

he is accompanied by the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Walter Goehr. *Nocturnes* and *Mouvements Perpetuels*, by Poulenc, complete the recording (Nixa CLP 1181). Reproduction is a little "clanky" but performance is good.

Fauré's music to *Pelléas et Mélisande* has a fragile charm to which George Sebastian and L'Orchestre de l'Association des Concerts Colonne give renewed loveliness. What a contrast is this delicate music of Fauré's to Paul ("Sorcerer's Apprentice") Dukas's *La Péri*, the composer's last orchestral work, written for the dancer Natacha Trouhanova. Dukas is by no means an apprentice in his orchestral writing, which comes out rich and colourful. The two works make interesting listening. Both are played by the Concerts Colonne Orchestra conducted by George Sebastian (Nixa ULP 9097).

For an example of Fauré's most mature writing, there is the song-cycle *La Chanson d'Eve*, sung by Irma Kolassi (mezzo-soprano), with André Collard, pianist (Decca LXT 2897). Both singing and accompanying are fine. The reverse side carries Milhaud's *Poèmes Juifs*, songs dedicated to various of the composer's friends, evanescent music without the astringency that sometimes comes from Milhaud's pen.

Songs and Singing

I am not sure that I could comfortably sit through a whole LP of Roger Quilter's sweet song writing. Taken in judicious doses, however, one can appreciate the perfection of the best of Quilter's style. This disc introduces the cycle *To Julia*, three Blake songs, three Shelley songs and seven Elizabethan lyrics (Argo RG 36). Alexander Young, tenor, sings them very pleasantly with Gordon Watson as accompanist.

From another direction altogether, sings Edric Connor. These are songs from Jamaica (Argo RG 33). Sung with chorus—the "Caribbeans"—they make very interesting listening; except that I found the use of piano an unnecessary anachronism. The *Festival of Lessons and Carols* by the choir of King's College, Cambridge (Argo RG 39), needs

no recommendation. What a joy to hear carols sung with such verve.

After a spate of singers, the spoken word falls very pleasantly on the ear, especially when the words are by John Donne and Wordsworth, and the speaker is Christopher Hassall (Argo RG 24). I didn't quite get to the end of Richard Burton reading *The Ancient Mariner* with John Neville and Robert Harby (Argo RG 41), but what I did hear put new life into Coleridge. For your money you get, on the same disc, "Xanadu" and "Frost at Midnight." This is something quite worth looking into.

Finally, some of the most moving music to come our way this month. It is, again, the music of the spoken word, Dylan Thomas's play for voices, *Under Milk Wood*, a recording of the BBC production, with an all Welsh cast (Argo RG 21-22). It has been said that you need the book to follow the words, but after all, this is something to listen to more than once, and there is an especial pleasure in discovering at each hearing a little more of Dylan Thomas's rich, fantastic imagery.

CODA: I rather feel that if organists studied the playing of Flor Peters in his recording of *Old Italian Masters* (Nixa PLP 586) and profited from his imaginative registrations and immaculate phrasing, the organ might regain some of the esteem it has tended to lose in recent times.

December Choice

DYLAN THOMAS: *Under Milk Wood*, a play for voices recorded by an all-Welsh cast from the BBC production. . . . Words imaginative as music.—ARGO RG 21-22.

JOHN DONNE: *Love Poems and Divine Poems*, read by Christopher Hassall, who reads, too, poems by Wordsworth. . . Great poetry brought to life.—ARGO RG 24.

OLD ITALIAN MASTERS: Played by Flor Peters on the organ of the Church of St. Jans, Gouda. Rich and immaculate organ playing.—NIXA PLP 586.



(C) Andre Francois in Punch

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