

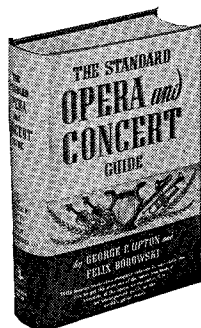
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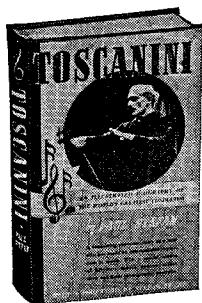
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THE RECORD REVIEW

BEETHOVEN: SONATA IN F MINOR ('APPASSIONATA'), op. 57. Walter Gieseeking, piano (Columbia 365; 3 records, \$5.00).

SONGS OF BRAHMS. Marian Anderson, contralto, Philadelphia Orchestra, & University of Pennsylvania Male Chorus, Eugene Ormandy, conducting (Victor M 555; 1 10", 2 12" records, \$6.00).

SCHUBERT: SYMPHONY No. 5 IN B FLAT. Sir Thomas Beecham & London Philharmonic Orchestra (Columbia 366; 4 records, \$6.00).

K.P.E. BACH: CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA IN D MAJOR, Arr. Steinberg. Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky (Victor M 559; 2 records, \$4.50).

DOHNANYI: QUARTET IN D FLAT, op. 15. Roth String Quartet (Columbia 367; 3 records, \$5.00).

GRIFFES: TWO SKETCHES: CHADWICK: QUARTET IN E MINOR, 2nd movement. Coolidge String Quartet (Victor M 558; 2 records, \$4.50).

SPIRITUALS & FOLK SONGS. Louis Armstrong (Decca; single records, 35¢ each).

THE recording of the "Appassionata" Sonata is the first solo performance to come from Columbia's American corner since the company was acquired by the Columbia Broadcasting System a few months back. Consequently the set has been awaited with considerable anxiety, for, prior to the change in management, Columbia's best catalogue items were those repressed from foreign matrices.

If the present set indicates anything, there are rosy days ahead for American recording. For the mechanics of the set surpass any previous recording of piano tone, as splendid as have been some earlier piano sets.

Little is the need to recount the wonders of Gieseeking's astonishing artistry. His "Appassionata" is as brilliant as was his "Waldstein" Sonata, issued two months ago. It has the now familiar (but nonetheless breathtaking) variegated shadings, dramatic conception, and undeviating faithfulness to the composer's intentions.

But what is especially significant in this set is the accuracy with which Gieseeking's attributes are recorded. That incredible subtlety which results from the endless change of dynamics, that clarity of the parts, and that balance between what the two hands are doing are so lucidly captured that the listener cannot fail to apprehend their presence. And to cap the climax the surfaces are smooth and quiet. This set certainly augurs well for tomorrow.

VICTOR, not satisfied with giving us a supremely beautiful performance of the Brahms Alto Rhapsody, sung by Miss

Anderson, assisted by the University of Pennsylvania Male Chorus and the Philadelphia Orchestra, hastens to add three lieder to the set. Three lieder under ordinary circumstances would be a welcome addition, but in this case Miss Anderson is accompanied by the full timbres of Mr. Ormandy's Orchestra while singing *Immer Leiser wird mein Schlimmer*, *Der Schmied*, and *Dein blaues Auge*. Could anything be in poorer taste?

But, of course, Miss Anderson's rich voice and grand musicianship lessen the hardship of taking Victor's flights of fancy. The Philadelphia Orchestra is not quite at the top of its plane in this set, and the recording has better companions in the Victor catalogue. Generally speaking, this set goes in the "other" column.

AFTER hearing Schubert's Fourth Symphony (to be reviewed next month), the Fifth Symphony sounds like a reversion to the purely classical spirit of Haydn's and Mozart's day. This symphony is lightly scored for flute, oboes, bassoons, two horns, and strings. The character of the music is essentially melodic, although the harmonic structure and the orchestral color are full indeed, notwithstanding the limited resources. Schubert was a melodic poet of the highest order, and this symphony testifies well to the fact.

Beecham's sprightly performance is the best of the available ones on discs. The reading is *echt* Schubertian. On an odd side, Hamilton Harty and the Halle Orchestra play incidental music from *Rosamunde*.

COMPETITORS will have to equal the Boston Symphony series before threatening the Victor dynasty. These sets mark the peak in modern orchestral recording. Each new one leaves the listener astounded. For not only is the recording impeccable on the mechanical front, but it also displays the finest orchestra on the musical horizon.

In this delightful orchestral concerto arranged for modern orchestra by Maximilian Steinberg from a work by Karl Philip Emanuel Bach, the resplendent gloss of the Boston Orchestra is in full dress. Dr. Koussevitzky's reading in places is vulgar. But the resilience of the strings, especially, more than compensates for the conductor's occasional poor taste. Here is an orchestra that, as a band, has no apparent weakness; and here it is luxuriously recorded.

AMONG contemporary composers, Ernst von Dohnanyi occupies a fortunate position. Already he is *recognized*. And rightly so, one will agree, on hearing this second string quartet, as well as others of his works.

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The Record Review

Although the Brahms influence is strongly marked, the Quartet is exciting and full of the vitality of a young writer (it was written in 1907 when the composer was thirty). Its three movements are allegro, scherzo, and adagio. Each has a character all its own, but the general impression is that the whole score, attractive as it is, has too many of the faults of nineteenth-century romantic music. The scherzo is probably the most original of the movements.

As usual, the Roths turn in a competent performance. The recording is spacious and the surfaces are quiet.

THE attempt in recording music by Griffes and Chadwick has been to get an "American music" onto records. Though Chadwick was a genuine creative talent and Griffes was an able second-rater, neither of them touched even the surface of what might be called an American music. Griffes at best imitated French impressionism, and Chadwick succumbed likewise to European influences. Chadwick had originality but in much the same sense as did Foote, Paine, and other nineteenth-century native composers.

In this album Griffes is represented by two sketches based on Indian themes, and Chadwick is represented by a movement from his fourth quartet, based on Negro folk music. There is little to recommend any of this music, but it is expertly played by the Coolidge Quartet and recorded with much polish and good balance by Victor.

AN American music is more closely approached on three records issued by Decca (Louis Armstrong singing the spirituals, "Jonah and the Whale" and "Shadrack," on record 1,913; "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen" and "Going To Shout All Over God's Heaven" on 2,085; and the folk songs, "Carry Me Back To Old Virginny" and "Darling Nellie Gray," on 1,245). Louis Armstrong, long known as a top-ranking jazz trumpeter, manifests the versatility of his art, a real improvisational art, in these unusual recordings. If you agree with Wilder Hobson that jazz is the outgrowth of the spiritual and folk music of the Negro and, further, that jazz is the basis of America's music, you will find in these records the true cradle of a native lore. Armstrong reveals the restlessness and neurotic strain that is, by some circumstance, our heritage. His rendition of "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen," particularly, ought to go down into history as a valid statement of our life and times. However, even if you reject this argument of Hobson's, you will at least find these records fascinating.

ARTHUR WALLACE HEPNER



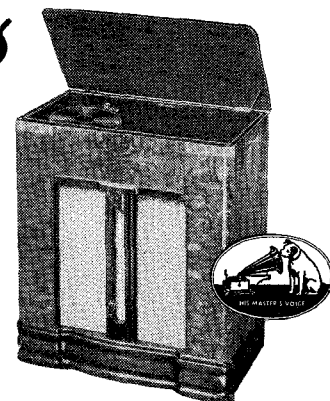
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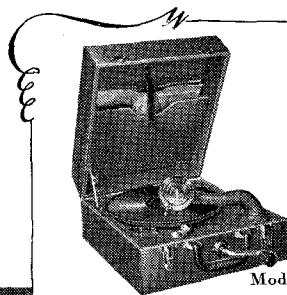
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