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Try this recipe for
BUTTER SPONGE

6oz Aerobake Self Raising Flour,
4oz Sugar, 3 Eggs, 3oz Butter, 3
tablespoons Milk, 1 teaspoon Van-
illa Essence, pinch Salt. Cream
butter and sugar. Add eggs (separ-
ately, unbeaten). Flour and milk
alternatively, salt and vanilla
essence. Beat well for 7 minutes.
Bake in oven about 400deg for 2
hours. Use about an 8in square tin.
Ice and sprinkle with coconut.



AEROBAKE

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NEW RECORDINGS

Vox Populi

WHAT makes a piece of music popular? That's something most composers, and all singers, players and concert promoters too, would like to know. You can take two parts or more of rhythm, flavour to taste with melody and harmony, mix with feeling and stir in a little thinking. What comes out may have the appearance of success; yet it is probably no more than a fifty-fifty chance that the mixture will have the essence of popularity. For music may be good but not popular; but, let it be remembered, rarely popular if it isn't good—of its kind.

Then there is "popular" music, of course, music of its kind that may be either good or bad. Take *Dixie* by Daily (Capitol LC 6603), for instance, and *The Benny Goodman Band* (Capitol LC 6601) and *Premiered by Ellington* (Capitol LC 6616). If these are a little out of your line, take them just the same. They are all good of their kind. Maybe the Dixie jazz of Pete Daily and his Chicagoans, despite the belching depths of his pumping sousaphone and the rattle of the banjo, may not be as "classic" as when New Orleans was coffee-and-cake and not just a fashion come round again; but the rhythm is hot enough to set your feet tapping. And that's something after all. Svelte and sophisticated is the polish on *The Benny Goodman Band's* chromium plating, with magnificent clarinet playing (by, of course, Benny himself), and a rich brass section, a touch of colour that makes the whole world din. But for real originality and more than a suspicion of that elusive, intangible quality called, for want of a better word, "genius," go to Duke Ellington. Brilliant trumpet playing, an understanding saxophone and sympathetic rhythm—but it's not virtuosity run amok that puts the something into this music. The bloom on this performance comes from Duke Ellington's creative piano playing, which is still one of the most lustrous gems of jazz. As for *Hazel Scott's Late Show* (Capitol 6607)—Hazel Scott, "a congressman's wife and a young mother" as the record jacket informs us—this efficient "popular" pianism would be admirable with the hors d'oeuvre.

Popular Though Good

What makes a piece of music popular—when it's not "popular"? If it is the *Glasgow Orpheus Choir* (HMV DLP 1019 and 1020), the music is its own answer. This simple music, simply and beautifully sung by a group that is now only a memory, is popular music in the fullest sense of the word. Sir Hugh Robertson, for 50 years

the choir's well-loved conductor, puts the matter in a nutshell on the record jacket: "The Orpheus always sang from the heart as well as the mind... The Orpheus was a real choir of real people..."

Something of the same sort of thing goes, too, for the music of Dvorak whose stocks are rising these days. Symphony No. 7 in D Minor, Op. 70, by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karel Sejní (Supraphon LPV 27) matches the Symphony No. 8 in G (Supraphon LPV 44) recently reviewed in these columns. Fine tone, lively rhythm and expert recording give this disc zest and vigour. Two Dvorak piano trios are also to hand. Dvorak in folksy mood does not stir me a great deal, but the fame of the *Dumky Trio* would suggest that this is not a reaction shared by many, and certainly not by Alexander Plocek (violin), Milos Sadlo (cello), and Josef Palenicek (piano)—Supraphon LPM 64—who play the trio lovingly. Dvorak's Piano Trio in F Minor is a much more moving work. The same players (Supraphon LPV

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58) bring out this music's character, but the recording is by no means as good, the string tone being pinched and thin.

When it comes to Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 4 in F Minor, you do not need to ask about popularity; you can take it for granted. The Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Nvazi, "famous Azerbaidjani composer and conductor" (Tagi-Zade Zulfigarovich Nyazi, for short) give a good account of themselves and do little to tarnish Tchaikovsky's romantic illusion (Supraphon LPM 8 and 9). The work, however, takes up two ten-inch discs, with the *Capriccio Italien* as a fill-up, and, unless you are a whole-hearted Tchaikovskian, you might find this a somewhat extravagant outlay.

For one listener at least—that's me—*Siegfried*, Act 3, Scene 3 (that's Wagner) would have been dull and meaningless out of its context, except that the glorious singing of Kirsten Flagstad made Wagner sound not only

(continued on next page)



BENNY GOODMAN
Chromium plating, rich brass

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 9, 1954.