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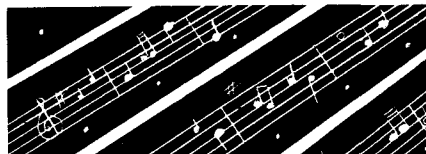
More Webern

D IAL's second Webern record (17, \$5.95) carries three of the master's thirteen or so dodecaphonic works, and fills out with four early songs. All are performed in an authentic manner, establishing standards which at this time represent this music as well as could be hoped. Indeed, the Quartet, Opus 22, is so admirably presented it should mold a tradition; it coheres—and this is always the performance problem with Webern—in a remarkably successful way. The pianist Jacques Monod, with the assurance of the dodecaphonic young generation, catches something of the fleeting Piano Variations, Opus 27, and Bethany Beardsley's pitches are generally accurate in the Four Songs, Opus 12. Reproduction is faithful and equitable and only two very hushed piano notes get lost between the recording studio and the listener's ears.

The performance of the Concerto, Opus 24, conducted by René Leibowitz, fails, in the first movement at least, to convey the "expressionist" content, without which it is stark and meaningless. But, as this "expressionism" is perhaps unrealizable without the

it were a thing apart from the polyphonic conception, but comparing the immediate rhythmic impression given by the first movement of this Concerto with, say, Stravinsky's "Danse Sacrale," the Webern seems to have no strong pulse and no bar accent. Whereas the Stravinsky is all vertical chord blocks, the Webern is in lines where, more often than not, nothing sounds simultaneously. Indeed, Webern takes paranoiac pains to avoid "chords," and the result is often one line which resembles the cardiogram of a widely fluttering heart! Webern has, in fact, superceded the pulse and accent idea of rhythm, and revealed a new dimension of possibility.

In the opening movement of this Concerto there is an example of different kinds of triplets, in simple combination with eighths and sixteenths artfully overlapping and dovetailing within the framework of equal bars. (Webern never tampered with the bar, leaving the field to Boulez and the younger dodecaphonists). In poetry this would be equivalent to scrapping the use of meter and so radically changing and enlarging the meaning of foot as to make it unrecognizable. Webern wisely kept within the simplest, most logically confining limits of the new world he had opened up. Any recent score by Pierre Boulez demonstrates the consequent complications of further exploration.



study Mr. Leibowitz's very disc affords future performers, we will not quibble with the achievement. Musical misreadings are surprising, however, in a performance thus waxed in the name of orthodoxy. Webern's music is clearly marked, and it demands letter-perfect respect. Dynamics, tempo controls, articulation—in Webern these are all structural, consistently and logically used. For example, when a movement, the second of this Concerto, depends upon a two-note slur idea in contrast with broad detached notes, the distinction in articulation ought to be severely observed in performance. The first movement, too, depends upon distinctions: in dynamics, where intensity varies from note to note; in tempo, which rarely holds constant for more than a few bars.

The most puzzling of Webern's many innovations is his rhythm. To new listeners it will actually seem rhythmless, just as his instrumentation will seem neutral and colorless, and his brevity trifling. It is impossible to discuss Webern's rhythm as though

But Schoenberg was, as usual, First Cause. None of the dodecaphonic apologists have placed the importance of Schoenberg's "Herzgewächse," that precious song, an unforgettable event if well performed. It is incrustated with the rhythmic ideas Webern was to exploit. It also shows the possibilities of Klangfarbenmelodien (for Webern has revolutionized instrumentation). Further, it marks the birth of the Webern dimension, the tiny, compressed, undeveloped cell, super-laden with "expression." "Herzgewächse" lasts three and one-half minutes; Webern's works average about six minutes to an opus number; the dodecaphonic pieces played one after another would last about an hour.

Ernest Ansermet describes a visit to Webern's home in Vienna, with the master in evident ecstasy by merely striking a succession of notes on the piano. A Schubert dance would bring him to a state of levitation. He believed that in time, and he was prepared to wait, his postman would be able to whistle twelve-tone music.

—ROBERT CRAFT.

Pop Roundup

MORE than ever the pop record companies today are concerned with "Moon-June" rifles—few of which are showing even light inclinations toward hitdom. The exaggerated mannerisms that identify our more popular stylists appear increasingly grotesque with each near-miss. To this obviously jaded listener RCA Victor's big reissue project, impressively dubbed "A Treasury of Immortal Performances," provides most welcome relief. Even when the music is not good, it's still interesting from the historical standpoint—and most of it is good.

For example, there's an LP entitled **GREAT TRUMPET ARTISTS** (RCA LPT 26), an anthology (1928-46) including well-chosen sides by Louis Armstrong ("Basin Street Blues"), Bix Beiderbecke (an alternate master on Whiteman's "From Monday On"), Roy Eldridge, Bunny Berigan, and Dizzy Gillespie. The big surprise is an elegant, eloquent 1945 side by the late ancient Bunk Johnson. . . . **GREAT ENOR SAX ARTISTS** (RCA LPT 7) embraces a more recent era (1937-1949), but no less a variety of styles. Coleman Hawkins for some reason is represented by a 1937 version of "Crazy Rhythm," cut in Paris, which is little more than a curio. But we're grateful for Ellington's wonderful "Cottontail," with Ben Webster's reathy, exciting solo. Also present are the late Chu Berry, Bud Freeman, Illinois Jacquet, and Charlie Ventura, aided by stellar cohorts.

Every year readers of the magazine *Metronome* elect an all-star jazz band, which for several successive years got together to make a recording, with a different label issuing the result each year. RCA Victor drew the first in 1939, then cut again in 1941 and 1946. These have been grouped on **METRONOME ALL-STAR BANDS** (LPT 21). All have their highspots, but the first two dates produced the most invention. "Bugle Call Rag" and "One O'Clock Jump," from 1941, with Goodman, Basie, James, Higgenbotham, and Hawkins, rate among the more exciting sides of the modern era. No freak stuff, just real "pros" at work in both ensembles and solos.

In 1935-6, while Benny Goodman's powerhouse band heralded the new swing era, that same clarinetist gave heart to devotees of more intimate jazz with perhaps the most perfect unit ever assembled. The **BENNY GOODMAN TRIO** (RCA LPT 17) pro-

vides ample testimony concerning the individual and collective talents of BG, pianist Teddy Wilson, and drummer Gene Krupa. The six numbers included are among the first recorded by the Trio, and having them now on LP must be our reward for wholesome living. Our favorite titles, even since they were first issued, are "Someday Sweetheart" and "Nobody's Sweetheart"—and let's hope that more "Immortal" Trio sides follow soon.

Other LP's in the series include **LIONEL HAMPTON** (LPT 18), in which the main attraction is alto saxman Johnny Hodges's fluid solo on "Sunny Side of the Street," and Hampton's swingin' vibes throughout, if you happen to like the instrument. A wide assortment of jazz stars are featured here, and also in the collection devoted to soprano sax genius **SIDNEY BECHET** (LPT 22). Especially recommended are two selections in which his close collaborator is Charles Shavers on trumpet.

Dance Discs

Sy Oliver, trumpeter and arranger with the Lunceford band in the Thirties, has tried on many occasions to re-create the rocking, deceptively limpid beat of that fabulous organization. He uses the same widely-spaced harmonies and full voicings, the same tempos, even the same musicians, but the beat is never quite the same. The best approximation, I believe, is in **BLUES JUST BLUES**, an instrumental recorded once by Musicraft, now reissued by M-G-M (11092). . . . The same label offers a relaxed, tasteful **I'LL SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS** by the Leroy Holmes Orchestra (11126) which, when it plays dance music, is as good as any band around. . . . In the buoyant, danceable rhythm referred to by hotel musicians as "Business Man's Bounce," Lee Monti's Tootones revive **SHOULD I?** (M-G-M 11140), the old Brown-Freed hit. . . . Trombonist Buddy Morrow and Orchestra have an instrumental version of **THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC** that's certain to join the select society of perennials (RCA 47-4451).

Tropical Tempi: **GLORITA**, an unusually fine samba by pianist Noro Morales and Rhythm (COL 39601). . . . **SIN AMOR** (RCA 51-5567) and **FELICIA** (RCA 51-5565), authentic tangos from Argentina by Juan D'Arienzo and his orchestra. —BILL SIMON.

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