

Recordings Reports I: Orchestral LPs

WORK, PERFORMER, DATA	REPORT
Beethoven: Concerto No. 2. Solomon, piano, with orchestra conducted by André Cluytens. Mozart: Concerto No. 15, K. 450. Same, with Otto Ackermann conducting. LHMV 12, \$4.98.	The early Beethoven concerto (it actually antedates No. 1) is a special fancy of Solomon, and he plays it with lithe strength and a graceful expressiveness. Cluytens hardly gives him what he merits in support, however. I would still consider the Backhaus-Krauss version on a ten-inch London disc superior, as Solomon does not play the overside Mozart with as much character. Though, in truth, there is no better version available just now.
Brahms: Symphony No. 2. Eduard van Beinum conducting the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra. Epic LC-3098, \$3.98.	Sturdy Brahms, a little phlegmatic in the first and third movements. It comes to a fine climax in movement four, though by then it is almost too late to save a performance rather deficient in lyric feeling. Fully formed sound, especially rich in the horns.
Franck: Symphony in D minor. Guido Cantelli conducting the NBC Symphony. RCA Victor LM-1852, \$3.98.	For those whose preference in Franck tends to compact statement, clean orchestral articulation, and a minimum of dramatic flourishes, Cantelli provides these qualities in sober measure. The sound, as reproduced, is dry and without the resonance of several other current recordings.
Handel: "Water Music." Boyd Neel and his orchestra. London LL-1128, \$3.98.	Neel provides a fine-sounding alternative to the recent, also "complete" issue of this superb suite by the Hewitt orchestra on the HS label. My personal preference remains with the French players for the detail and finesse of the wind instrument playing, but Neel has done his work well.
Paderewski: "Fantaisie Polonaise." Felicia Blumental, piano, with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Anatole Fistoulari. London LL-1104, \$3.98.	Paderewski's melodious, well-made, though hardly adventurous work is beautifully played by Blumental, supporting previous impressions of her artistry. However, she is happier in this reminiscence of her homeland (she is Polish by birth) than in the overside "Concerto in Brazilian Forms," by Hekel Tavares of her adopted country. It is rather fussily ornate in its writing for the solo instrument and not distinguished in its musical content. Fistoulari and the orchestra collaborate to Mme. Blumental's advantages, the recording also being highly satisfactory.
Rachmaninoff: Concerto No. 2. Leonard Pennario, piano, with the St. Louis Symphony conducted by Vladimir Golschmann. Capitol LP 8302, \$4.98.	Swift-moving execution, by the strong fingered Pennario, of a rather small-scaled conception of this music, which hardly provides the mass of sonority or the kind of flowing expressiveness desired. The engineering is excellent, especially in respect to balance, but it doesn't make up for the lack of Rachmaninoff feeling in the performance.
Ravel: Concerto. Leonard Bernstein as piano soloist and conductor. Camden CAL-214, \$1.98.	There have been few better versions of the Ravel at any time, and since the English recording was first-class when made—approximately 1947—this is highly desirable merchandise. The disc also shows the versatile Leonard in two other aspects of his musicality: as interpreter of Copland's striking piano sonata, and as composer-pianist in his own "Seven Anniversaries" . . . now, I would say, a little slight by the side of later creations. Very good sound in all.
Ravel: "Tzigane." Chausson: "Poème." Lalo: "Symphonie Espagnole." Arthur Grumiaux violin with Jean Fournet conducting the Lamoureux Orchestra. Epic LC-3082, \$3.98.	Grumiaux's feeling for, and understanding of, Ravel's far from transparent work are even more apparent in this version with orchestra than they were in a previous issue (Boston Records) with piano. However, he does not provide much that is distinctive in versions of the Chausson and Lalo works which are smoothly played, but without any strongly personal poetry. Good sound.
Saint-Saëns: "Carnival of the Animals." Geza Anda and Bela Siki, pianists; Igor Markevitch conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. Britten: "Young Persons Guide to the Orchestra." Markevitch conducting, Peter Pears narrator. Angel 35135, \$4.98.	Two able accomplishments by Markevitch, who manages very creditably with the Saint-Saëns as do the more than qualified pianists. I would, for purposes of general recommendation, prefer another coupling than Britten's tonal lecture, especially as it is punctuated by Pears's Reading of a script that is apt to dull with repetition. If the audience is a youthful one, the pairing can be recommended. First-class reproduction.
Sibelius: Symphony No. 2. Leopold Stokowski conducting members of the NBC Symphony Orchestra. RCA Victor LM-1854, \$3.98.	Big proclamative style of performance, plus some dubious ritards and overstressed dynamics. It also sounds as though some post-performance doctoring of sonorities was introduced, which tends to make the whole too mechanized for my taste.
Suppe: "Light Cavalry" and "Beautiful Galathea" overtures. Franz André conducting the orchestra of the Belgian radio. Telefunken TM-68018, \$4.98.	As those versed in the lore of the phonograph are aware, Telefunken is identified with some of the notable recordings of the 1930s, a phrase which may be applied to the 1950s if issues of this quality accumulate. André directs the work of his half countryman (Suppé was Dalmatian-born of Belgian ancestry) with taste and vigor, also a strong sense of the orchestra values involved.
Turina: "La Oración del Terero," etc. Zarzuela Orchestra of Madrid conducted by Federico Torroba. Decca 9763, \$4.98.	Torroba's direction of this lengthiest and best known work in the miscellany is not outstanding, nor is the recording up to current expectations. However, he gives excellent service to his own "Madrilenas" as well as sundry works of Larregla, Breton, Chueca-Valverde, etc. The emphasis throughout is on entertainment, of most appeal to those with a taste for the zarzuela literature.
Wagner: "Tristan" (Prelude and Liebestod). "Götterdämmerung" (Rhine Journey and Funeral Music). Carl Schuricht conducting the Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire. London LL-1704, \$3.98.	Carefully planned, well-phrased performances which, however, lack the propulsive force or the dramatic impact to measure against those of Toscanini or Furtwängler. In addition, the French brass sound is light for Wagner, especially when reproduced as acutely as it is here. (It will not be long before orchestras will be type-cast for music as well as conductors.)
Walton: "Portsmouth Point" and "Scapino" overtures, "Wise Virgins" suite. Sir Adrian Boult conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra. London LL-1165, \$3.98.	Well-sounding, rather four-square performance of a repertory that would profit from more flexibility than Boult imparts to it. Litschauer's direction of the Bach-based "Wise Virgins" (on Vanguard) is more sympathetic, if the engineering here is a shade more expert.
Vivaldi: Concerti in A minor (bassoon), F (flute), D minor (oboe), etc. New Chamber Orchestra of Paris, André Jouve conducting. Westminster WL-5341, \$5.95.	So far as aural judgment is dependable, none of these is familiar from previous recordings, though all are typical of the composer at his best. Jouve's direction is consistently alert and energetic, though the ensemble is sometimes heavy for the material. Of the unidentified soloists, the flutist is particularly adept, with a broad sound admirably suited to the work. Razor-sharp sound, sometimes a trifle cutting. —IRVING KOLODIN.

Fi. vs. Fat.

Continued from page 42

work was performed, naturally in its entirety and with the knowledge that as it was played it was destined "to be or not to be." And whatever interruptions were necessary for longer units were physical breaks and did not cause a Rachmaninoff, for example, to lose his unerring sense of relationship and design.

COMplete artists are rare in any age, and it is just possible that in the arts mass production by its very nature is incompatible with uniformly superlative results. A work of art, a superb performance, is an individual case. It is unique; the sheer number of recording artists needed to fulfill the repertory demand and the sheer amount of music consumed by an LP disc would be quite sufficient cause for a ruthless artistic decline. And I am now referring to the rarity today of just normal artistic qualities,—of the ability to play a melodic line expressively, to lend charm and grace to dance movements, to play passages with articulation and any four confounded bars in the same tempo. Perish the thought that one should inject any such transcendent note that the unity of a work of art is a glimpse of immortality.

When faced with the problem of communication, whether on the platform or on discs, a real artist always demands the most of himself. In addition, when it comes to recording, no artist of integrity can free himself from the inhibiting realization that performances on records can be preserved more or less permanently, and potentially can be the basis for the judgment of posterity. It is also a fact that the many versions of the same standard works issued today indicate how much the interest of most listeners will be focussed on the interpretation of the music rather than the music itself. A great artist will not want to utilize protective devices for achieving flawless accuracy at the expense of structural continuity and propulsive drive. What we hear in the best recordings old or new are the ideals of variety within unity, technique at the service of expressive conception, and the individuality of the artist. The difficulty of achieving these ideals is so tremendous that we are lucky to have a few such examples, not alone so many. And those examples have nothing whatsoever to do with terms such as LP or 78-rpm or hi-fi or acoustic recording. They stem from musical genius, from the inexorable devotion and integrity.

THE TAPE YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!

SOUNDCRAFT
"PLUS 50"
(50% EXTRA PLAYING TIME)
magnetic recording tape



- 50% EXTRA PLAYING TIME
- EXTRA STRENGTH "MYLAR" BASE
- FULL DEPTH OXIDE COATING
- • • YET ACTUALLY COSTS LESS

PLUS 50 is the perfected "long-playing" magnetic tape, bringing you 50% extra playing time with no compromise in strength or recording quality.

One reel of "Plus-50" is equal in recording or playback time to 1½ reels of standard tape. More listening per reel . . . less time changing reels. Best of all, Soundcraft "Plus-50" actually costs less per foot than quality acetate-base tapes!

The secret of "Plus-50" lies in its extra thin "Mylar" base (1 mil as compared to 1.5 mils in acetate tapes). "Mylar," DuPont's Polyester Film, contains no plasticizer. It will not cup or curl. Elongation and shrinkage from heat, cold and humidity are barely measurable. And it's far stronger than the thicker acetate . . . one third as strong as steel!

There has been no compromise in the development of "Plus-50"—a big advantage for you! The oxide coating is constant, full-depth—to maintain correct frequency response, output level, and bias characteristics. No machine adjustments are needed.

"Plus-50" can be interspersed with other fine quality tapes without level change.

See your Soundcraft Dealer for "Plus-50" as well as these other famous Soundcraft Magnetic Recording Tapes:

Soundcraft Recording Tape (in the box with The Red Diamond) the all-purpose "Standard of the Industry."

Soundcraft Professional Tape (in the box with The Blue Diamond) for radio, TV and recording studios. Splice-free up to 2400 feet. Standard or professional hubs.

Soundcraft LIFETIME Tape (in the box with The Yellow Diamond) for priceless recordings. DuPont "Mylar" base. For rigorous use . . . perfect program timing. Store it anywhere virtually forever.

Soundcraft Tapes are the world's finest—and yet they cost no more.

For Every Sound Reason

REEVES SOUNDCRAFT CORP.
10 East 52nd St., New York 22, N. Y.

Recordings Reports II: Miscellaneous LPs

WORK, PERFORMER, DATA	REPORT
Canteloube: "Chants de la France." Lucie Daullienne, soprano, with Joseph Canteloube, piano. Oiseau Lyre OL-50047, \$4.98.	By other standards than the memorable ones of "Chants d'Auvergne" these are engaging folk songs (from Savoy, Picardy, Gascony, Brittany, etc.). However, Mme. Daullienne has a babyish-sounding soprano, and her art is hardly of the sort to hold the attention. Canteloube's touch is evident in some of the harmonic colorations, and he plays his accompaniments well. Good sound.
Debussy: Twelve Etudes. Hans Henkemans, piano. Epic LC-3104, \$3.98.	Like Monique Haas and Charles Rosen, the previous LP performers of these pieces, Henkemans is a performer notable more for well-disciplined fingers than for the capacity to search out the poetic essence in these works. Epic-type piano, which is to say, clear and ringing.
Granados: "Danzas Españolas." Alicia de Larrocha, piano. Decca DL-9762, \$4.98.	In addition to the famous No. 5 and its almost equally celebrated successor, there is music of fantasy and charm in all of these dances. Mme. de Larrocha plays them with fluency and in excellent style, utilizing a text (unpublished) left by the composer. I cannot testify to differences from the usual versions, but the results are thoroughly enjoyable. Effective piano reproduction.
Grieg: Ballade, op. 24, Berceuse, Papillon, etc. Rubinstein, piano. RCA Victor LM-1872, \$3.98.	Rubinstein's lavish color range, his dynamic artillery, are held in reasonable restraint in these artfully colored performances. However, I am always aware of an unreleased tension straining at the outlines of the smaller pieces.
Handel: Trio sonata (Adagio only), Bach: Trio sonata (Adagio), etc. Blanche, Louis, and Marcel Moysse. Marcel Moysse Records. M-101, \$5.95.	As has been well-known for years and years, Marcel Moysse is one of the greatest instrumentalists of our time, and a flutist second to none. This incredible mélange—ranging from a solo out of Massenet's "Sapho" to a piece of Bizet's "L'Arlésienne" and including oddments from Burneau, Reichert, and Tulou—is suitable, really, only for flutists. The Handel and Bach extracts are superbly played, but the recording is sub-professional in its studio surroundings, the subordination of the accompanying piano.
Haydn: Quartets in G and D minor (opus 76, Nos. 1 and 2.) Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet. Westminster WL-5342, \$5.95.	First violinist Anton Kamper is not always the meticulous workman wanted as head of a quartet in these works, but the musical style and excellent sound of the ensemble are gratifying to those attached to the music of Haydn. The pairing duplicates previous issues by the Budapest and Schneider quartets: its superiority would be largely related to the excellent technic of the reproduction.
Lecuona: "Andalucia," etc. Pablo Flores, piano. MGM E-199, \$2.98.	For those who still lack acceptable versions of "Andalucia," "Malaguena," "Siboney," and the other favorites of Lecuona's repertory, Flores provides a characteristic rhythmic sense and ample lyric feeling. However, whether it is the fault of the instrument used in this recording or a limitation of the performer's style, the piano tone is decidedly hard and without much artistic variation in tone color.
Mendelssohn: "Rondo Capriccioso," "Variations Sérieuses," etc. Reine Gianoli, piano. Westminster WL-5329, \$5.95.	All the delicacy and lightness wanted for Mendelssohn's presto writing are not at Gianoli's disposal, but she plays the lyric kind very sympathetically and with a nice discrimination between over and under statement. Some of the smaller pieces on side two are a useful contribution to a broader knowledge of Mendelssohn's musical personality. Resonant sound, occasionally too percussive.
Mozart: Serenades in E flat (K. 375) and C minor (K. 388). Arthur Winograd conducting a wind ensemble. MGM E-3159, \$3.98.	Though Winograd had some esteem as a cellist in the Juilliard Quartet, his intrusion into an ensemble which includes such musicians as Arthur and Harry Berv (horns), Augustin Duques (clarinet), Benjamin Kohon (bassoon) does not add to the amount of Mozartian feeling conveyed by the musicians. Altogether too much "phrasing" for music (K. 375) which can make its appeal without exterior manipulation. Though the second side work is described on the liner and its annotation as in "C major," it is the same C minor paired with the E flat in three other issues. The sprightly performance is not nearly so mannered as the E flat, and excellently played by the two oboists (Albert and Doris Goltzer) in particular. Close up recording, a little dead in sound.
Nielsen: Quartet No. 4 in F minor. London LL-1199, \$3.98.	A somewhat backward step in the recent upsurge of regard for Nielsen in this country, this work is dryer, less interesting than expected. It is artfully written for the strings, but of limited interest otherwise. I cannot find much to enthuse about in the overside work of Vagn Holmboe, a Danish compatriot of Nielsen now forty-six. Both works are energetically performed, though the tonal production of the Koppel ensemble is thin.
Puccini-Verdi: Opera Excerpts. Hilde Gueden, soprano, with Alberto Erede conducting the Santa Cecilia Orchestra. London LD-9165, \$2.98.	Beautiful vocalization by Gueden of two arias from "Turandot" and "O mio babbino caro" spaced by the arietta of Nanetta Ford from Act III of "Falstaff" and "Ah! fors è lui." The last of these is a shade deliberate, almost cautious in delivery, but remarkably pure in sound. The sound, incidentally, is of special interest: either London has taken to using an echo chamber, or else it has found an uncommonly resonant hall in Rome. (The latter probability is closer to fact.)
Parente: "Pulecenella," etc. Fernando Corena, bass-baritone, with orchestra conducted by Ernesto Nicelli. London LD-9164, \$2.98.	Those who are attracted to this disc by the promising name of the favorite buffo will find him here dispensing sentimental Italian songs in a dry, rather quavery voice. The accompaniments are all they should be.
Schubert: "An die Leier," "Der Atlas," "Gruppe aus dem Tartarus," etc. Gérard Souzay, baritone, with Dalton Baldwin, piano. London LL-1148, \$3.98.	As the listing indicates, Souzay is here concerned with some of the biggest songs in the Schubert repertory (as well as such others as "Ständchen," "Du bist die Ruh," and "Hark Hark the Lark"). The sound is consistently good, if more than a little tenorish in quality. Indeed, he sounds very much at his best throughout, without really getting inside the material—which, after all, is a primary requisite in Schubert. Dalton Baldwin is a very able partner at the piano.
Weber: "Pieces," op. 3, and op. 60. Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale, duopianists. Columbia ML-4968, \$3.98.	Crisp, well-phrased articulation by the performers of works which can use all the performing arts they can bring to them. Those who are interested will find the generative elements of Hindemith's "Symphonic Metamorphosis" on a Weber theme in the op. 60 set. Very good reproduction.

—I. K.