

Letters to the *RECORDINGS* Editor

APPRAISING TOSCANINI

THE ARTICLE ON "Toscanini and Brahms" by Neville Cardus [SR March 27] has caused me great pleasure; it is so seldom that one can read today criticism that really criticizes. Most of the critics seem to feel that when confronted with a "great man" all they can do is to heap on him a large pile of superlatives.

I suppose this is one of the symptoms of the age of conformity we live in, having "Hi-Fi fans" and "Maestro-fans" instead of lovers of music. We do not dare to make up our own mind about the music and the artist we like; and so we look for the "great men" whom we can worship together with the crowd.

The "con" letter which you printed afterwards [SR April 24] was typical of the "fan" type of audiences we have today. It seems to me that these people worship "the Maestro" rather because it is convenient to do so, and not because they know their music so well that they really by their own will and effort came to the conclusion that Toscanini's interpretations are "definitive" (another fan-expression).

It is beyond doubt that Mr. Toscanini is a very gifted conductor, especially when it comes to conducting Italian opera. But many people—among them myself—find his interpretations of Beethoven, Mozart, and Brahms less inspiring, and not too authentic. Fast tempi and rigid phrasing are not always expressive of the qualities that can be brought out from the score, and Toscanini has seemed to indulge in these at times maybe a bit too much. His greatness, in my opinion, lies in his ability to conduct all kinds of music with a certain brand of his own. However, one would not want to hear only that.

Anyway, three cheers for Mr. Cardus and the SR! I hope that in the future I shall again have the pleasure of reading criticism that does not bend down before so-called shrines, criticism that will keep in mind that the essence of a performance is the music as it was written, the contribution of the artist being only of secondary importance.

JULIUS M. E. MORAVCSIK, JR.
Cambridge, Mass.

URTEXT AND URFASSUNG

I AM AFRAID THAT Hans A. Illing's letter and your Editor's Note [RECORDINGS, SR April 24] are equally confusing as regards the meaning of "original version," *Urtext*, and *Urfassung*.

The two German words belong to the language of historic and literary criticism, in the first place. The exact meaning of either term in any specific instance depends, of course, on the context. Generally speaking, *Urtext* refers to a literary document of which one reading or version only is legitimate. Even though artistically or stylistically a subsequent text may appear more attractive, the *Urtext*, or first and original embodiment

of an utterance or statement, is the real thing and has historical pre-eminence. The most likely antonym to an *Urtext* is a garbled text, while the antonym to *Urfassung* merely is a later and not necessarily better version. In other terms, *Urtext* emphasizes genuineness and material authenticity, whereas *Urfassung* emphasizes the existence of a first draft.

On the other hand, if he wished to refer to the first treatment of a subject before it was tampered with or improved upon by a subsequent author, a German writer would no doubt prefer the term *Urbehandlung* (of a given theme). The *Urfaust* refers to the most ancient treatment of the Dr. Faustus theme long before Goethe wrote the *Urfassung*, or first draft, of his own "Faust." However, certain German scholars seem to have used *Urfassung* and Goethe's *Urfassung des Faust* interchangeably.

An *Urtext* must not necessarily be lost. In our age, at least, the *Urtext* of everything seems to be on file. Unfortunately, a certain ambiguity attaches to the German prefix *ur-* as well as to the English adjective *original*. In the context of intellectual creation, *original* can mean many things, of which I should like to mention three: (1) what has been first produced, (2) what most nearly corresponds to the intention of the author, (3) what is paragon. In English the phrase "original version" is often taken to mean

"authentic text" while the basic distinction between *Urfassung* and *Originalfassung* in German is not always strictly upheld. Moreover, *Urgeschichte* means prehistory, that is, history long past, whereas *Urphaenomen*, a term rather fashionable in current German philosophy, refers to the obdurate permanencies of life. For most readers language is a labyrinth teeming with monsters, but no Theseus is in sight. Incidentally, this accounts for the fact that Messrs. Dulles and Molotov cannot come to terms.

BERNARD GUILLEMIN.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

"AIDA" AGAIN

MAY I ADD a strong endorsement to your previous correspondents who have pleaded for a Milanov-Bjoerling-Warren "Aida" together with a special request that RCA-Victor might let us have a glimpse into their future plans and a whisper about their intentions. It would make a hot summer so much more pleasant if one knew that the following summer might be graced with the cool splendor of an evening on the banks of the Nile, à la Orthophonic!

I wonder if RCA Victor could also be convinced to give us more complete operas with Bjoerling. This splendid voice should be harnessed on discs in greater quantity. And when and who will record an uncut "Louise"? Could Beecham be induced to do it?

HENRY BARDACH.

Arlington, Va.

RECORD MART

RECORD MART is designed to provide a bulletin board on which may be posted buyers' or sellers' notices of anything odd, unusual, rare, or out-of-print on discs or the accessories thereto. Individuals as well as dealers may submit their offerings of duplicated discs, rare labels, old acoustics, society sets, private issues, or withdrawn items, albums, needles, record brushes, or the like. Rate 35¢ per word:

10-word minimum. Count two extra words for box and number. Full payment must be received eighteen days before publication. We forward all mail received in answer to box numbers and submit postage bills periodically. Mail to be called for at this office will be held thirty days only. Address RECORD MART, The Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York 36, N.Y.

HI-FI SERVICE. The Audio Exchange Service Laboratory is responsible for the reliability of our used equipment. You may avail yourself of this expert service for maintenance and repair of your Hi-Fi equipment. THE AUDIO EXCHANGE, Dept. SR, 159-19 Hillside Ave., Jamaica 32, N. Y. Olympia 8-0445. AUDIO EXCHANGE EXCHANGES AUDIO.

RECORDS played with a TELEVEX Professional-quality Diamond needle last longer—sound better! Free literature. Box 101, Riverdale Station, NYC 71.

RECORD COLLECTORS' SERVICE offers vocal records, collectors', "good listening." Write, visit 530 East 88 St., Apt. 2F, NYC. Regent 7-7611.

ALLEGRO LP's (were \$5.95 each) now \$2.95 each. FREE catalogue. BROADWAY RECORD MART, 255 West 34 St., NYC 1.

FONOTIPIA and other rare vocals. Free lists. R. WESTHOFF, 931 Geary St., San Francisco 9, California.

RECORDING TAPE, all brands; also used tape (cleanly erased); other bargains. COMMISSIONED ELECTRONICS, 2503 Champlain St., Washington, D. C.

RECORDERS (ENGLISH FLUTES) finest imported make. English, Swiss fingerings. \$4, \$6, \$7.50 up. Recorder music, recorder records. Free catalogue R64. HARGAIL, 130 West 56 St., NYC.

RECORD RARITIES is going out of business! 10,000 brand-new imports and 30,000 historic rarities at discounts to 80%! G & T, Fonotipia, HMV, Telefunken, Polydor, Odeon, prewar Victor, etc. Send 25¢ for 80-page catalogue. 534 South Fair Oaks, Pasadena 1, California.

ELEKTRA is releasing some of the finest folk music available on LP.

RARE RECORDS sold, lowly priced. Free lists. Collections bought. E. HIRSCHMANN, 100 Duncan Ave., Jersey City, New Jersey.

EXCEPTIONAL RECORD SERVICE: LP and 45 RPM records. No charge for postage. New releases and specials issued monthly. Send for FREE comprehensive catalogue today. MOREC MAIL, Inc., 15 Park Row, NYC 38, Dept. SR.

NASHVILLE'S HI-FI CENTER is Nicholson's "AUDIOPHILE." Complete gamut High Fidelity components, Catalogue Net. Demonstration facilities. Nicholson's "AUDIOPHILE," 105 Eighth Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee.

UNUSED, complete 6-album set, Hugo Wolf Society. Best offer. Box T-53.

RECORDINGS FROM YOUR TAPES OR DISCS. Top professional quality at low mail-order cost. AMPEX-FAIRCHILD equipment. Send for particulars. Gordon Mercer, Recording Service, 974 Cheltenham, Santa Barbara, California.

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A. BY THE CUNEO PRESS, INC.

Exclusive! on RCA VICTOR RECORDS

NOW HEAR BOTH DRAMA and MUSIC



First, in English, *Deborah Kerr*, famous star of stage and screen, acts out Cio Cio San's brave words of faith "One fine day..."

Then, in the original Italian, *Licia Albanese*, glorious "Met" soprano, sings the Aria "Un bel di, vedremo" from *Madame Butterfly*.

ARIAS SUNG and ACTED by famous operatic and dramatic stars

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| ERA 209 45 EP ★ AIDA: "Celeste Aida" ★ I PAGLIACCI: "Vesti la giubba" | Sung by Jussi Bjoerling | Acted by Joseph Cotten | |
| ERA 206 45 EP AIDA: "Ritorna Vincitor" | Sung by Zinka Milanov | Acted by Geraldine Brooks | |
| ERA 210 45 EP ★ LA BOHÈME: "Sì, mi chiamano Mimi" ★ MME. BUTTERFLY: "Un bel di, vedremo" | Sung by Licia Albanese | Acted by Deborah Kerr | |
| ERA 211 45 EP CARMEN: "Death Scene" | Sung by Risë Stevens Jan Peerce | Acted by Judith Anderson, Shepperd Strudwick | |
| ERA 207 45 EP ★ I PAGLIACCI: "Sì Può? Sì Può?" ★ RIGOLETTO: "Cortigiani, vil razza dannata" | Sung by Leonard Warren | Acted by Dennis King | |
| ERA 208 45 EP ★ LA TRAVIATA: "Ah! Dite alla giovine" | Sung by Licia Albanese, Robert Merrill | Acted by Deborah Kerr, Dennis King | |

Now, for the first time, in these brilliant new RCA VICTOR recordings, you can enjoy a fuller appreciation of famous Operatic Arias. Hear them acted out in English by top stage and screen stars. Then, the Arias are sung in the original language by outstanding RCA VICTOR operatic artists. Thus, you get the full dramatic and musical impact.

5th Anniversary of "45 Victrolas" and Records... the only System that plays all kinds of recorded music



9 Arias on 6 "45 EP" albums...\$1.58 ea.

7 Arias on 1 Long Play album . . . \$5.95

Prices suggested list, including Federal Excise Tax. Add local tax.

*All starred Arias above are sung and acted on one Long Play album, LM-1801



dear reader I'm the real one
 not those silly liars Bess
 and Elizabeth and Beth only
me and if I could just have
 gotten rid of them they were
 always trying to keep me
inside and Aunt Morgan
 the old fool ha ha and
 Dr. Wrong too — oh we
 did have fun and I'd like
 to have killed them all
 but they killed me
 your ever loving ha ha
 Betsy

Shirley Jackson's

brilliantly absorbing
 new novel — a startling blend
 of humor and horror

The Bird's Nest

One of the finest women writers of our time,
 author of The Lottery and Life Among the Savages,

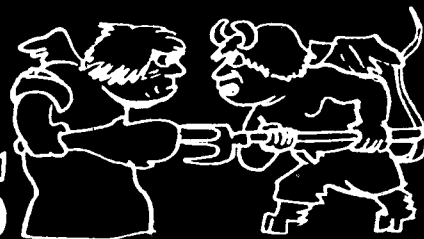
carries her readers now into a strange
 and compelling realm of human experience
 where one woman could be four women
 — where four warring personalities
 might inhabit the same young body.

\$3.50

FARRAR, STRAUS & YOUNG
 101 Fifth Ave., New York 3, N. Y.



The irrepressible padre is back,
 battling with his friendly enemy the mayor
 in the NEW Don Camillo book



DON CAMILLO'S DILEMMA



BY Giovanni Guareschi

author of *The Little World of Don Camillo* \$3.00