# DOUBLE-CROSTIC No. 775 

Reg. U. S. Patent Ottice
By Elizabeth S. Kingsley




## I MPRESSIONS

RCA VICTOR, as noted in the leading article of this issue, has taken the wraps off its longrumored "Madame X," and soon the two contenders for public favor will be toe to toe in the commercial ring: in this corner, "Kid Jewel Box," in the opposite corner, "Battling LP." For the first time since the flat dise replaced the cylinder, the consumer finds himself obliged to match a record to a piece of equipment if he cares to enjoy all the advantages which modern science has brought into being.

One phase of the matter, however, calls for a bit of clarification-the allegation that a product substantially similar to the Columbia $L P$ record was available years ago and withdrawn from the market because public acceptance was lacking. The oversize disc which RCA marketed, through versions of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and similar works, in 1933 resembled the current product in but one respect: its speed of $331 / 3$ revolutions. It failed, primarily, because of poor performance due to the following factors: lack of a dependable motor (at a reasónable price); distortion due to imperfect cutting; noisy shellac surfaces; poor reproducing point. Furthermore, the stimulus to persist and perfect these elements was lacking, since the volume of business in extended musical works was small.

In choosing to preserve the status quo of record reproduction-as represented by a record of short-playing span-RCA Victor has limited itself to the convenience of one segment of the record public (the large mass market) and left the smaller, if more discriminating, public to take what consolation it can from the improved quality of the new disc. My conviction is that both parties could have been served, by the use of as much of a

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record's surface as their needs require, gaited to the standard slow speed of $331 / 3$ revolutions. This would have required a choice of one kind of stand-ardization-RCA's $67 / 8$-inch record, for all purposes-against another, uniform speed; and, incidentally, lessened the
importance of its quick-change cycle. When the returns are in, a year from now, we may all know a good deal more about consumer preference than we do now.

Irving Kolodin, Editor, SRL Recordings.

