



## THE AMEN CORNER

## Seated One Day

SOME years ago, I think, I referred to the way in which history so often endows pipe organists with names which suit their mighty machines. Some organists, of course, are simply styled. The name Carl Weinrich might perfectly well suggest a second trumpet or a green grocer. Charles M. Courboin might describe a simple *avocat*. On the other hand, one would scarcely expect a man named Melchiorre Mauro-Cottone to play the ocarina or hang out his shingle as a foot doctor. He is clearly at the pipe organ. So is Sidney Dark. So is T. Tertius Noble. So is the most organic name of them all—S. Gordon Thunder—a name which rolls so appropriately through the nave that I sometimes think I must have invented it. But I did not.

When it comes to the Hammond organ, that relatively modest instrument which can easily be installed in the common parlor or roadhouse, one would not hope to find such resonant names at the console. Indeed, in view of the use many Hammond players make of the tremulously sentimental possibilities of their device, one might suppose them to be named Renfrew or Hyacinthe. The best Hammond player I have heard in jazz (eclipsing for me even the late Fats Waller and Count Basie) is Jimmy Smith. Disdaining volume and schmalz, he uses the organ with great tact and reserve, with insinuating sustained chords under the horns, brisk "comping" (the modern jazz term for rhythmic chordal accompaniment) and an occasional sharp punctuation in an acid timbre that has an electric effect. In short, he treats the organ not as a box of multi-colored moanings and heavings, but as a discreetly supporting and propulsive part of a jazz band. In his newest LP, "A Date With Jimmy Smith" (Blue Note 1548), he works mostly behind and underneath some of the best men in the vigorous modern New York school: Donald Byrd, trumpet; Lou Donaldson, alto sax; Hank Mobley, tenor sax; Art Blakey, drums; plus a warmly delightful, unfamiliar guitarist, Eddie McFadden. One entire side of this record is given over to a splendid middle tempo exploration of Duke Ellington's "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart."

Last summer, in the Walker Art Center of Minneapolis, the redoubtable trumpeter Paul "Doc" Evans presided over three outdoor concerts of Dixieland jazz from which have come

three LPs constituting a resumé of early jazz classics played in traditional style (Soma MG 1209-10-11). Evans's cohorts included John W. "Knocky" Parker, chairman of the English Department of Kentucky Wesleyan College, on the piano. The program begins with the cakewalk "Whistlin' Rufus" by Kerry Mills, better known as the composer of "At a Georgia Camp Meeting." There are then excursions into ragtime and the New Orleans and Chicago canons. Listening to all this today, I have mixed emotions. Evans and company play infectiously, with lightness and spirit. There is no solemn pedantry, and it is good to have these jazz classics rendered with so much ease and understanding, and recorded with such fidelity. Yet the fact remains that I would rather hear earlier recorded versions of most of the numbers. Almost all of them have been waxed by early masters, often the creators of the numbers themselves, and in a pristine musical atmosphere. There is no reason in the world why men like Evans and Bob Scobey should not continue to play in the Dixieland idiom they know and love so well, why they should not continue to give any amount of musical pleasure. But there must inevitably be a question as to the value of their recordings as against the performances already on the shelves.

In this connection, it should be noticed that the whole golden series of recordings for the Library of Congress by the late Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton are now available on twelve re-mastered LPs (Riverside RLP 9001-9002). For the benefit of latecomers to jazz literature, I would say that this wonderful piano playing, singing, and conversation about the New Orleans past represents to the pious a substantial part of the Old Testament. Even with excellent re-mastering, the technical quality of the recording often leaves much to be desired. This will concern no one who truly cares about the music. The albums are lined with cogent explanatory material by Martin Williams, and should be supplemented by a reading of Alan Lomax's ineffable volume of musical history, "Mister Jelly Roll."

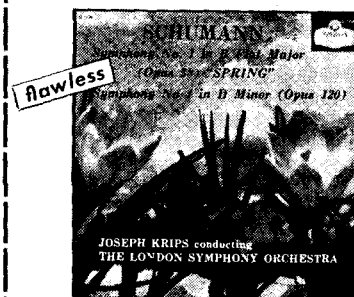
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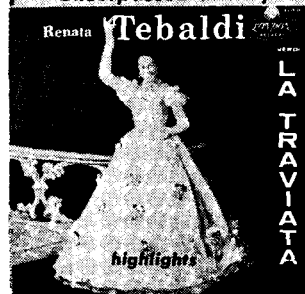
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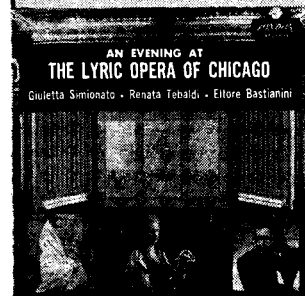
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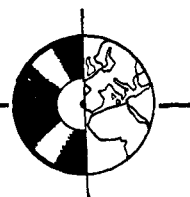
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LONDON  
RECORDS



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# THE OTHER SIDE



## TRIUMPH FOR KLEMPERER

LONDON.

**A**PART from Covent Garden's "Ring" cycles under Kempe—by general consent the finest heard in London for nearly twenty years—two events have served to secure the current autumn season a lasting place in our memories: Klemperer's Beethoven cycle at the Festival Hall and Lotte Lehmann's series of master-classes at Wigmore Hall. A greater contrast could hardly be visualized! On the South Bank the austere Klemperer conducted the Philharmonia in deeply thought-out and meticulously rehearsed performances of the nine symphonies, the five piano concertos (with Arrau as soloist), and the Violin Concerto (Tosy Spivakowsky), as well as assorted overtures, before packed audiences ready to acclaim him as a paragon of virtues—Furtwängler and Toscanini rolled into one, if such a blend were possible—while, in the more intimate surroundings of the old recital room, informal charm plus more than a little nostalgia proved to be the order of the day.

The near-veneration with which a large slice of London's concert public now regards Dr. Klemperer is a strange phenomenon when one remembers that, only a few seasons ago, most of his followers were barely aware of his existence and that, apart from his striking, gaunt appearance, he has nothing whatever to offer to those who attend concerts in search of visual as well as aural excitement. In many ways, therefore, his success proves that our postwar generation of music-lovers finds personal glamour a poor substitute for artistic integrity and, were it not carried to excess, I should be inclined to regard this Klemperer-worship as an encouraging manifestation. As things are, I feel that the answer is to be found less in his own positive qualities than in the depressing mediocrity of most of his rivals at the present time.

Granted that he is a sterling and singleminded artist who knows just what he wants and how to achieve it, granted too that his Beethoven performances are never routine affairs but invariably hold our interest and rarely fail to shed new light or to provoke thought. What I do miss, however, is intuitive genius, a vital spark which ensures that the performance shall be greater than the sum of its splendidly rehearsed parts. Whenever I listen to Klemperer I

sense a certain caution, a suggestion even of pedantry, and as a result his readings interest me but I remain unconvinced by their frequently unconventional tempi and emphases. The Ninth Symphony, which brought the cycle to a triumphant conclusion amid tumultuous acclaim (and the presentation of laurel wreaths, which clearly embarrassed their recipient), is a typical case in point: here was a performance more thoughtful and better prepared than any Londoners had heard since the war. The playing of the Philharmonia was beyond praise and the contribution of the new Philharmonia Chorus (trained by Wilhelm Pitz, of Bayreuth fame, and appearing in public for the first time) proved to be of sensational quality. The gifted solo quartet (Nordmo-Löfberg, Christa Ludwig, Kmentt, and Hotter) were not always masters of the situation, but they fared better than most. Yet it was not until the Finale, when the chorus set the evening ablaze, that the performance ceased to sound overdeliberate and began to storm the heavens.

As a matter of fact, this performance of the Ninth Symphony, or one very like it, has been earmarked for posterity, as it were, since Columbia recorded it during the following week so that it might take its place at the apex of Klemperer's complete Beethoven set with the Philharmonia. Lotte Lehmann's master-classes, on the other hand, will have to live on unaided in our memories, though the BBC did eavesdrop at two of the sessions devoted to "Der Rosenkavalier" and Third Program listeners will be able to hear edited recordings shortly after Christmas. Professional musicians, students, and critics are of course well aware that, more often than not, rehearsals or classes are apt to be far more stimulating and revealing than finished performances, but Lotte Lehmann's sessions (which were arranged by Joan Cross's Opera School for its students) attracted in addition many ordinary opera and concertgoers eager to revive treasured memories of the inter-war years and others, too young to have seen Lehmann on the stage, whom she had captivated solely by her records.

New December issues from EMI include the Schwarzkopf/Karajan "Rosenkavalier" on Columbia-Angel, an excellent performance in many respects in which, however, "the lady