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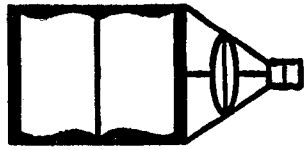
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THE AMEN CORNER

Notes from the North

SUMMER has not yet departed the Maine coast, and we have been enjoying the poetic melancholy of Miles Davis's trumpet, engaged in subtle contrapuntal action with the pianist Thelonious Monk in a wholly remarkable version of George Gershwin's "The Man I Love" (Prestige LP-200). Last month Davis put a spell upon the Newport Jazz Festival, and he makes haunting company in the living room. Monk's eccentric variations on Gershwin are inimitable, and there are also the excellent Milt Jackson, vibes; Percy Heath, bass; and Kenny Clarke, drums.

Jackson appears in another fine program with the pianist Horace Silver—delicate and authoritative—and I call special attention to their up-tempo blues, "Stonewall" (Prestige LP 7003). But this is all chamber jazz of high refinement. Somewhat on the gustier side is the young trumpeter Jon Eardley, an erstwhile ornament of Gerry Mulligan's crew, working now with tenor saxophonist J. R. Montrose (Prestige LP 207) and really pushing the business. And while we are still in the modern vein I will mention an artist called King Pleasure whose specialty is vocal versions of instrumental solos. He invents his own words; they are apt and sometimes witty; and I have obtained a double value from his translations of such saxophone solos as Charlie Parker's "Parker's Mood" and Lester Young's "Sometimes I'm Happy." In the first place, they are attractive jazz singing in themselves and, secondly, they point up, in to me quite a startling way, the contours of the instrumental style (Prestige LP 208).

The traditional buy of the month is "Satch Plays Fats," which of course means a program of Fats Waller's tunes by Louis Armstrong and his band (Columbia CL 708). This is the current outfit, with Trummy Young on the trombone, and the delicious roster ranges from "Ain't Misbehavin'" to "Squeeze Me." George Avakian's copious notes include a briefing on Waller's lyricist, Andy Razaf, whose real name is Andreamentena Razafinakeriefo and who is the son of the late Grand Duke of Madagascar who died fighting the French in 1896. This LP, incidentally, contains a couple of those

pleasant tape tricks in which Armstrong can be heard accompanying himself.

Another sturdy, historically oriented LP is "Paul Barbarin and His New Orleans Jazz" (Atlantic 1215) in which the veteran drummer is joined by such fine performers as trumpeter John Brunious, bassist Milton Hinton, and banjoist Danny Barker. The tunes include such parading gems as "Sing On" and "Bourbon Street" and, as I once heard a barker declare at Savin Rock, "there is nothing in this show to offend the most fascinating man."

Ed McCurdy, an appealing man himself, is a fellow who sings about sin. On one side of his LP he is for it, and on the other agin' it. Thus you have the praises of rye whiskey balanced by the fact that "tobacco is an Indian weed." This seems equable enough, and it remains to be said that in "Sin Songs—Pro and Con" Mr. McCurdy handles some fairly ticklish material with a great deal of tact and no little musicality (Elektra 24).

"Festival in Haiti," under the direction of the dancer Jean Léon Destiné, is a delight for the drumming of men named Ti-Roro and Alphonse Cimber and for the exquisitely rhythmic fife playing of the Haitian composer, Herblee (Elektra 30). The Haitian forms discoursed include méringues, a vodoun chant, and other magic matters.

It is not everyone who wants records by an Alsatian brass band, but we do, and are in a position to recommend the organization under Jules Mayer of Schnockerloch (London W 91057). These boys give an utterly stirring rendition of the waltz "Over the Waves" (Rosas) and, needless to say, they also get into schottische and polka routines.

This summer miscellany will be concluded with mention of two beautifully recorded LPs by the famous blues singer and guitarist Josh White. On one he sings his own narrative of the legendary John Henry, and on the other a number of ballads and blues; both records are in a single album (Elektra 701). We may say that White often sounds a little bland for our taste; we prefer the more abrasive timbre of Leadbelly. But White is a gifted and lyrical musician and superbly represented here. The Elektra people are also to be saluted for their excellent program notes and word sheets.

—WILDER HOBSON.



Letters to the *RECORDINGS* Editor

THE BRIGHTER SIDE

I FOUND Jennis A. Nunley's article "Concerning Audiophilia" [SR July 30] most entertaining. Through his creative imagination Mr. Nunley has produced a word which adequately describes our cult. But surely Mr. Nunley must know of the brighter side to the life of an amateur audiophile. I am certain that the thousands of audiophiles who faithfully read *RECORDINGS* would enjoy seeing him report it.

HOWARD J. HANSEN.

Mexico, N. Y.

HOW MORBID ARE WE?

THE ARTICLE "Concerning Audiophilia" made an unpleasant impression on me. Mr. Nunley (or is it Miss?) reveals his bias in the way he plays ducks and drakes with etymology. There is no etymological connection between the words audiophile and audiophilia. They look and sound alike, but they spring from different roots. They are contradictory and mutually exclusive. Audiophilism would be logical and proper, as in the case of bibliophile and bibliophilism.

The word audiophile stems from the Greek *philo*, loving; and it bears no connotation of morbidity. It identifies a person who loves beautiful sound, just as *heliophile* identifies one who loves the sun. Has anyone ever heard of *heliophilia*? And, conversely, a person afflicted with *hemophilia* is a *hemophiliac*, one addicted to *necrophilia* is a *necrophiliac*, and so on.

In good English, then, what Mr. Nunley tried to say was that we are not audiophiles, but audiophiliacs.

JACK COX.

Bronx, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reader Cox's Greek etymology doesn't convince. Is there a classical scholar in the house?

THE TRUTH ABOUT BEETHOVEN

RE THE LETTER of the Sterbas [SR July 30], permit me to state that I would not hang my mother-in-law's cat on evidence no better than that which has been presented to prove that Beethoven was luetic. The most detailed consideration of the evidence on this matter that I have found in an extensive study of the Beethoven literature is in the book by Dr. Waldemar Schweisheimer, "Beethovens Leiden" (1923). His findings are summarized on page 95:

The most exhaustive study that has been made so far of Beethoven's ailments presents the conclusion that the clinical course of Beethoven's illnesses [deafness, intestinal disorders of long standing, cirrhosis of the liver], so far as is known to us, shows no characteristics that are typical of syphilis. The findings of the autopsy indicate against a diagnosis of syphilis.

The student who is interested in having the statements of various writers set forth *pro* and *con* may consult an article by Dr. Charles K. Carpenter in *Annals of Otology, Rhinology, and Laryngology* Vol. 45 (1936), page 1069. As Carpenter says:

Whether Beethoven had that disease or not is in itself of little consequence—he had begged that the truth about him, whatever it might be, be told—but it is of consequence whether or not [his] biographers have without sufficient warranty attributed it to him.

It is too much to hope that such a titillating story will drop out of the popular biographies and the music-appreciation courses merely because there is no reason to believe that it is true, but serious scholars like the Sterbas should not be forced to defend themselves for not having given new currency to the fable.

DONALD W. MACARDLE.

Dallas, Texas.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Old wives' fables die hard. SR now buries the canard about Beethoven.*

GIMME SOME H & H

HARRIGAN AND HART (with music by Braham) were "deliriously idolized by critics and cash customers alike" according to a review by Arthur Mayer of "The Merry Partners: The Age and Stage of Harrigan and Hart," by E. J. Kahn, Jr. [SR July 30], but curiously enough it seems that the team has been completely ignored by the LP record-makers. Is this because the songs of Har-

rigan and Hart are too simple for our present sophisticated taste? Or have the recording companies been so busy searching for the diamonds in far-off places and in times long ago that they have neglected the diamonds in their own backyards of the immediate past?

In any event, as a matter of historical completeness we should have some recordings of the 200 songs written by Harrigan and set to music by Braham, so that we can judge for ourselves the value of these songs and the musical taste of our forebears.

ALBERT HAND.

Jersey City, N. J.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *J. Durante would seem the man to the manor born.*

A FURTWÄNGLER-FILE

I AM AN AVID READER of SR, since I am a librarian, and I anxiously await *RECORDINGS* issue each month. A question has been in my mind for quite some time regarding Wilhelm Furtwängler's recordings. Do you know if he made a new recording of the Tchaikovsky Sixth Symphony before his death? If not, perhaps RCA Victor might be persuaded to release his earlier masterful version on the Treasury Series. It is unfortunate that we are continually flooded with so many inferior interpretations, and yet are denied this great one on LP. I still treasure my old 78 album, worn and scratchy as it is. But I feel that an LP could capture much of the original luster. This would also apply to his early recordings of "Parsifal" and Beethoven's Fifth.

THOMAS CHANDLER.

Atlanta, Ga.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *RCA Victor is willing, if the master material suits. The subject is now under study.*

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