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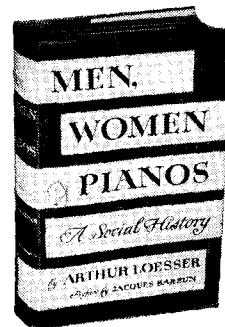
POP ROUND-UP

Musicals on Disc

M-G-M RECORDS has issued the soundtrack music from its filmed version of **BRIGADOON** (M-G-M E-3135), which was a smash musical play on Broadway not too many months back. Rarely since Jerome Kern have we had such a batch of warmhearted lilting tunes. Composer Frederick Loewe and author-lyrist Alan Jay Lerner are served adequately in this recording by such of the film cast as Gene Kelly, John Gustafson, Van Johnson, and Carol Richards. Johnny Green, not a bad writer himself, conducts the orchestra. Kelly sings most of the important songs, "Almost Like Being in Love," "The Heather on the Hill," "There But for You Go I," and as usual compensates for his vocal deficiencies with warmth and charm, which would be the main requirements here anyway.

WHITE CHRISTMAS is Irving Berlin's most successful song by his own word, and he has included it in a Paramount picture bearing the same title. This and new tunes from the score have been re-taped for a long-player (Decca DL-8083). Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye of the original cast are on hand, while fetching Peggy Lee, a Decca regular, has been sent in to sub for fetching Rosemary Clooney, who picks up her checks at Columbia. Berlin has contributed some new, very typical Berlin songs in "Count Your Blessing Instead of Sheep" (Bing) and "The Best Things Happen While You're Dancing" (Kaye), and the girl has engaging material in "Sisters" and "Love, You Didn't Do Right by Me." The comedy numbers, "Choreography" and "What Can You Do With a General," don't seem quite funny enough, and actually nothing here gives Kaye a chance to inject his own brand of hilarity. In fact, this score is more marshmallow than mustard. I believe the recording itself, with its close-up focus on the voices and too-distant perspective on the background, saps much of the sparkle.

Sparkle, wonderfully synthesized, comes across profusely in the original cast recording of the new Broadway hit, **THE BOY FRIEND** (RCA LOC-1018) a song-and-dance fabrication in the manner of the Twenties. However, I wonder how many times this gag can make the rounds without wearing thin. British author-composer Sandy Wilson has given us a score which, in this production, reminds us warmly and hysterically of the Victor Company's "Gems from . . . (this or that)," the "orthophonic" show mementoes of the bathtub-gin era. The band is Paul



How can a book be so "persistently and freshly funny, brilliant, wise and witty" for 613 pages?

III An unusual book, just published, is turning out to be the surprise of the season: a magnum—if not a jero-boam—of literary champagne.

III It is called **Men, Women and Pianos**. It is a piano's-eye view of social behavior and taste since the 17th century, written by **ARTHUR LOESSER**.

III And how it is written!

III **CLIFTON FADIMAN**, who read it in advance of publication, says: "It is so written, with such wit and humor and humanity, it is so larded with anecdote and spiced with reflection, that it should appeal even to the non-musical."

III And **CATHERINE DRINKER BOWEN** sent this note to the publishers:

"I am so enthusiastic I can't hold still. I have read many books about music, but never one so highly entertaining as this. How anybody can be so persistently and freshly funny about musical history is astonishing. I laughed aloud and so did my husband to whom books on music are as a rule sheer horrors.

The book is large and feels heavy to the hand. But I rejoice that you took nothing out of it. I couldn't spare a word. I predict a great popular success, something I am sure Arthur Loesser did not himself look for when he wrote it. It's brilliant, wise, witty and extraordinarily 'well informed.' I congratulate Simon and Schuster on its publication."

III What **ARTHUR LOESSER** has done in so entrancing a manner is to trace the history of the piano from the harpsichord to the latest bleached wood spinet. Always present in his cliché-proof mind are these questions:

For whom were the instruments made? How were they used? Who made them and why? What social forces altered their structure?

III In search of the answers, you visit middleclass parlors, aristocratic drawing-rooms, concert halls, workshops, factories—in a three-century social whirl through Europe and America.

III You will discover how, in the development of the piano, the interior decorator has been quite as important as the virtuoso, and the ambitious mama more important than either.

III The preface is by **JACQUES BARZUN**. You will, we promise, be completely charmed. And so—may we add, since Christmas time is near—will your friends. Price \$6.50 at your bookseller's.

—SIMON AND SCHUSTER

McGrane and his Bearcats, with a few straggly fiddles, tenor saxes, banjo, etc. The soprano is sweet and innocent, the "Perfect Young Ladies" of the chorus sound perfectly naughty, and the male lead is properly pompous. Several of the tunes, I'm sure, would have enjoyed roaring success in the flapper age. I'm partial toward the ballad duet "I Could Be Happy with You" (the next line, of course—"If you could be happy with me") and "You Don't Want to Play with Me Blues."

I have one complaint regarding all three sets mentioned above. None of them provides an adequate set of program notes for those of us who dwell in the provinces. None provides a story thread, and it's usually difficult to determine who's singing. For "White Christmas," Irving Berlin has scribbled a short note expressing his own satisfaction with his score. For "The Boy Friend," Bill Zeitung has composed an enjoyable, atmospheric evaluation, but the company lists the titles only on the record itself, and then identifies the performers by their last names alone.

And speaking of album "liners," there's a real honey penned by the sometimes tempestuous George Frazier for a new set of LEE WILEY SINGS RODGERS AND HART (Storyville LP 312). Miss Wiley obviously has strong appeals for Mr. Frazier and he lays bare his soul for all to observe. Personally, I don't see where Miss Wiley merits such adulation. I've never objected particularly to her borderline jazz styling nor her non-communicative lyrics—as long as she sang good, otherwise unobtainable show tunes—and her previous albums have included such fine jazz men as Bunny Berigan, Bud Freeman, and, recently on Columbia, Bobby Hackett. Her early shellac album of Rodgers and Hart on Gala contained such rarities as "Ship Without a Sail," "I've Got Five Dollars," "A Little Birdie Told Me so," etc. The new set has two remakes, "You Took Advantage of Me" and "Glad to be Unhappy;" plus "My Romance," "My Heart Stood Still," the no-longer rare "My Funny Valentine," "Mountain Greenery," "It Never Entered My Mind," and the still obscure "Give it Back to the Indians" from "Too Many Girls." My own favorite Rodgers and Hart collection is the one Margaret Whiting did a few years ago for Capitol. And now there's a special E.P. edition of four R and H tunes by Frank Sinatra, who also knows how to handle a substantial show tune. It's simply SINATRA SINGS RODGERS AND HART (Col. EP-B-1872) and it includes "Where or When," "Falling In Love with Love," "Spring is Here," and the best available version of "Lover."

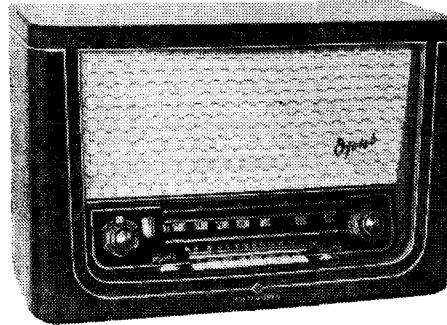
Frazier, in his enthusiasm for Lee Wiley, comes closer to describing my own feelings for another artist on the new Storyville label, MISS TEDDI KING (Storyville LP-314). Miss King, who has grown up professionally in jazz circles (she worked and recorded with the George Shearing Quintet) could become a very successful pop singer. For the nonce, happily, she's concerning herself with show tunes and off-beat ballads, which she renders with more warmth and feminine appeal than we've encountered in several dozen new vocal "finds." What's more, she's intensely musical without getting tricky. Among the tunes graced by her attention are

"I Saw Stars," Carmichael's "New Orleans," "It's the Talk of the Town," "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," "Love is Here To Stay," and a couple of specials, including "Love is a Now and Then Thing," by Johnny Richards, the jazz arranger who hit recently with "Young at Heart."

One of our proven commercial singers, Rosemary Clooney Ferrer, lends her precise, pleasing, intimate style to eight good or fair songs dealing with Youth in WHILE WE'RE YOUNG (Col. CL-6297). Included are the Alec Wilder beauty from which the title derives, as well as "Too Young," "Hello, Young Lovers," and similar fare.

—BILL SIMON.

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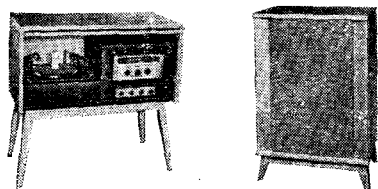
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Music to My Ears

Continued from page 31

the first violinist was no one else but Daniel Guillet, who recently cued the conductorless "Symphony of the Air" through its historic Carnegie Hall program, the need of this leadership was evident.

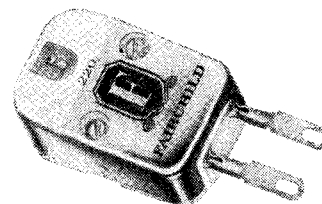
Following came Phyllis Curtin singing Thomson's "Stabat Mater" with string-quartet accompaniment, and Alice Howland offering his settings of four poems by Thomas Campion with viola, harp, and clarinet respectively, very well played by Emmanuel Vardi, Edward Vito, and Robert McGinnis. Both ladies sang pleasantly. The "Stabat Mater" did not add up to anything impressive to me, but several of the songs were pretty in a way oddly reminiscent of Benjamin Britten. The prosody, of course, was typical of Thomson's skill in such matters, though the whole effect was a little too pastel for my taste.

The ladies then came back to share the performing rights of Satie's "Socrate," heard for the first time in New York, and much belated. However, before this Thomson directed a playing by a chamber orchestra of twenty-five or so of the Mozart B flat symphony (No. 33). This was, in the manner of the Bach, metronomic and not too subtly shaded, with the conductor's attention fixed on the score and the players likewise absorbed. Here and there some manifestations of *rappor*t could be noted, but the end-product was more angular, probably, than Thomson meant it to be, and lacking in flavor. The finale, on which the major rehearsal time appeared to have been expended, came off best. If this was the price for hearing the almost legendary "Socrate," it was, if not too high, at least no bargain.

THE most talented newcomer of the young season (and it could be, of the whole winter) is young Van Cliburn, a nineteen-year-old Texan still enrolled at the Juilliard, who gave a notable demonstration of pianistic prowess in playing the Tchaikovsky B flat minor piano concerto on a recent Philharmonic-Symphony broadcast. A striking figure of over six feet two, Cliburn literally commands the piano as he plays, and in many ways the music too. He is far from a finished performer as yet—an inclination to rush tempi and accelerate accelerandos was evident, also a little lack of technical discipline—but he has, in abundance, the qualities of fervor, audience appeal, and musicianship which make for distinction.

—IRVING KOLODIN.

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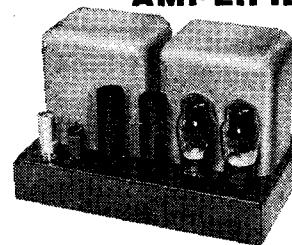
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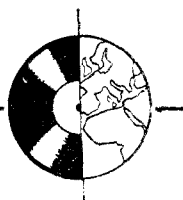
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THE OTHER SIDE



DG'S ARCHIVE PRODUCTIONS

LONDON. **P**RIDE of place this month belongs, without question, to the first release in England of Archive Production records, made by the History of Music Division of the *Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft* and manufactured and distributed in this country by the Heliodor Record Co., Ltd., DGG's newly established English subsidiary. In time, no doubt, we shall be offered ordinary, run-of-the-mill issues from this source, but for the present let us contemplate this staggering project which appears certain completely to overshadow HMV's "History of Music in Sound."

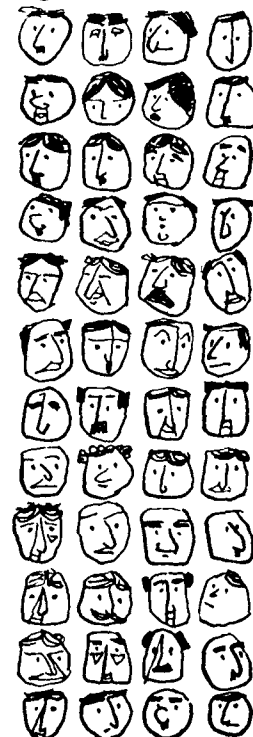
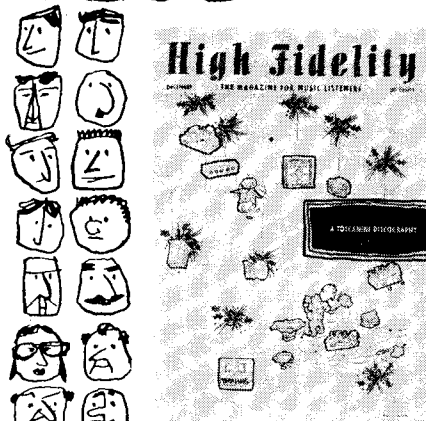
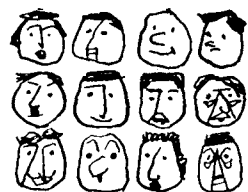
Despite the characteristic German thoroughness with which Archive Production has been planned, its purpose, unlike that of the HMV project, is not primarily educational, nor, apparently, is its growth to be restricted to any predetermined limits. A.P.'s terrain is the art music of Western Europe from ca. 700 A.D. up to and including the time of Mozart, and this has been divided up into twelve so-called Research Periods, each with from three to thirteen subdivisions. A.P.'s aim, as expressed in its introductory booklet, is not so much to improve our minds by extending our knowledge of old music as "to preserve on records complete works from this infinite field, works whose beauty and vitality can still exert an immediate appeal on the music-lover of the present day," and the first release of a dozen discs—one from each of the "Research Periods"—must be adjudged a major triumph.

Some A.P. recordings have already appeared in the USA on (American) Decca and, of the first twelve discs published here, two will be familiar to many of our readers: Handel's complete "Water Music," conducted by Fritz Lehmann, and two Bach Cantatas, Nos. 56 and 82, with Fischer-Dieskau as soloist. But, despite the baritone's expressive singing, these two records, representing Research Periods X (G. F. Handel) and IX (J. S. Bach) respectively, are among the least remarkable. Quite outstanding, on the other hand, are recordings by the Belgian vocal and instrumental group, Pro Musica Antiqua, directed by Safford Cape. From Period II (Central Middle Ages, 1100-1350) we have Adam de la Halle's dramatic pastoral, "Le Jeu de Robin et Mar-

ion," and a group of his rondeaux for voices and instruments, together with an enchanting collection of Thirteenth-century dances; Period III (Early Renaissance, 1350-1500) is represented by eight "Madrigale e Caccie" from the Codex of Antonio Squarcialupi and five sacred songs by the great Netherlandish master, Guillaume Dufay. These lovely and vital performances, which

are beautifully recorded, should convince all but the most hidebound that music such as this deserves a better fate than to gather dust in museum libraries.

Scarcely less excellent are the discs from Period I (Gregorian Chant) and Period IV (High Renaissance, Sixteenth century). The former is devoted to the *Primae Vesperae in Nativitate D.N. Jesu Christi*, ravishingly sung by the Monks of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Martin, Beuron; the latter will be especially welcome here since it contains ten songs by the Elizabethan lutenist-composer Thomas Campion, tastefully, but perhaps a little preciously, sung by René Soames to accompaniments



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(Part I of a complete discography)

"A Brave Echo from Vienna"by Martin Mayer
(about Julius Hermann, famed leader of the *Deutschermeister Kapelle*)

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plus a versatile shopping list of "audio oddments and trinketry" for Christmas giving.

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