

(Capitol) leads the parade, with "Johnny Appleseed" (RCA Victor) and "Pecos Bill" (RCA Victor) among the top fifteen—all taken from Disney's "Melody Time." Like all such adaptations, "Little Toot" is essentially a visual rather than auditory story; it leans heavily on illustrations that accompany the record and on a catchy tune; the story by itself is quite ordinary. "Johnny Appleseed" is a good version of the popular American legend, with a masterful performance by Dennis Day, but the story is slow in developing. "Pecos Bill" lacks the salty folklore flavor which one expects of a Western tall story and the plot line is somewhat chaotic; the producers of this album could learn a valuable lesson from "Paul Bunyan" (Signature) which, regrettably, is not on the best-seller list. "Bugs Bunny" (Capitol) and "Bugs Bunny and the Tortoise" (Capitol) owe their success to the famous cartoon shorts. Their appeal lies mainly in puns and slapstick humor.

Some records get off to a good start because they are adaptations of well-known books and have the advantage of familiarity. Among this group of best sellers are some good albums: "The Little Engine That Could" (RCA Victor), "Peter Rabbit" (Columbia), and "The Bear That Wasn't" (MGM). Record companies have not yet explored all the possibilities of adapting books to records. It is a rich source of material since publishers have had much more experience with children's likes than the record manufacturers. Though a large proportion of juve-



"Daddy, play me the one with the totem pole on the cover."

nile books are commercial ventures, many publishers and many writers have learned that it is possible to achieve satisfactory sales and still keep the child in mind. With a few exceptions, the record companies have yet to learn this lesson.

Then, too, there are the old standbys, staple items in anyone's repertoire that are sure to appeal to children and to the adults who buy them. The current best sellers in this category are: Gene Kelly's "Nursery Songs" (Columbia), Frank Luther's "Nursery Rhymes" (Decca), "The Night Before Christmas" (RCA Victor), and "The Gingerbread Boy" (Columbia). While these records are good, and appeal to children, the future of children's records should not depend on standard material. A new literature must be developed for records, one that takes advantage of the auditory aspects of discs and at the same time takes account of the kind of human beings that children are. The consumer must encourage attempts in this direction.

Intensive promotion will also help make an album a best seller. This point is demonstrated by Capitol's "Bozo" albums. "Bozo at the Circus" was the first of the series. It was launched with a promotion campaign which included newspaper and magazine advertising, window displays, radio performances by disc jockeys, excellent relations with record dealers, etc. The album deserved all this attention, for it is unquestionably good and contains an appealing feature, which was novel at the time—a picture book well-integrated with the contents of the records. The succeeding albums, however, are pale imitations of the original. The latest, "Bozo Under the Sea," is a mine of ichthyological misinformation and not only a poor replica of "Bozo at the Circus" but also reminiscent of two excellent, but not best-selling albums, "Lonesome Octopus" (Belda) and "Grumpy Shark" (Belda). However, promotion and the popularity achieved by "Bozo the Clown" have kept all the "Bozo" albums alive and on the best-seller list.

It is gratifying, though unusual, that a few albums are so good that they have come to the top without promotional advantages. For example, "Tubby the Tuba," possibly the best seller of all times, was the first album released by an unknown record manufacturer, Cosmo. Despite these odds, it became a sensational seller overnight and has actually survived the company that mothered it. Other albums that have sold mainly on their merits are: "Genie the Magic Record" (Decca) and "The Little Fireman" (Young People's).

There are a number of excellent al-



—David Hobb.

My Favorite Records

W. H. Auden, noted English poet now resident in America, has for long been an avid record collector. Mr. Auden has kept strictly to vocal music in his list, since he felt it would be impossible to encompass the whole range of music within the specified space.

BACH: "St. Matthew Passion." The Leipzig recording, with Günther Ramin conducting, Lemnitz and Hüsck as soloists.

BELLINI AND OTHERS: *An Operatic Recital* by Claudia Muzio.

DONIZETTI: "Don Pasquale." The La Scala recording with Tito Schipa.

DONIZETTI: "Lucia di Lammermoor." The version on Parlophone, with Pagliughi and Malipiero, Tansini conducting.

MOZART: "Cosi Fan Tutte." The Glyndebourne recording, Fritz Busch conducting.

VERDI: "Ritorna vincitor" from "Aida." Rosa Ponselle.

VERDI: "Un Ballo in Maschera." The Rome recording with Gigli and Caniglia, Serafin conducting.

VERDI: *Requiem*. The Rome recording with Caniglia, Stignani, Gigli, and Pinza, Serafin conducting.

WAGNER: *Quintet* from "Meistersinger." Schumann, Schorr, et al.

WAGNER: "Herzeleide" scene from "Parsifal." Flagstad and Melchior.

WAGNER: "Die Walküre," Acts I and II. The composite Vienna-Berlin recording with Lehmann and Melchior.

WEBER: "Und ob die Wolke sie verhüllt" from "Freischütz." Tiana Lemnitz (Polydor version).

WEBER: "Gebet des Hün" from "Oberon." Helge Roswaenge.

bums that have not reached the best-seller list. One group includes adaptations of such classics as "Treasure Island" (Columbia), "The Count of Monte Cristo" (Decca), "The Three Musketeers" (Columbia), and "The

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The Saturday Review

"The Records I'd Give"

As Chosen by the Critics

THE gift season being almost at hand, we have presented a page of this issue to some of the leading opinion formers of this country, and they in turn have presented us with their free-hand opinions of what recordings they might give their friends as Christmas gifts.

If we see any pattern, it is that four professional listeners are in agreement that the thing their friends would most like to have is a copy of the Brahms Requiem. The four are **Felix Borowski** of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, **Suzanne Martin** of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, **Albert Goldberg** of the *Los Angeles Times*, and **Hilmar Grondahl** of the *Portland Oregonian*. Trust the critics, however, to make things as difficult as possible; for having shown so much agreement, they promptly diverge on which of the year's two versions of the Requiem they consider preferable. Messrs. Borowski, Goldberg, and Grondahl bestow their favor on Herbert von Karajan's direction (Columbia) while Miss Martin, both a critic and female, exercises the prerogative of her sex by nominating the Shaw-RCA Victor Chorale album.

Borowski adds a "hang the expense" to his Brahms recommendation and proceeds with further lavishness to suggest, for a violin-playing friend, the Heifetz recording of Vieuxtemps No. 5 (which he calls "remarkable") and, for a piano fancier, the Saint-Saëns G minor (both RCA Victor) by Moiseivitch. For his single he reverts to a phonographic classic: Bidu Sayao's singing of the "Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5" of Villa-Lobos (on Columbia). Miss Martin is also a Sayao enthusiast, though she prefers the "O Mio Babbino Caro" from "Gianni Schicchi" (Columbia), regretting that the other side "does not have an early Italian art song sung by Pinza." She has children on her list, too, and for them it's Basil Rathbone's "Sinbad the Sailor" (Columbia). Goldberg's friends will get the Prokofieff "Toccatà" played by Horowitz (RCA Victor) if he is a man of his word, and asks that we mention his difficulty in preferring the Brahms to Klemperer's direction of the "Brandenburg No. 5" (on Vox). Further up the coast in Oregon, it's a Bampton Christmas for Grondahl, with "D'amour l'ardente flamme" from "Damnation of Faust" (RCA Victor) the No. 1 single. Danny Kaye's "Tubby the Tuba" (Decca) and "Alice in Wonderland" with Bambi

Linn (RCA Victor) are his nominations for single and album gifts in the children's category.

John Rosenfeld of the *Dallas News* has a special reason for liking Florence Quartararo's "Tacea le Notte" from "Trovatore" (RCA Victor) as his gift to Texas enthusiasts: "Here is great vocal material," he writes, "and estimable art that could be significant in a few years." With men who know the Dallas Symphony best, it's Copland's "Rodeo" ten to one, to judge from Rosenfeld's notation that "gin rummy players and poker pals have already asked me for 'Rodeo.'"

Though Ravel's "L'Enfant et Les Sortilèges" has but recently been issued, two critics hold it in high favor, for different reasons. **Jerome D. Bohm** of the *New York Herald Tribune* cites it without reservation as the ideal album gift, while **Harvey Taylor** of the *Detroit Times* works it into his list in the children's department. It's a technicality, however, as Taylor adds: "I have deliberately cheated in classifying 'L'Enfant' as a work for children but I think it's one of the year's most important records—just as 'The Medium' was." As may be deduced from the foregoing, Taylor is a Menotti man in the classical album field. Stokowski's recording of the Revueltas "Sensemaya" (RCA Victor) and Thurber's "Many Moons" (Columbia) complete his selections in singles—classical and children's. The Bohm single is Berglund's "Blick ich umher" (RCA Victor).

Sayao—or is it merely Debussy?—wins another vote in the preferences expressed by **Cyrus Durgin** of the *Boston Globe*, who estimates the

Columbia recording of "La Demoiselle Elue" with Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra as the thing his friends would like to see under their Christmas trees. With it should go Hindemith's "Lively" (Columbia) as enlivened by the Stuyvesant Sinfonietta. "Inside USA" is his choice for a popular album (RCA Victor), with Haydn's "Toy Symphony" (YPR) directed by Max Goberman and Columbia's "Sinbad the Sailor" for the tykes.

Out San Francisco way **Alfred Frankenstein** of the *Chronicle* poses a problem: "When is a single not a single?" He has capably chosen the Budapest Quartet's playing of the Beethoven Opus 132 as his "single"; but adds, "If LP records are not single, put me down for Koussevitzky's recent 'Academic Festival' under that heading." And the mail carriers who have to deliver the fifty or so Berlioz Requiems that Frankenstein is giving away, will not bless either him, Columbia, or Berlioz. Children's singles, he expressively notes, "Nah." But the Young People's "Building a City" is favorably Frankensteined.

From the periodical press, a vote for some standbys by **Robert Darrell** of *The Review of Recorded Music*: Edwin Fischer's direction of a string orchestra in the six-part "Ricercare" of Bach and Beecham's "Great Elopement" Suite of Handel (both RCA Victor). He thinks children will welcome the Haydn "Trumpet Concerto" as played by Eskdale (Columbia) or the "South African Veldt Songs" of Marias (Decca). **Peter Hugh Reed** of *The American Record Guide* selects the new Stokowski version of "The Swan of Tuonela" (RCA Victor), the "Vienna Waltzes" played by the Alexander Schneider Quintet (Columbia), and Count Basie's "Piano Rhythms" (RCA Victor) for the grownups. For the small fry, "Little Toot" (Capitol) and "Irving the Unemployed Horse" (MGM).

Being neither a horse nor unemployed, the editor regards the last as suspiciously akin to a slur from the genial Reed, but will resolve that aspersion after the holidays. To his friends **Kolodin** proposes the following: Fauré's "Pavane" (Columbia) as a single token of affection, Kathleen Ferrier's "Alto Rhapsody" (English Decca) of Brahms for multiple joy. At least one of the younger set will get Copland's "Appalachian Spring" since she's asked for it now six times, and can be put off no longer. A much younger one will get Thurber's "Many Moons," and a handful of Dizzy Gillespies will make the rounds of the bebop set. For his neighbors, Kolodin proposes a closed phonograph and no music on Christmas Day.

