



OSMAN
towels

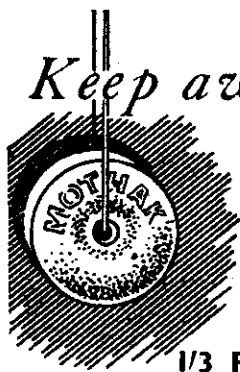
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1/3 FOR A BAG OF 8—ALL CHEMISTS

New Recordings

BACK OF BEYOND

BY OWEN JENSEN

THESE days you need no Wellsian "Time Machine" to travel back into the far countries of our musical past. The long-playing record brings the music back alive, much of it music which for long has been no more than names in the books of history. With a little imagination you can come to terms with almost any century, and like it. In fact, these days, some of the music comes out more beautifully in performance than the composer himself may have heard it.

That's how it is with the Deutscher Archives, released in England and made available here by the Helidor Record Company. In some fifty LPs the Deutscher Archives plan to make a comprehensive coverage of music from the 8th to the 18th Centuries. The production is divided into what the sponsors call Twelve Research Periods. The first twelve discs—one from each period—have come to hand. All of them in every way bear the mark of distinction.

First of all, and most important, it is obvious that much effort has been made to achieve a high degree of authenticity. Some considerable research has been undertaken to discover reliable editions of the music. Wherever possible original editions have been used. The music is played on instruments faithful to those probably used in first or early performances, and the performers on these discs are all fine.

That you may be in no doubt as to the reliability of the materials used, each disc—in fact, each composition recorded on each disc—is provided with an index card listing details of the recording. Starting with the composer's name, his dates and the title of the composition, the card gives sub-titles of each separate movement or part of the work, the duration of each movement and total duration, the edition used, the performers, details of the instruments used, the period of the music, the technical supervisors, the town and building in which the recording was made, and even the dates on which the recording was done.

The final touch is the record cover, which is handsome and durable. An innovation is the provision of a plastic envelope sewn into the cover, giving protection to the disc.

Two criticisms may be made of the series. Having been so zealous in notating details of the recording, the edi-

tors might reasonably have gone the whole way and added some notes about the music. True, the brochure which publicises the series has a brief account of the style of each Research Period, but something more than this will be required by all but the most experienced listeners. The enthusiastic will look up what they want for themselves, but many, less enthusiastic, perhaps, may not have the references to hand nor the time to fossick them out. Some notes on the music, then, would have been a great help.

The other point is a small one, but not unimportant. It is merely that the producers of the records have been a little parsimonious in the matter of tracking separate works or parts of them. There are times, surely, when you want to hear your favourite excerpt or, in a group of pieces, a particular one without having to plough through the whole side, which is the only other convenient way of selection on an LP. But this objection applies to only one or two of the discs.

The Beginning

In the beginning was Plainsong, music whose origin goes back to pre-Christian times. During the papacy of Gregory in the late sixth Century, the foundations were laid which were to make plainsong some of the noblest music of the Christian faith. This is not the time to discuss the essence of the enjoyment of Gregorian chants, if enjoyment is the word to use of the approach to such dispassionate music, but those who have listened will have discovered something of its secrets.

The first research period of the Archive series is devoted to plainsong and the first disc issued is the singing of the office of *The Vespers of Christmas Eve* (Archive AP 13005). Decca have also put out a series of plainsong records. These are sung by the monks of Solesmes, who have undertaken notable modern research into plainsong. This Archive disc is sung by the Choir of the Monks of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Martin, Beuron, using a version edited by the Solesmes monks. I wouldn't like to decide between them. They are both beautifully sung.

The second research period moves on to the Middle Ages and brings us the
(continued on next page)

THE PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM

*LOOKING through this childhood
album which traces your
growth from infancy to womanhood,
I am humbled that before
you met me you were growing
for my love, and I all unknowing.*

*For in my hands I hold
your whole life and all
its moments—in your blue eyes told
could I read them, could I call
forth the undiscoverable mystery
that lies buried in your life's history.*

*My charge frightens me.
Child, girl, woman, these
made one, my wife, See
I close your book and fear flees.
Love is faith and enough. Your hand
in mine, there is no need to understand.*

—Victor O'Leary