

national styles somewhat in the manner of the great Betove (I liked particularly the "Song of the young Russian peasant who has been betrayed by his tractor"); on the other, called "Mock-Mozart," he gives us "Die Zauberpauze," a "newly discovered Mozart opera in one act" complete with recitatives, arias, ensembles, etc., all the voices and orchestral instruments (with the exception of a harpsichord) being provided by the larynx of the irrepressible Mr. Ustinov.

—THOMAS HEINITZ.

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PARIS.

AN important and long-range recording project has been initiated here in Paris which will result in a great anthology of solo vocal music of all countries, from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, occupying twenty or more LP records. The man responsible for this plan is a young Norwegian musicologist-composer now living in Paris, Arne Dørumsgaard. For this new anthology Dørumsgaard has collected about five hundred songs, from Walther von der Vogelweide through the sons of Bach, and has composed new accompaniments for all of them. What we have in his settings is an important demonstration of the way the piano *should* be used in the accompaniment of early music: not as a poor substitute for the lute or the harpsichord, but as an element to be treated as a medium in itself. With the inevitable prominence given to the piano in Dørumsgaard settings there comes a feeling of the best elements in chamber music, a sense of true collaboration between singer and pianist. One particularly lovely setting I heard was of a sacred song by Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach, worked out as a kind of chorale-prelude with the vocal line intricately woven into the accompanying figures. This appears, with other songs by K.P.E. Bach and his father, on the first release in the anthology, an LP by Flagstad with Gerald Moore.

The recordings of these songs will be done in Paris and in London, partly by HMV and partly by Decca-London. Among the artists who will appear in the project are Flagstad, Souzay, Ferrier, Richard Lewis, and Aksel Schiøtz. It is planned that Schiøtz will record, next January in Paris, a large group of songs by the Swedish composer Carl Bellman (1740-1795). Anyone who treasures (as I do) the two or three Danish HMV's of Bellman songs by Schiøtz will gladly receive these tidings of joy.

The forthcoming French HMV list includes the first recording generally available of a major work by the Italian dodecaphonist Luigi Dallapic-

cola. His "Canto di Prigionia," which was heard at the Paris festival last May, has been recorded in Rome by the chorus and orchestra of the Accademia Santa Cecilia conducted by Igor Markevitch. Dallapiccola's appearance at Tanglewood last summer seems to have occasioned the long overdue awakening of interest for his music in the United States, and this new LP should see eventual American issue. The music is not meant for diversion's sake, but is a powerful expression by a gifted composer. The recording, by the way, was made under the auspices of UNESCO.

Pathé-Marconi is presently engaged in recording a performance of Ravel's "L'Heure Espagnole" at the Opéra-Comique with Cluytens, and the re-

sults so far are most beguiling. At another recent session a work often discussed but seldom played received its first recording, Florent Schmitt's "Psalm 47" for soprano, chorus, and large orchestra. Schmitt seems in this work to be more under the influence of Central European post-romantic megalomania, but it's an impressive work, nevertheless, and the performance by Denise Duval, the Elizabeth Brasseur Chorale, and the Paris Conservatory Orchestra under Georges Tzipine keeps to a steady pace through the underbrush.

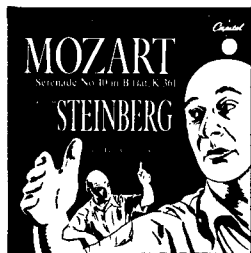
After a busy survey of the French recording industry it's like a restful walk in the country to spend an afternoon with Mme. Louise Dyer of (Continued on page 54)

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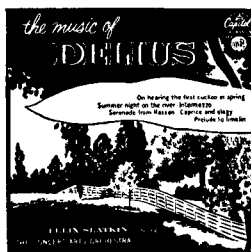
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Unredeemed "Ruins"

BEETHOVEN: "Ruins of Athens."
Walter Goehr conducting the
Netherlands Philharmonic
Choir and Orchestra, with
Annie Woudt, soprano, and
David Hollestelle, baritone.
(Concert Hall CHS 1158, \$5.95.)

IF Concert Hall can afford the luxury of providing us with listening introduction to certain minor works of Beethoven which have always had a curiosity interest though scant standing in the concert hall, we shall welcome them one by one, though not guaranteeing to like them. Certainly such a disc as this has a place in a library, or in a music school, where it gives life to the inanimate notes of the same work in the printed "Ausgabe." Other values, however, have to be considered where home consumption is the objective.

This seems to be one of a number of commissions Beethoven executed because he preferred to live well rather than badly, but it did not draw from him any consequential music. "It" was a kind of literary satire by Kotzebue which begins on Mt. Olympus with Minerva given leave to visit Athens. She invites Mercury to go along, but he says the place is not what it used to be. Minerva persists, only to find that her advisor was right. Where, then, does culture flourish, she asks? Only in Budapest—where, strangely enough, the first performance of "Ruins of Athens" took place in 1812.

It is hardly from such stuff that enduring masterpieces are created; and Beethoven did not exceed the possibilities it provided. The overture has some merit, and certain episodes related to the Olympian atmosphere have character and dignity. But, in this context, the famous march is plainly a satire, with its "Turkish" overtones. The composer responded to other situations with music of relative distinction, but it hardly hangs together.

The performance has consistent merit, especially in the intelligent direction of Goehr and the singing of Hollestelle, a baritone new to me but possessed of a pliable voice, well used. Good orchestral playing and expert engineering.

—I. K.

Opera Roundup

IT WAS on Christmas Eve 1928 that I first heard Verdi's "Forza del Destino." That was also the first time I heard Claudia Muzio. The coincidence of the two has always given me an interest in the opera which subsequent Muzio-less productions have not warranted. Yet this first of the final five ("Forza," "Don Carlo," "Aida," "Otello," and "Falstaff") is by no means dependent upon its soprano for ultimate success. She must be good, but her absence from the stage in Act III and half of Act IV leaves a lot up to the rest of the cast.

In the latest "Forza" to achieve LP completion (Urania URLP 226, \$18.50) a solid cast is on hand. Adriana Guerrini's Leonora is the best work we have heard from her on records. The voice is steadier, the pitch more consistently accurate. Her style is sound. Yet her voice is still unattractive to these ears. Don Alvaro is well sung by Giuseppe Campora, the excellent Cavaradossi of London's new "Tosca." Anselmo Colzani is a good routine Don Carlo. Any cast that includes Fernando Corena is thereby strengthened. This young bass-baritone has quickly become noted for his fine musicianship and true style. He can already be heard as the King of Egypt, the Sacristan, Don Pasquale, and several other fine characters. He is questionably advertised as an "exclusive artist" for one company since some of his best work is divided between two. His Melitone in the present set is a model far surpassing that of the Met's present incumbent in the part. But Giuseppe Modesti gives the Padre little nobility and less richness of sound. Miriam Pirazzini's Preziosilla is vigorous, but the part demands something like—indeed very like—Ebe Stignani, and there seems to be only one of those around.

For excellent fidelity in sound, and for Parodi's good reading of the score, Urania's set is admirable. You may remember Cetra's cast, with Caniglia, Masini, Stignani, Tagliabue, and Pasero—which is some lineup. But this is a brand new recording and as such has a liveness of sound, plus some fine singing, to make it highly desirable.

When Mary Garden strode onto the stage as Thaïs in the second scene of Massenet's opera, a sheaf of crimson roses on her left arm, and her right

arm outstretched in a gesture of which no one else ever seemed capable, to announce to the adorners about her, "C'est Thaïs," her pronouncement was not a statement of the obvious, but an invitation to gather around and worship. What's more, the invitation never failed to pass beyond the footlights and reach into the minds of all the males in the audience, who—perhaps unwillingly dragged to the opera—never seemed to object to staying once Garden arrived.

But every memory of the opera "Thaïs" is a visual one of Garden. According to accounts, neither Farrar nor Jeritza, who sang it sixteen and seventeen times respectively at the Met, could create the mood of the Alexandrian courtesan who was universally irresistible. Take away the presence and animating power of a Garden, put "Thaïs" on records, and you have nothing but Massenet's windy spaces.

An apparently faithful account of the Paris Opéra's present best foot forward for "Thaïs" is now available (Urania URLP 227, \$18.50). Géori-Boué, remembered for her Marguerite in the complete "Faust" by Beecham, defends the title role in her brilliant but unyielding manner. Thaïs is a girl who knows how to yield and should be able to do so. Géori-Boué is effective in the Mirror Scene, which is the dramatic high point of the set. Her work in the final duet is shrill and ineffectual, lacking the optional high notes, and yipping the alternates. Roger Bourdin, the Valentin of the "Faust" set, is a good Athanael, but the lack of musical stuff is too much for him as for everyone else. Georges Sebastian directs the Opéra chorus and orchestra. Bright note: Jean Giraudeau is admirable as Nicias, where he had failed as the Enée of Berlioz's "Trojans." If you pine for "Thaïs," here you are.

—PAUL HUME.

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THOUGH we have not yet had the reissue of the Toscanini broadcast "Fidelio" yearned for when the first complete version of the score appeared on LP in the summer of 1950, we now have another studio edition, which is a shorter period of time for a duplication of this reasonably esoteric work than might have been anticipated. It comes from Vienna on the label of Vox (Set 7793, \$17.85), with Karl Böhm conducting a cast that includes such sturdy performers as Paul Schoeffler (Pizarro), Hilde Konetzni (Leonore), Torsten Ralf (Florestan),

Paul Hume is music critic for the Washington Post.