

Recordings Reports I: Orchestral LPs

| WORK, PERFORMER, DATA | REPORT |
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| Bechet: "La Nuit est une Sorcière." Jacques Bazire conducting. London International WV-91050, \$2.98. | This Bechet is indeed the mighty Sidney, whose artistry on the soprano sax is intermittently evident in the solo sections of this ballet score. However, it is prevailingly a patchwork of jazz and cinematic clichés, embarrassingly overarranged by (if I read the credit rightly) James Toliver. Good sound. |
| Busoni: "Tanzwalzer," etc. Igor Markevitch conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. Angel 35154, \$4.98. | In its esoteric aspects—Chabrier's "Fête Polonoise," this Busoni item, an orchestral version of the waltz from Stravinsky's suite No. 2 (four hands), even Liszt's "Mephisto" waltz—this "Portrait of the Waltz" is absorbing, also well performed. However, I doubt the appeal to the same ear of Saint-Saëns' "Danse Macabre," Sibelius's "Valse Triste," Mozart's "Sleigh Ride," and the Berlioz "Dance of the Sylphs" as Markevitch offers them . . . whether or not the total is called "A Portrait of the Waltz" or not. Fine orchestral playing and sound. |
| Cimarosa: Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra, etc. Sidney Gallesi, oboe, with the Scarlatti Orchestra directed by Franco Caracciolo. Angel 35255, \$4.98. | Though Gallesi is not quite as able an oboe player as Leon Goossens and Mitch Miller, who have excellent versions available on Columbia and Mercury respectively, the other matter on the disc is decidedly attractive. This is especially true of the Lully-Mottl suite, only slightly less so of the Tartini Concerto No. 58 for strings. The Scarlatti ensemble does not have quite the verve of I Musici or the finesse of Virtuosi di Roma, but is a highly competent group in its own way. |
| Dvořák: Concerto in B minor. André Navarra, cello, with Rudolf Schwarz conducting the New Symphony of London. Capitol P-8301, \$4.98. Pierre Fournier, cello, with Rafael Kubelik conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. London LL-1106, \$3.98. | Two decidedly superior performances, altogether creditable to the persons involved in both instances. However, my suspicion is that the subtlety of Navarra will wear better than the more strenuous presentation of Kubelik and Fournier. Navarra (like Fournier, of French background) is sparsely represented on records, but he is clearly an artist of quality, with a mature, settled view of the music. Fournier is more impulsive, prompting Kubelik to a response that sometimes drives the orchestra beyond good balance with the soloist. The slight superiority in reproduced sound favors London. |
| Falla: Concerto for Harpsichord. Rieti; Partita. Surinach: "Tientos." Sylvia Marlowe, harpsichord, with the Concert Art Players. Capitol P 8309, \$3.98. | A thoroughly excellent disc, not less for the brooding work of Surinach, and the ingeniously alive one of Rieti, than for the better-known, somehow unsatisfying score of Falla. Miss Marlowe's instrument has been deftly treated by the engineers, with a blend of sounds highly complimentary to her and the associated (oddly, anonymous) group of fine woodwind and string players. |
| Gershwin: "Rhapsody in Blue," Concerto in F. Julius Katchen, piano, with Montovani and orchestra. London LL-1262, \$3.98. | Katchen has technical facility in abundance, and much of his execution in these works arouses admiration. However, some of his tempi, especially in the phrasing of melodic matter, are exaggerated, as are the orchestral flourishes as directed by Montovani. And, if this is merely a matter of taste, what of the really indefensible rearrangement of the "Rhapsody," in which the famous clarinet solo at the beginning becomes, almost immediately, an episode for unison strings? |
| Lumbye: "Dances from Tivoli." Tippe Lumbye conducting the Tivoli Concert Hall orchestra. Mercury MG-90000, \$3.98. | Denmark could hardly send us a more enticing invitation to Copenhagen's famous Tivoli amusement park than this hour-long concert of typical nineteenth-century dance music by its gifted bandmaster of the 1840-1860 period. Included in the lively performances led by the composer's grandson are "Bouquet Royal," "Hesperus" waltz, "Britta" polka, "Krolls Ballklänge," and "Dream Pictures," the last two recently danced here by an ensemble from the Danish Royal Ballet. Excellent sound. |
| Paisiello: Concerto in C, etc. Ruggero Gerlin, harpsichord, with Jean-Pierre Rampal, flute, and Georges Ales, Pierre Doukan, violins. Oiseau-Lyre OL 50009, \$4.98. | Offered on this single disc are works by three additional composers associated with eighteenth-century Naples—Francesco Durante, Domenico Auletta, and Francesco Mancini. What results is apt to be a little too similar for sustained attention, though the slow movements of the Durante and Mancini "concerti" have melodic individuality. Excellent performance throughout, and acceptable sound. Louis de Froment is identified as conductor. |
| Roussel: "Petite Suite." Concerto for Piano, Concerto for Small Orchestra, Sinfonietta. Paul Sacher and the Lamoureux Orchestra, with Leila Gousseau. Epic LC 3129, \$3.98. | A varied sampling of Roussel for those whose acquaintance with him has been limited to "Bacchus and Ariadne" or "The Spider's Feast." The value of the musical ideas is—as might be said of almost anyone—erratic, but the workmanship throughout is remarkably consistent and of a superior discrimination. Sacher's performances are all to the point, and serviceable to the conductor, likewise Miss Gousseau's playing of the solo part in the concert. Excellent reproduction. |
| Stravinsky: "Le Sacre du Printemps," also "Petrouchka" suite. Eugene Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. Columbia ML-5030, \$4.98. | Brilliant orchestral execution is the substantial virtue of these two performances, which otherwise are deficient in the special kind of tension and rhythmic interplay which distinguish Stravinsky's own treatment, and those, of more recent date, by Monteux, Steinberg, and Markevitch. So far as mechanics are concerned the new Columbia can hold its own with any. |
| Tchaikovsky: Concerto No. 1. Gina Bachauer, piano, with the New London Orchestra conducted by Alec Sherman. RCA Victor LM-1890, \$3.98. | Large-scale, energetic performance with a grateful absence of fussy details and overstressed personal inclinations. Something more in the way of warmth of tone might occasionally be welcomed from the soloist, but the momentum and good musical sense of the performance are valuable traits. Sherman does his work capably, and the reproduction is first class. |
| Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5. William Steinberg conducting the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Capitol P-8325, \$4.98. | Typically well-conceived performance by Steinberg, with all attention to the music, none to extraneous dramatics. Comparatively, the orchestral sound lacks the richness of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw as conducted by Van Kempen on Epic or the even excellence of Stokowski's handpicked one on RCA Victor. The somewhat dry, lean timbre is well conveyed by the acute Capitol pickup. |
| Weill: Concerto for Violin and Wind Orchestra. Anahid Ajemian, violin, with ensemble conducted by Izler Solomon. MGM E-3179, \$3.98 | A thought-provoking work, with a highly organized tonal texture for all its acidity and dryness of style. Miss Ajemian plays it with persuasive command of musical and technical difficulties. The second side is filled out by four pieces of Webern (opus 7), with Maro Ajemian providing valuable assistance at the piano. —IRVING KOLODIN. |

Marxist Music

Continued from page 39

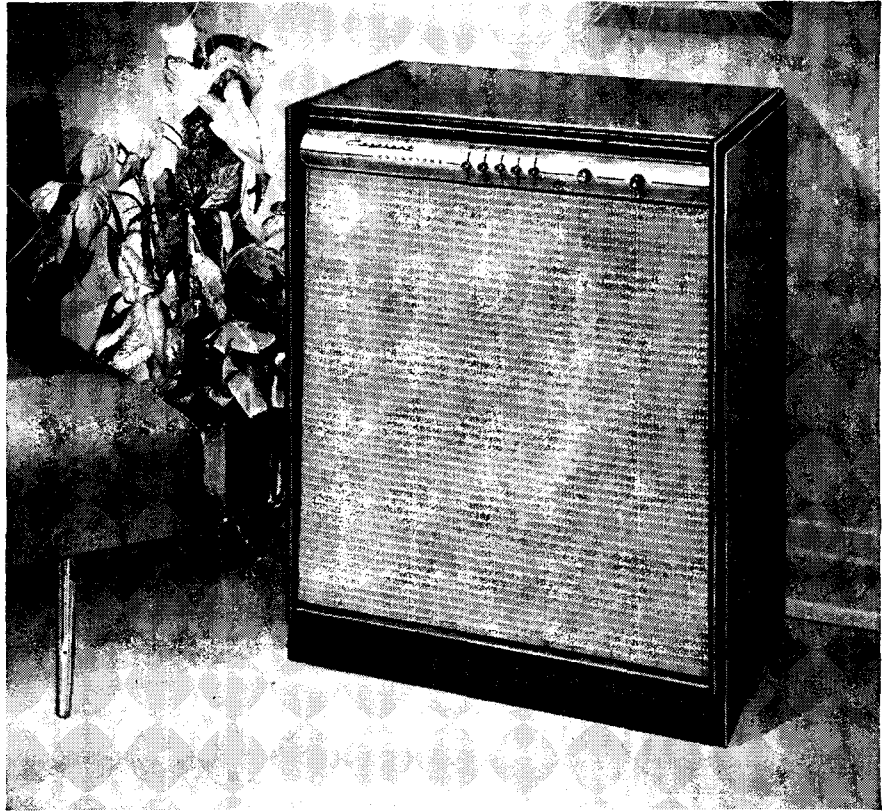
sophical writers were celebrating the happiness and humanity of the latter half of the nineteenth century. W. H. Lecky, in comparing the modern world with the ancient, while unable to find in the former any intellectual superiority over the latter, was quite sure that the morality of the human race was milder and gentler than it was 2,400 years earlier. It is a pity that some of these amiable gentlemen did not live to view the extraordinary events of the first half of the present century, probably unparalleled in any historical era for ruthless inhumanity.

It is possible to imagine that if Marx, who at home was an excellent family man, had been gifted with prophetic insight he might have refrained from pressing his political dogma so consistently to its logical conclusion. For there was no delusion in his mind about the wisdom or the capacity of the immense class whom he desired to see inheriting the earth. He admitted with candor that in itself it was incapable of organization or rule, and must for its own good and interests be dominated by adroit and skilful managers who owed allegiance to nothing on earth but his own creed.

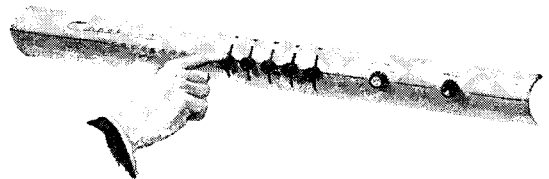
The old world in the past forty years has suffered much from two gigantic wars; the flower of the youth of each of its separate states has perished and we can only conjecture what that loss has meant to a declining culture. But even these disasters fade into insignificance when compared with the success of the ghastly doctrine accepted willingly by a large part of the modern world. The proposition that it is justifiable for any junta attaining power to eliminate cheerfully millions of people without the least legal or moral sanction has shattered the nerve, dulled the conscience, and enfeebled the arm of that portion of the globe that once looked upon itself as civilized. For this indeed is a Nihilism of the Spirit, and it has not only chilled all those spontaneous and generous emotions that inspired the arts of the past, but has left in its stead only an empty shell of impotence and negation.

IT CANNOT be too often emphasized that at no time have the arts been appreciated or supported by the bulk of the population in any Christian country. Something like one hundred years ago Gobineau estimated that in France, then the most advanced and civilized state in Europe, hardly more than 100,000 persons out

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Recording Reports II: Miscellaneous LPs

Bach: Concerto in the Italian Style, Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue. George Malcolm, harpsichord. London LD-9187, \$2.98.

Robust, large-lined performances, with no trace of any effete implications that might be suggested by the harpsichord. Malcolm is fully in command of the tonal problems involved, and though his registration tends a little to monotony, there is admirable vitality in his Bach. Fine reproduction.

Bach: G minor sonata. Vitali: Chaconne, etc. Igor Oistrakh, violin, with A. Markarov and I. Kollegorskaya, piano. Vanguard VRS-461, \$4.98.

From the young Oistrakh's playing of these two works, one might conclude that the high praise for last year's recording of the Khatchaturian concerto was excessive. However, when he matches skills with a Vieuxtemps "Tarentelle" and the Wieniawski "Scherzo Tarantelle" on side two it is at once apparent he is born to the violinistic purple, if not an interesting mind where Bach and Vitali are concerned. There is comparable dash and style in the Mozart-Kreisler "Rondo," a Kabalevsky "Improvisation," and the Szymanowski "Fountains of Arethusa" which fill out side two. The longer works (also Mozart) are better in sound (they were recorded in Paris) than the others, Russian in origin. All are quite acceptable, however.

Balakirev: "Islamey." Liszt: Rhapsody No. 12. Julius Katchen, piano. London LD-9175, \$2.98.

Katchen has more to offer, in verve and flair, in the Russian music than in the Liszt, which seems mostly a recitation, at high speed, of a difficult series of words, rather a successful attempt to make anything meaningful out of them.

Brahms: Sonatas in A and G. Szymon Goldberg, violin, with A. Balsam, piano. Decca DL-9720, \$4.98. Sonata in A. Schumann: Sonata in A minor. Rafael Druian, violin, with John Simms, piano. Mercury MG-80002, \$3.98.

The introspection of Goldberg is more suitable to the G major sonata, which he plays beautifully, than to the A major, which lags a little in interest. Druian's two performances are evenly appropriate to the works at hand, with Simms an excellent partner in each. Little to choose in sound, which is to say that both are well recorded.

Falla: "Siete canciones populares españolas." Ravel: "Don Quichotte à l'écume." Aurelio Estanislao, baritone, with Hedy Salquin, piano. London LD-9180, \$2.98.

This baritone (presumably Spanish) is a new name to me, and to the record public generally. It is a rather dry, thew voice he projects, and in the Falla raspy as well. They are vigorously, if not persuasively, sung. In the Ravel sequence the suaver manner required makes for a pleasanter vocal sound, though it be an exaggeration to term the results caressing. The pianist is competent, the recording good.

Handel-Salzedo: "Harmonious Blacksmith" variations. Salzedo: "Scintillation," etc. Carlos Salzedo, harp. Mercury MG-80003, \$3.98.

The wizard of the wires is in his very best form here, which means that there is musical as well as technical facility to admire. Some of the effects in the piece called "Scintillation" are exceptional, even for Salzedo. Corelli ("Giga") and Massenet ("Menuet d'Amour") are the other composers represented. Mercury has done a superb job of faithful rendering in the reproduction.

Handel: Sonata in D. Prokofiev: Sonata in D. Vitali: Chaconne. Nathan Milstein, violin, with Artur Balsam, piano. Capitol P-8315, \$4.98.

Milstein's lively, discriminating performance of the fanciful Prokofiev score is the saving grace of a recording which does not, otherwise, sustain the interest of his recent excellent releases. The Handel is thinnish in sound, without suitable breadth of treatment, the Vitali somewhat perfunctory. Balsam also contributes more to the quality results of the Prokofiev than to the other works.

Scarlatti: Six Sonatas (Longo 107, 202, 221, 256, 432, and 487). Mozart: Sonata in B flat (K. 333). Charles Rosen, piano. Esoteric ESP-3000, \$4.98.

Rosen is not as well cast in the role of Scarlatti interpreter as he is in Mozart. For that matter, much of the musical result is conditioned by the use of an old Italian piano (reconstructed in an 1800 case) whose improbable history does not improve a sound tinkly by modern standards. Hence, Rosen's sensitivity is devalued, in an unequal struggle to make one ignore the "precious" considerations involved. Hardly, in any case, for general consumption.

Schumann: "Mondnacht." Brahms: "Am Sonntag Morgen." Strauss: "Zueignung," etc. Zinka Milanov, soprano, with Bozidar Kunc, piano. RCA Victor LM-1915, \$3.98.

It is hard to say which is less suitable for this material: Milanov's voice or her manner. The first is most often shrill and tremolo-ridden in songs such as "Zueignung," "Freundliche Vision," "Allerseelen," and "Cacilie" which make up the inexplicable Strauss group; the second is artless and innocent of subtlety in a genre where art and subtlety are indispensable. She manages the lighter sound of the Brahms "Wiegenlied" pleasantly, and there are now and again well-rounded phrases in the others, but not often enough for one of her celebrity. Textually, one can rarely understand five words consecutively. The second side, devoted to works of her brother (the accompanist) and other Yugoslav composers, is relatively more enjoyable. Kunc's "The World Is Empty" is an impressive song, well sung. But the following version of Hageman's "Do Not Go, My Love" offers no reasonable argument why anyone should linger.

Siqueira: "Xango," also Brazilian folk songs. Alice Ribeiro, soprano, with chorus and orchestra conducted by Siqueira. Vanguard VRS-465, \$4.98.

Remarkably fine reproduction of a highly unusual work by Siqueira, utilizing the ritualistic "Xango" as the basis for a composed work rich in orchestral values as well as a soaring voice part remarkably fulfilled by the flexible instrument of Miss Ribeiro. Overside she makes much of a folk-sequence set by Siqueira, with Elsie Houstonish overtones in "A Casinha Pequena," "Coco-Penerue," and "Engenho Novo." The clear, evenly balanced sound affirms that Vanguard need not defer to any "major" where producing a fine record is concerned.

Tchaikovsky: "Waltz Scherzo," "Sérénade Mélancolique," etc. Mikhail Vaiman, violin, with Maria Karanpasjova, piano. London LD-9154, \$2.98.

Able, but rather colorless, performances by two performers hitherto unknown to celebrity. Vaiman is more persuasive in the lively "Waltz Scherzo" and a comparable excerpt from Prokofiev's "Cinderella" than he is in the melancholy serenade, which becomes doleful indeed. Typically good technical work by London.

Tchaikovsky: "Album for the Young." Mendelssohn: "Children's Pieces," Op. 72. Menahem Pressler, piano. MGM E-3204, \$3.98.

Pressler has just the right combination of refinement and simplicity to make Tchaikovsky's twenty-four vignettes clearly what they are: the utterances of a great musical mind working within self-imposed technical limitations. He applies as much effort to the Mendelssohn (a product of 1842), but they contain less that is rewarding. Excellent likeness of the Pressler piano sound.

—I. K.