

THE YOUNGER SET



WITH the cost of living slowly soaring out of sight, it is comforting to find some commodity useful in the household pegged at 29¢, slightly more than a quarter, the fourth part of a dollar—and less than a quarter pound of butter. We speak of the new series of six-inch records for the very young launched this month by Simon & Schuster under the title of "Golden Records." Derived from the remarkably popular series of "Golden Books," the discs are well-recorded, unbreakable, shrewdly divided between a story to a side, and one side story, one side musical classic.

Taste as well as care is evident in the selection of material and performers. Most of the actual performance is done by Irene Wicker, famous as the Singing Lady of radio. Alec Wilder has done many of the musical settings, with a blend of craft and simplicity which is rather novel in this field. Mitchell Miller, well known as a virtuoso oboe player, is the musical director and an able one.

Included in the series are such pairings as "Tootle" and a "Norwegian Dance" of Grieg; "Little Pee Wee" and the "Turkish March" of Mozart, "The Shy Little Kitten" and Tchaikovsky's "Humoresque." These are frankly experimental, providing the parent with an opportunity to try out musical works of worth on the youngster, at a minimum price. The playing is musicianly, the recording uncommonly clear, though sometimes a little boomy for a small machine.

The more conventional pairing of stories offers, as typical items, "The Tall Giraffe" and "The Funny Little Mouse," "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod" and "Storm in the Bath Tub," "Out of the Window" and "The Busy Elevator." Some of the titles, such as "Circus Time" (a two-side job) parallel books in the printed series, allowing for correlation of aural and visual experience.

Continuing its Composer Series, which began with Igor Stravinsky, the Young Peoples Club has turned to the American composer Aaron Copland for its second issue (YPR 408, \$1.59, unbreakable). Selections are offered from "The Lincoln Portrait," "Billy the Kid," "Appalachian Spring," and "El Salon Mexico"—an excess of generosity, we think, on two sides of a ten-inch record. A slight story is interspersed, but it might all have been easier for young listeners to

grasp had fewer words been utilized, and more repetition provided to familiarize them with Copland's style. Walter Hendl directs members of the New York Philharmonic in performances which are stylistically good, but a bit over-recorded.

Otherwise, the fall releases are mostly for the very young, particularly in the song category. Outstanding is Alec Templeton's presentation of A. A. Milne's favorite "Songs of Christopher Robin" (RCA Victor Y 26, \$2.25, unbreakable). The fine selection includes "Buckingham Palace," "Hop-pity," "Halfway Down," and "Christopher Robin is Saying his Prayers." Templeton's charm, his distinctive voice and piano playing are certain to delight the youngsters. Also from RCA Victor (Y 30, \$2.50) are "Adventures in Mother Goose," sung by Jack Arthur, a new, agreeable children's artist. Other nursery news concerns "Nursery Rhymes" (Capitol D.B.S. 90, \$2.36), sung by Ben Carson, a compilation of twenty-two verses, adapted by Allan Livingston, with music by Billy May. As an additional feature, there are illustrations for coloring.

Also for the young listener are a zooful of animal records, mostly undomesticated: "Rhumpy the Rhino"

(Columbia M. J. 47, \$2.29), "Clara the Curious Cow" (Columbia 90038), "Whoa Little Horses, Lie Down" (Y.P.R. \$1.59), and "Bugs Bunny and the Tortoise" (Capitol D. B. X93, \$3.68), are representative. The "Horses" setting has some story elements to invite activity, though the music vetoes the impulse, but most certainly to be shunned is the "Bugs Bunny" presentation, a life-sized version of the smart alec, thoroughly repulsive comic character augmented by colored illustrations. A waste of wax and paper!

Older children will enjoy the new "Tex Ritter" album (Capitol D. C. 91, \$3.85), which includes "Animal Fair," "Big Rock Candy Mountain," etc. Ritter's warm, informal voice is assisted by some wonderful sound effects in the creation of a very real picture of Western life. Admirers of the Song Spinners will find them happily employed in "Holidays in Song," along with Jack Arthur and the orchestra of Henri Rene. (RCA Victor Y 31, \$3.15). Eighteen songs commemorating as many American holidays are musically undistinguished. Arthur deserves better material.

For owners of players employing Long Playing records, Columbia offers pairings of "Many Moons" and "Eager Piano" (J. L. 8002, \$2.85), and "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" and the "Gingerbread Boy" (J. L. 8003, \$2.85). Forthcoming soon is the complete "Hansel and Gretel," on two L. P. records—a problem for a Christmas stocking, but one which invites solution. MARIE L. MUTCH.

POSTWAR JAZZ IN FRANCE

(Continued from page 51)

Pleyel in Paris, and six twelve-inch sides were issued under the title "Rex Stewart at the Salle Pleyel": "Mobile Bay," "I Can't Get Started," "The Man I Love," "I Cover the Waterfront," "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Cotton Tail." Although the recording is far from excellent, there are some very good spots, and the shouts from the audience show what a wonderful reception Rex's band had in Paris.

Among the French musicians, Django Rheinhardt's Hot Club Quintet has been particularly active in the recording field during recent years. "Lentement, Mademoiselle" (Swing), "Blues Primitif," "Folie A Amphion," a swing version of the "Anniversary Song" (all on Blue Star) and many others prove that Django's artistry is greater than ever. Claude Luter's band which became an overnight hit at the recent International Jazz Festival in Nice has already made quite a few

recordings. The best sides are "Muskrat Ramble" / "Shreveport Blues" (Swing) and "High Society" / "Didn't He Ramble" (Pacific), which these youngsters perform in the true style of King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. Another excellent record in the New Orleans tradition is "Tin Roof Blues" / "Jazz Me Blues" by Claude Abadie's orchestra (Swing).

Finally, a rather unusual recording by two young French pianists, Eddy Bernard and André Persiany, should be mentioned: "Cuttin' Contest" (Blue Star). Bernard plays in the Fats Waller "stride" style, while Persiany uses the "blocked chords" created by Milt Buckner (of Lionel Hampton's band). Both are very gifted, and it is an amazing contrast to hear them on the same record, as they do not play together but take choruses alternately.

HUGUES PANASSIE AND
ANDY GURWITCH.

discs would be priced at about \$1.75. Finally, Class C would be a listing of all records for which stampers are available. Special pressings would be made to order from these, at a cost of about \$2.50. In this category would be found the vast majority of acoustical waxings, together with out-dated electricals like the old Weingartner version of Mozart's "Symphony No. 39." (Before the war, record companies used to make special "White Label" pressings of any deleted disc, but such business was discouraged through the charging of exorbitant prices. The service has not been resumed.) To a layman, this plan seems to possess considerable merit, and it would be interesting to learn the reactions of Mr. Hall's confreres at RCA Victor and Columbia.

Another answer, or rather palliative, to the deletion problem would be the establishment of some central record archive. Many cut-out recordings are of great importance to the musical researcher and historian. Should a scholar want to study Franz Schalk's interpretation of the Beethoven "Fifth," however, he would have to rely on a cut-out store and pay \$9.75—a sum well beyond most researchers. Requirements of this nature could effectively be met by a complete library of recorded music. No such repository yet exists, but its need becomes more urgent with every passing year.

Since both these proposals smack of utopianism, a concrete suggestion based on the status quo might be in order. Granted that the rare-record business is here to stay, there should at least be a reasonable code of ethics to protect the unwitting consumer. A policy rampant in the cut-out field is to leave the price of a record indeterminate, so as to get from it what the traffic will bear. I know of a collector who owned one of a two-record Telefunken set and was extremely anxious to acquire the missing disc. It turned out that the cut-out record shop at which he inquired happened to have the odd disc in its stock. The collector's need and his willingness to pay were accurately judged. The cost for one record of a Vivaldi Concerto Grosso: \$15. Surely, if hard and fast prices were set on "rare recordings" and lists of same widely distributed (as is customary in the used-book business), the real music lover in search of a deleted record would get a better deal. And that neglected individual, it need hardly be said, deserves every possible break.

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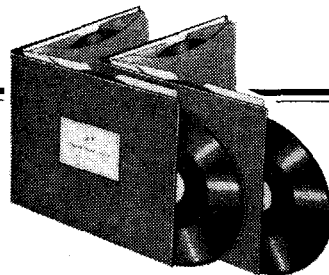
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Some Highs and Lows

A PRIMER ON SUPPRESSION

THE ARGUMENTS over H. H. Scott's principle of Dynamic Noise Suppression continue, and after a summer's work with three different models I am still in the field to defend it as a valuable adjunct to wide-range phonograph equipment and as a potentially useful gadget, simplified and lower priced, on the standard commercial home phonograph.

But few arguments will be settled as long as we speak of "the" suppressor. There are already three general types, the radio-station model used for broadcast records, the fancy phonograph amplifiers-with-suppressor, and various simplified versions built into ready-made phonographs or attachable. More important, there are several fundamentally different types of control system, and since no suppressor is better than its controls—when we dubs are turned loose on them—it is hardly accurate to judge the whole breed by any single performance.

The basis of the dynamic suppressor,

whichever form, is not as some might think, to separate noise from music like a cream separator. That is impossible. Instead it follows a line of very cagey reasoning on Scott's part. Most noise is found in the higher frequencies. The usual remedy is the tone control (or filter) which cuts down all higher tones, the music with the noise. A sacrifice. But—a vital difference—noise on a record is steady in volume, whereas music soars from loud to soft. Music is *dynamic* in volume. Moreover when music is soft we most mind the noise; louder music drowns it out.

Why not, then, devise an automatic tone control to *respond to volume*, that opens up when volume is high, closes down when it is low? True, the suppressor can't tell music from noise; but since it is the music, not the noise that changes volume, the music will be in control—which is precisely what we want. Ingenious! But not so simple in practice. A farther step is to arrange two sets of tone-control "gates," one to control the higher tones, the other for the bass, to remove assorted rumbles and thumps when no louder bass music is present. Because these gates are all-electronic with no moving parts—they will work as fast or as slowly as you will, to cover any situation; the adjustment can be instantaneous.

The principle is both simple and wonderful. It is the application that is difficult. A thousand questions must be answered. At what volume shall the gates begin to open and when shall they reach full width? What shall be the limits, both open and closed? Above all, how much control over all this shall we entrust to the doughty operator, so that he can best match a million and one very different records?

In the working out, three main control functions seem to be most important, aside from the bass gate, which takes care of itself inconspicuously. Once the idea of the tone-control gate is clear, they aren't too hard to visualize. First, the gates must be adjustable so that they open and close within the volume range of the music; thus, as they open, the music is always a bit louder than the noise let through. If the gates open too soon more noise will be passed than can be covered up by the louder music and you'll hear a fine swish. Second, we may control the extent that high tones are cut down when the gates are closed, the music at low volume, how

much noise is cut out (and music too, of course). At the risk of mixing metaphors I'll call this the *floor*. If so, then another control, the wider range of tones allowed through at loud volume when the gates are open wide, is of course the *ceiling*, and you can imagine, in topsy-turvy fashion, the gates bouncing from floor to ceiling as the music goes soft and loud! Think again of your manual tone control as though automatically driven by the musical volume: first, what volume shall it respond to—when shall its movement begin; second, how far "down" shall it turn with music at low volume, and third, how far up shall it go—if not all the way—when the music is at full volume?

It is in the controls for these three functions that the various brands of suppressor differ greatly. Goodell and Fisher, also others, feel that the most important adjustment you, the user, should make is the first ("gate sensitivity") at what volume levels the gates work. Turn this adjustment down, and it takes louder music to open the gates up and so more noise is covered; with less noisy records the gates can be changed to open sooner, thereby letting through more music.

However, H. H. Scott provides a very different control, though unfortunately at first glance it may look the same. His main control is a *variable floor*. When you turn this, instead of changing the volume level needed to open the gates, you change the depth to which the gates cut down on the highs when they close. After all (he may have thought) it's in the soft parts that we notice noise most; the usual remedy for noise is tone-control—let's have *more* tone control, in the soft parts, for the noisier records.

The one-knob simplified suppressors now installed in some phonographs may well become more widely and cheaply available. Combining several controls in one, they aren't very adaptable to changing conditions. But since nine-tenths of noise and distortion trouble comes in the tonal ranges still completely beyond most home machines, these suppressors can loaf along; they'll further reduce the already low noise for you, with minimum damage to the part of the music that you do get to hear.

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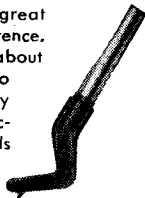
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