

## 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. Makarov 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.

of 35,000,000 could be regarded as really cultivated. Music and painting in particular had been protected until recently by a small minority. This minority, possessing knowledge, judgment, and taste, constituted a solid block of authority and bore some resemblance to an international Academy. It was for its members and not for the greater public that men painted pictures and wrote symphonies or operas.

Today this cosmopolitan lodge of musical freemasonry is disestablished, and its place has been taken mainly by public corporations whose zeal is greater than their insight. A fresh gathering of the select may be in course of self-creation, but at the moment any evidence of a struggle to live is hardly noticeable. On the other hand, there is, so far as music is concerned, a much larger body of new devotees who may be called the rank and file of listeners.

What is the relationship of our latter-day composer towards his audience? We know what it was in the last century and for what set of persons the great masters wrote their works. There was a close association between authors and patrons: one almost as intimate as a telephone conversation. They were the two complementary parts of a rounded whole. Today that association is a thing of the past, and most composers proudly declare that they write only to please themselves and without regard to the taste or requirements of the public anywhere. The latter reciprocates this attitude by failing to discover any merit in the music it is constantly adjured to hear.

**T**HIS IS a ludicrously unreal state of things and cannot continue indefinitely. Our musicians are now writing in an uncanny species of vacuum, unknown to and undreamt of by any of their great forebears from Monteverdi to Debussy. They will soon have to think about deserting their several ivory towers and finding some way of addressing themselves more persuasively to the public of today, such as it is.

For it is a matter of moment that in the next fifteen or twenty years there should be forthcoming at least a handful of works capable of looking unashamedly in the face of those of the elder masters. In the concert-room the great orchestras of the world cannot continue living much longer in and upon the past. Satiety and boredom will prevail and the greatest musical invention of the nineteenth century, as well as the glory of the twentieth, will gradually decline and pass away, just as all earlier vehicles of sound and motion have done.



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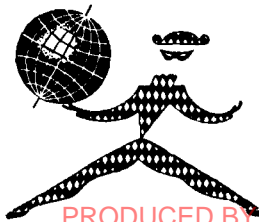
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## Recordings Reports III: Jazz on LPs

PERFORMER, CONTENTS, DATA	REPORT
Eddie Bert. Savoy MG 12015, \$4.95.	Eddie Bert, who is in his mid-thirties, has emerged in the past year or two as still another member of that already large and surging host of expert modern-jazz trombonists. On this date, which is the first to record properly his great competency and steadiness, he is accompanied beautifully by Hank Jones, Kenny Clarke, and Wendell Marshall. There are two standards and five originals, on one of which Clarke takes a clean but rather spiritless solo built on the rhythmic patterns of "Billie's Bounce." On four sides, Bert weaves in and around himself in the ensembles, with the help of some double taping. A fine record.
Ball at Bethlehem with Braff. Bethlehem BCP 1034, \$3.85.	This month's Ruby Braff record was made at a taffy pull held last New Year's Eve by the Bethlehem Record Company. Also on hand were Eddie Hubble, Dick Katz, Sam Margolis, Gene Ramey, and Izzy Sklar. The results are enthusiastic and pulsive, with Braff proving again that he could probably construct an impressive chorus sitting in a deep freeze.
Kenny Clarke. Savoy MG 12006, \$4.95.	Both sides of this were first released a short time ago on two ten-inch LP's. The first was recorded in California with M. Jackson, F. Morgan, W. Benton, G. Wiggins, and P. Heath (four originals) and the other in New Jersey with M. Jackson, H. Coker, C. Fowlkes, E. Jones, and F. Wess (four originals). The second side is generally the superior one, for in addition to the knotty, if uneven, trombone of Coker and Clarke's neat, IBM drumming there is a classic tenor saxophone solo by Wess on "Telefunken Blues" the likes of which Ben Webster used to weave regularly for the Duke in the early Forties.
This is Chris Connors. Bethlehem BCP 20, \$4.85.	Miss Connors is a quasi-original (June Christy, Anita O'Day), jazzlike singer whose voice is big, clear, and ear-filling. There are ten standards, and the adept settings are provided by K. Winding, J. J. Johnson, R. Sharon, H. Mann, J. Puma, M. Hinton, and O. Johnson.
Don Elliott Sings. Bethlehem BCP 15, \$4.85.	Don Elliott, an army of jazz instrumentalists, sings the way he plays the mellophone, trumpet, trombone, vibraphone, piano, and bongos: without sock, mistily, and with catlike tread. He does ten seldom heard standards here, and is backed sufficiently by a string section, a harp, and a gathering of friends which includes B. Byers, A. Cohn, H. McKusick, A. Epstein, D. Bank, B. Galbraith, M. Hinton, and O. Johnson.
The Artistry of Tal Farlow. Norgren MG N-1014, \$4.98.	Tal Farlow is considered by many to be the best jazz guitarist in the business today. There are others, though, who feel that, in spite of his great technique, facility and range of ideas, there is something in his style and conception (lack of dynamics, guts, and stomp) that becomes damagingly monotonous. This LP, on which there are seven standards and one original, should give ample food to either side. On hand, ably, are G. Wiggins, R. Brown, and the great Chico Hamilton.
Russ Garcia. Bethlehem BCP 1040, \$3.85.	Russ Garcia, who has arranged for dance bands and written movie music, has here put together ten originals which are built on a jazz basis and make use of symmetric harmonies, the twelve-tone scale, and other such atomic devices. R. Cheever, C. Mariano, B. Holman, J. Guiffre, P. & C. Candoli, M. Bennett, and S. Levey perform the materials with fervor and understanding but, somehow, despite all the accoutrements, the results seem without purpose or any sort of genuine jazz persuasiveness.
This is Jimmy Hamilton. Urania UJLP 1003, \$3.98.	A thoroughly pleasant date which features the clarinet, arrangements, and originals (two, in addition to the three standards) of Jimmy Hamilton, who has been with Duke Ellington for thirteen years. The whole record has a mid-Forties flavor about it, and is helped immeasurably by the consummate solo work of Ernie Royal, Earl Knight, and Lucky Thompson. Hamilton plays an accomplished, rather academic clarinet, and it is good to have him on record as a leader. The rhythm section is rounded out by S. Gross (who directed), O. Pettiford, and O. Johnson.
Jolly Jumps In: Pete Jolly. Victor LPM—1105, \$3.98.	Pete Jolly, a young and extremely promising West Coast pianist in a premature and so inevitably disappointing first LP. There are three sextet sides (Counce, Manne, Roberts, Rogers, Guiffre), on which Jolly plays accordion (this instrument fits into jazz about as well as the triangle), and eight by a trio (Manne, Counce). Five standards and six originals.
The First Mehegan: John Mehegan. Savoy MG 15054, \$3.85.	John Mehegan is a skilled all-around pianist-teacher who attacks his jazz like a starved man his first beef. The result is a biting, forceful approach that is always interesting and frequently exciting. He is accompanied on one side (the best side) by C. Mingus and K. Clarke, and on the other by C. Wayne, V. Burke, and J. Morello. Three originals and five standards.
The Joe Newman Octet. Victor LPM—1118, \$3.98.	A generally rewarding neo-Basie session that has everything, including the Count's thumb prints, down just right. Newman, who is not heard enough here, is abetted well by E. Wilkins, F. Greene, N. Pierce, F. Rehack, S. Wilson, and M. Hinton. There are twelve selections (seven standards, five originals), and as a result none of the good arrangements and good solos gets past the sketchy stage. It's too bad because there is a feeling about the record that it might have been really first rate had there been less material and more time to move around in.
The Progressive Piano of Hal Schaefer. Victor LPM—1106, \$3.98.	Hal Schaefer, late of the movie industry, is now working the shrimp-cocktail clubs on the East Side in New York. His piano, properly, is tricky, gimmicky, facile, and about one-eighth part jazz. Joe Mondragon and Alvin Stoller provide manful accompaniment on the ten standards and two originals.
Willie "The Lion" Smith and His Dixie Cubs. Urania UJLP 1004, \$3.98.	The Lion and his diaphanous-rumbling piano in a date that smacks strongly of some of those small-band sessions of the Thirties where everybody just took off their hats and blew. Two of the six standards are piano solos (one is Smith's "Echoes of Spring"), and the rest somewhat violent collective exercises featuring H. Goodwin, C. Scott, G. Stevenson, P. Foster, S. Gross, and the brick-handed Art Trappier.
Big Jazz: Jack Teagarden and Rex Stewart. Atlantic ALS 1209, \$4.85.	This batch of reissues includes some of the most vibrant, commanding jazz ever put on record. Made in two different sessions in 1940 under the leaderships of Teagarden (Bigard, Webster, Kyle, Taylor, Fleagle, Tough) and Stewart (L. Brown, Bigard, Kyle, Fleagle, Braud, Tough) on the old H. R. S. label, it is still as positive and fresh today as it was then. Listen, for example, to all of Tough's drumming, to Ben Webster on "The World Is Waiting," and to Billy Kyle's barrels-down-the-stairs chorus on "Diga Diga Do." An essential record. —WHITNEY BALLIETT.