

Letters to the *RECORDINGS* Editor

Repertoire for George Byron

SIR: Among the LETTERS TO THE RECORDINGS EDITOR in SR July 26 appears a letter from Hugh Samson of Baltimore, Maryland, which asks if the Desto people who have just recorded a Kern album featuring George Byron can be persuaded to reissue the singer's Gershwin album recorded some time ago under another label.

I should like to inform Mr. Samson that George Byron has re-recorded his original Gershwin album under the Desto label. There is one change in it—the substitution, at the suggestion of Ira Gershwin, of "Back Bay Polka" for "The Jolly Tar and the Milkmaid."

It might be of further interest to add that Byron has just completed a Rogers and Hart album and will be in the East in a few days to record a Cole Porter album of songs selected by the composer. He is contracted for a total of six albums. As he has not decided upon the composers for the last two, I am sure he would welcome suggestions re well-known composers whose lesser-known songs the public wants to hear.

WALTER R. PICK.

New York, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Any suggestions which readers may wish to make will be duly forwarded to Mr. Pick, who is George Byron's personal representative.

Recordings Wanted

SIR: . . . When is RCA Victor going to give us some LP recitals by Maggie Teyte, Sigrid Onegin, Tiana Lemnitz, and Elisabeth Schumann?

FRANKLIN A. WILLER.

Lancaster, Pa.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This suggestion would seem to fit in well with RCA's new series of His Master's Voice releases. Doubtless if the initial HMV issues are a commercial success, RCA will pursue this source of recorded material further.

SIR: Never have I heard more beautiful playing than is to be found in the recording by Karl Haas and the London Baroque Ensemble of Bach's "Brandenburg" Concertos 2 and 4 (Westminster). After the cold meat and soggy potatoes dished up by Casals, Klemperer, Koussevitzky, et al, it is a pleasure to hear these two magnificent works played with the proper instrumentation. After hearing these two wonderful works played with the clarity and precision that the London Baroque Ensemble bestows upon them, I am even more convinced that a hearty dislike for all types of music manifested by the bride of Prince Leopold of Cöthen and Bach's subsequent removal to the ecclesiastical drudgery of Leipzig deprived those of us with a more worldly trend of mind of a vast treasury of the sort of secular music that had its highest flowering at the time the "Brandenburg" Concertos were composed. Now to the point of all

this: When are we to have the other four concertos recorded by the same group? And are there plans afoot at Westminster to bring out any other eighteenth-century music by the same ensemble. I already have Symphonies 1, 4, 6, and 8 of Dr. Boyce by them, and would like to own the other four.

GEORGE HOLBERT TUCKER.

Norfolk, Va.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Since the "ecclesiastical drudgery" resulted in the B minor Mass, the "Matthew Passion," and several score sacred and secular cantatas, we cannot take the deprivation of which Mr. Tucker complains too hard. As for future Haas-Baroque issues, Westminster reports that the remaining "Brandenburgs" and Boyce symphonies have already been recorded and are scheduled for release in 1953. Also on the way are some Haydn divertimenti by this group.

Pro Munch

SIR: I have attended the concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra for several years and in that time I have come to feel a considerable pride in the wonderful music-making of that great orchestra. I have read with interest your comments on the various records made by that orchestra under its conductor, Charles Munch. As I remember, there was no performance among these various recordings of Mr. Munch which you liked.

Now, Mr. Munch may not be the best hand at the works of German composers, but most people will at least agree that he is very highly thought of as a

conductor of French music. But your recent review of his new recording of "La Valse" indicates that you dislike his readings of this sort of music also. . . . I suppose that I should not challenge your opinions, but I should like to say that I disagree with your very extreme appraisal of Mr. Munch's work. And I am certain that there is a legion of music-lovers who share my sentiments.

GILBERT R. CHERICK.

Boston, Mass.

SIR: May I ask without implying undue disrespect what exactly is your attitude toward Charles Munch and the BSO? If I recall correctly, you have never admitted that Mr. Munch has waxed anything except a mediocre performance since his advent in Boston.

DAVID H. FLIGHT.

Fort Benning, Ga.

EDITOR'S NOTE: There is a fine distinction, but an important one nonetheless, between the standards applied in judging a concert performance and those used in evaluating a recorded interpretation. We have found Mr. Munch more than satisfactory as conductor of the Boston Symphony concerts—and have said so in print. But there is a difference between a single performance of the Beethoven Seventh in Carnegie Hall as part of a varied orchestral program and a record of the Seventh that must stand comparison with the recordings of Toscanini, Weingartner, Walter, et al. In this company, and in the Germanic repertoire, Mr. Munch as yet appears at a disadvantage. We have been very appreciative of this conductor's "Ibéria," "Daphnis et Chloe," and "Festin de l'Araignée"—to name a few items from the French repertoire he has recorded—and we hope that RCA will concentrate on exposing this side of his interpretative personality.

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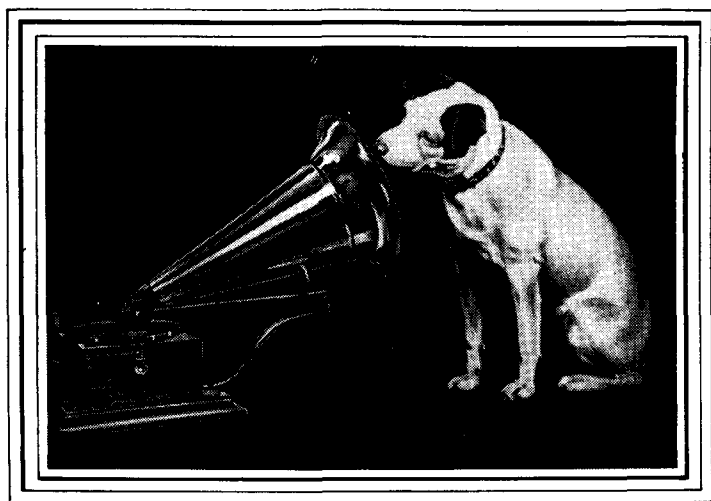
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