

Recordings in Review

K.P.E. Bach, Symphonist

BACH, K.P.E.: *Symphonies (1773) in B minor, A, C, and B flat. Collegium Aureum with Franzjosef Maier, concertmaster; and Gustav Leonhardt, harpsichord.* Victrola stereo, VICS 1453, \$2.98.

THESE STIMULATING performances of the so-called "Hamburg" Symphonies should do more to illuminate the place of J. S. Bach's second oldest son in the sequence of symphonists than half a dozen scholarly treatises. There have been, to be sure, prior recordings of such works (perhaps even of works included on this disc: the attributions are none too conclusive). But they have not been brought together in such meaningful sequence, or performed with the unanimity and verve achieved by the conductorless group of which Maier is the chief officer.

In addition to illuminating the place of Karl Philipp Emanuel among symphonists, the symphonies themselves shed much light on their famous characterization of his father as "the old peruke." In a 1770 version of the generation gap, K.P. expressed his distaste for "learned music," and contended that other things were "more essential" for a good composer than command of counterpoint. As these works show, he had his own fair share of such command, but also a large sense of enterprise, musical innovation, and what commentator Robert Gutman aptly characterizes in his annotation as "the rhetoric of the following century."

It is of no small consequence that



K.P.E. Bach—"the rhetoric of the following century."

the works were commissioned from Philipp Emanuel (the first name, incidentally, derived from his father's regard for Georg Philipp Telemann) by Baron Gottfried von Swieten (a Viennese diplomat who, between 1770 and 1800, exercised his musical judgment to the advantage of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven). The four works are replete with the vehemence, the changes of mood, the striving for musical expressiveness associated with Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* years (after Goethe). As these also centered about works of 1770-1772, it is clear that it was a widespread rather than localized phenomenon.

The scholarship embodied in the performances derives from their origin with the Harmonia Mundi (German) producers. The performances have the ring of authenticity, though some keen-eared listeners may detect that the B minor of their well-tuned claviers does not agree with the pitch of the work in this sequence so designated. Nor is it quite B-flat minor. The explanation is given that "the instruments on this recording have been tuned about one-half tone lower than usual, pitch having risen since the eighteenth century." This strikes me as a fine point shaved razor thin: what difference does it make, in instrumental performance (where pitch is not the factor that it is to the vocalist), which convention prevails? If this typically pedantic "innovation" became anything like general practice, a symphony orchestra concert could have six different As in the course of an evening.

Backdating Berlioz

BERLIOZ: *Irlande (Neuf Mélodies, Op. 2); Le Trébuchet (Op. 13); La Mort d'Ophélie; and Chant de la fête de Pâques.* April Cantelo, soprano; Helen Watts, mezzo; Robert Tear, tenor; and Richard Salter, bass; with Viola Tunnard, piano; and the Monteverdi Choir conducted by John Eliot Gardiner. L'Oiseau-Lyre stereo, SOL 305, \$5.95.

OPUS NUMBERS are as undependable an index to chronology with Berlioz as they are with many of his contemporaries, but, where his vocal music is concerned, Opus 2 has some degree of definition. The *Huit scènes de Faust* bears Opus 1, but the music is most widely known only in the much later revision as *La Damnation de Faust*. Thus, these settings of texts by Thomas Moore are likely to backdate a gen-

eral awareness of Berlioz's inclinations where voice and poetry are concerned (*La Mort de Cléopâtre*, which Jennie Tourel sings on Columbia SMS 6438, is almost its contemporary).

The nine songs are in no sense a cycle: indeed they vary in settings from not only solo voice to choir, but from one member of the quartet to another. What is extraordinary in making their acquaintance is to be ushered directly into the world of Berlioz's most distinctive idiom with the first line of the first song: "*Que j'aime cette heure rêveuse*" ("How dear to me the hour when daylight dies"). Many of the characteristics and traits that define the Berlioz of *Roméo et Juliette* as a master melodist a decade later are imbedded in it, likewise his special sense of French prosody. Not all the songs that follow are of the same quality, but the flame rises high in "*L'Origine de la harpe*," especially in the treatment of the piano accompaniment in a full-fledged arpeggiated (harplike) figuration. So far as performances are concerned, the women have better voices, better disciplined, than the men (Robert Tear, in particular, sounds here like a salon tenor rising on tiptoes for high tones), but the performances are always understanding and communicative.

The contents of Side 2 (which begins with "*L'Origine de la harpe*") are uniformly high in quality, likewise the performances. The "*Chant de la fête de Pâques*" ("Easter Song") is an adaptation from the form in which it appears in the 1846 revision of *La Damnation*. Tear is rather more suited to this style of singing than that he is required to do in the songs.

More Furtwängler

BRAHMS: *Concerto No. 2 in B flat (Op. 83).* Wilhelm Furtwängler conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra with Edwin Fischer, piano. Unicorn, UNI 102, \$5. SIBELIUS: *Concerto in D minor (Op. 47).* Furtwängler conducting the Berlin Philharmonic, with Georg Kulenkampff, violin. Unicorn, UNI 107, \$5. (Both, mono only, may be obtained by addressing Record Hunter, Ltd., P. O. Box 315, Binghamton, New York 13902.)

ENLARGED THOUGH it has been in recent years, the available file of Furtwängler records is still only a fraction of what it should be for a conductor of his unquestioned eminence. It is especially deficient in performances of the concerto literature, which gives these two issues (reclaimed from German radio archives) special interest. The source being what it is, perfection is not to be expected (the applause in the

Brahms confirms a broadcast concert of 1942, the silence in the Sibelius suggests a studio rendition the following year). However, the sound in both instances is decidedly better than what might have been expected from most studio recordings of the time.

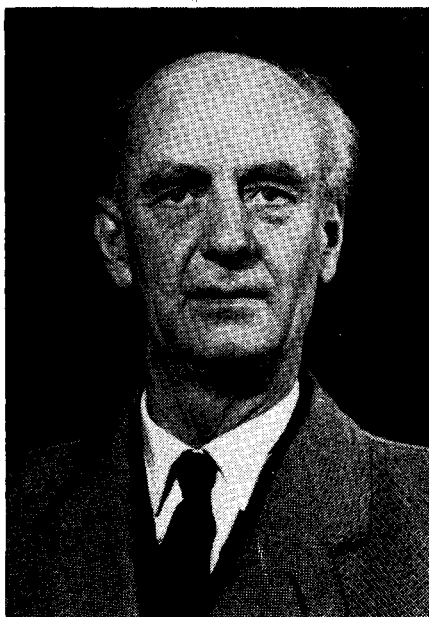
To some younger listeners of today, identification of the late Edwin Fischer as Daniel Barenboim's teacher may be meaningful. He was, of course, one of the legendary great masters of the German piano literature in the Twenties and Thirties, though he did not tour extensively. There is perfect mutuality of conception in this work, which stresses breadth and weight in the first movement and doesn't quite unlimber itself to make a real jolly experience of the "Scherzo." However, when the two men and the fine orchestra that the Berlin Philharmonic was at the time (a tentative horn solo at the very outset of the work notwithstanding) settle into the mood that Furtwängler devises for the slow movement, it takes on shadings of meaning that few versions of this work have equaled.

In the Sibelius, it is, similarly, the slow movement in which the performance reaches its greatest intensity as well as distinction. This may suggest that Furtwängler was primarily a philosopher and poet rather than a dramatist and activist but—other repertory, other results. In this instance, both the first movement and the last have a strong surge of the bardic spirit for which Sibelius has long been celebrated, but it tends, slightly, to the sluggish and the overstated. Also, for all his sizable qualifications as an artist and an interpreter, Kulenkampff, as of 1943, was not quite up to the technical demands of this work. It is Paul J. Minchin's observation in his liner notes that the Concerto "is the first example of Furtwängler in Sibelius to reach the public."

Mozart by Szell

MOZART: *Serenade No. 9 in D (K. 320); Eine kleine Nachtmusik*. George Szell conducting members of the Cleveland Orchestra. Columbia stereo, MS 7273, \$5.98.

ANY RECORD by the Cleveland Orchestra under its resident alchemist commands attention for the high standard of quality that he has established as its norm. But there is a smaller, inner circle of composers for whose works expectations are pitched even higher. Among these, Mozart is at the very core, a tribute to the musical intelligence that Szell demands of his players and a consequence of the togetherness he has instilled in them.



Wilhelm Furtwängler—"shades of meaning few . . . have equaled."

Rarely have both attributes been marshaled to more gratifying results than in these two choice examples of Mozart's genius. In the one, it is the superb string section that gives Szell the kind of cooperation most conductors dream of but rarely receive (more likely because of their shortcomings than those of the players). In the other, it is his fastidious collection of wind players that, in supplementing the strings, makes for a choring of sounds truly approaching the celestial.

In describing the results as "gratifying" rather than "impressive" or "overwhelming," the mind runs to the content of the music itself. For that was conceived neither to impress nor overwhelm, but rather to gratify the senses and satisfy the mind. In a span of performances ranging across decades, Szell's comes closest to equaling the chamber music spirit to be found in the efforts of the Pro Arte and Budapest ensembles. The volume of sound sometimes threatens to engulf the "kleine" aspect of the composition, but Szell adroitly bails out the craft short of capsizing it.

In the other instance, he makes clear that rarely has a work of sizable content been so burdened by an inappropriate nickname as this "Posthorn" (so called because of a charmingly incidental allusion to that instrument in the sixth of its seven movements—a "Menuetto"). Within the other six are comprehended a three-movement symphony and a "Concertante" and "Rondeau," which make a kind of *sinfonia concertante* on their own. Taken altogether, it is as idyllic a way of spending thirty-eight minutes, plus, as the world of music affords—a characterization which necessarily includes the

performance and the manner of its reproduction. The posthorn solo is blown with vastly more than an untutored coachman's authority by Bernard Adelstein.

Stich-Randall and the S's

SCHUBERT: "An die Musik"; "Lachen und Weinen"; "Die Forelle"; "Seligkeit"; "Frühlingsglaube"; "Heidenröslein"; "Ave Maria"; and "Liebhaber in allen Gestalten." SCHUMANN: *Frauenliebe und Leben*. Teresa Stich-Randall, soprano, with Robert Jones, piano. Westminster stereo, 17160, \$5.98.

FORTUNATE THE CRITIC gifted with prescience, the ability to foresee an outcome without first experiencing it. Short of that, persistence has its rewards also. As in the instance of this release, whose "A" side, devoted to Schubert, naturally invited priority attention. A fervent but somewhat tremulous "An die Musik" and the series of acutely perceived but less than satisfactorily articulated performances that followed led to the suspicion that Stich-Randall's always admirable artistry had now outlasted her capacity to realize, vocally, what she conceived mentally.

But there was also Side 2, and the contrast was vaster than could be imagined from merely reversing a record side. Here, in the easily over-projected *Frauenliebe und Leben* is one of the great lieder performances of recent years, a credit not only to the time Stich-Randall spent mastering her craft in this country and abroad but also to the accomplishments at the Vienna Opera that have earned her rank as *Kammersängerin*.

Is there some technical explanation for this fairly miraculous transformation in results? The one that clearly comes to my ears is that the Schubert is sung with one "voice" (as singers say), the Schumann with another. In "An die Musik," "Die Forelle," "Heidenröslein," etc. (which plumb a particular phase of Schubert's genius), Miss Stich-Randall is striving for a light, silvery quality and, despite some highly sophisticated moments of phrasing and articulation, not quite making it do her bidding. In the Schumann, which is pitched lower on the physical scale as well as deeper on the emotional range, she sounds decidedly more comfortable. Robert Jones, who is otherwise unknown to me, does exceptionally well in the Schumann, somewhat less compellingly in the more varied requirements of the Schubert side. In addition to other assets, he has a real "accompanist's tone" that blends perfectly with the voice.

Orchestral LPs

Data

Berwald: Overtures to *Estrella de Soria* and *Drottningen av Golconda*; *Elfen-spiel*; Polonaise from *Estrella de Soria*; *Erinnerung an die norwegischen Alpen*; and *Bajadärfesten*. Sixten Ehrling directing the Swedish Radio Orchestra. Nonesuch stereo, H-71218, \$2.98.

Leclair: *Scylla et Glaucus* ("Ouverture," "Forlane," "Air des Silvains," "Entr'acte," "Menuet et musette," and "Air en rondeau"). **Destouches:** *Issé* ("Ouverture," "Air pour les Faunes," "Air pour les Hesperides," "Marche des Bergers," "Sarabande," "Sommeil," "Rigaudon I" and "II," "Air tendre," "Air pour les trompettes," and "Passepied I" and "II"). Raymond Leppard directing the English Chamber Orchestra. L'Oiseau-Lyre stereo, SOL 303, \$5.95.

Mancini: "Beaver Valley"; "Dream of a Lifetime"; "Strings on Fire"; "Cameo for Violin"; "Drummer's Delight"; "The Ballerina's Dream"; and "Speedy Gonzales." Henry Mancini conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. RCA stereo, LSC 3106, \$5.98.

Reger: Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Hiller. Joseph Keilberth conducting the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra. Telefunken, SLT 43064, \$5.95.

Strauss: *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Suite); "Dance of the Seven Veils" (*Salome*); *Till Eulenspiegel*. Erich Leinsdorf conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. Seraphim stereo, S-60097, \$2.49.

Takemitsu: *Asterism*. Toronto Symphony Orchestra conducted by Seiji Ozawa; with Yuji Takahashi, piano. *Requiem* (for strings); *Green*; *The Dorian Horizon*. Ozawa conducting the Toronto Symphony. RCA stereo, LSC 3099, \$5.98.

Report

Those whose interest in Franz Berwald has been stimulated by the issue of several symphonies by this mid-nineteenth-century Swedish composer will find much that is complementary to them in these overtures, tone poem, dance piece, etc. Others who have not been exposed to his ingratiating ideas, colorful orchestration, and freshness of feeling will find much to reward them, and start them, perhaps, on their Berwald way. Not the

Pre-LP, Jean-Marie Leclair's place in general knowledge was restricted to a single sonata movement ("Tambourin," arranged by Sarasate and later by Kreisler), a concerto or two, a couple of minuets, etc. In addition to the quantities of concertos and sonatas more recently available, the operatic materials show him to have been a master of his time (he was born in 1697), not unworthy of the example of Rameau and Lully. Leppard's are the best performances the

The idea of combining the engaging light talents of Henry Mancini ("Days of Wine and Roses," "Moon River," *Peter Gunn* theme) with the Philadelphia Orchestra is not without good commercial reasoning. However, the idea of having Mancini write a file of pieces to show off the virtuosity of the Philadelphia Orchestra puts the burden of proof on another matter: his capacity to write such pieces. "Beaver Valley," with its melodic reminiscences of the first-generation Italian background against which he grew up in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania (hitherto known only as the birthplace of Yankee pitcher Joe Page), has a share of interest, but it

The first impression that this might be a remake of the version by Keilberth of Reger's massive series of variations that circulated in the Fifties is offset, on closer scrutiny, by the conclusion that it is, rather, that same version in another form. It is described on the back side of the liner as "electronic stereo," which is not exactly what is wanted toward the clarification of the vast structure Reger evolved from the simple few measures

The nominal novelty of this trio is the Suite made by Leinsdorf from *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, but the artistic triumph of it is one of the best recordings of *Till* ever made. Not only is the excellent orchestra entirely attuned to Leinsdorf's wishes in matters of pace, accent, and contrast, but those wishes are, of themselves, based on an acute insight into the complexities of the score and their significance. The last point is the most telling, for the amount of characterization conveyed by this woodwind detail or that is central to Strauss's purpose. On all counts—including recording—a rousing *Eulenspiegel*. Leinsdorf's self-made

Consideration of Takemitsu's compositions leads one into a tendency for confusing the exotic with the esoteric. That is to say, are his well-wrought examples of impressionism to be rated high because they are an uncommon example of a Japanese musician working in Western idioms, or merely to be judged for the expression in the idiom? Thus far, Takemitsu has come closest to making an individual result in the prior piece recorded by Ozawa, titled *November*

least of the attractions of the disc is the vivacity and assurance of the treatments by Sixten Ehrling. Perhaps he acquired such sense of style from his older contemporary Tor Mann, who directed some of the first Berwald to be issued on discs with this Swedish Radio Orchestra in the 1940s. In any case, the direction achieves close to virtuoso flavor in the swift-moving *Elfen-spiel*. The recording is a bit over-resonant.

spirited and elegantly turned dances have had to date, a factor not only of his own abilities, but also of the English string and woodwind players in his ensemble. For those without specialized knowledge of the subject, Destouches (born twenty-five years earlier) could be Leclair (and vice versa), which means that Side 2 is much in the same vein, and profits from the performance virtues equally. Bright, well-balanced recording.

finds Mancini repeatedly reaching for devices pioneered by Sibelius or Tchaikovsky or others, and producing the likeness rather than the substance. On Side 2, which deals with the solo talents of such persons as concertmaster Norman Carol and piccolo virtuoso Murray Panitz, the vein is closer to that of David Rose or Leroy Anderson. Given comparable originality, the mighty Philadelphians might find themselves properly challenged: in these contexts, the pop is not so loud as the caliber of the gun discharging it. Will the real Henry Mancini please stand up (and conduct the Philadelphia Ork)?

by Johann Adam Hiller (1728-1804). Indeed, it is the insufficiently specific, overly dense sound of the orchestra rather than any shortcomings of Keilberth's effort that leaves my listening curiosity unsatisfied. It would be a not unvalued service for some producers looking for a sound-exploiting score to take on Reger's enormously complex product and make it as simple to follow as Dohnányi's "Variations on a Nursery Song."

Suite from *Die Frau* is perhaps more balanced and possessed of greater contrast than the one bearing Strauss's name—there is some doubt whether he was wholly responsible for the matter chosen—but it does not, to this taste, add up to a really absorbing experience. When juxtaposed this way (and Leinsdorf notes that the sections were chosen with no intent of relating them to the story line of the opera) the materials too often recall prior Straussian use of similar ideas. Perhaps *Die Frau* is simply not an excerptible work (orchestally speaking) in the sense that *Der Rosenkavalier* is.

Steps. On this disc, the sketch titled *Green* bears the subtitle "November Steps II," but does not come on with nearly the same sense of discovery conveyed by its predecessor. In the piano-orchestra work, he is working with values of the Webern variety, and not varying them enough, to my ear, to make them unmistakably Takemitsu (a destination he almost attains in *Requiem*).

—IRVING KOLODIN.