombonists of the Twenties and early Thirties, Roy Palmer and Ike Rodgers, are featured in this collection of reissues from the Champion and Paramount labels, recorded in 1929 and 1931. Palmer plays with the State Street Ramblers, a recording name used by pianist Jimmy Blythe and a group of Chicago South Side musicians. They play wonderfully lusty, carefree, stomping jazz, wedded on b trademark saxophone arrangements. Palmer's trombone style is driving, stabbing, and rough-toned, much like the present-day work of Jimmy Archey. The group also has a remarkable kazoo player, possibly Albert Bell,
who not only takes solos that have real jazz validity but even gets involved in a kazoo and clarinet duet that comes off very successfully. The bare, economical style of Rodgers, a St. Louis trombonist, is interesting in its very starkness. It is a limited manner, however, and it is just as well that on four of his six selections he plays accompaniment to a pair of blues singers—Edith Johnson and Alice Moore.


In retrospect, the pure joy that leaps from the series of records made by Lionel Hampton's studio groups between 1937 and 1940 is tremendously impressive. Surely a side turned out by Hampton in those days fails to glister with light-hearted, swinging spirit. Like the two discs that have preceded it (on the Camden label), this collection is a complete delight from beginning to end. Of course, Hampton always took a superb set of musicians into the studio with him on these sessions but, as experience has often shown, the presence of top-notch musicians does not necessarily result in top-notch performances. Hampton seemed to have an ability to instill a feeling of excitement and well-being in his musicians. Among the sidemen heard in this collection are Cootie Williams, Johnny Hodges, Lawrence Brown, Jess Stacy, Jonah Jones, Ziggy Elman, Chu Berry, Dizzy Gillespie, Benny Carter, Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Charlie Christian, Red Allen, J. C. Higginbotham, Edmond Hall, and Nat Cole. And, of course, Hampton—on vibes, on drums, on piano, and singing.

Jon Hendricks: "Evolution of the Blues Song." Columbia CL 1583, $3.98 (LP), CS 8383, $4.98 (SD).

Jon Hendricks, the lyric-writing member of the Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross trio, wrote and produced this presentation of the origin and development of the blues for the Monterey Jazz Festival in 1960, he re-created it at Newport this summer. Casting himself as narrator and using cadenced, rhymed lines in his narrative, Hendricks very simply, directly, and effectively sketches the sources of the blues, introducing examples of the African chant, calypso, and spiritual, and then moving quickly up to various types of vocal blues, to an instrumental blues and to the relationship of blues to gospel song. The two blues singers who provide most of the illustrations, Big Miller and Jimmy Witherspoon, are adequate for the purpose: their effectiveness is implemented tremendously by the presence of Ben Webster, nosling provocatively on his tenor saxophone. Hendricks himself, in fact, is a more effective singer despite an extremely limited voice, and he projects a couple of songs with much more presence than Miller, Witherspoon, or Hannah Dean, who does the spiritual and gospel singing. Despite its limitations, this is an entertaining and informative introduction to the blues.


Although this disc is offered as an introduction to Holmes, an organist who is a protegé of Les McCann, and McCann himself plays piano with the group, the interest generated here springs from two other musicians—the veteran Ben Webster on tenor saxophone and a newcomer, Lawrence "Tricky" Lofton, a trombonist.

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lections associated with" Ory, so the 
warhorses are trotted out and paraded 
around once more. But this group fails 
to give them any new distinction.

Kid Ory: “Kid Ory! Favorites!” Good 
Time Jazz 1026/42, $9.98 (LP); 
10041/42, $11.98 (Two SD) 

The Ory group’s live performances 
include Alvin Alcorn on trumpet; 
Phil Gomez, clarinet; Cedric Haywood, 
piano; Julian Davidson, guitar; Wellman 
Hill, bass; and Charlie Phillips, drums. It 
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Django Reinhardt: “Djangology” RCA 
Victor LPM 2319, $3.98 (LP) 

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as the cover blandly claims, but with 
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ever appeared in the United States. 
Both Reinhardt and Grappelli are in 
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and drummer back them up equally. 

The selections are a mixture of familiar 
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welcome.

Randy Weston: “Live at the Five Spot.” 
United Artists 4066, $3.98 (LP); 
5066, $4.98 (SD) 

Weston, a pianist who has been growing 
steadily as a strong, individualistic, 
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Sviatoslav Richter, piano.
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Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond.
- **London, LCK 80066 (twin-pack).** 91 min. $11.95.

I relish Ansermet's Eighth because he is one of the few conductors who captures both the radiant warmth and the gusto of this delectable "little" symphony. His Coriolan and Prometheus Overtures, too, are played and recorded as well as I've ever heard them. The Eroica, however, is more idiomsyncratic, and is handicapped by the same lack of sonic weight and conceptual grandeur noted in Ansermet's Ninth. Yet I am not at all conscious here of any channel imbalance or loss of low frequency definition, mentioned by some reviewers of the disc edition. Whatever sonic shortcomings there may be here stem, in my opinion, neither from the orchestral playing (which is resonant) nor from the recording as such, but entirely from the lack of an adequately spacious acoustical ambience.

It would be futile to suppose that as a complete series Ansermet's nine Beethoven symphonies would be the first choice of most collectors. But it would be a great pity if the somewhat lukewarm reception of the best of them, or even the justified criticism of the Third and the Ninth, should discourage their careful study. The listener I hear them the more forcibly I am impressed by the illuminations provided by even the most radical of Ansermet's departures from orthodoxy. His distinctively individual French-Swiss approach may be startling at first encounter, but in many ways it is one of the most classically lucid and vividly personal on records. Every performance in the series reveals unsuspected felicities in the familiar scores and is highly provocative. Now that the series is complete on tape I strongly recommend that every catholic Beethovenian investigate them for a novel and stimulating re-experience of the masterpieces themselves, and for an exciting encounter with one of the most vital interpreters of our day.

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

Issac Stern, violin; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.
- **Columbia MQ 374.** 40 min. $7.95.

Although the early stereo Heifetz-Reiner version remains in print in RCA Victor's 2-track format, the only 4-track taping of this concerto available until now has been that by Morini and Rodzinski for Westminster—the distinctively feminine and chamber music qualities of which may not be to everyone's taste. The need for a magisterial, large-scaled modern taping is magnificently met by Stern and Ormandy, in this assured, faultlessly muscular, full-blooded performance. Soloist and orchestra have seldom sounded to better advantage than they do here: their broad sound of richly colored sonorities and superb sense of continuity carry the listener along irresistibly, and even the cadenzas (Kreisler's in the first movement, Stern's own modification of Joachim's in the finale) seem perfectly integrated in the work as a whole. The stereo sound is powerful and reverberant.

**DEBUSSY: La Mer**

Strauss, Richard: Don Juan, Op. 20

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond.
- **RCA Victor FTC 2057.** 41 min. $8.95.

As Robert C. Marsh predicted, the tape version of this coupling definitely does show a sonic improvement over the discs, especially in its elimination of the tubbiness and lack of bite in the stereo disc version of Don Juan. Indeed there is a symptomously rich, powerfully incisive orchestral sound here, lending conviction to Reiner's more somber than usual but highly evocative Mer as well as to the overtly dramatic contrasts of the Strauss tone poem. We have had a fine taping of Debussy's masterpiece before (by Ansermet for London), but Reiner's is distinctively different: less Gallic and impressionistic but no less valid. His robust Don is to my ears markedly preferable to earlier reels by an overemotional Stokowski (Everest) and a Szell somewhat lacking in vigor. (Epic)

**DVOŘÁK: Slavonic Dances, Op. 46; Op. 72**

Smetana: The Bartered Bride: Overture; Polka; Fantaisie; Dance of the Comedians

Czeck Philharmonic Orchestra, Karel Sejna, cond. (Dvořák). Prague National Theatre Orchestra, Zdenek Chalabala, cond. (Smetana)
- **Artia ASTB 504 (twin-pack).** 91 min. $11.95.

I've relished this tape with such delight that I feel quite unable to analyze its charms dispassionately, much less to haggle over any possible flaws. Undoubtedly the Czech orchestras here are less distinguished by polish, precision, and propriety than many other more famous European and American ensembles. But they play with such enthusiasm and spicy piquancy, and their conductors obviously understand and love the music so well, that the listener can only be carried away by them. Certainly I have never heard the galvanic Bartered Bride overture and dances played more idiomatically and excitingly than by Chalabala. And while I no longer have the definitive Talich LPs of the Slavonic Dances available for direct comparison (his last edition, reissued by Parliament), Sejna's readings seem no less spontaneous, high-stepping, and vivacious. I am further intoxicated by the recorded sound itself, which unlike Artia's Russian masters is markedly stereotistic, brilliant, and enhanced by the reverbence to a large, acoustically warm auditorium.

Quite possibly some may find that there are excessive color and dynamic contrasts here; certainly the percussion is attacked with a gusto which may seem overexuberant to more inhibited conductors and audiences. But what great fun it is! And how much more dazzlingly kaleidoscopic the Dvořák dances seem when they can be heard in complete, endlessly fanciful sequence rather than in few scant selections! In short, the present release ranks
high among my personal Delectable Mountains in the tape repertory. I can only hope that many other listeners will share my relish and derive as much stimulation and solid satisfaction from these apothecaries of the incomparable Czech musical spirit.

GOULD: Fall River Legend; Ballet Suite; Interplay for Piano and Orchestra. Latin-American Symphone: Tango and Guaracha

Morton Gould and His Orchestra.
- RCA VICTOR FTC 2061. 44 min. $8.95.

To me, Gould's sometimes somber, sometimes folksy music for a ballet based on the Lizzie Borden case seems a kind of poor man's Appalachian Spring with little of Copland's tenderness or passion. Yet probably it will have considerable appeal to those who know the actual De Mille choreography, and in any case it is good to have an authoritative composer's version of the widely admired concert suite hitherto represented (on discs only) by Hanson and Mitropoulos editions. What surprises me most, however, is that my lukewarm reaction to Gould's most ambitious work is how well his less pretentious concerto-ballet Interplay -- and even the slighter, almost salonish, Latin-American pieces--stand up. Fine tunes, immense verve, and an uncommonly imaginative command of piquant orchestral colorings make these great fun to hear and rehear, especially when they are played as engagingly (and as brilliantly in the solo piano role) as Gould himself plays them. They are recorded in sparkling stereo.

MASCAGNI: Cavalleria rusticana

Giulietta Simionato (ms), Santuzza; Anna di Stasio (c), Mamma Lucia; Mario del Monaco (t), Turiddu; Cornell MacNeil (b), Alfio, et al. Chorus and Orchestra of L'Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Tutti Serafin, cond.
- London LOH 90032. 76 min. $9.95.

Sonically the best of the Cavalleria recordings, the version's rich vocalism, finished orchestral playing, and unexaggerated but effective stereoism are even more evident on tape than on discs (and here there is happily no superfluous "filler" in the form of the disc album's coarse Italian song program by Del Monaco at his worst). Unfortunately, however, the performance itself isn't notably persuasive or dramatic. Unlike the perhaps overly melodramatic companion taping of Puccini, last February, this one lacks vitality and impact. Probably no conductor alive today knows the music better than Serafin, but his pace is very leisurely indeed, and he seems to expend his primary attention on relatively minor details. Simionato sings admirably, but never brings Santuzza to real life; Del Monaco bawls lustily enough, but neither he nor the more restrained MacNeil seem personally involved in Turiddu's or Alfio's tragedy. I hope that there will be a more exciting Cavalleria on tape before long, but meanwhile this one has many musical and technical attractions to compensate for its dramatic deficiencies and for the slight intrusion of background noise in the lower-level passages---the only flaw in an otherwise transparent recording.

MOZART: Le Nozze di Figaro

Lisa della Casa (s), Countess; Hilde Guden (s), Susanna; Suzanne Danco (s), Cherubino; Alfred Poel (t), Count Almaviva; Cesare Siepi (bs), Figaro; Fernando Corena (bs), Bartolo; et al. Chorus of the Vienna State Opera, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Erich Kleiber, cond.
- London LOH 90008. Two reels: approx. 91 and 90 min. $25.95.

Since over six years have gone by since this "miracle" recording first appeared on LPs, it may be well to remind collectors that the performance was greeted with resounding applause on all sides. I couldn't concur more heartily, and can only add that the tape processing is a model of its kind, and that these reels provided the shortest and most delightful three hours I've ever spent listening to a single work. For songfulness that only can be called heavenly, with its liveliest, ensemble and orchestral writing that has never been matched for inventiveness, The Marriage of Figaro would seem to defy ideal performance. The miracle here is how close Kleiber and his forces come to this impossible ideal. The set includes an Italian-English libretto, and if the price seems formidable even in these inflationary days, I can assure you that no musical investment you can ever make will pay more satisfying dividends!

SCHUMANN: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 54

tGrieg: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 16

Leon Fleisher, piano; Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond.
- Epic EC 812. 60 min. $7.95.

Hearing this performance here for the first time I can now understand why it is preferred by many even to the "ideal" Lipatti version, which up to now (and despite its obvious technical age) has remained my own first choice. On tape Fleisher easily eclipses his competitors, the only serious one of whom is Van Cliburn (RCA Victor), whose uncommonly individual and Schumannesque reading has very special dreamily romantic charms, but less heroic nobility and bravura. Technically, too, the present recording is outstanding for the big, ringing qualities of both piano and orchestral timbres, ideally captured in broadspread stereoism, with warm, big-hall acoustics. The Grieg concerto is played and recorded with equal éclat, but here the slighter music is less well suited to such robust dramatization. This is a more brilliantly impressive performance than any other on tape (not excluding Rubinstein's still-in-print 2-track RCA Victor version), but I prefer the smaller-scaled, more delicate yet richly unromantic Vanegian-flavored Curzon-Fiedlstad taping for London, reviewed here last May.

"Bells Are Ringing" and "Irma la Douce" Selections

London Repertory Company (bs), Bob Hope, Alphonse Strong, cond.; Vanegian-flavored Curzon-Fiedlstad taping for London, reviewed here last May.

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praise each new addition to Richmond's bargain-priced London versions of Broadway hits, but I'm impressed anew by their characteristic verve, the bright orchestral playing and recording, and the freshness of the non-'name' soloists (here Janet Blair in both works, with Ian Peterson in Bells, Gerry Grant and Dave Casey in Iroquois). Of course Miss Blair is no Judy Holliday or Elizabeth Seal, but she has a charming personality (as well as more voice); in Iroquois la Douce I found these performances more attractively vocally, if not necessarily theatrically, than those in the original Broadway-cast complete version.

"BMOC." The Brothers Four. Columbia CQ 381, 33 min., $6.95.
The cryptic title is to be translated "Best Music On/Off Campus," and isn't too extravagant a claim, since the "Brothers" (Mike Kirkland, Dick Foley, Bob Flick, and John Paine) are as skilled and tasteful a vocal foursome as any university could muster from its under-or post-graduates. They have extremely pleasant voices, precision, and straightforwardness in their ensemble performance (there are few holdups of I Am a Wanderer, Gambler, Riders in the Sky, A Pretty Girl Is Like a Little Bird, and other quasi-folk and popular songs in which the ensemble themselves on guitars, banjos, bass, and cymbal. The stereo recording is so expansively open that it would hardly seem necessary to employ such close miking as is used here; the fresh voices can stand it, but the ensemble blend would certainly be warmer in a more natural acoustical ambience.

"Brass Laced with Strings." Vic Schoen and His Orchestra. RCA Victor FTP 1072, 33 min., $7.95.
Although the restlessly moving sound sources and occasional moments of raucousness are no less marked here than in the recent stereo disc version, they seem less annoying, while the richness of Schoen's brass and cello sonorities is even more sumptuous and the subtleties of interplay between various types of muted and open horns are more clearly differentiated. Again to honor go to the expressively atmospheric Summer-time, Trees, and Glad To Be Unhappy; but By Myself and The Band Played On have a buoyancy in which the constant stereo "action" seems less superfluous.

"Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White." Jerry Murad's Harmonicats. Columbia CQ 360, 28 min., $6.95.
In the first of its new Columbia series, the popular harmonicas trio produces its finest program to date, notable for the straightforward effectiveness of the arrangements and performances (the atmospherically varicolored Polka Dots and Moonbeams, Lovely Love, the vibrant Mack the Knife, and Kiss of Fire in particular), and outstanding for the boldly stereoscopic authenticity of the recording, especially of Don Les's properly subdued yet still impressively weighty bass part.

"Dedicated to You." Ray Charles: Orchestra and Chorus, Marty Paich, cond. ABC-Paramount ATC 821, 38 min., $7.95.
The only too versatile and mannered Ray Charles seldom fails to confuse me with his variety of styles. This seems to be his most ambivalent program yet, alter-
nating between driving blues or swing numbers accompanied by a jumping big band, and lushly sentimental ballads for which the orchestra is conventionally aug-
mented by schmaltzy strings and chorus. In the first genre I liked best the bounc-
ing Josephine and Marie: all those in the latter left me hkewarm, although Ray himself projects his personality persuasiv-
ely enough, and in the interludes losses off bright bits of pianism and an occa-
sional splash sax solo. The bold, clean recording is extremely stereoscopic, while the soloist himself is solidly centered.

"Intermezzo: A Violin Pop Concert." Arnold Eids, violin; Gloria Agostini, harp. Perfection Dynamics CS 1200 S, 47 min., $7.95.

These are somewhat oversuave though

lyrically expressive performances in rather extreme channel-separated stereo-
ism, the main value of which is filling a gap hitherto largely neglected in the tape repertory. The reel notes and labels blithely ignore the basic necessity of a detailed contents list: such fiddlers’ standbys as the Massenet Elégie and Méléditation from Thaïs, the Granados-Kreisler Spanish Dance No. 5, Ravel’s Piec en forme d’un habanera, Dvořák’s Humoresque, Tchaikovsky’s Mélodie, the Chopin-Milstein C sharp minor Noct-
turne, D’Ambrosio’s Canzonetta, Pro-
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“Irma la Douce.” Original Broadway Cast, Stanley Lebowks, cond. Col-
bumbia QG 353, 45 min., $9.95.

While this exuberant tape sharpens my hunger to see the lively French import show on the stage, I’m not as convinced as most of the enthusiastic disc reviewers seem to have been that the music can stand as effectively an its own as that of some other Broadway hit recordings. I suspect that the brash Elisabeth Seal and the robust Keith Mitchell, for all their remarkable vocal facility and the beauty of their voices, will appeal most to those who have first enjoyed them “live.” Even such rousing ensemble scenes here as the Sons of the Pioneers’ “Give Me Some Slack” and “ arithmetic Man, and There’s Only One Paris for That (which includes the amusingly claylery Arctic Ballet) must be far more relishable with staged action. The re-
ording itself is realistically open and

powerful, but except in some cross-chann-
el duos and well-spread ensembles, little advantage has been taken of stereo’s potentialities for localization and movement.

“Ilalia Mia.” Mantovani and His Orches-
tra. London LPM 40075, 38 min., $6.95.

Except for a slight edginess in fortissimo high-string passages, the lusciously pro-
duced and recorded orchestral sonatas here make even Mantovani’s most sentimenta-
alized Italian folk and traditional air settings hard to resist. Still better are the vivacious, ingeniously scored Carni-
val of Venice by Frosini, and Milner’s arrangements of Vasi d’arte,” “Nes-

torno,” and excerpts from Tchaikovsky’s Capriccio Italian. Aromatic travelogue indeed, but one which Mantovani fans are sure to relish unreservedly, and which even those generally cool to this conduc-
tor can respect for its wealth of color and feeling.

“Memories Are Made of This.” Ray Con-
ning and His Orchestra and Chorus. Columbia CQ 361, 33 min., $6.95.

Whether I’m exerting a reviewer’s privi-
lege of changing his mind or whether Conniff himself has refined his popular “vocetion” style to achieve more skillful orchestra-chorus integration, I’m certainly far more impressed by the pres-
ent program than by his previous album of Conniff in the past. His varicolored arrangements of Young Love, Unchained Melody, Moments To Remember, etc. along with a dramatically brilliant No Other Love and Three Coins in a Foun-
tain (the last featuring a Doc Severis 

en trumpet solo) are beautifully played and sung. I am also happy to report that the extremely vivid stereo recording which the Columbia engineers have provided makes the most of both their piqancy and sonority.

“Cole Porter Swings Easy in Stereo.” Larry Clinton and His Orchestra. Reeves Soundcraft, 29 min., special offer.

This tape is available to purchasers of a Soundcraft “premium pack,” which also includes a reel of blank tape, at the regular price of two blank-tape reels plus $1.00. It is a bargain on any terms, for these performances are otherwise un-
available. A wealth of new delights in Porter’s fine tunes are revealed in the ingenious and tasteful, often sotto-voce variations by Clinton’s eight soloists. All

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are first-rate, but perhaps the best are Sol Yaged on clarinet and Buddy Weed on piano. The recording itself is a model of stereo transparency, and the processing, at a relatively low modulation level, is immaculate. Only the "A" side is recorded here, and the blank return tracks may be used for checking the vertical alignment of the playback head for minimum cross-talk or reverse-channel "spillover." With a properly adjusted head no spillover whatever should be heard, even at maximum playback level.

"The Previn Scene." André Previn, piano, with various ensembles. M-G-M STC 39018, 38 min., $7.95. It is a happy notion on the part of M-G-M to extract from earlier releases the best of Previn’s performances with the David Rose orchestra, and to couple them with several still more attractive jazz numbers. The latter, with Shelly Manne and Red Mitchell, are drawn from the sound track of The Subterraneans and the Mitchells’ great "Get Those Elephants Outa Here" program. The Previn-Rose collaborations are merely pleasant, but the others rank among Previn’s best. Blues for Brian and the title piece from the "Elephants" program reassure me that I wasn’t overenthusiastic in my earlier praise for their original tape appearances. The recording here, not surprisingly, is somewhat variable: bright and clean at its best; occasionally, it seemed to me, a bit overbalanced on the left.

"Ring-a-Ding-Dong." Frank Sinatra; Orchestra, Johnny Mandel, cond. Reprise RSL 1701, 31 min., $7.95. Frankie sings better than ever in his first appearance on his own label, triumphing even over the inanity of the opening title song and the considerable effort of dragging Mandel’s heavy-handed orchestra along with him. The latter never matches the soloist’s superb sense of timing or his relaxed assurance, and is somewhat harshly recorded. Nevertheless, the vocalism and personality of the star still are able to give real distinction to A Foggy Day, In the Still of the Night, The Coffee Song, and I’ve Got My Love To Keep Me Warm, among other popular tunes.

"The Soviet Army Chorus in Paris." Alexandrov Song and Dance Ensemble, Arista ASTA 502, 46 min., $7.95. Even in its palmiest days the Jaroff Choir never sang with more dramatic virtuosity than Alexandrov’s Red Army choristers. In the unexaggerated but brilliant stereoism which characterizes Arista’s first tape appearances, the Soviet singers and orchestra are simply tremendous here— that is, if one doesn’t check the accompanying text leaflet to discover what banal and arrogant words these fine voices are wasted on! The anonymous soloists are robustly effective, but except in the nostalgic Soldier Boy, Sing and the emotional Dostoevskanskaya they never bring the house down as do the sensational “patrol” pieces (Meadowlands, of course, but also the less familiar Soldier’s March, Song of a Troubled Youth, and The Partisans’ Anthem). The only relevancy of the program title seems to be the inclusion of an incisively scored Macbeth suite in French, and for no apparent reason there is also an exuberantly swinging chorus ("Beviant!") from Verdi’s Ernani, sung—unexpectedly but happily—in quite intelligible Italian.

Tchaikovsky - Ellington - Strayhorn: The Nutcracker Suite. Duke Ellington and His Orchestra. Columbia CQ 372, 31 min., $6.95. If the Duke has delighted only a portion of his fans with this reworking of the familiar ballet suite, he is likely to intrigue rather than offend longhair listeners, at least in his freest metamorphoses. A few of the less daring recordings struck me as dull or heavy-handed; but the best of them are great fun: Sugar Rum Cherry, Chinoiserie, the swinging Overture, and—most distinctive of all—the imaginatively atmospheric Arabesque Cookie, starring Russell Roper’s bamboo whistle and Johnny Hodges’ alto sax. Full-blooded recording and smoothly widespread stereoism make the most of the mélange of Tchaikovskian and Ellingtonian sonorities.

"Temptation." Roger Williams, piano; Orchestra, Pete King, Frank Hunter, Hal Kanter, cond. Kapp KTL 41028, 32 min., $7.95. Even in one of his less distinctive programs, handicapped by schmaltzy orchestral accompaniments, Williams provides disarmingly attractive cocktail-hour music, and at his best does well by the oddly insistent title piece, a happy-go-lucky One-Finger Symphony, and a vibrant Never on Sunday. The rich recording is perhaps too closely miked, but the stereo channnels are effectively differentiated and admirably balanced.

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High Fidelity Magazine
Camouflaged Components. As interest in sound reproduction expands into ever widening circles, news begins to arrive from some (for us) fairly exotic sources. Two novels recently called to our attention are a new antenna and a new line of speakers. Both seem inspired by a common desire to hide the fact that sound reproducing apparatus is actually being used. The first is an "invisible" TV-FM antenna. Announced by B. F. Goodrich (whose products are visible on the wheels of many autos), the antenna is described as a silver circuit printed on flexible vinyl of Goodrich's manufacture. The antenna itself was invented by Frank Higgins of Summit, New Jersey, who has set up RF Industries to produce it. The "Mile Site"—as it was dubbed—resembles a pair of butterfly wings with a five-foot wing span and can be tacked onto any concealed surface, or—if one cares to display zoological replicas after all, thousands of "rabbit ears" have been in plain view for many years—can be fastened whimsically to the wall.

A similar attempt at camouflage is represented by a new line of speakers offered by Sears, Roebuck and Co. One series hides the speaker inside a framed painting which may be hung on the wall. Another series tucks the speaker inside a simulated set of "books"—something that resembles the phony sets used in store displays or to fill empty shelves to impress visitors. Finally, a third series is disguised as outdoor lighting fixtures. While no fiendish would seriously consider these units for quality sound reproduction, they conceivably might have some use as extension or outdoor speakers.

High-Fidelity TV? We are not sure what is meant by this phrase, but presumably it implies improved television sound as well as clear pictures—in a word, the kind of combined audio-video reception that would do justice to TV shows whose musical content is of some interest. In any case, a new line of kits so described has been announced by Transvision of New Rochelle, N. Y. These do-it-yourself TV sets feature, says Transvision, "special circuits . . . to satisfy the sophisticated video-audiophile who is always striving for perfection." The set builder can choose a 23-in., 24-in., or 27-in. picture tube and also may do the job on a "pay as you wire plan" in which he buys the rig in successive steps of kit packages. For those who are content to let others strive and want only to enjoy the results, the sets also are available in wired-chassis form.

Modular Microphones. University Loudspeakers, Inc., known for some substantial products in use at the output of a sound system, now is offering microphones for use at the other end—in recording as well as public address work. There are two lines of dynamic mikes. A novel feature of one group is their interchangeability. One basic microphone module, with adapters, is said to provide the functional utility of five different microphones. The other group also features dynamic mikes with omnidirectional pickup patterns and impressive performance specs. For details, write to the manufacturer.

Kit News. Audio components in do-it-yourself form continue to pour forth in larger numbers. PACO's new Model ST-25 is a wide-band FM tuner with a rated sensitivity (HFIM standards) of 4 microvolts. Described as a "semi-kit," it sells for $42.95 with front end fully wired and prealigned.

To its line of kits. H. H. Scott, Inc., has added two more models. The LC-21 is a stereo preamplifier: the LK-150 is a stereo power amplifier rated at 65 watts per channel. Both new kits have very fine specifications, and feature the same handy packaging and instruction sequence used in Scott's former LT-10 and LK-72 kits. The new preamp is priced at $99.95; the power amp, $169.95.

Another stereo powerhouse for the kit builder is Lafayette's KT-550. This dual 50-wattter sells for $134.50 and is built largely with printed circuit boards. From the standpoint of power and response, it represents Lafayette's most ambitious audio entry to date.

Spreading the Spread. The makers of Roberts tape recorders apparently feel that stereo is just too good to be confined to one room. Comes now a "Stereo Master Distribution Panel, Model 54-01," which can be used to pipe twin channels of sound into eight different locations, all operating off the stereo outputs provided on Roberts recorders. The panel, which is patched to the recorder, also accommodates stereo headphones. Reportedly, as many as sixteen 8-ohm speakers can be driven in this manner without the need for booster amplifiers.

Literature, Free and Otherwise. A booklet explaining FM multiplex stereo has been announced by H. H. Scott, Inc. The new method of broadcasting, as well as advice on how to receive it, is discussed. Free copies are available by writing to the company's Multiplex Division, 111 Powder Mill Rd., Maynard, Mass.

In its new catalogue, AL 1302-1, Altec-Lansing emphasizes "the return of larger speaker systems" and describes its new line of reproducers as well as stereo tuners and amplifiers. Three new microphones also are announced. The handsomely illustrated booklet is available free at Altec distributors or by writing to Dept. I.D., Altec Lansing Corp., 1515 South Manchester Ave., Anaheim, Calif. The revised and updated version of EICO's "Guide to High Fidelity Stereo and Monophonic Sound" is off the press. The booklet naturally emphasizes EICO products but also contains a neatly written primer on sound reproduction. Copies cost 25 cents and may be ordered from Electronic Instrument Co., Inc., 33-00 Northern Blvd., Long Island City 1, N. Y.

For Cleaner Sound. RCA Custom Records is offering antistatic compound—up to now used only in Victor "miracle surface" records—to other customers using any of RCA's record-pressing plants. The chemical, which is compounded with the vinyl record material, is credited with dust-repellent properties which keep playing surfaces cleaner.

Meantime, another approach to improved disc quality has been taken by Command Records. Following the lead of Everest, Command has been recording its masters on 35-mm spocketed movie film. The photographic emulsion is replaced by a special oxide coating designed to make of the film a hefty bit of recording tape. Better frequency response and improved channel separation are claimed for this process.
not because he was a musician. Gesualdo's actions, those that came under the surveillance of the Ferrara scribes at any rate, were automatically recorded, and about four hundred of his letters survive. These letters are perfunctory family notes, mostly acknowledgments of letters received, petitions for news of the health of his brother-in-law, the Cardinal, etc. His own health, he tells his correspondents at the ends of catalogues of flattery, is always bad. Health has ever been the best excuse, and the demands of his in-laws must be avoided, no matter how often he may proclaim himself their humble servant. Gesualdo was violently astatic, however, and he may even have left a musical portrait of this affliction, by hyphenating the syllables of "sospiro" and "sospirava" with pauses: the effect is of a person gasping for breath, and reminds us of the realistic astatic music of Dr. Schigolch in Berg's Lulu. The "aria salubre" of the town of Gesualdo was the Prince's own avowed reason for living there, in any case (as a visitor there myself, I can testify that a very special reason would be necessary). The letters of other people are more revealing. From them we learn—if we did not already know it by listening to the music—that Gesualdo was a manic-depressive ("effige di malinconico"); an insomniac; a fastidious dresser (he wore long robes, as though to conceal his figure; could he have been lame?). Like other composers, he talked too much and his need of music was compulsive. Several hours of every day had to be filled with singing and lute playing. But though music may have eased Gesualdo's pains, pain itself was necessary to him. We read that he was chronically cistic, and that he could be relieved only by beatings. Such purgations, considered in the psycho-sexual interpretation of our own time, indicate that Gesualdo had identified death with supreme erotic satisfaction. This fact is made abundantly clear by his every setting of the word death in the madrigals; and even in the motets and responses, examples of exorcizing pleasure-pain music can be found in abundance. The word flagellatum duicitis in the Fiera Sexta, for instance.

What did Gesualdo look like? From the historical evidences and the one painting psycho-physiologists would probably call him a cerebrotonic ectomorph. His head was egg-shaped. His complexion was lifeless, his eyes were dark and narrow, his ears were the large ears common to all composers, and his fingers were the long, lithe digits without which virtuosity on the lute would have been impossible.

Rundly, 125 of Gesualdo's madrigals survive; and three books of sacred music (including incomplete books) containing approximately seventy pieces in all. Only two examples of instrumental music, keyboard canzonet both, appear to be authentic, but these two make us much regret the loss of others, for one of them is. I think, the most remarkable piece in the Prince's entire work. The fact that a considerable amount of music is known to be lost (including what by date and contemporary description might be the lost book of madrigals) also suggests the loss of unmentioned and unlisted music as well. The surviving corpus musicae, then, is about 195 pieces, each from two to five minutes long, like most music of that time. The scope, by Wagnerian standards, is small, but it is a measure that we today are able to feel, or at least adjust to, perhaps for the first time since the cinquecento. Five minutes of densely packed contrapuntal and harmonic movement, with no repetition beyond an occasional sequence, and no backward loops in the form: this is a musical dimension common again to the mid-twentieth century. The madrigals of Gesualdo are marked by a new intensification of feeling. The listener cannot imagine music of this period more emotionally charged, and to go to Gesualdo from Wert or even Cipriano is to leap into a whole new theatre of expression. The analytical musical reasons for this are several and easy to enumerate, but essentially they are two: Gesualdo makes greater use of the upper female tessitura than his predecessors; and he exploits a far greater range of harmonic movement. Indeed, the Neapolitan master outstrips all contemporaries in his ability correctly to choose the intensifying step in a harmonic progression and the next step. Consider, for example, the tonal logic which guides him, with perfect harmonic lucidity, through the final phrases of Arditu Zancaretta to the B flat pivot note in the alto, just before the 6/4 5/3 cadence. Consider, also, the motivic construction of these measures, and the double canonic imitation. However restless Gesualdo's Mannerism may be—sixteen keys are gone through here and in not so many more beats—the composer remains still a musical architect, with an over-all sense of form.

What is "Mannerism," and why is Gesualdo the musical Mannerist par excellence? The tendency now called Mannerist was first distinguished by
Vasari in reference to a group of his contemporaries among Florentine artists. They had begun to paint, Vasari noted, di maniera rather than di natura. But another expression of Vasari's can be applied more concretely to music. This is "lo sfarzato," the strained effect. In fact, Gesualdo might well be dubbed the master of "lo sfarzato." Many scholars now date the Mannerist movement from Michelangelo, who was perhaps the first of the masters to disregard the Renaissance ideals of serenity and mathematical perfection of form. Michelangelo elongates and distorts. He ignores the rules of proportion and puts his own "expressive purposes" above any rule. The Mannerist art that followed him—Gesualdo's art—is not only extravagant but tortured, and not only dramatic but theatrical. Doubt and conflict are expressed in it too—and so is the desire to express these things. The perfect example of musical mannerism—it was made for the demonstration, in fact, like Dr. Pangloss' nose—is Gesualdo's most famous madrigal, Moro Lasso. To understand Mannerism, in fact, one has only to compare this flamboyant music to the mathematical simplicity and the expressive control of a motet by Ockeghem. But Gesualdo's musical means are the tried and traditional tools of the contrapuntists too. Gesualdo has only developed and used them in Gesualdo's way.

A SOUND ENGINEER

Continued from page 66

ends, using a small index tab made especially for this purpose or splicing in a section of leader tape. The unused tape may of course be used for later recording.

The recorded tape thus made is your own "master" copy. Treat it carefully and it will provide years of faithful playing, especially if you splice a foot or so of leader tape to both ends to facilitate threading for rewind and playback and to avoid damage to the tape itself during handling or upon "snapping" when the end is reached on fast rewind. An identifying tag (self-adhering labels are available at most dealers) should be affixed to the reel; aside from program data, technical information should also be included: stereo or mono, two-track or four-track, and of course the speed of the recording. To prevent spillage when handling, clip the leading end of the tape to the flange of the reel with any of the little plastic clips made for this purpose. Finally, to store the tape under normal room conditions, simply return it to its original carton. Label the carton, and store it vertically upright as you would a disc. If you plan to store the tape for a relatively long period or under extremes of temperature and humidity, it will be worth your while to invest in a metal can.

A good many details? Perhaps, but for those who have savored the unique pleasures of tape recording, mastering the art is part of the fun.
PHANTOM PHILHARMONIC

Continued from page 47

Concert Arts Orchestra may have been made in California, with one fairly consistent group of musicians, or in New York, with an entirely different ensemble. And a given player may find himself appearing simultaneously in releases for two different labels in direct competition. Robert Bloom, a onetime NBC Symphony man, says with a grin, "Since I've been freelancing, I've been first oboe for the RCA Victor Symphony, the Concert Arts, the Columbia Symphony, and others I can't even remember the names of." And Mr. Bloom is not unique in his wide-ranging career.

Thus one company's house orchestra may have two distinct sets of personnel under the one name—while members of each set may appear in house orchestras for recordings made by different labels. In other words, an East Coast Concert Arts record will have many players in common with an East Coast Columbia Symphony disc, but none in common with an offering made by the Concert Arts Orchestra which has its home on the West Coast.

Often a kind of genial baa-baa-bleating is perpetrated on the record collector by these multiform groups. Morton Gould offers the example of his album of Copland's "Billy the Kid" and "Rodeo," which was recorded with first one orchestra, then another. "We did most of Billy at one session, but didn't get time to finish. So, a few days later, we did the Waltz from the suite with a new orchestra with a different make-up. If you listen, you can't tell the difference." "Telling the difference" may well become a new parlour game for some listeners.

When Gould is working on several albums of short selections at the same time, Victor will send an East Coast group according to size and make-up of orchestra. He'll record a number of works with small orchestra and a lot of brass, for instance, and Victor will subsequently cut that session's tapes up and assign the various pieces to different albums. Thus the "Morton Gould's Orchestra" cited on the label of one record may be a quite different aggregation from the "Morton Gould's Orchestra" cited on another. The semantics of free-lance orchestraship often defy comprehension.

Despite occasional disparaging references to "pickup" orchestras, free-lance orchestras are likely to be employed with growing frequency in recording classical music. Capitol Records is doing virtually all its orchestral recording with freelancers. Columbia plans to go ahead with a big program of Bruno Walter and Stravinsky sessions in 1962, using its carefully built house orchestra. As Mr. Chapin said, in the aftermath of the critical hassle over the Walter/Brahms set, "Some critics and some record collectors make up their minds in advance that a free-lance orchestra just can't possibly be as good as one of the regular outfits. We're hoping to break down the prejudice."

Hundreds of free-lance orchestral musicians hope so too.
MAESTRO SERAFIN

Continued from page 53

"Stage fright. Not like De Luca, who never felt anything, with nerves of steel. Tamagno suffered terribly. It shortened his life. What was exceptional about his singing was that his vowels... completely pure." And Serafin repeated "Exaltate," to show me what pure vowels should sound like.

We got back to the subject of records.

"I like making records, because one can make a little more music with them." Un po' più di musica is a hard phrase to translate, but I think he meant that removed from the urgency of actual performance conductor and artists can deepen their conceptions and polish their interpretations.

"Records are important documents. They can show young people how our music should be performed. With German music, it's different. Take the opening of Die Walküre. I was listening to the radio the other night, and I heard Knappertsbusch conduct it. Sassetta, Toscanini took it faster, and Kleiber was somewhere in between. But still it was always stimmisch, as Wagner marked it. Our music is more delicate, more risky. Violent changes can falsify it all. And some of the younger men try to make an effect by just playing it all fast... Of course, adagio music can be boring..."

When Serafin refers to la nostra musica, he speaks with the authority of the last representative of Italian opera's great years, and the possessive pronoun is justified. In 1960, with the musicologist Aleeo Toni, he published a book entitled Style, Traditions, and Conventions of Italian Opera in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, in which he discusses the tempos, the cuts, and the interpretation of various works from his repertoire. The volume is meant to be the first in a series which should be invaluable to younger conductors and scholars.

For the ordinary music listener, Serafin's records are more important. And he feels the same way of making them correspond to his ideal. With the engineers, he worries about the placing of the microphones. A London-Decca official told me that, when they were making La Bohème a couple of years ago, he came to the hall an hour or so before the session and there was Serafin. The conductor had discovered some minor errors in the printed score, and he was painstakingly going from one music stand to the other, marking in his own hand all the orchestra parts. Tullio Serafin was a shaper of the Italian tradition, and in his old age he does not spare himself in his determination to preserve it.

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TREASURY ON REELS

Continued from page 71

Third Stage

Whether you are content to go on expanding a mainly standard collection or are eager to branch out into individual specializations, you will inevitably face the problem of larger works with the conflict they raise between ambitious desires and limited budgets. Full-length masterpieces for chorus and orchestra or for the operatic stage are undeniably expensive. Yet their price tags may seem less formidable when you consider the infrequent opportunities of hearing these towering dramas in live performance and the in-exhaustible gratifications of having them always available to you at home. To cite only a few of perhaps the most rewarding of these investments, there are:

- Munch's Berlioz Requiem (RCA Victor FTC 7000, $14.95), whose apocalyptic grandeur and tender sweetness only can be reproduced in adequate proportions and contrasts in the stereo medium.
- Scherchen's Bach Mass in B minor (Westminster WZT 119, $19.95) and Handel Messiah (Westminster WTW 134, $10.95), highly individual but inexpessively thrilling ascents of two of the Himalayan peaks of all Western music.
- The RCA Victor Trovatore and Turandot (FTC 8000 and 8001, $21.95 each), a brilliant warhorse and a magnificent realization of Puccini's last and most ambitious stage creation.
- The London history-making operatic (and stereo) triumphs of Enrico Maffiolette (LOR 80011), Strauss's Fledermaus with gala interpolations (LOR 90030), Verdi Aida (LOR 90015), and Wagner Rheingold (LOR 90006), $21.95 each; yet even above these panoramic dramas I must recommend still more urgently the perhaps less sensational but wholly incomparable closest approach to the impossible ideal of Mozartean operatic perfection, the last Erich Kleiber's unassailable Nozze di Figaro (London LOV 90008, $25.95).

Elsewhere, the combination of two normal-length programs in the distinctive "twin-pack" single-reel format provides, at $11.95; an almost exact equivalent of the cost of the same works on two stereo discs. Of course this represents a genuinely saving only if both, or all, elements in the combination are wanted. If such is the case, there are potent as well as bountiful attractions in such outstanding twin-packs as:

- Ansermet's Beethoven Sixth and Seventh Symphonies (London LCK 80052); Mussorgsky-Ravel Paintings at an Exhibition and Bartók Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta (London LCK 80053); Bruckner's complete Firebird, Pulcinella Suite, and Song of the Nightingale (LCK 80042)—variously demonstrating the Swiss maestro's versatility in endowing both classical and modern works with his distinctive lucidity, rhythmic propulsion, and kaleidoscopic tonal coloring.
- Krips's Beethoven Ninth and Leonore Overture No. 3 (Everest 43006), re-creating the restrained strength and lyrical capability of the famous Weingartner readings with the dramatic impact of stereo.
- Rodzinski's Tchaikovsky Nutcracker Ballet (Westminster WTP 138), most warmly poetic of all the company versions, although no one can go wrong with the even more brilliant Ansermet London reel or Irving's balletic one for Kapp.
- Backhaus' Beethoven First and Second Piano Concertos (London LCK 80047), perhaps the best first choice among the veteran pianist's virile yet serene recordings of all five works in this series.
- Scherchen's Mozart Requiem (Westminster WTP 122), less idiosyncratic than his Bach Mass and Handel Messiah, but sung and played with no less heavenly eloquence.

Fourth Stage

Here at last you do best to indulge your purely individual tastes in systematically expanding the specialized departments which stamp a tape collection with its own characteristic and unique signature. No one else can anticipate the delightful discoveries you'll make on your own; no one else's suggestions ever are few enough to be immediately practicable for limited budgets, or ever can be many enough to more than suggest the incalculable riches available today. A good place to start is by turning to the Homer Catalog of Stereophonic Tapes; get what you can; play and enjoy it.

THE MAN WHO HATES STEREO

Continued from page 50

another dimension—suitably vague of course, providing a new set of clues, clues that range over the entire spread of musical sound from top to bottom (should I say from side to side?)—will give us that much more. This is stereo.

You see why I feel that stereo, as such, is beyond questioning, just as recording itself is to be taken for granted as a principle. You see why I can say that virtually every sound that is good in mono can be better in stereo. Given ears that have taken time to learn to hear what has been added.

In theory, stereo is better than mono because it must be. In practice, of course, it all depends on , well, on everything. On taste and judgment, on expertise all along the whole line of manufacture and reproduction, on good musical performance of well-chosen material, recorded for optimum transmission of the musical ideas into the new stereo medium. A big hill! Plenty of stereo is dreadful and a lot is mediocre. Plenty of stereo equipment doesn't work as it should. Plenty of musical ears aren't

High Fidelity Magazine
hearing what they might. Do these facts change the picture? We ask a lot from the makers of stereo—namely perfection. We haven’t given them very much time to become infallible; yet even so, perfection comes along in stereo quite often and always it is just around the corner.

Once more, one dramatizes to listen to stereo. One must grow slowly, along with the music itself, towards really imaginative use of the new sound cues it gives us, which offer values in every sense as infinite as the values of music itself. I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that stereo, in this sense, is music. It is effective, that is, directly in terms of what it does with music; it operates specifically through the musical meaning (and all other meaningful sounds) which it conveys. It cannot even exist on its own, any more than a color photograph can be a picture of nothing. And so I do not think we can speak of stereo as a thing we like or do not like. Stereo is a means, a tool, to feed all sorts of imaginings with all sorts of information. It has no quality of its own. It is neither good nor bad.

As for the new information that stereo alone imparts, first, I think, is the sense of immediate space, surrounding and enveloping the music in a living space because it is real, in two dimensions out of three. It is there, because you can actually hear the multiple wall reflections, bordering on a big hall, which make up the sound of spatial liveness or reverberation. We hear the space, but we apply our realism to the music—the musicians themselves seem more immediate, they too are there, before your ears. What marvels the imagination can create out of such minutely increased information! Of all the stereo effects, this one of living space (and living music within it) is to me the most satisfactory. But beginners often don’t notice it at all.

Second, for me, is the striking increase in the clarity of musical texture that stereo provides simply by adding a relatively infinitesimal quality of separation between the multiple sound sources of complex musical performance. I am not talking of ping-pong stereo, right and left. I mean the separation which makes a group of first violins sound as a body and yet minutely separate, indetectably so but over-all more lifelike in imaginative terms than any mono group of violins could ever sound.

I mean the tiny spacings that place an oboe vaguely in the middle and a clarinet not quite also in the middle—but the two clearly apart in a musical sense, two living sounds from the same place. You can’t measure the separation in feet or even inches; but you can hear it in the music. So with the whole ambient structure of orchestral sound in stereo—there may be no clear directionality at all as far as pointing to this or that instrument (and in good stereo the directionality should never arouse more than marginal consciousness in any case); but there is a clarity of many sounds together, where in mono there is merely a superimposed unity. Impossible really to describe, infinitely subtle to hear, endlessly satisfying in musical terms.

Thirdly, I must quickly lump all the rest via a few more specialized effects. There is of course the right-left stereo: the ping and the pong, and it has many uses that are far from crude—in spoken drama, for instance, a dialogue between speakers, or a pair of voices opposed to another in dramatic give-and-take from one side to the other. There is the peculiar stereo of opera, unlike any opera house but immensely enhancing the projection of the enormously complex sounds of opera dramas. The “action” is rudimentary; stereo is not literal enough for active motion of any sort—unless one is willing to risk a sense of sudden flight through the air! But the separation and grouping of the opera elements, the orchestra, the chorus, the solos, is an immense new value.

There is music for double choir or triple, for groups of brass instruments, antiphonal music for sections of the orchestra, music for two pianos, double concertos, music for several orchestras, echo music, there is the Bach Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 with a dozen groups of solos, playing spatially discrete parts, but playing together too as their own “orchestra.” None of these works has ever been realized in its intended spatial contrast by any mono recording whatsoever. They come to life, each in its own terms, in stereo, and uniquely in stereo.

Enough said—for my account could wander on through most of the music I have ever heard on records. I am still addressing myself to the man who hates stereo. Have I made at least a start in reaching him?

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CIRCLE 16 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
performance, for the permanent record. We found early in the game that the cast would look for the mike hung in the proscenium arch out but when we were actually taping. If they saw the mike, they got mike fright and gave a poor performance. So now we put the mike up for all performances, and we never tell the cast which night it will be turned on. Under these conditions, each performance tends to be better than the last.

Ten years ago, when we taped a play during performance, we used a professional recorder operating at fifteen inches a second, and hung two American professional mikes in the proscenium. With the advent of recorders using heads with smaller gaps, we have been able to use a single mike and record at three and three quarters inches per second, with improved results over our original recordings. In the future, plays on our new stage will be taped in stereo.

They say that Hollywood folk will run and hide from their old pictures on the TV Late Show, and that there are writers who never open a book once they have finished writing it. Well, maybe.

It is true that the Shell Oil Players suffer acute pain when they first hear themselves on tape. So does everybody else. "But I don't sound like that. My voice is lower" is the universal protest. In fact, nobody ever hears his true voice with his ears. The sound is bone-conducted, and bone does not transmit the range of high frequencies conducted through air. So you do sound like that tape recording. Make the best of it.

In Sherman we have good parties. Our Martins are not like city fellers', and our palette is really from the liver of a stuffed Alaskan goose. And we can always get up a good political argument not Democrat versus Republican, but Four-Plans-Next-Year versus Three-Plans-Are-Nothing-But-Republic-versus-Iterhold Brecht, or of Coffins-for-the-Church-Benches-in-the-Playhouse versus Cushion-Cost Too-Much (cushions won). People will come to parties when our white silk Martini flag goes up. Of course, we will have to pull out because the baby sitter didn't show up or "There is water in the basement and the plumber hasn't come". But for our Sherman Player parties, when we are going to play the complete tape of the last play, Sherman babies can do without the ten o'clock bottle and Sherman furnaces may take off to sea. Everybody comes. They come nonchalantly, as a "matter of community feeling." There is a good deal of shrugging and eyebrow-raising and "After you." But after you my dear Gaston maneuvering for seats. But somehow chairs and sofas are left empty, while everyone sits upon the floor. Sound from the tape recorder seems to bounce better off the floor. They chat but are not absently-mindedly, until I get up and walk towards the recorder. Then you could hear a pin drop. I push a button, the invisible curtain rises, and the play begins. No Broadway show ever had an audience like this. Cocktails glasses are set out quietly. No one scratches a match; it might drown out a priceless syllable. But like the Red Cross, we do afford "Compassion." Our guests know when it is safe to crawl out to the powder room—they are off the air for this bit of dialogue. And if a glass is empty, the kitchen bar is not too far away. Two of us, not to be heard till the next minute, sit by the suds and drink with one ear cocked towards the living room. But neither will be surprised if suddenly he finds himself alone. "I'm on" takes the place of "Good-hy, excuse me, see you later.

We have come to love the microphone, see you later. I've got to get this tape recorder over to the Sherman Playhouse.
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