

The Amazing Mr. Haydn

"THE admirable and matchless HAYDN!" wrote Dr. Charles Burney, "from whose productions I have received more pleasure late in my life, when tired of most other music, than I ever received in the most ignorant and rapturous part of my youth." That goes for me, too, and, I imagine, for the rapidly growing circle of Haydn's admirers—which includes, apparently, those who decide what shall or shall not be recorded. Joseph Haydn is indeed coming into his own. Recently to hand are the six String Quartets, Op. 17, played by the Schneider Quartet (Nixa HLP 13, 14 and 15). Here is the craftsman Haydn moulding the string quartet into a flexible and expressive medium, giving the first violin mature music and letting the underneath strings join in the fun. Grand music and grand playing by the Schneider Quartet.

The String Quartets, Op. 17, are the musician Haydn growing in stature. Somewhere or other there must have been a beginning. Remembering Symphony No. 104, one remembers, too, that way back in Joseph's callow youth there must have been a first. Here it is, Symphony No. 1 in D Minor, by

A Monthly Review by
OWEN JENSEN

Haydn, played by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra under Jonathan Sternberg (Parlophone R 20616). You may find this first symphony of Papa Haydn's graceful, interesting, even original—if you can forget the other hundred and three—but even with the best will in the world you are hardly likely to class it as exciting. Nevertheless, a disc worth popping into your Curiosity Corner.

And while you are there, make room for *Eight Pieces for Mechanical Clocks*, a further by-product of Haydn's inexhaustible fecundity. These were written to be played on Prince Esterhazy's "flute-clocks" which were not actually clocks but mechanical organs. As played on a less mechanical organ by Geraint Jones (HMV 04177), these little pieces by Haydn still retain much of their fragrance. Haydn must have been the most professional of all professional musicians, excepting perhaps John Sebastian Bach. Almost everything he turned out in the way of composition was a job of work, written for an occasion. There are, for instance, *Three Notturmi for the King of Naples* (Nixa



JOSEPH HAYDN

Almost everything was a job of work

HLP 1044). The Viennese were strong on serenades, nocturnes and such-like outdoor music, and no doubt visitors from other salubrious places envied them. The King of Naples took a bunch of nocturnes home with him. They may delight you as much as they did the Neapolitan monarch. The Vienna Chamber Orchestra under Fraz Lischauer makes the most of them.

Thrown in for good measure on the same disc is a trio—also by Haydn—for horn, violin and cello. This sounds like a little bit of private entertainment for Haydn and three musicians from his Esterhazy band. As such, it may seem a little naive to our sophisticated ears, but at least you may be mildly astonished by the brilliant horn playing of Franz Koch of a part which is no mean feat for the modern player, and must have been incredibly difficult for Haydn's 18th Century man.

Operation SP

You will have noticed that the Haydn Symphony No. 1 and the *Eight Little Pieces* are on SPs, which shows there's life in the standard 78 yet. One has to remember that every four minutes one good turn deserves another, and also that record beauty lies deeper than the surface scratch. Nevertheless, there is still much to be said for the SP when it comes to short pieces.

Whether or not you fall for the mechanical clock music you surely must find delight in Irmgard Lechner's harpsichord playing of two fantasias by Bach's great contemporary, Telemann. This is straightforward playing, with no frills, of music by a composer of whom we may yet hear more—and like it, too. These fantasias are by HMV—C 4167. Far removed from Telemann's intimate music are *Four Marches for Wind Instruments*, "Pour La Garde Nationale," composed by Cherubini. They are played

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