

MUSIC IN YOUR POCKET

By EDWARD JABLONSKI and
EDITH GARSON

WITH THE recent stream of paperback books in the quality field, the arts, sciences, and non-Mike Hammer brand of literature have come into the drug store, bringing a five-foot shelf of music books with them. Though more extensive than comprehensive, the paperback music library contains a good number of excellent titles, some reprints of books that have gone out of print and other new titles especially prepared for soft cover edition.

Not all is gold, of course, but the general level is high. Still there are obvious gaps, no doubt dictated by the economics of demand rather than availability of material. There is no general history of American music, for example, as there is of English music (even modern music) in the English Penguin Books series. There is not a single biography of an American composer; but, then, there is no Bach biography available, either. (But there must be a market for a paperback on George Gershwin, especially since the long out of print biography by Isaac Goldberg, with a little editing and up-dating, would serve the purpose.)

Broken down into categories it would seem that the field is fairly covered—at least ground is broken in all divisions. And some volumes of a rather special nature—such as Stravinsky's "Poetics of Music," Tovey's "The Forms of Music," and "An Elizabethan Song Book"—manage to be printed (or reprinted in the case of the first two) in reasonably durable and handsome editions. The material of these books makes them musts for the library of anyone seriously interested in music and record collecting.

One of the best introductory volumes, Aaron Copland's "What to Listen for in Music," is unfortunately no longer available in paperback form in this country, though Salter's "Going to a Concert" and Darrell's "Good Listening" fulfil somewhat the same function. Neither, however, approaches music from the inside so well as Copland has done. Mr. Salter's book is a paperback original designed specifically for the teenager and is happily free of the usual patronizing and popularizing tone one might associate with this kind of effort.

Of the assorted histories available, Einstein's "A Short History of Music" is outstanding. The British have led the way in coverage of their music and composers in two fine volumes (only in paperback), Blom's "Music in England" and the even more venturesome "British Music of Our Time," a compilation edited by A. L. Bacharach. One can only point out again, and regret, the lack of American counterparts of these excellent publications.

Strangely, there is a paucity of biographical paperbacks, the extant studies being limited to Beethoven, Berlioz, Mozart, and Purcell. Turner's "Mozart" is a valuable critical biography which had gone out of print in its original form; the present inexpensive edition is one of the riches of the paperback harvest. So is Barzun's "Berlioz and His Century," a one volume abridgement of his two volume "Berlioz and the Romantic Century," which not only recreates a man but an age. The musical giants absent from the biographical list are, of course, manifest.

One of the bonuses of the past Mozart year (along with a flood of recordings) is a wonderful single volume of "Mozart's Letters" edited by
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Introductory

- "Going to a Concert" by Lionel Salter (Penguin Puffin Story Book 85, 65¢).
- "Good Listening" by R. D. Darrell (Mentor MD 122, 50¢).

History

- "British Music of Our Time," Edited by A. L. Bacharach (Pelican A 156, 65¢).
- "History of Music" by Hugh M. Miller (Barnes and Noble COS 55, \$1.25).
- "Music in England" by Eric Blom (Pelican A 107, 35¢).
- "Philharmonic" by Thomas Russell (Pelican A 264, 50¢).
- "A Popular History of Music" by Carter Harman (Dell C 102, 50¢).
- "A Short History of Music" by Alfred Einstein (Vintage K-4, 95¢).

Biography

- "Beethoven" by J. W. N. Sullivan (Mentor M 45, 35¢).
- "Berlioz and his Century" by Jacques Barzun (Meridian M 30, \$1.45).
- "Mozart" by W. J. Turner (Anchor A 24, 95¢).
- "Henry Purcell" by A. K. Holland (Penguin 679, 35¢).

Essays and Letters

- "The Forms of Music" by Donald F. Tovey (Meridian M 36, \$1.35).
- "Mozart's Letters," Edited by Eric Blom (Pelican A 238, 85¢).
- "Music Ho!" by Constant Lambert (Pelican A 195, 65¢).
- "Poetics of Music" by Igor Stravinsky (Vintage K 39, 95¢).
- "Shaw on Music," Edited by Eric Bentley (Anchor A 53, 95¢).

Reference

- "A Dictionary of Music" by Robert Illing (Penguin R 4, 65¢).
- "The Symphony," Edited by Ralph Hill (Pelican A 204, 85¢).
- "The Concerto," Edited by Ralph Hill (Pelican A 249, 85¢).
- "Pocket Encyclopedia of Music" by Harry Dexter and Raymond Tobin (The Wisdom Library, \$1.45)

Opera

- "Gilbert and Sullivan Operas" (Avon A-228, 25¢).
- "Introduction to Opera," Edited by Mary Ellis Peltz (Barnes & Noble Everyday Handbook 262, \$1.65).
- "Opera" by Edward J. Dent (Pelican A 150, 50¢).
- "The Pocket Book of Great Operas" by Henry W. Simon and Abraham Veinus (Pocket Book PL 21, 35¢).
- "Stories of Famous Operas" by Harold Vincent Milligan (Signet KD331, 50¢).
- "Stories of the Great Operas," by Milton Cross. (PermaBooks M-5004, 50¢).

Folk Song

- "American Folk Tales and Songs" by Richard Chase (Signet KD 340, 50¢).
- "The Burl Ives Song Book" by Burl Ives (Ballantine 48, 50¢).
- "Burl Ives Sea Songs" (Ballantine 146, 35¢).
- "The Pocket Treasury of American Folklore" by B. A. Botkin (Pocket Book 684, 35¢).
- "The Story of American Folk Song" by Russell Ames (Grosset & Dunlap Little Music Library, 95¢).
- "A Treasury of Folk Songs," Edited and compiled by Sylvia and John Kolb (Bantam A 1227, 35¢).

Jazz

- "Jazz" by Rex Harris (Pelican A 247, 50¢).
- "Mister Jelly Roll" by Alan Lomax (Grove Evergreen E-35, \$1.45).
- "Really The Blues" by Milton Mezzrow and Bernard Wolfe (Dell D 118, 35¢).
- "Satchmo" by Louis Armstrong (Signet S 1245, 35¢).

Discography

- "The Long Playing Record Guide" by Warren DeMotte (Dell FE 75, 50¢).

Song Collections

- "An Elizabethan Song Book," Edited by Noah Greenberg, W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman (Anchor A 56, \$1.25).
- "God's Wonderful World" by Agnes Leckie Mason and Phyllis Brown Ohanian (Signet KD 315, 50¢).
- "101 Favorite Hymns," Edited by James and Albert Morehead (Pocket Book 925, 25¢).
- "The Penguin Part-Song Book," Selected by Leslie Newgate (Penguin Q 15, 95¢).
- "The Penguin Song Book," Selected by Leslie Newgate (Penguin Q 14, 95¢).

Scores

- (All Penguin)
- Bach: "Brandenburg Concertos" (5)
- Beethoven: "Coriolan" and "Egmont Overtures"; "Symphonies" (9)
- Brahms: "Variations on a Theme of Haydn," "Violin Concerto in D"
- Frank: "Symphonic Variations for Piano and Orchestra"
- Haydn: "Symphonies No. 94, 100, 101, and 104"
- Mendelssohn: "Overtures: A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Fingal's Cave"; "Violin Concerto in E Minor"
- Mozart: "Overtures: The Magic Flute and Don Giovanni"; "Symphonies No. 39, 40, 41"
- Schubert: "Symphony No. 8"
- Schumann: "Piano Concerto in A Minor"
- Tchaikovsky: "Romeo and Juliet Overture"
- Wagner: "Die Meistersinger Overture"; "Siegfried Idyll"
- Weber: "Overtures: 'Der Freischütz' and 'Oberon'"

"MARIA, RENATA, AND ZINKA"

SOUND COUNTS

HERBERT WEINSTOCK's brilliant "Maria, Renata, Zinka . . . and Leonora" (SR Apr. 13) fails to attach sufficient significance to the tastes of today's average opera ticket buyer and record collector who is not interested truthfully in art *per se*, drama, acting ability, personality, even the dictates of the composer or anything else except vocal *sound*. In this latter attribute Milanov and Tebaldi both have a purity of tone that at times is ear-ravishing. That Zinka is an incompetent actress or that Renata takes brazen liberties with tempi to the point of seeming to be directing the orchestra does not matter. Their voices alone are *carte blanche* to all kinds of seemingly unpardonable artistic errors.

Who is to say that there is not a place in our New Golden Age of Opera for their magnificent voices together with Callas's all-around histrionic and vocal genius?

ALAN W. AGOL.

Visalia, Calif.

ERRONEOUS ASSUMPTION

HERBERT WEINSTOCK's reasoning stems from an assumption which is erroneous; therefore, his conclusions have no validity. "Callas's voice, of phenomenal agility, is as luscious as could be desired in its middle and lower registers, but sometimes thins out to stridency or widens to hollowness at the top. Quite simply, Callas marshals every means at her command, of which singing is merely the most important, to summon up a human being under stress, never hesitating to sacrifice sensuousness for sense."

The above quotation contains a perfect analysis of Callas's voice for lower, middle, and high registers. However, for Mr. Weinstock to state that what one hears from the high register is artistry is merely an opinion not shared by many who have heard the voice. It is both my opinion and of others that what we hear is simply bad singing. No matter what the role, Callas's upper register always contains the same flaws—the same horrible sound! The voice is technically imperfect.

HERBERT J. GLASS.

Urbana, Ill.

LUCIA OR LADY MACBETH

WEINSTOCK states Milanov doesn't enter into the part, but is this any worse than overacting as many feel Callas does? Or to completely misconceive the character as she does so often, distorting it into her 'highly personal ideas? If Milanov never seems to become the character, as Mr. Weinstock says, just as surely the character becomes Maria Callas, which is worse. Her "Lucia," for instance, is not Lucia . . . if anything, it is Medea or Lady Macbeth.

CLIFFORD BRIER.

Lisle, Ill.

SING AND ACT

It occurs to me that it is deplorable to have to choose between an excellent singer who acts only superficially and an actor or actress with an unpleasant, though usable voice. It would seem that the ideal operatic performer is one who can both sing and act—on equally high levels. This is not easy to find, but we do have a few excellent examples at the Metropolitan Opera right now in Cesare Siepi, Nell Rankin, George London and Antonietta Stella.

ALAN C. WAGNER.

New York, N.Y.

THANK YOU!

MR. WEINSTOCK has written a most just, fair and excellent report on the vocal qualities and personalities of these three gifted singers. So rarely has Madame Callas in the American press been awarded the artistic place she truly deserves. So rarely has Mme. Tebaldi been awarded her place as a beautiful prima donna who enthralls but unevenly!! And Zinka is placed where her talents and use of them in relation to the other two is seen. It's a difficult job to assess these three in honest appraisal and to be willing to sign one's name to the article!!! but you have done just that—so very well.

I attended the opening Metropolitan night when "Norma" was superbly sung by Maria—and heard her again the following Saturday on my regular subscription performance there. Both were "out of this world" and my first hearing of her—in the flesh! I do think she is an artist *without equal*—even tho an unkind press did keep her "foibles" in the headlines.

Renata I have heard (only at Metropolitan) in "Otello" with Del Monaco—a performance I shall treasure to my dying day—but in "Traviata" this past week she could easily be surpassed by others.

Zinka has done yeoman service through the years, but usually leaves me "cold"—despite the "bravos" and applause her claque affords her. Sometimes she is good, but only on some occasions.

I'm a poor one to be critical—but when I see in print my very own ideas expressed so faithfully as you—with fairness to all three ladies—I do want to say Thank you to You!

ESTHER WEIGHTMAN BOWER.

Red Bank, N. J.

SHRILL PETULANCY

HERBERT WEINSTOCK is entitled to his preference for Maria Callas but, in his anxiety to "make his case," he commits the ancient error of thinking that the musical reputation of one singer can only be built upon the ruins of the reputation of other singers. His denigration of Miss Callas's foremost Leonora competitors does nothing to enhance Miss Callas's voice. Miss Callas, Weinstock acknowledges,

does not hesitate to "sacrifice sensuousness for dramatic sense" and this he prefers to the on-pitch, tonally pure singing of Tebaldi and Milanov. Well, Mr. Weinstock, as I say, is entitled to his own taste in the matter, but he might have added that Miss Callas frequently sacrifices more than "sensuousness" when she dramatizes; she frequently sacrifices beauty. And since the medium under consideration is opera recordings, we may question whether Mr. Weinstock's excited enthusiasm for "operatic protagonists wholly gripped by dramatic crises" is, as he implies, one that all but the most stupid listener must share with him.

A great many of us, I am sure, like all three sopranos, each of them for a different reason. Mr. Weinstock's shrill petulance on behalf of Miss Callas seems rather out of place in SR's music department which has, in the past, presented some great musically knowledgeable articles on Gieseking, Chopin interpreters, Toscanini, etc.

DONALD McDONALD, Editor.

The Catholic Messenger.

Davenport, Iowa.

CALLAS-JERITZA

I MANAGE to buy a few recordings and—though I owned another—the recent Callas "Trovatore" was among them. It didn't strike me as quite the experience that it did you, but I enjoy it and the soprano in it. The portion of your article which prompts this, however, was that dealing with Garden and Chaliapin, in whom, as in other virtuosi of the past, I am somewhat interested. You stress the likeness of Callas and Garden (exclusive of repertoire), and I wonder if there is not an even greater similarity between much of Callas's art and that of the never-forgotten Maria Jeritza.

DAVID BEAMS.

Iowa City, Iowa.

FABULOUS EXPRESSION

I HAVE BEEN listening to opera, both on the stage and recordings, for the past thirty years and have often wondered what the great operatic stars of the past must have been like to cause oldtimers to speak of them with so much emotion. Their records failed to move me consistently so I had concluded we were either being deluded or the performances of these artists had left lasting impressions which no recording methods could ever reproduce.

Now the secret has been revealed to me, because I know nothing can reproduce the electricity generated in watching Callas fall to her knees in the last act of "Norma" while, with consummate vocal skill, she heartbreakingly pleads for her children; or in seeing her slowly turn toward the audience to let them share her thoughts while she sings "Vissi d'arte." Nor shall I forget the union of both fabulous vocal expression and action in Callas's Mad Scene from "Lucia," conveying the horrors of a mind gone astray.

CHARLES F. REILLY.

Jersey City, N.J.