

Letters to the *RECORDINGS* Editor

THE PHILADELPHIA FLAGSTADS

COULD RCA BE PERSUADED to transfer to LP those stirring recordings by Kirsten Flagstad of the "Oberon" and "Fidelio" arias, as well as the Beethoven "Ah Perfido!" made some years ago with the Philadelphia Orchestra. I am sure the demand would be great.

PAUL P. ROTELLA.

New York, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: No persuasion is needed, say the Victor people. An LP reissue of these recordings is in the works.

NICKEL-MADE REISSUES

IN ADDISON FOSTER'S ARTICLE "From Nickel, Tonal Gold" [SR Dec. 26] he mentioned having made arrangements for a series of limited editions of some historic recordings. I would very much appreciate the opportunity of purchasing some of these releases and would like to learn the details.

JOHN B. LEARNED.

Endicott, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Inquiries should be addressed directly to Addison Foster, 1226 Montgomery Ave., Narberth, Pennsylvania.

ANGRY WITH ALDRICH

THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS in Putnam Aldrich's article "Bach in Three Styles" [SR Dec. 26] which I find presumptuous, rigid, and unscholarly. He says: "... it becomes apparent that anyone who claims to be a 'Bach authority' without being likewise an authority on all the music of the entire Baroque period is being unduly pretentious." This is a frank accusation of ignorance leveled against both Miss Tureck and Miss Ahlgrimm. Where does Mr. Aldrich derive his authority for such a statement?

We can agree that the most complete understanding of the work of creative genius includes knowledge of his time and his formative experiences. But this historical knowledge becomes less important the more creative, and therefore less period-bound, the work; e.g. try to label Bach (or Shakespeare or Freud) with an historical period. The "historical" approach is often used, not in the service of complete understanding, but to mask the critic's rigidity and intolerance. Moreover, Mr. Aldrich seems to be unaware that ideas on authenticity vary greatly from generation to generation, and these changes, I believe, are due to the interpretations of living performing artists.

Mr. Aldrich states that while Miss Tureck's conceptions seldom jibe with his conceptions of the authentic, "she is an extremely gifted and sensitive artist, she is able to make them convincing from a purely musical point of view." Obviously, Mr. Aldrich would have been

more impressed with a more "authentic" but less convincing musical performance. . . . It's too bad that SR readers could not have had the benefit of a review of Miss Tureck's recordings by someone with more enthusiasm for the piano and a more flexible historical and musicological orientation.

FREDA BLANK.

Thornwood, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We believe Mr. Aldrich's ideal is an approach that combines historical awareness with convincing musicianship—and that he finds both qualities at their peak in Landowska's performances.

MISSING "PELLEAS"

I NOTE THAT the new Schwann LP catalogue no longer lists the RCA Victor recording of "Pelléas" conducted by Désormière. Does this by any chance indicate plans for a new Monteux-led version; if not, why has the older version been withdrawn?

TOM HEERMANN.

Waukesha, Wisc.

EDITOR'S NOTE: According to a source at RCA, this recording is only temporarily out of the catalogue, not irretrievably.

ably withdrawn. In any event, there is enough stock on hand to meet current demand.

IN DEFENSE OF LANDOWSKA

I HEREBY TENDER A CHALLENGE to Mr. Anonymous who writes so disparagingly of Wanda Landowska [SR Jan. 30]. If he has ever made a recording of, or played in recital, anything by Bach, let him give his name so that we may judge for ourselves the difference between his feeling for Bach and Mme. Landowska's.

ROBERT LE GENIE.

Youngstown, O.

EDITOR'S NOTE: A good request. But "Mr. Anonymous" might well wonder why M. Le Genie declares himself under what looks suspiciously like a pseudonym.

IN SPITE OF MME. LANDOWSKA'S contribution to the art of performance as illustrated in her latest recordings, it is not for these that she will be remembered. Now, when we scarcely blink an eyelash at a harpischord, it is all too easy to forget that this casual acceptance was won only by tiresome struggles against public apathy and ignorance, and that it was Mme. Landowska who did most of the fighting. Is this not significant enough for the anonymous correspondent? I'm sure it is for Messrs. Fischer, Kirkpatrick, et al. mentioned in his letter.

ROBERT CONANT.

Passaic, N. J.

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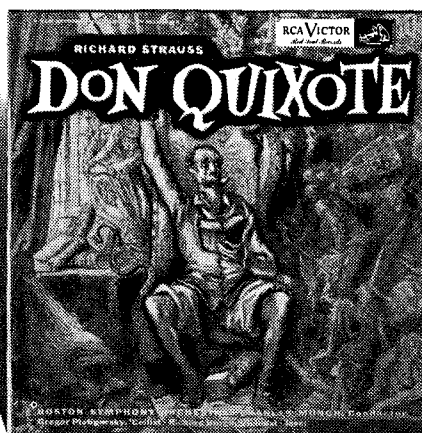
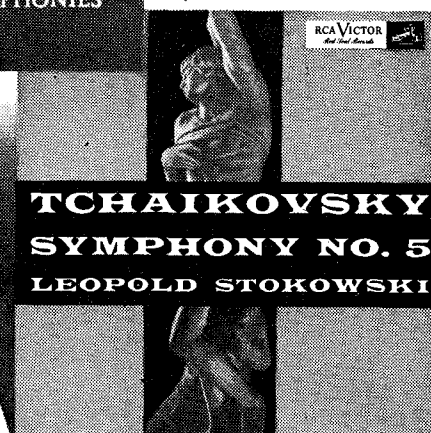
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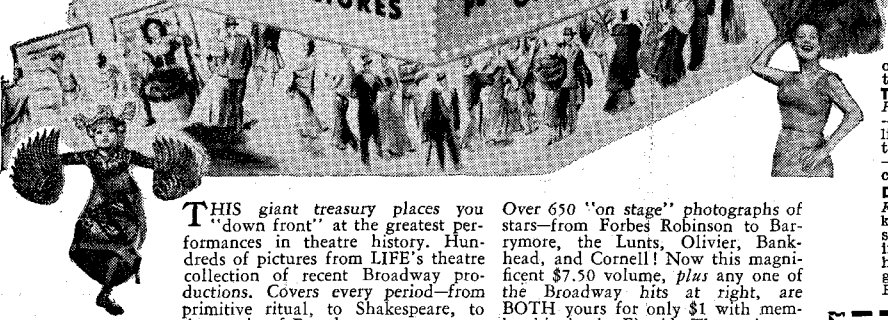
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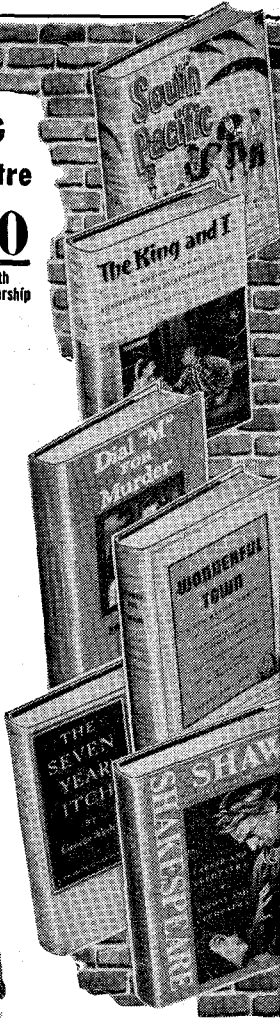
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