



DUKE ELLINGTON
Creative piano playing

credible but significant. Set Svanholm, as Siegfried, supports but does not measure up to Flagstad (HMV BLP 1035).

La Gioconda, Ponchielli's opera of frustrated love (all operas are about frustrated love, but this one is more so) seems to lack the spark that sets going the bush fire of popularity. Even the smooth and polished performance by an impressive list of soloists, and the orchestra and chorus of La Scala conducted by Armando la Rosa Parodi (Nixa VLP 9229: 1-4) may not rouse your enthusiasm unless a genuine passion for opera runs in your veins. This is not to infer that *La Gioconda* hasn't its points. It has; and this performance makes the most of them.

Brahms's Symphony No. 3 in F Major, Op. 90, derives its measure of popularity from its integrity, emotional drive and meticulous craftsmanship, all of which come out well in the playing by the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hermann Abendroth (Supraphon LPV 57). Bartok's *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin* is also music of integrity and craftsmanship, but it is unlikely ever to ring a bell on a hit parade. Even the composer himself, after the first performance of this, his last completed work, found it a little on the long side. The *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin* was commissioned by Menuhin, who gave the work its first performance. Wandy Tworek on this disc (Decca LM 4557) plays the work with assurance, but he seems unable to give the music the glamour and brilliance it needs, which would be no trouble to Menuhin.

Being now up among the "B's" again, brings out Bloch's String Quartet No. 3, played by the Griller Quartet, for whom it was written (Decca LM 4558). This is a rich and exciting piece of contemporary music. Although the Griller do not give as accomplished a performance of this work as we heard last year during their New Zealand tour, the disc still makes very good listening. There is, too, Beethoven's Horn Sonata (Supraphon LPM 47), very pleasantly played by Miroslav Stefek (horn) and Alfred Holecek (piano), with a piano sonata on the reverse side by Jan Ladislav Dusik (remember Dussek?). Dr. Otakar Vondrovic's playing, which is sympathetic enough, only goes to show, when Dusik

is placed alongside his contemporary Beethoven, the gulf between genius and talent.

The same might be said about Symphonies No. 1 in D and No. 3 in C, by C. P. E. Bach, with a Sinfonia Concertante by his young brother John Christian on the other side, all played by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dr. Felix Guenther (Nixa BLP 304). C.P.E. has what it takes, is obviously a son of his father, and still sounds alive; J.C.'s music is "restful but stimulating," as a friend of mine put it, and, although by no means dull, a little faded and definitely dated. The playing, however, is fine.

If popularity, which we seem to have dwelt much on this month, has anything to do with perfection, then its essence should be found in *Elizabethan Love Songs and Harpsichord Pieces*, sung by Hugues Cuenod (tenor) and Claude Jean Chiasson (harpsichord) (Nixa LLP 803). This may be love in a cool climate before the Victorians inhibited it or Hollywood profaned it, but if your ardour can be brought to the right temperature, you will also certainly be enamoured of Cuenod's beautiful phrasing and Chiasson's sensitive harpsichord playing.

April Choice

Elizabethan Love Songs and Harpsichord Pieces, presented by Hugues Cuenod (tenor) and Claude Jean Chiasson (harpsichord). For notes on love, see above. . . Nixa LLP 803.

Dvorak: Symphony No. 7 in D Minor, Op. 70—The Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karel Sejna. A Bohemian's love in music; and a record jacket as handsome as the music. . . Supraphon LPV 27.

Premiered by Ellington: In which Duke Ellington and his orchestra reproduce some of the numbers originally presented by them. . . Music that takes its heart in its hands and sets the pulse in your feet. . . Capitol LC 6616.



"*COLOSSUS*," a BBC programme first broadcast to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of Cecil Rhodes, is to be heard from 12B at 7.30 p.m. on Good Friday. The programme portrays Rhodes as a nation-builder, a visionary genius, a multi-millionaire who controlled almost all the diamonds in the world but who valued money only as a means of colonising Africa—and yet a man marred by great and grave faults whose actions precipitated conflict.

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destination?
illumination?

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