

Recordings Reports: I: Orchestral LPs

WORK, PERFORMER, DATA	REPORT
Arnold: "English Dances." Sir Adrian Boult conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra. L LD-9178, \$2.98.	Excellent examples of Arnold's qualities as an orchestrator (he is best known here for his "Homage to the Queen" ballet score, in the Sadler's Wells repertory). The tunes have a folkish turn, but are original creations, their orchestration suggesting the influence of Milhaud. Bright performances, expertly reproduced.
Bartók: Concerto for Orchestra. Eugene Ormandy directing the Philadelphia Orchestra. Columbia ML-4973, \$4.98.	Vigor and vitality are compelling traits of this performance, which is a brilliant demonstration of the color possibilities inherent in the orchestra, powerfully reproduced. There are, however, some expressive elements in the score which do not come off as well as in the Karajan version (Angel).
Beethoven: Symphony No. 7. Warwick Symphony Orchestra. Camden CAL-212, \$1.98.	The long and honorable history of this Philadelphia-Stokowski performance (once identified as V Set-17) is all too clearly conveyed by the recording, muddier and more indistinct than even a bargain price can ameliorate. The good repute of the Camden catalogue is not well-served by this kind of thoughtless venture.
Brahms: Serenade in A. Carlo Zecchi conducting the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra. Epic LC-3116, \$3.98.	This performance is substantially superior in sound to any other now available, a tribute as much to the excellence of the players—hardly the full Concertgebouw despite the contentions of the labeling—as to the skill of the engineers. Zecchi's direction is conscientious and carefully detailed, but the full measure of Brahmsian sentiment is not quite conveyed.
Chopin: Concerto No. 2 (F minor). Saint-Saëns: Concerto No. 4 (C minor). Alexander Brailowsky with the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. RCA Victor LM-1871, \$3.98.	Technical competence abounds in the playing of Brailowsky, and Munch's direction is knowing enough; what is wanting is some degree of real artistic impulse to convince one that this is more than a business transaction. Of the two, the Saint-Saëns strikes me as the more successful, though this may mean, merely, that the ear is more tolerant in its regard than where Chopin is concerned. Fairly good, not outstanding direction.
Dvorak: Symphony in E minor ("New World"). Rudolf Schwarz conducting the New Symphony of London. Capitol P-8308, \$4.98.	In competition with Dorati, Ormandy, Kubelik, Szell, and Talich, not to mention Toscanini. Schwarz hardly provides more than a modicum of listening interest. For those who are curious, his is a careful, literal, moderately energetic, mostly unpersuasive effort. The recording is in the same "good, but not good enough" category as the performance.
Elgar: Concerto in B minor. Alfredo Campoli, violin, with Sir Adrian Boult and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. London LL-1168, \$3.98.	Campoli has adroit command of the silky suavity to sing out the first movement of this work with its lovable tune, but the breadth and power wanted later on are not in his equipment. Boult is a little ponderous with the orchestral values provided by Elgar, though this is doubtless considered the authentic manner. Fine sound.
Gould: "Dance Variations." J. Whittemore-A. Lowe, duo-pianists, with Leopold Stokowski conducting the San Francisco Symphony. Menotti: "Sebastian." Stokowski conducting members of the NBC Symphony. RCA Victor LM-1858, \$3.98.	Two excellent performances on the credit side of the Stokowski ledger, both highly attentive to detail and to the composer's purpose. The fine "Sebastian" score (with its anticipations of some thoughts prominent in "Amahl") is a pleasant contrast to the Gould, which makes highly agreeable use of the two-piano-orchestra medium. Both sides are successfully reproduced, though the points of origin are a continent apart.
Haydn: Symphonies No. 44 (E minor) and No. 85 (B flat). Paul Sacher conducting the Vienna Symphony. Epic LC-3059, \$3.98.	Sturdy performances, in the new mode for Haydn, of two superior works in the composer's long catalogue. No. 44 ("Trauersymphonie") is an interesting instance of some impulses better-known in the "Farewell" (No. 45), showing Haydn to be absorbing even in paraphrase. No. 85 ("La Reine") is very well handled by Sacher. Big open sound.
Khatchaturian: Concerto. Thomas Magyar, violin, with Rudolf Moralt conducting the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. Epic LC-3080, \$3.98.	Magyar may not have the super-sound of either Oistrakh (whose versions have had pre-eminence till now), but he has a decided sensitivity for this particular work, and a very persuasive way of delivering it. A violinist of mixed Hungarian-Dutch influences, he is obviously an artist of quality, who might be well worth hearing in other literature. Moralt directs forcefully and the recording is one of Epic's best.
Rachmaninoff: "Isle of the Dead." Dukas: "La Péri." Ernest Ansermet conducting the Conservatory Orchestra. London LL 1156, \$3.98.	This is the first up-to-date recording of the Rachmaninoff tone poem, and on the whole, a satisfying one. Ansermet doesn't develop the dramatic atmosphere as compellingly as Koussevitzky did (his reissued treatment offers everything but suitable sound), but the musical texture is artfully conveyed. "La Péri" is even more to Ansermet's taste, and he manages it masterfully. More of the very good London sound.
Respighi: "Vetrare di Chiesa." "Feste Romane." Antal Dorati conducting the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. Mercury MG-50046, \$4.98.	Respighi's "Church Windows" are not as familiar an arrangement of his orchestral clichés as "Feste Romane," relatively welcome on that basis. Actually, the interest in either of these is mostly electronic, for the music in "Feste Romane" has been better organized by Toscanini, and the "Church Windows" contains no great amount of it. The qualities of woodwinds and strings are particularly well realized in this instance of Mercury's engineering skill.
Saint-Saëns: Symphony No. 3 in C minor. Arturo Toscanini conducting the NBC Symphony. RCA Victor LM-1874, \$3.98.	Due to some alchemy not easy to explain, this performance from a broadcast of November 15, 1952, is a better likeness of Carnegie Hall sound than some NBC-Toscanini discs of later date from actual recording sessions. As a performance, it ranks high in the list of exceptional ones by Toscanini, especially in the "mystic" slow movement. The calm, controlled statement of the melody marks the difference between affecting and affected.
Strauss: "Till Eulenspiegel." "Don Juan." Weber: Overtures to "Der Freischuetz," "Euryanthe." Wilhelm Furtwaengler conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. L HMV-19, \$4.98.	A comprehensive statement by Furtwaengler on the subjects of Strauss, Richard and Weber, Carl Maria, wholeheartedly abetted by the Vienna Philharmonic. There are stretches of much beautiful playing in each of the works—also wilful phrasings, artificial changes of pace, strenuous accents, etc. The most consistently interesting performance is the "Don Juan," which has fine atmosphere and broad musical justice. My favored version would, however, still be the Toscanini.

—I. K.

Singing Horns

Continued from page 32

music is exasperating in the extreme to scholars who are seeking precise information. Yet it has the rugged persistence of a folk legend, and sometimes this persistence may be a way of trying to tell us something. Here is the legend in its classic form, as related by Bud Scott, another of the earlier New Orleans musicians: "Bolden would strip Lincoln Park of all the people by slipping his horn through the knothole in the fence and calling the children home. . . . Let me tell you, he was plenty powerful." (Bolden was playing at Johnson's Park.)

Loudness *per se* may not mean much; still, it is the one indication, firmly rooted in folk memory, of the first impact of the new music of New Orleans on its hearers. This new music, like its country cousin, was also based on a repertoire of spirituals, reels, ballads, blues, and work songs, played by Negro musicians handling brass band instruments for the first time.

It has been established that both the Negroes of New Orleans and this region of western Alabama had heard white brass bands playing European harmonies from sheet music. When they first heard *their own people* playing with hoarseness, a notable lack of harmony, and a high level of heterophony, it is possible that the "new music" struck them as "loud." A brass band, any brass band, can play only up to a certain decibel level of actual *loudness*; but the sound of "unfamiliar" music is so often described by auditors as "loud" that perhaps this frequent use of the word is our subtlest clue to emergence of a new way of playing. It may take us back to that fresh moment when the new music was first heard blown through the knothole of a fence in Johnson Park, or riding out across the Alabama countryside.

There seem to be enough points of similarity to suggest that the earliest, "roughest" band music played by Negroes in New Orleans may not have been wholly different from music of the country brass bands. The changes that took place, almost immediately, in New Orleans music, were away from the "roughness." But as far as we could determine, the "primitive" or "rough" style did not undergo changes in remote rural districts like those that nurtured the Lapsey and Laneville-Johnson Brass Bands.

OTHER parallels might tend to relate the music of country bands to the early bands of New Orleans, and they



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Recordings Reports II: Miscellaneous LPs

WORK, PERFORMER, DATA	REPORT
Albeniz: "Iberia" "Navarra," "Cantos de España." José Echaniz, piano. Westminster WAL 219, \$11.90.	Echaniz has here engaged a task somewhat more complex and demanding than he can wholly manage. The pieces tend to be similar in accents and coloration, the piano tone hardly as sonorous or varied as it might be. Moreover, the execution is not always technically clean. (The collection covers volumes I-IV, whereas the Arrau on Columbia is incomplete.) The additional pieces are played in the same, less than wholly satisfactory, style.
Bach: Partita in D minor, Sonata in G minor. Nathan Milstein, violin. Capitol P 8298, \$4.98.	Sturdy, well-phrased performances of the sort Milstein has often purveyed in the concert hall, a stamp of approval sufficient unto itself. The "Chaconne" of the D minor is especially absorbing, for its technical solidity and resolute musicality. The G minor is also beautifully formed. Fine sound.
Beethoven: Sonatas in A (opus 101) and E (Opus 109). Paul Badura-Skoda, piano. Westminster 5357, \$5.95.	Two performances of high credit to the ever-developing artistry of Badura-Skoda, though it is quite conceivable he will feel his Beethoven differently in 1965 than now. Here he is most consistently persuasive in the E major sonata. The A major is strongly felt but not so consecutively thought where Beethoven demands understanding more than merely exposition. Good resonant piano sound.
Brahms: "Neue Liebeslieder Walzer," also six songs. Flore Wend, soprano. Nancy Waugh, mezzo, Hugues Cuenod, tenor, and Doda Conrad, bass, with Nadia Boulanger, Jean Françaix, piano. Decca DL 9650, \$4.98.	These affectionate performances have all the virtues and some of the defects of the <i>Hausmusik</i> atmosphere associated with their composition. That is to say, the performers are sometimes stronger in enthusiasm than in proficiency. However, the "swing" in the music is strongly present, especially in the four-hand playing of Boulanger and Françaix. The additional items are "An die Heimat," "Der Abend," and "Fragen" (opus 64), "O Schöne Nacht," "Sehnsucht," and "Nächtens." Fairly good sound.
Brahms: Quartets in A minor and B flat. Vegh Quartet. London LL-1142, \$3.98.	Sharply outlined, well-phrased performances, a little reticent in expression but otherwise of substantial artistic qualities. The players seem more concerned with playing for each other than for the listeners, which is acceptable enough when the over-hearing is so satisfactory. Finely balanced sound.
Caldara: "Come Raggio di Sol," Pergolesi: "La Passione," etc. Magda Laszlo, soprano with Franz Holetschek, piano. Westminster WL 5375, \$5.95.	The thirteen items on two sides of this disc add to a choice introduction to the attractions of the early "arie antiche": the Italian literature of Bononcini, Carissimi, Durante, Scarlatti, Gasparini, not to mention Vivaldi and Pergolesi, which have lip but not throat service from most singers. Laszlo sings them intelligently enough and with real musicianship, not with the full emotionalism they demand. Holetschek is a capable associate.
Debussy: "Chansons de Bilitis," "Fêtes Galantes," etc. Nan Merriman, mezzo, with Gerald Moore, piano. Angel 35217, \$4.98.	An admirable compliment to the recent disc of Spanish material by Merriman, showing the range and versatility of the singer's interpretative talents. Fine vocal sound throughout, and in such songs as "En sourdine," "Le Jet d'Eau," and "Clair de Lune," a superior kind of artistic awareness. The colorful, flexible piano playing of Moore fills another dimension of the whole. Side two provides Bachelet's "Chère Nuit," Fauré's "Ici-Bas!", and "Après un Rêve," Duparc's "Phidylé." Chausson's "Temps des Lilas," etc. Outstanding reproduction.
Debussy: Sonata for flute, viola, and harp. Julius Baker, flute, Lillian Fuchs, viola, and Laura Newell, harp. Roussel: Trio for flute, viola, and cello. Baker, L. Fuchs, and Harry Fuchs, cello. Decca DL-9777, \$4.98.	A truly delectable serving of uncommon musical viands, topped in each instance by the silvery freshness of sound generated by Baker from his sometimes recalcitrant but here obedient instrument. In addition to the fine-sounding versions of the Debussy and Roussel works noted, he engages the solo challenge of Debussy's "Syrinx" and manages it supremely well. The scope and definition of the recording are very well suited to the material.
Dohnányi: Quartet No. 3 in A minor. Dvorak: Quartet in F ("American"). Hollywood Quartet. Capitol P-8307, \$4.98.	The mingling of Smetana and Brahms in the Dohnányi score is very well-appraised by the Hollywood Quartet, which gives back a very sensitive, and on the whole vital, image of the musical values it contains. A decidedly welcome addition to the quartet literature on LP. The associated version of the Dvorak "American" is one of the best available. Superior sound in each instance, characterized by more than average concern for balance.
Fauré: "Nocturne" No. 12, "Barcarolle," "Valse-Caprice," etc. Ravel: "Valse Nobles et Sentimentales," etc. Jean-Michel Damase, piano. London TW 91035, \$4.98.	Light-fingered, atmospheric pianism by the hitherto unfamiliar Damase, especially in the Fauré literature. The Ravel asks a little more, in color and nuance, than he provides, but he would appear to be an artist well above average quality. More of the Fauré literature, in which he shows himself to be unusually adept, would be welcome. Average good sound.
Fauré: Quintet No. 2. Gaby Casadesus, piano, with the Guilet String Quartet. MGM E 3166, \$3.98.	A beautifully prepared, fully matured reading of this work, with excellent mechanical detail to balance the music sense. So much of it is so good that one must conclude, in those passages which do not make the clearest sense, that the composer has himself not quite succeeded in making his meaning clear. However, these passages are infrequent in a work which has much to offer to the chamber-music enthusiast.
Fauré: Sonata in A. Franck: Sonata in A. Joseph Fuchs, violin, with Artur Balsam, piano. Decca DL 9716, \$4.98.	First-class examples of skilled chamber-music playing, especially in the balanced projection of the elements involved. All one might ask is a little more active statement of the poetry in the music, especially in the Franck, which is a little prosy. The Fauré, however, is neatly drawn, without being overdrawn. Excellent reproduction.
Haydn: Quartet in F minor (opus 20, No. 5). Schubert: Quartet in E flat (opus 125, No. 1) Vienna Philharmonic Quartet. Telefunken LGX 66034, \$4.98.	Despite the impressive name, this is no more than adequate chamber-music playing, stylistically, and less than that in fidelity to the printed score. Intonation is not consistently exact, some <i>portamenti</i> (especially in the Schubert) more deliberate (almost smeary) than good taste decrees. Acceptable sound.
Haydn: Sonata in F (No. 23). Mozart: Sonata in D (K.576) Géza Anda, piano. Telefunken TM 68023, \$4.98.	Anda's feeling for the romantic literature as exemplified in recent Angel recordings is not paralleled in these neat but essentially colorless performances. All the notes are in the right places, but the air space between them, the accents that make for interpretative sense, are almost mechanically rigid and unvarying. No plus in the piano sound, either.

—I. K.