

WAGNER: "Fanget an!" and "Morgenlich leuchtend" ("Die Meistersinger"); "Höchstes Vertra'n" and "In fernem Land" ("Lohengrin"); "Ein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater" ("Die Walküre"); "Immer ist Undank Loges Lohn" ("Das Rheingold"); "Allmächt'ger Vater" ("Rienzi"); "Nur eine Waffe taugt" ("Parsifal"). Jess Thomas, tenor, with Walter Born conducting the Berlin Philharmonic. DGG stereo C-6387, \$7.95.

WEBER: "Der Freischütz." Irmgard Seefried, Rita Streich, sopranos; Richard Holm, tenor; Eberhard Wächter, baritone; and Kurt Böhme, bass, with Eugen Jochum conducting the orchestra and chorus of the Bavarian Radio. DGG stereo S-8639 \$16.95 (Two reels).

VIVALDI: *Concerto in C* (P. 79). Hans-Martin Linde, sopranino-recorder, with Wolfgang Hofmann conducting the Emil Seiler Chamber Orchestra. *Concerto in C minor* (P. 434). Klaus Storck, cello, and same orchestra. *Concerto in A* (P. 222) for Violin and Echo. Susanne Lautenbacher and Ernesto Mampaey, with same orchestra. *Concerto in D minor* (P. 266) for Viola d'Amore and Lute. Emil Seiler, and Karl Scheit, with Hofmann conducting. Archive stereo C-3218, \$7.95.

Two familiar labels—the lemon yellow of Archive, and the canary of Deutsche Grammophon—are now revolving in an unfamiliar guise: the reel of the tape recording rather than a disc. They are the latest source of supply for the United catalogue distributed through Ampex, and an impressive addition to the wide variety of materials available for that purpose. The above nine packages, including the celebrated full-length *Freischütz* conducted by Eugen Jochum, have much to commend them, but, it may be assumed, they are only the forerunners of greater things to come.

So far as a first sampling reveals, the quality level surpasses by a narrow but consistent margin the sound values of the same issues on disc. I can hear no intrusive noise and fidelity is excellent. In the case of Richter's organ and the Wagner excerpts performed under Walter Born, the brilliance as well as the body of the instruments utilized are as good as can be heard from any equivalent reproduction, whatever the source. At the other extreme the balance and fullness of the Amadeus ensemble merits special mention. Perhaps as DGG and Ampex progress in their relationship, the tapes will progress beyond a side-for-side parallel to the original issues on disc. For owners of such a reproducer as the Ampex 2000 series, the tapes offer a new refinement in playback utility: an automatic reversing signal at the end of each track.

Greetings from Klemperer

MOZART: *Symphonies No. 35 in D*, ("Haffner") and *No. 36 in C* ("Linz"); *Overture to "Die Entführung aus dem Serail."* Otto Klemperer conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. Angel 36128, \$4.98; stereo, S-36128, \$5.98. *Symphonies No. 38 in D*, ("Prague") and *No. 39 in E flat*. The same. Angel 36129, \$4.98; stereo S-36129, \$5.98. *Symphonies No. 40 in G minor and No. 41 in C* ("Jupiter"). The same. Angel 36183, \$4.98; stereo S-36183, \$5.98. BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 4 in E flat*. The same. Angel 36245, \$4.98; stereo S-36245, \$5.98. DVORAK: *Symphony No. 5 in E minor* ("New World"). The same. Angel 36246, \$4.98; stereo S-36246, \$5.98. STRAVINSKY: *Symphony in Three Movements: "Pulcinella" Suite*. The same. Angel 36248, \$4.98; stereo S-36248, \$5.98.

As a perspective of Otto Klemperer's musical vista from the summit of his eightieth year (see pages 45 to 49), this batch of new releases lacks a few such items as Offenbach's *Belle Hélène* overture or Auber's *Fra Diavolo* overture, which once circulated on the pre-war American Decca label (at 50 cents per disc) to give it completeness. But it must be admitted that the range from Mozart's *Entführung* Overture to Stravinsky's *Symphony in Three Movements* is wide enough. Indeed, there is a sufficiency of meaningful music in the integral issue of the last six Mozart symphonies alone to keep the mind occupied and the spirits soaring for days. (Purists who question the omission of No. 37 should also be purists enough to know that it is almost entirely by Michael Haydn.)

To be sure, it is Mozart the musical scientist who is in the forefront of Klemperer's mind and the focus of his attention in these performances, rather than Mozart, the Salzburger (or even Viennese) with a heart for fun and frolic. There isn't, really, very much fun in any of these performances, including the *Seraglio* Overture, and the frolic is at a minimum, save for those respects in which the conductor's penetration of essence (as in the final movement of the E-flat and both C-majors) makes for a kind of intellectual follow-the-leader with its special kind of gamesmanship.

As I hear it, what Klemperer undertakes to do, and accomplishes supremely well, is to show how consistently Mozart's impulses fulfilled themselves in the orchestral music he wrote, in a variety of circumstances and for sundry purposes, in the years between 1782 and

1788. The text that this lesson serves is against the common conception that, in his last three symphonies (E-flat, G-minor, and C-major) Mozart accomplished something he had never approached before. Rather, as the finale of the *Linz* (No. 36) shows, he was approaching very close to it all the years of this decade, and the *Prague* (No. 38), as Klemperer directs it, has a fulness and richness of sound that lead directly to the introduction of No. 39, perhaps the most sonorous stretch of orchestral writing Mozart ever achieved.

Characteristically, most of this is to be found in Klemperer's conducting of the allegros—first movements and finales. His minuets are mostly antipyschorean and heavy-footed at best. And the slow movements, thoughtful as they are, rarely soar. But the sense of structural stresses and balances, of architectural proportion and logic, as these qualities can be musically conveyed, is rigorously applied by Klemperer to the greater glory of Mozart as he comprehends him. When, as in the "Jupiter," he comprehends him equally in all his aspects, the result is close to the Olympian implications of the title.

Of the works he has not recorded recently, or ever before (the Bruckner is a replacement in the 1953 edition and with a much better orchestra for a performance that has long circulated on the Vox label), there is a specialized kind of interest in a non-nostalgic *New World*. In it, all the composer's directions are literally observed (including a repetition of the first part of the opening movement). The benefits are sometimes striking, as in the mathematically proportioned performance of the Largo, which holds together better than it sometimes does in "freer" interpretations. But, in sum, the results lack the kind of exuberance that can be imparted to this work by an interpreter with more active conviction about it than Klemperer conveys.

Most surprising to those whose acquaintance with this conductor are recent (and limited) will be his thoroughgoing, drivingly dynamic direction of the Stravinsky Symphony. Klemperer's clarification of its rhythmic patterns and separation of textural threads testify to long and close affinity for such music over decades. Others have imparted more zest and lift to the *Pulcinella* music. However, there is excellent clarity in the sound, as well as virtuosity in the orchestral performance of the eight numbers of the ballet.

—IRVING KOLODIN.

RECORDINGS REPORTS I: Orchestral LPs

WORK, PERFORMER, DATA

REPORT

Beethoven: Concerto No. 4 in G. Rudolf Serkin, piano, and the NBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. RCA Victor LM 2797, \$4.98 (mono only).

Toscanini conducted this work on only two occasions during his American career—in a series of programs during his final Philharmonic season in February 1936, and in the broadcast of 1944 from which this performance is derived. The soloist on the earlier dates was Rudolf Serkin, meaning that they had a solid base of affinity for the playing that is heard on this disc. However, as is the case in other concerto performances (the Beethoven with Heifetz, the Tchaikovsky with Horowitz), the charged atmosphere sometimes becomes supercharged—with Serkin, in the cadenza of the first movement; with Toscanini, in the finale, as the end approaches. The result is a unique performance that is not always as well controlled as it might be. The sound of the piano is better than that of the orchestra.

Beethoven: *The Creatures of Prometheus*. Utah Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Maurice Abravanel. Vanguard VRS 1124, \$4.98; stereo VSD 71124, \$5.95.

For the average enthusiast for Beethoven (or even the unaverage one) the interests of *Prometheus* are apt to be served by the overture, a specimen or two of the ballet music, and the finale. For others, it may be reported that this newest treatment of the complete score does not alter a previous impression (based on a recording by Walter Goehr for the Concert Hall label) that much of it is below Beethoven's third- or fourth-best level. Abravanel has trained his orchestra to deal capably with the range of technical problems presented by such a score as this, and his conception of the style is solid if not enlivening.

Esplá: *Don Quijote velando las armas*. Albéniz-C. Halfiter: *Rapsodia Española*. Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos conducting the Orquesta Nacional de España, with Gonzalo Soriano, piano. London CM 9423, \$4.98; stereo CS 6423, \$5.98.

Spanish music by composers of the rank of Esplá and Albéniz is, at the least, pleasant, and these works are no exception. Esplá's reflections on the "Meditations and hopes of Don Quixote on the vigil of his armour during the night" has more than a touch of *Petrushka* (as well as Falla's *El Amor Brujo*) to date its time of origin in the mid-Twenties, but it achieves its evocative ends entertainingly. The orchestral embellishment that Christóbal Halfiter has provided for Albéniz's early (Op. 70) piano work is rather better than such added elements may turn out to be. He has contributed a color of his own to the mixture, without obscuring altogether Albéniz's. Soriano, who is peerless in the music of his own country, has developed a discipline and projection that put him high on the list of pianists generally. Excellent recording.

Haydn: Symphony No. 57 (in D) and No. 86 (in D). Max Rudolf conducting the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. Decca DL 1017, \$4.98; stereo DL 710107, \$5.98.

If the ability to play Haydn well is the index to the quality of an orchestra—and many musicians agree that it is—Max Rudolf has put to very good use a half-dozen or so years in Cincinnati. He has instilled a strong sense of ensemble in his players without taking away a sense of individual participation. He has also influenced them to seek subtlety without sacrificing strength. In short, Rudolf has the knowledge required to put a worthy ideal before his players and the patience to win them to his way of thought. An example might be found in the little-known No. 57 (this is the only version now available), which is midway between Haydn's early and late manners. Rudolf draws a nice distinction between the robust Minuet and the more delicately scored slow movement with variations, and the orchestra responds equally well to his lead. No. 87 is the last in the "Paris" sequence, and Rudolf's performance ranks with the best it has had. The recording is better than what was previously considered the best possible for Cincinnati's Music Hall.

Hindemith: Concerto. Barber: Concerto. Isaac Stern, violin, with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Leonard Bernstein. Columbia ML 6113, \$4.98; stereo MS 6713, \$5.98.

Perhaps Stern and Bernstein have a pipe line to some authentic source, but Hindemith's own recording of this work with Oistrakh is much less strenuous, especially in movement one. The collaborators are better adjusted to the two succeeding movements of Hindemith, and the whole of Barber, which is beautifully played.

Mendelssohn: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Rafael Kubelik conducting the orchestra and chorus of the Bavarian Radio, with Edith Mathis, soprano. DGG 18959, \$5.98; stereo 138959, \$5.98.

Kubelik does well with those problems that are exclusively or primarily musical, which is to say the Overture, Scherzo, and Fairy March. They follow each other in the first part of the first side and make a very good start for what promises to be a superior performance. However, the second side brings with it problems of poetry and imagery—the Nocturne, Funeral March, Dance of the Clowns—to which he is less well adjusted. Here, he tends to push the tempos a little more than they can comfortably absorb and bear down on some details that merit a lighter hand. The sequence takes in the ten lengthiest items in the total of twelve, omitting only the vocal trio on *Over Hill, over Dale* and another brief interpolation (No. 4) early in the play. The recording is very satisfactory.

Mozart: Concertos Nos. 21 in C (K. 467) and No. 24 in C minor (K. 491). Robert Casadesu, piano, with George Szell conducting members of the Cleveland Orchestra. Columbia ML 6095, \$4.98; stereo MS 6695, \$5.98.

Casadesu and Szell have recorded Mozart together previously (the earlier, mono-only version of No. 24 is still listed in the Schwann catalogue). This collaboration adds a new value to the total, being the first in which the participating orchestra is Szell's own. It is hard to imagine a higher degree of mutuality than they achieve in both of these works. Indeed, so sure (as well as subtle) is the balance between all the instrumental elements that, for once, the listener is wholly unaware of a conductor, as such, or a soloist. The only personality that obtrudes is Mozart's, save in the cadenzas, which are, respectively, by Casadesu himself and Saint-Saëns. In terms of musicality, refinement of detail, and a broadly based conception of structure, these performances are in the realm of the ultimate. The reproduction is in keeping with the material it preserves.

Mozart: Symphonies Nos. 30 and 31. Eugene Ormandy directing the Philadelphia Orchestra. Columbia ML 6122, \$4.98; stereo MS 6722, \$5.98.

The kind of tonal splash of which the Philadelphia Orchestra is capable makes a dazzling play of spray and color in the Symphony No. 31. This is, of course, the one Mozart composed for Paris in 1778, and by some it is esteemed as the first truly orchestral symphony (a tribute to the way in which Mozart scored it). However, the justification it contains for the breadth of treatment to which Ormandy is partial does not exist in its predecessor. No. 30 lacks not only the clarinets utilized by Mozart in No. 31, but also flutes, bassoons, and kettledrum. There is, however, little distinction between their treatment by Ormandy and the way in which they are reproduced.

Stravinsky: *The Song of the Nightingale*, *Scherzo à la Russe*, *Fireworks*, and *Four Etudes*. Antal Dorati conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. Mercury MG 50387, \$4.98; stereo SR 90387, \$5.98.

The crispness and clarity of this recording are notable even by today's high standards. They contribute much to the effect of the works on Side 2, which is to say the *Scherzo*, *Fireworks*, and études. In the instance of *Fireworks*, Dorati's illumination of its pinwheels and rockets is the most vivid on record, and the études are not far behind. However, Stravinsky's own recent version of the *Scherzo* does more for the work, it seems to me, than Dorati's. The qualities of discipline and precision that characterize those performances do not serve the needs of *The Song of the Nightingale* nearly so well. Precision and discipline are, of course, desirable, but so are more finesse than Dorati imparts to the marvelously textured score. In this respect, the Reiner-Chicago Symphony performance, still available from RCA, is peerless.

—IRVING KOLODIN.