

## LONG ISLAND SOUND

[[IND shakes compacted lilac from her sill,  
A shutter on the ground floor knocks and bangs.  
Down by the beach a rotten sail still hangs  
Under the boatshed eaves. All summers spill  
A something from their play of light and set  
Unease remembered. Only the dead forget.

Unused yet as widow she lies down to count  
Six score of minutes from the active day  
And sees, tenderly scanted, the petals mount  
Fret, and scatter, and with the gales away.

—Kendrick Smithyman

(H.M.V. ALP 1124). Both playing and recording are fine. On the other side of the disc Heifetz plays the Mozart Concerto for Violin No. 5 in A, K.219, with what Virgil Thomson once called "silken opulence." In fact, it sounds almost too good to be true.

Talking about twelve-tone music, someone once made the rather unkind crack that Schoenberg's best music was written by his pupil and disciple Alban Berg. Certainly, Berg coated the atonal pill with the sugar of romanticism. But if you're wedded to Wagner and find comfort in the Bruch Violin Concerto, I would not recommend Alban Berg's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*, even so convincingly played as it is by Andre Gertler and the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Paul Kletzki (Columbia 330-1030).

### Mozart As He Is Played

Someone or other said that no pianist should attempt to play Mozart until he had reached years of musical discretion. I imagine this was a pass at those young bloods who airily toss Mozart off under the impression that he is easy. Paul Badura-Skoda and Reine Gianoli playing *Concerto for Two Pianos in E Flat*, K.365, and the two-piano *Concerto in F*, K.242, make no mistake about this. With the orchestra of the Vienna State Opera conducted by Hermann Scherchen (Westminster WL 5095) they give an exemplary performance.

The same enthusiasm cannot altogether be raised for the performance of Mozart's *Sonata in D Major for Two Pianos*, K.438, played by Cyril Smith and Phyllis Sellick (Columbia 33SX 1018). The playing is clear and technically assured, and there's no doubt about the precision of the ensemble, but this duo team is inclined to rush its fences and the last movement tends to become a reckless gambol. This is the sort of thing that comes off well on the other side of the disc when Cyril Smith teams up with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Sir Malcolm Sargent in Dohnanyi's *Variations on a Nursery Song*, Op. 25 (Columbia 33SX 1018). Dohnanyi dedicated this work "to the enjoyment of lovers of humour and to the annoyance of others." If you're one of the former, I think you will enjoy this scintillating lighthearted performance. I can't believe anyone would be annoyed by it.

Before we leave Mozart, there is Volume I of his piano works played by Walter Gieseking (Columbia 33CX 1128). This takes us from the little Minuets through three sets of variations, K.24, K.25 and K.180, and leaves us with the *Sonata in B Flat*, K.570, and *Rondo in F Major*, K.616. There are

several ways in which Mozart might be played on the piano. To my mind, Gieseking's is one of the best.

### Good-humoured Music

There is serious music and light music; and such is the perversity of music and its devotees that some of the light music may be quite serious. So we had better put another lot in between and call it light-hearted music, or, if you like, good-humoured music. This was the sort of music Rossini wrote, Rossini who said: "All kinds of music are good except the boring kind." Rossini is hardly ever boring. His two one-act comic operas, *La Cambiale di Matrimonio* and *La Scala di Seta*, are typical chips from the composer's workshop. The Italian language should be but a small barrier to the appreciation of Rossini's wit which, after all, is largely expressed in the music. *La Cambiale*, written when Rossini was eighteen, seems to come off slightly the better. It is performed by the Chorus and Orchestra of the Societa Del Quartetto, Rome, with a fine cast of Italian soloists headed by Angela Tuccari and Grazia Ciferi (Nixa PLP 583). *La Scala di Seta* has the same chorus and orchestra with Angela Tuccari again at the head of the cast (Nixa PLP 591).

For good-humoured music, too, there is Johann Strauss's *Wiener Blut*, an operetta in three acts put together by Strauss from clippings of waltzes, polkas and so on, garnered from his vast output. It was completed after Strauss's death by Adolph Muller. *Wiener Blut* is performed by soloists, chorus and orchestra of the Berlin Civic Opera. Despite rather liberal ideas about intonation on the part of two of the soloists it is as bright and genial in the Strauss tradition as you could wish for (Nixa ULP 9209/1-2).

### November Choice

**SCHOENBERG:** *Gurre-Lieder*, performed by the Chorus and Orchestra of the New Symphony Orchestra of Paris conducted by Rene Leibowitz, with soloists Richard Lewis, Ethel Semser, Nell Tangeman, John Riley, Ferry Gruber and Morris Gesell. A vast elegy for the 19th Century, magnificently performed (NIXA HLP 3100: 1-3).

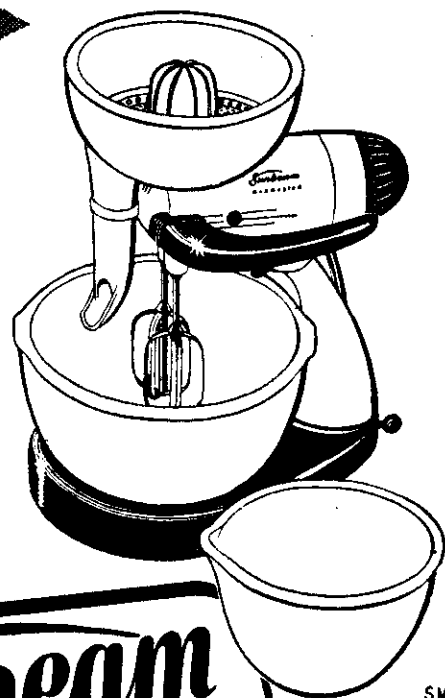
**MOZART:** *Concertos for Two Pianos and Orchestra*, in E Flat, K.365, and in F, K.242, played by Paul Badura-Skoda and Reine Gianoli with the Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera conducted by Hermann Scherchen. Mozart as he should be played (WESTMINSTER WL 5095).

**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *Antar* and the *Russian Easter Festival Overture*, played by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hermann Scherchen. Glittering music and fine playing. Life-size recording (NIXA NLP 910).

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