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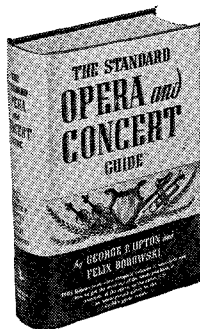
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THE RECORD REVIEW

STRAUSS: SYMPHONIA DOMESTICA. Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy (Victor M, AM 520; 5 records, \$10.00).

TAYLOR: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS, Suite. Columbia Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Howard Barlow (Columbia 350; 4 records, \$8.00).

HARPSICHORD RECITAL. Ralph Kirkpatrick (Musicraft 25; 6 records, \$9.00).

SCHUMANN: CONCERTO IN A MINOR, op. 54. Myra Hess, piano, & orchestra conducted by Walter Goehr (Victor M, AM 473; 4 records, \$6.50).

HINDEMITH: QUARTET No. 3, op. 22. Coolidge String Quartet (Victor M, AM 524; 3 records, \$6.50).

BEETHOVEN: QUARTET IN E FLAT, arr. from quintet, op. 16. E. Robert Schmitz, piano, & members of Roth String Quartet (Columbia 348; 4 records, \$6.00).

BRUCKNER: OVERTURE IN G MINOR. Henry J. Wood & Queen's Hall Orchestra (Decca 7; 2 records, \$2.25).

TSCHAIKOWSKY: NUTCRACKER SUITE. Alexander Smallens & symphony orchestra (Decca 23; 3 10" records, \$2.75).

THE Domestic Symphony of Strauss was introduced to this country in 1904 by the composer himself, and at that time its program of mamma, papa, and baby caught the imagination of critics and public alike. Shorn of its program, the symphony — actually a symphonic poem — is a tedious bore, as bombastic as the egomaniac ravings of *Ein Heldenleben*. It represents the talent which composed the sparkling rondo, *Til Eulenspiegel*, well on the road to decay.

But this is the first recording of the symphony and as such should have immense appeal in many quarters. Besides, it is magnificently orchestrated, and the Philadelphians drain it to the last ounce. Another salutary factor is the spaciousness of the recording, which omits little, if any, of the orchestration's effulgence.

DEEMS TAYLOR's Suite combines a series of firsts: the first Deems Taylor work to get onto records, the first gramophonic adventure of the Columbia Symphony Orchestra, and Mr. Barlow's debut on discs.

Mr. Taylor's music is pleasingly graphic and sentimental, dextrously written and skillfully orchestrated. It contains idioms of forerunners of Mr. Taylor, but the freshness of every bar and the color of the orchestration make it gratifying in every way. Surely Mr. Taylor has a manner of writing for the woodwinds, down to the contrabassoon, that in itself is worthy of recording.

Both Mr. Barlow and the Orchestra should have been on records before. Many of their performances over the C.B.S. network should be recorded, and it is hoped,

now that there is a financial tie between C.B.S. and the Columbia Phonograph Company, that this splendid orchestra and its able conductor will be permanent additions to the recording field — as will be the excellence of these records.

MUSICRAFT, the David between two Goliaths, scores another triumph, perhaps its greatest for a time to come, with the Kirkpatrick recorded recital.

Old music had not been done in its original form with great success until Musicraft entered the recording business about two years ago. Since then, its harpsichord and organ records, and also its choral records, have brought about a new deal in the recording of the polyphonic style.

Ralph Kirkpatrick's recorded recital presents an extraordinary sample of music for the harpsichord, including, as it does, Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D minor, two suites by Purcell, two sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti, and items by Rameau, Couperin, and Morley. These works belong in any collection which pretends to catholicism, and, while their historical value may be paramount, their musical appeal is genuine and magnetic. Beyond this, Mr. Kirkpatrick performs a veritable miracle by giving the harpsichord a dynamic variance and continuity of line that heretofore have been unattainable. To complete the case, these records, qualitatively, are the best to come from Musicraft's studios to date.

SCHUMANN's piano concerto has needed re-recording for some time. Miss Hess could not be surpassed as the artist to do it. Although her playing is broad and romantic, and just what the music requires, the orchestral accompaniment and the dullness of the recording make this set only the best of the available recordings of the concerto instead of one of the high spots in Victor's catalogue. But much of this may be due to the soporific character of the music, for the sixth and eighth sides of the records arouse considerable interest.

HINDEMITH is one of the most talked-about musicians of the day. Supposedly a musical radical, he is one of our most conforming composers, if one will only take the trouble to see this. If you listen to Hindemith in terms of today and remember that he is only expressing his feelings, which, in fact, are conditioned by the influences of society, you will readily understand him.

This quartet is formally clear. The five movements categorically fall within various patterns. And the talk about atonality is so much nonsense. If anything, the quartet is polytonal, with several tonalities prevailing simultaneously.

The Record Review

The Coolidge Quartet makes its first appearance on records in this set. Victor is fortunate to have these musicians in its fold, for they are an admirable addition to the chamber-music world. Perhaps Victor will let them record some more Hindemith and give them as superb a mechanical background as they have provided in the current set. So far as I can see, this is really one of Victor's noblest chamber-music achievements.

WHY Columbia chose to record the quartet version of opus 16 is a puzzle to me. Yes, the Roth people and Mr. Schmitz give a delightful performance, and Beethoven himself wrote the quartet version. But the facts that originally opus 16 was scored for piano and winds and that it is suited to wind timbre augur well for the first version.

In any case, the music is light and gay, and the recording is excellent.

FOR Brucknerites who cannot persuade the major companies to release more of their master's larger works, Decca's G-minor overture will be something of a pleasure. For others it will be an introduction to the music of a man whose true genius may be recognized by the world at large some day. In the overture there is ample evidence of Bruckner's best characteristics: polyphonic inventiveness, masterful orchestration, thematic beauty, bold improvisation. Possibly the hearing of this set will increase that small band of devotees, almost religious in their fervor, who want more of Bruckner's music — the third, fifth, sixth, and eighth symphonies — on records.

MUSIC for children and young people is a Decca specialty. Among its catalogue items are albums of French folk songs, highlights from the score of the cartoon film, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," and now this compact version of the Nutcracker Suite.

Instead of detracting from Tchaikovsky's score, the condensed version gives it a greater charm by deleting superfluous passages that burden the music. Mr. Smallens and his small orchestra perform the music with an intimacy often lacking in more pretentious approaches. For once the Suite sounds like music for children, its scope being naïve and fanciful.

Again the Decca records are full of extramusical scratch, but at the same time they are spacious and articulate. The wood winds, especially, are recorded colorfully. Among the set's assets is a skillfully written leaflet by Moses Smith, of the *Boston Transcript*, who presents material of fact rather than of hallucination.

ARTHUR WALLACE HEPNER

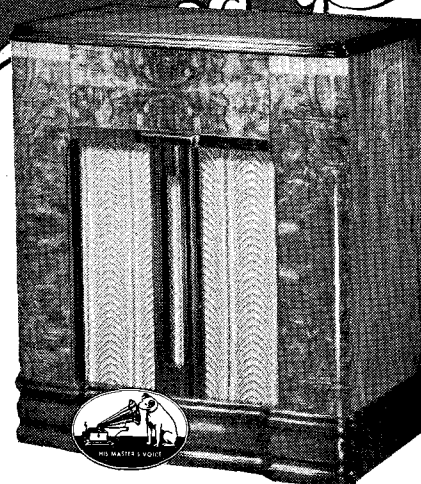
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