

Antonio Frasconi. A red mailing envelope comes with this slender volume, making it an ideal Christmas card for somebody special.

THE COLUMBIA-VIKING DESK ENCYCLOPEDIA. (Dell, paperback, \$1.95). Two thousand and sixteen pages, 31,700 articles—flatly, the paperback bargain of the year.

FOLD-AND-PASTE ORIGAMI STORYBOOK. By Florence Sakade and Kazuhiko Sono. (Tuttle, paperback, \$1.95). The Japanese art of paper-folding worked into a story book. Colored papers are included to make the sixteen origami creations described in the book. The story illustrations have blank spots on which the completed paper fantasies can be pasted.

IS THIS THE HOUSE OF MISTRESS MOUSE? By Richard Scarry (Golden Press, \$1.95). The read-to-me set should be on the edges of their seats each time they poke their finger into the hole that runs through the middle of this sturdy board, spiral-bound delight. Does that furry something they feel mean they have located Mistress Mouse's house or is it a dangerous lion? The last page reveals the happy surprise.

IN THE WINTER OF CITIES: Collected Poems of Tennessee Williams. (New Directions, \$1.50). A sampling of the poetry of the world-famous playwright.

THE COMPLETE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO U.S. COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS. By Valerie Moolman. (Cornerstone Library, paperback, \$1). There are black-and-white pictures of every one of the more than 500 stamps discussed in this paperback. Also included are an up-to-date table of cash values plus facts, anecdotes and historical background pertinent to the stamps pictured.

GHOST AND HORROR STORIES OF AMBROSE BIERCE (Dover, paperback, \$1). Twenty-four of Bierce's best tales of the unknown.

GERALD GARDNER'S NEW NEWS-REALS. (Pocket Books, paperback, \$1). A sequel to the gag paperback *News-Real's*. Photo comic strips—three per joke—featuring political VIPs.

Finally, for paperback donors who like to give grandly, Signet has come up with cardboard-boxed sets. The ones that most interested me are: **COMPLETELY MAD** (\$3)—six volumes of satiric insanity from the cartoon magazine *Mad*; **SEVEN PAPERBOUND CLASSICS** (\$3.50)—*The Red Badge of Courage*, *Hamlet*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Wuthering Heights*; **A COMPLETE PAPERBOUND REFERENCE LIBRARY** (\$3.50)—*The New American Roget's Thesaurus*, *Hoyle's Rules of Games*, *The New American Medical Dictionary and Health Manual*, *How to Write, Speak and Think More Effectively*, *The New American Webster Handy College Dictionary*.

—HASKEL FRANKEL.

Broadway Was Their Way



—From the book.

John and Lionel Barrymore, in *Peter Ibbetson*—shadows behind the glamour.

***The Barrymores*, by Hollis Alpert** (Dial. 397 pp. \$6.95 to Dec. 25; \$7.95 thereafter), concerns our theater's "royal family" and its influence on U.S. dramatic tradition. John K. Hutchens has been drama critic for *Theater Arts magazine*.

By JOHN K. HUTCHENS

WAYWARDLY devoted as some of them were to the stage, they were indeed our theater's royal family, those greatly gifted, always fascinating artists, the Barrymores. Their like will not be known again, survivors of the Barrymore heyday observe, doubtless patronizingly, to today's younger theatergoing generation. But were they really so essential a part of our theater history as all that?

It is one of the achievements of Hollis Alpert's book that its readers inevitably will come away from it with the conviction that yes, the American theater would not be all that it is today if, back in the nineteenth century, old Mrs. John Drew had not managed the Arch Street Theater in Philadelphia; if she had not had an actor-son, John Drew, who became one of the truly polished craftsmen of his era; if she had not had a daughter, Georgiana, who married a dashing Englishman, Herbert Blythe, who chose to call himself Maurice Barrymore and fathered the daughter and two sons named Ethel, Lionel, and John.

Even without the Barrymores our theater would of course have had this or that play or player you may be seeing this evening. But that theater's tradition would hardly be the same if there had not been Ethel in *The Corn Is Green*, John in *Hamlet*, and Lionel in *The Jest*. Even in so mercurial a medium as theirs, continuity is a vital force. What veteran theatergoer of the 1920s seeing Richard Burton's *Hamlet* in 1964 but remembering John Barrymore's *Hamlet* of 1923 could fail to compare the two?

Mr. Alpert's approach to the Barrymore chronicle is thorough, documented, objective, warm. No one has hitherto recorded it in such detail. The Barrymore legend's grease-paint glamour is here, but so also are the shadows behind it—the madness of the brilliant Maurice, which weighed on the mind of, and possibly was inherited by, his son John, and the personal disappointments and occasional professional failures over which the solid Lionel and the gallant Ethel ultimately triumphed. Of the three, it now seems clear that only Ethel really loved and respected the theater, and that her two brothers continued in it merely because acting was the profession that most easily afforded them the means to live as they wished. It follows, then, that John would have been even greater than he was if he had brought to his art the dedication of, say, Edwin Booth. It is one more of the sad might-have-been's in a family saga both tragic and zestful.

To this reviewer, who as a theater news reporter covered the Shubert Alley beat a long, long time ago, it does seem that Mr. Alpert has passed over an item or two out of chivalrous regard for one Barrymore's memory. It is no great matter. In Mr. Alpert's pages plays and players, magical moments on stage and equally dramatic moments off stage return in a mighty parade, all the way from old Mrs. Drew's personal empire in Philadelphia to her grandson John's pathetic caricature of himself in his last Broadway appearance and the fading out of talent in the generation following that of Maurice and Georgiana's daughter and sons.

"We who play, who entertain for a few years, what can we leave that will last?" Ethel Barrymore once asked plaintively. They can leave a good deal, if only it is conscientiously recalled and vividly evoked, as it is here.

(Book reviews are continued on page 49)



Steinberg's Bruckner, Series by Ricci

ALULL in the recent performance of a Bruckner symphony (the Eighth has fewer than most, but a few nevertheless) induced a reverie in which a new figure emerged before the Philharmonic Orchestra. He had the animation, the zest, and the extroversion of its music director, and the patient, thoroughgoing introspection of its present guest. His name, of course was Leonard W. Bernsteinberg, and great was the rejoicing among the many who had given up hope that there would be, soon again, such a phenomenon among us.

At the next fortissimo the reverie was shattered, and the attention returned to the reality of Philharmonic Hall. In this instance, as it happened, the reality had at least a working relation to the reverie. In his first contribution to the season's Bruckner Cycle, William Steinberg applied his patient, thoroughgoing mind to the Eighth Symphony with a result that must rank high among anybody's experience of this work since it was introduced here half a century ago.

It was, in the first place, faithful to the Nowak-edited score of the Bruckner-Gesellschaft, which is marked "edition of 1890" and was published in Vienna only nine years ago. The description of it as "faithful" refers not merely to the inclusion of every measure in its 171 pages, but also to the performance of every note with a superior sense of its relationship to every other note. It has not, in a varied experience of recordings and performances, seemed to have as much organic structure or so unified an artistic plan as it did this time.

Steinberg's reconstruction of Bruckner's purpose had, at its source, several relevant guidelines. One was to make of the orchestra something between the richness of the Wagner sound from the covered pit of Bayreuth, substantial but veiled, and the gigantic organ tones that existed only in Bruckner's mind. Thus the woodwinds had the straight, uninflected quality that comes from an organ stop, the trumpets, horns, etc., roundness rather than brassiness. Between them, the strings mediated as a kind of pervasive, integrating overlay. The dynamic level began at a much lower level than is commonly heard in Bruckner, so that the fine line of filigree in the Adagio could be clearly perceived. The one real fortissimo came just where it belonged, at the very end, when Bruckner follows his idol into Valhalla. Binding all the elements together was a keen awareness of the place of the transitional passages

in Bruckner's scheme, the treatment of them not as mere repetitions of something that had preceded, or anticipations of something about to happen, but as evolutionary parts of the total process.

With so much to his credit in the way of insight and textual command, it was regrettable that Steinberg didn't reap all the rewards of a performance that would have been overwhelming as well as stimulating. What one heard, through all the fine playing by the orchestra, was an exposition of the work rather than an interpretation of it. It contributed more to admiration of Bruckner as a craftsman and tonal architect than it did to love of him as a warm-voiced brother-in-arms and fellow victim of the human condition. It was Bruckner the musical scientist who was extolled, rather than Bruckner the peasant poet. We can be grateful and admiring for what Steinberg did; but Bernsteinberg would, I suspect, have done even more. Copland's Nonet for strings provided an appropriately neutral preliminary to the richness of sound that followed.

RUGGIERO RICCI'S devotion to the instrument that he has made his life's companion has never been more apparent than in the series of evenings-with-orchestra which began with a program of Bach (Concerto in E), Bach (*Kammermusik* Op. 36), Mendelssohn (E minor) and Prokofiev (G minor). Unlike some other figures of the past who have ventured such cycles, Ricci has no such underwriting as the National Orchestral Association provided for Gabrilowitsch and Feuermann, or the vast popularity (plus a recording arrangement) provided for Rubinstein. He is on his own, which means that if he takes the loss, he is also entitled to all the credit.

Amid the changing repertory and modes of writing, one fact was persistently evident. Give Ricci a score of any kind, and if it contains a thread of *cantilena*, he will find and expose it. Thus the best moments of his Bach came in the Adagio, as the most satisfying section of the Hindemith was its insinuating *Nachtstück*. Were the same sequence of works undertaken by a Hubermann, a Szigeti, or a Szymon Goldberg, the emphasis would obviously be different—but Ricci's right to be included in such an honorable sequence was incontestable. He also earned thanks for inviting, as conductor, Gerhard Samuel of the Oakland (California) Symphony, one of four men identified with similar community

enterprises who will participate from week to week. Samuel's poise, steadiness, and substantial knowledge were tested and not found wanting in his work with assorted members of the American Symphony.

WHEN was the last time an all-Hugo Wolf program drew an audience that filled every seat of Carnegie Hall and as many more as the stage could hold? No time within ready memory, or perhaps the last time the *Italienisches Liederbuch* was sung by two artists of the quality of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, with such a pianist as Gerald Moore to collaborate with them. This, of itself, would be a fair approximation of never.

Most of the songs are beautiful, and perhaps a sixth of the forty-odd settings of poems by Paul Heyse that make up the lengthy sequence beginning with "Auch kleine Dinge" and ending with "Ich hab in Penna einen Liebsten wohnen" are among the finest Wolf ever wrote. To hear them in any circumstances is to realize anew the range and refinement of this composer's reaction to the printed word. To hear them in such circumstances as these was to recognize New York's lack of a suitable space in which to appreciate the refinement as well as the range of that reaction. Carnegie Hall serves, but at the expense of prompting the performers to a larger scale of effort than is most appropriate to this material.

Of the participants, Moore was the one who was unfailingly apt, perhaps because he had the most suitable instrument at his disposal. The scheme of the evening called for an alternation of effort by the two singers, who engage in a kind of duologue in which they never perform together. Fischer-Dieskau's was always shaped to the spirit and dimension of what he was concerned with, whether it was the intimate "Auch kleine Dinge" (perhaps as well as it has been sung since McCormack) or the more expansive "Heb' auf dein blondes Haupt." Mme. Schwarzkopf seems to have sacrificed something of her famous finesse to the requirements of the opera stage, but she did perform with complete control in "Nun lass uns Frieden schliessen," one of the greatest of the great Wolf songs. Some others were gaspy, or hollow at the bottom.

Taken together, the experience was somewhat less than the sum of the parts, which is perhaps why it is ventured so seldom. Even with three artists who may unreservedly be called great—as these can—the interplay of visual personality tends to detract from concentration on the magnitude of the composer's accomplishment. There was no evidence that the audience shared any such reservations.

—IRVING KOLODIN.