

JUNE RELEASES

COPLAND

Appalachian Spring (Ballet Suite)
El Salon Mexico
Billy The Kid (Ballet Suite)
Fanfare for the Common Man
 The National Symphony Orchestra
 Conducted by Howard Mitchell WL 5286

VIVALDI

Gloria
 Ensemble Vocal De Paris
 Orchestre de la Societe des Concerts
 Conducted by A. Jouve

MARC ANTOINE CHARPENTIER

Midnight Mass
 Ensemble Vocal De Paris
 Conducted by A. Jouve WL 5287

RIMSKY KORSAKOFF

The Great Russian Easter, Opus 36
"Antar" Symphonic Suite, Opus 9
 London Symphony Orchestra
 Conducted by Hermann Scherchen WL 5280

BACH

Motet "Jesu Meine Freude"
Motet "Komm Jesu Komm"
Motet "Singet Dem Herrn Ein Neues Lied"
 Vienna Akademie Kammerchor
 Conducted by Ferdinand Grossman WL 5289

TCHAIKOWSKY

"The Seasons"
 Eva Wollmann—Piano WL 5290

SCHUBERT

Die Schöne Müllerin—Song Cycle
 Petre Munteanu—Tenor
 Franz Holetschek—Piano WL 5291

JOSEF HAYDN:

Trio No. 27 in F Major
Trio No. 4 in E Major
Trio No. 17 in E Flat Major
Trio No. 29 in F Major
 Jean Fournier—Violin
 Antonio Janigro—Cello
 Badura Skoda—Piano WL 5293



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nothing to the passions aroused, both pro and contra, by the national instrument of the Scots: the bagpipes. While my own knowledge of this strange monster is somewhat limited, I am assured on the highest authority that Decca's LP disc entitled "Highland Bagpipes"—traditional tunes played by Seumas MacNeill (Joint Principal of the Glasgow College of Piping)—is really terrific, and I gladly pass on this information to all Scotsmen-in-exile.

AFTER a gap of some months a new consignment of Supraphon records has arrived from Czechoslovakia for distribution in this country. They are imported into Britain in a completely finished and packaged state, whereas all the other LP discs on the British market are at least pressed here. What comes from Prague is an odd mixture of highly desirable fare interspersed with issues that would appear to be doomed from the very start. Who, for example, would wish to buy a second-rate performance of Beethoven's Ninth (Abend-roth, with Leipzig Radio Orchestra and Chorus) which is poorly recorded on three ten-inch discs, with the "Fidelio" and "Egmont" Overtures as fill-up, when they can have fine recordings by Kleiber or Toscanini at less cost? Nor, I fancy, shall we see a great rush to the shops for "Czechoslovak Polka," by one Václav Dobiáš. This is described as "A Peace Cantata" and, according to the notes on the cover, its subtitle, "Build your country, strengthen peace!" is typical of Dobiáš's ideological approach. The music is just what might have been expected, a pale reflection of nineteenth-century Czech music tinged with a suggestion of Khachaturian.

To realize just how synthetic Mr. Dobiáš's music is we have only to turn to the latest Dvořák and Smetana issues. "The Bartered Bride" has long been one of my special favorites and the recording, by soloists, chorus, and orchestra (presumably the same performance published in the States by Urania), is the first we have had of this endearing opera. Despite the fact that most of the singing is only of average quality and that, to Western ears, Czech is not the most mellifluous of languages, the performance is highly enjoyable and the set, which has been eagerly awaited by many discophiles, should prove very popular. Dvořák is represented by his D minor Symphony, played with great spirit by the Czech Philharmonic under Karel Sejna, and by the popular "Dumky" Trio. The latter receives an irresistible performance from the Czech Trio (Messrs. Plocek, Sádlo, and Páleníček), who capture the ever-

changing moods of this music in a way which is surely quite beyond the reach of any "mere foreigner."

Another Supraphon disc brings us Beethoven's Horn Sonata, Opus 17, coupled with a fascinating novelty, the Sonate in F-sharp minor, Opus 61 ("Elégie harmonique") by J. L. Dusik (or Dussek). This music bears a marked resemblance to middle-period Beethoven, with which it is contemporary, and is well worth reviving, especially when it is given so fine a performance as here by Otakar Vondrovic. Most enjoyable, too, is a Mozart coupling which offers the delectable Bassoon Concerto (K. 191) together with the Wind Serenade in E flat (K. 375). Czech wind playing has a refreshing vigor which is much to my liking, and in the concerto we are treated to a superb display of skill and musicianship from Karel Bidlo.

—THOMAS HEINITZ.

* * *

VIENNA.

SPRING in Vienna this year has meant a long stretch of wet weather, but it has not deterred recording companies from fulfilling their commitments. Philips is continuing to build up a formidable catalogue and has brought out, among other things, the Benevoli "Mass for the Consecration of the Salzburg Cathedral," which was recorded two years ago at the ISCM Salzburg Festival. Its new plans stagger the imagination. They have coolly announced that they intend to record all the works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, from K. 1 to K. 626, and have engaged the leading Mozart scholar, Dr. Bernhard Paumgartner, director of the Mozarteum at Salzburg, to supervise the gigantic plan from a musicological standpoint. The other day I saw Dr. Paumgartner busily copying out the first version of the slow movement from the "Paris" Symphony (D major, K. 297), a copy of which is preserved in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde.

Philips has also announced its intention of recording nearly all the works of the Strauss dynasty and has chosen the Viennese Strauss expert Dr. Fritz Racek to prepare the scores. Since many of Johann Strauss's finest works are preserved only in a piano reduction, Dr. Racek is having his problems restoring a correct orchestral version for recording; in many cases, the original scoring just cannot be found. Recently Philips engineers taped a beautiful and little-known "Salve Regina" by Handel, for soprano, obbligato organ, and small orchestra; Paul Sacher conducted, Hilde Zadek was the soprano, and Anton Heiller played the organ part on a

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BENEVOLO: Festmesse für 53 Stimmen; St. Ruperti Hymnus "Plaudite tympana." Joseph Messner conducting the Vienna Symphony with the Salzburger Domchor. LC 3035.

HAYDN: Symphony No. 67 in F Major; Symphony No. 53 in D Major. Paul Sacher conducting the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. LC 3038.

MOZART: Cassation in G Major; Cassation in B-flat Major. Paul Sacher and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. LC 3043.

PALESTRINA: Missa Papae Marcelli. Choral Music From the Lowlands (15th and 16th centuries). The Netherlands Chamber Choir, Felix de Nobel, conductor. LC 3045.

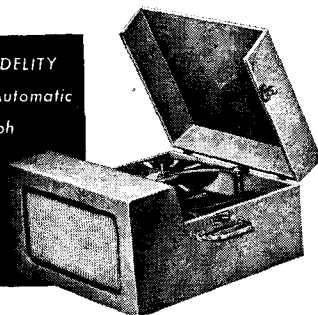
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seventeenth-century Positiv, or portable organ without pedals (which are not required in Handel's score). Heiller's complete Bach Organ Works series, incidentally, begun some years ago in Switzerland, has been taken over by Philips and will be continued.

Vanguard has been making some excellent tapes with the conductor Mario Rossi, who has recorded Prokofiev's "Alexander Nevsky," a batch of Rossini overtures, and two works by Stravinsky, "L'Histoire de Soldat" and "Les Noces." The sound that Vanguard has captured on these tapes is startlingly realistic. For the Bach Guild, Vanguard is in the midst of a complete set of "Brandenburg" Concertos, conducted by Felix Prohaska. As I write, they have completed a stunning No. 5 (Anton Heiller, harpsichord) and convincing Nos. 3 and 4, the latter with recorders, as required by the score. The Viennese treatment is quite different from the leisurely paced Wöldike performances. In some instances I think the Viennese have captured more of the excitement inherent in these scores (e.g., the cadenza of the Fifth), while in others the quiet, intimate treatment of the Copenhagen HMV records seems more appropriate (e.g., the slow movement of the Fourth). One particular feature of the Prohaska tapes deserves praise: the improvised harpsichord cadenza played by Heiller between the two movements of the Third, which touches the whole "circle of tonality," as it is called, ending with the Lydian cadence notated by Bach himself.

Vanguard has made another set of records that will certainly cause comment when released. They have engaged the English counter-tenor Alfred Deller, who sings in falsetto with a beauty and purity of tone that has to be heard to be believed. Vanguard has made two twelve-inch LP's of Elizabethan music for voice and lute, alternating with music for "A Chest of Viols," played by a young group of gamba players here who specialize in music of this era. One of the gamba players is Gustav Leonhardt, a leading expert on harpsichord and organ music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and an expert keyboard player.

George Eskdale, first trumpeter of the London Symphony and famous for his old Columbia recording of the Haydn Trumpet Concerto, has just recorded it again for Vanguard with Franz Litschauer as conductor. With it will be a crisp, delicate performance of Haydn's Harpsichord Concerto in D major (c. 1784), played by Erna Heiller, wife of Anton, also conducted by Litschauer.

—H. C. ROBBINS LONDON.



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Letters to the RECORDINGS Editor

SCHERCHEN'S "MESSIAH"

THE REASON THAT "But who may abide" was sung by the contralto in Scherchen's recording of "Messiah," which Irving Kolodin finds hard to understand [SR Apr. 24], is that the version presented (Handel's third version of this number, by the way) was written for a male alto. Further, Julian Herbage states in his "Messiah" book: "There is no evidence to show that a bass ever sang this version, the one we know today, in Handel's time." It may be, as you say, that the words seem more appropriate to a masculine voice. Nevertheless, Scherchen's contralto sings this music with more fire than I have ever heard from a bass voice.

Westminster notwithstanding, the recording is not based on the original performance of 1742. The third version of "But who may abide" was written for the male alto Guadagni in 1748, along with other major changes in the oratorio which have remained. The Dublin premiere featured, for instance, "How beautiful are the feet" as an alto duet, and included a chorus, "Break forth into joy," which Handel later discarded and replaced with "Their sound is gone out." Scherchen uses the later version in each case. It is apparent that the subtitle "Based on the original Dublin performance" was devised by Westminster as a good way of announcing an "original" "Messiah," as distinguished from just another presentation of the "traditional" version of Mozart *et al.* A more accurate subtitle would have been: "Based on the revisions made by Handel himself."

JACK DIETHER.

Hollywood, Calif.

THREATENED DEMISE OF FM

IT IS SOMEWHAT IRONIC that mourning for Major Armstrong should coincide with powerful attempts to destroy his favorite invention, frequency modulation broadcasting.

The apparent shortage of VHF television channels has inspired some operators to petition the Federal Communications Commission to re-allocate the FM band as three additional television channels. The specious argument supporting this demand is that only a small minority makes up the FM audience. This minority is contrasted with the supposed millions whose happiness depends on the existence of three more channels.

It is true that wrestling fans outnumber those who use FM for the reception of high-quality program material, primarily classical music. However, the minority is not so small as is claimed. Further, since when are the rights of any minority to be so thoughtlessly ridden over?

Despite the excellent case that can be made for the retention of the FM band (the 700 stations now operating, the growing interest in classical music, the flourishing condition of the high-fidelity business), the opponents of FM are dangerously near to victory.

Curiously enough, the FM audience, which is composed of the most articulate stratum of our society, is fatally inarticulate in the support of its medium. FM stations sometimes struggle along seemingly without listeners and discover that they have a numerous and faithful audience only when about to close up.

If all the people who depend on and glory in the greater faithfulness of FM sound and the greater maturity of FM programs were for once to wake up and make their numbers felt, perhaps the threatened demise of this medium might be averted.

Those who feel that FM deserves their support should write at once to the FCC and to Senator Charles Potter of the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee.

LOUIS T. MILIC.

Bozeman, Mont.

TOSCANINI, BRAHMS, AND CARDUS

I THINK THAT William Ralston was right when he said [LETTERS TO THE RECORDINGS EDITOR, SR April 24] that Neville Cardus is more impressed by his own opinion of the music [the Brahms symphonies, conducted by Toscanini] than by the music itself. . . .

The Toscanini treatment of Brahms is so far from customary that I think it is a crime to say, in commenting, that Toscanini is greater as a formalist than as a poet. I am more than a little outraged in reading such a declaration. I can think that Toscanini is everything, but never a formalist. He seems to me the only one musician who has the courage to put away a few things called routine, formulas, standard, tradition, etc. He can rediscover all the freshness and the poetry in the original score, which he conducts for the hundredth time. That makes his greatness as a musician as much as a poet.

JEAN SIMARD.

Quebec, Canada.

EDITOR'S NOTE: "Formula" is as far from "formalist" as a rowboat from a robot. Cardus chose his word well, even if the correspondent doubts wisely, and did not accuse Toscanini of "routine."

THE VERSATILE MISS CAMPHAUSEN

EDWARD CUSHING in his account of the stolen "Ring" [SR April 10] mentions that the Allegro recordings under consideration are credited as being performed by "Soloists, Choir and Orchestra of the Dresden State Opera, Conductor Fritz Schreiber" and asks, parenthetically, "Who is Fritz Schreiber?" To anyone familiar with the operatic catalogue of Allegro, Fritz Schreiber can be identified as a fiction of the manufacturer, shared with Royale records, and classifiable with such conductors as Gerd Rubahn, Herbert Wentzel, and Karl List.

The question of who is pulling whose