

IT WAS many years ago that I heard Marian Anderson sing the great recitative and arioso from Mendelssohn's *St. Paul*, "But the Lord Is Mindful of His Own." This comes at the germinal moment when, journeying to Damascus, the Apostle hears the voice of the Lord and, *mit Zittern und Zagen*, is converted.

haps an act of ingratitude to mention them. Mendelssohn's genius roamed far from the baroque splendor of Bach's, but the gentle melodic patterns of his music were a weave of his own period and the Italian masters of the seventeenth century. *St. Paul* was performed fifty times in the eighteen months after it was



Sound on Disc



Since then, that combination of deep faith and pulsing voice has lived with me. I have often wondered whether this passage was a unique inspiration in a long score, or whether Mendelssohn sustained the challenge of his theme.

Now the answer lies easily at hand for those who wish to listen. Vox has issued a two-record album of the entire oratorio, by the Akademie Kammerchor and the Pro Musica Symphony of Vienna. There are, to be sure, some lagging passages in this beautifully sung and cleanly recorded performance. But these are minor — so minor that it is per-

published in the 1860's — and it ranks with the best in its genre. The promise of the arioso which I heard so long ago is fulfilled in its pages and in this, its first recording (Vox 8362).

The leap is great from Mendelssohn's religious expression to Kurt Weill's sardonic depiction in *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* (a suite based on his *Three Penny Opera*) of the decadent and maudlin Germany of 1928. The corruption of the era and the self-conscious attempt to integrate the orgiastic aspects of jazz with the music hall ballads of Berlin make interest in this contrivance

more clinical than anything else. But Weill's undoubted talents break through, and with it the anguish which seized German intellectuals and sent them scurrying into the Communist movement. The sleeve blurb describes the music as charming; it isn't; it's vicious. Izler Solomon and the M-G-M Orchestra give it a good workout, but technically the recording lacks brilliance. (MGM E-3095.)

IF YOU like Borodin set to Broadway lyrics, the original-cast version of the hit, *Kismet*, is your meat. Alfred Drake and Doretta Morrow sing with verve and color. But the words and music somehow do not blend. The score becomes commonplace when brought down to the level of Broadway rhymes and rhythms. And there is not enough spark to the words to carry them alone. Many were entranced by *Kismet* as spectacle. When reduced to revolving grooves, much of the enchantment is lost. (Columbia ML-4850.)

Somewhat in the Broadway mood is Shostakovich's *Concerto for Piano, Trumpet, and Strings*. I find it hard to take the eminent Soviet composer's works with too much seriousness. They are clever, dazzling in spots, full of moody cross currents. But to me they always sound like the product of a highly intelligent, talented and perceptive student. Menahem Pressler is an excellent pianist, and Harry Glantz plays a clean-toned trumpet. But they cannot make the

concerto get up and walk. (MGM E-3079.)

In a deluxe package, Capitol offers to the world something called *The Passions*. The 10-inch record comes in a plastic envelope which, along with a big descriptive booklet, is boxed. The work is an original composition by Les Baxter, described as "a powerful conception that plumbs the depths of human emotion. Here is a picture of woman's passion painted with strokes of shocking brilliance." For the recording enthusiast this is an interesting experiment—instruments and voice blended to be picked up by a full-range, high-fidelity microphone. But the composition falls far short of its build-up. (Capitol LAL-486.)

Also on the pretentious side is Jackie Gleason's *Tawny*, his score for a dance production. Like Gleason's other LP's, this is background music for gentle living room dalliance, with every ounce of sentimentality extracted from the sighing orchestra. (H-471.) Frank Sinatra's *Songs for Young Lovers* is also in the lights-out category—an aggregation of older tunes including "A Foggy Day" and the Rodgers & Hart; "Little Girl Blue." (H-488.)

As a change of pace, there is a selection of dance tunes made famous by the late and great Glenn Miller. Ray Anthony, a former sideman in Miller's band, swings into them with appropriate dash. (H-476.) These last three records are on the Capitol label. R. DE T.



SOVIETS

IN OUR BACK YARD

by
The Editors

➤ *The editors of the AMERICAN MERCURY recently completed an extensive survey of Communism in Central America. Herewith their findings. The situation in Central America is of tremendous importance to the safety and well-being of the United States, yet it is a subject which has received far too little attention from this country and the policymakers in Washington. We urge all of our readers to study this article intently.*

— THE EDITORS

THE Soviet conspiracy has made tremendous headway in its program in Central America, and unless current trends are quickly checked the Kremlin will soon dominate this entire area.

Once the Communists attain such domination, it will be virtually impossible to dislodge them without direct military intervention by the United States, followed by the military occupation of those countries for a prolonged period. And the prospects of direct intervention and occupation are themselves fraught with the gravest

diplomatic dangers to this country, both in its hemispheric and its international relations.

The Communists are so confident of success that their high command recently raised their operating procedure for this area from the social level to the political level.

Nevertheless, if the present trends continue, and the Communists gain control over this entire strategic area, it will be by the default of the United States Government.

The Department of State has failed to evaluate correctly the seriousness of

