

RENAISSANCE

October, 1945

Vol. — No. 2

RENAISSANCE

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Vol. I, No. 2

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Erratum:

Fill line 1, page 24, to read: "world was going and bowed to it; the shrewd men like Parnassie who"

NOTES AND COMMENT

Audience

Not a few outsiders have been puzzled by the claim to a "fixed circulation" in the first RENASCENCE. They have asked:

a) Have you really got 100 subscribers already?

b) If not, how did you arrive at that figure?

The answer to the first question is "no," with the qualification that we did not claim to have, nor expect to. The figure of 100 was determined this way:

RENASCENCE is received by all the members and subscribers of Vanguard Amateur Press Association. According to the VAPA Constitution, this can never be any more than fifty people. We counted it as such; this is the Vanguardists' first year, and their growth during this period has been rapid enough to make safe the assumption that they will have their full complement very shortly. The same process was used in assessing the Usher circulation; we're even younger than Vanguard, so we settled on 25 as a safe figure. In addition, RENASCENCE is received by a number of people, not presently on the roster of either organization, but on our mailing list either because of outside subscription or for promotion; all of these latter are occupied in or interested in the arts. Finally, about twenty copies of the book are put on sale commercially in spots where people of this calibre would be most likely to pick them up.

In short, approximately 110 copies are turned out; these are what we expect to be able to use, and therefore all we print - which is the simple meaning of "fixed."

For the record, then, the circulation of the first issue breaks down as follows, upon the basis of incomplete returns:

Vanguard recipients; 32

Vanguard Surplustock; 18 (VAPA Constitution requires that 50 copies be deposited with the Official Manager of the organization regardless of the state of the roster; these extras usually disap-

pear in a hurry through salos to members buying for their friends.)

Usher recipients (excluding overlap):

	10
Subscribers, etc.:	6
On sale;	20
Total circulation of Vol. I, No. 1:	86

The rest are being held in New York and will be used, as long as they last, to start off new subscriptions.

Repertory

The Usher declaration in favor of some sort of security guarantee for the "worthy" artist already has aroused some discussion. The controversy centers upon the phrase "for work well done, but for no other work;" the consensus seems to be that it is impossible to judge fairly what is well done and what not, and that such a program would have to include every artist, regardless of whether or not the Usher Society thought him "worthy." (Gr. Damon Knight.)

This point we grant, in haste. The clause was inserted in the prospectus, which was, in any event, purely tentative, with the hope of excluding Tin Pan Alley and the comic strips; however, if it is necessary to subsidize those too in order to provide for bigger men, we are all for it.

A letter from Marcus Lyons makes a specific suggestion: "We'd be better off if we lowered our sights to a possibly attainable objective. Offhand, I'd propose a campaign for the establishment of a repertory theater, something that has been needily badly for many years, to the benefit of public and playwright alike. Skillful lobbying on the part of the Society, directed, say, toward the NY City Center, conceivably could get some action on this; whereas the results of attempting to influence government subsidization are likely to be either ineffectual or downright bad - witness the Reichskulturkammer, or even the Hays Office."

Pocket Music?

Harry Warner, Jr., one of the musicians among us, reports: "I was very surprised to turn up the other day in the local [Hagerstown Md] Woolworth store a new series of cheap editions of music that contains a set of 13 of the Rachmaninoff preludes for two bits. The rest of the stuff in the series (which consists of volumes priced at 25¢ and 50¢, depending on their thickness). . . mostly hackneyed collections of "easy piano pieces," a volume of excerpts from excerpts of Tchaikowsky, texts on how to play boogie-woogie, and so forth. However, it could easily presage a general reduction in the cost of printed music, or at least cheaper editions of the more popular expensive stuff."

Considering the good possibility, which Mr. Warner also notes, that the stocks and plates of Peters, Breitkopf und Haertel, and other European houses may easily have been destroyed by the bombings, such a prospect is cheerful. There seems no good reason why music houses might not profit by the experience of Avon Books and other publishers of cheap reprints of novels, who found to their doubtless considerable surprise that a 25¢ reprint makes money in shoafs for both author and printer.

Treason

Latest to join the rising protest against the crucifixion of Ezra Pound is Tiffany Thayer's Fortean Society, whose maliciously iconoclastic magazine DOUBT (No. 12 - p. 170) declares EP "the stature of three Whitmans or five Frosts, which amounts to a Poe-and-a-half."

The Workshop

is now open to creative work in a wide variety of media. Usner Society members whose short musical compositions, pen or pencil drawings, or silk-screen designs are used in RENAISSANCE, will receive 350 extra copies of the reproduction for their own use.

Artists who are unfamiliar with the possibilities of silk-screen techniques are asked to query the editors; we have seen some really remarkable things done with it, in both pictorial and non-objective categories. (This was the method used in early issues of CHIMAERA.)

Apologies

to one of our subscribers, James Laughlin of New Directions, for failing to mention that the essay "James Joyce et Pouchet" was published in the previous issue through his kind permission.

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The USHER SOCIETY is an organization for the practising artist, and is designed to provide him with laboratory facilities and a discriminating audience of fellow-practitioners in all fields. Membership costs \$1. per annum and places upon the member a small activity requirement, which may be satisfied by representation in Renascence, or by participation in a Society Committee of the member's selection. Memberships are subject to review at the end of the year. The organization is run in compartmental fashion -- each committee is answerable only to its own members, and to the Editorial Committee which must handle the reports.

HOT: An Inquest

In the recendite world of hot jazz, despite the best press-agenting and educational campaigns, it has gradually become evident that while complainers change, complaints persilst. The reaction pattern of "legit" musicians (and this truncate adjective itself is not unindicative) and the critics who represent them is a nearly static one, moving only within itself; it is like a carousel - different horses, and an occasional elephant, pass the bystander, and sometimes a few of them have been repainted but the shape of the machine is fixed.

It was not so many years ago as time passes in music history that Ernst Ansermet, the Belgian conductor who at present serves the patrons of the Chicago Symphony, was speaking admiringly of Sidney Bechet ("like a Bach concerto grosso") and jazz in general. Stravinski was actually writing "ragtime", which he has continued to use ever since. Gilbert Seldes, although in something of a tizzy as to exactly what he meant by the term, had good intentions toward jazz and published them.

At about the same time a number of others, including Stock (also Chicago Symphony, but pre-Ansermet), Demrosch, Thomson, and Rosenfeld were finding different ways of announcing that jazz was musically worthless. Nowadays the personnel has changed a little but the pattern is the same: Bernstein and other symphonists, including some oldsters who have changed their colors, exude approval; and Rodzinski blames jazz for juvenile delinquency.

Men more closely associated with jazz, or more closely observing it, have preserved a mein of general and more or less continuous support; to the casual observer there is less confusion in the jazz men's camp, at least as far as approval is concerned. There is, actually, marked disagreement, over what constitutes the idiom itself. More men than one might realize have been in Mr. Seldes' unenviable position - radiating goodwill, but not certain what the object of it was. Even discounting Downbeat and Metronome, trade papers whose criticisms are haphazard and seldom speak for anyone but themselves, there are at least three major schools of thought as to what jazz is, and their judgements of what good jazz is vary accordingly. Briefly, the three include:

1. The scholars' group: represented critically mainly by Robert Goffin, whose two books and sizable sheaf of essays present judgements derived from historical sources, without special reference to "new music" angles. Leonard Feather falls in this group, as do Duke Ellington and Reginald Forsythe and other practising musicians whose work in defining the scope of jazz is important.

2. The improvisatory group: those who maintain that jazz is entirely improvisatory in nature, its effect depending upon the paradox of freedom amidst great rhythmic restriction. The idea, represented by such men as Poling and Copland, accounts for good work in previously-planned arrangements, by such phrases as Paul Eduard Miller's "illusion of spontaniety."

3. The sentimental group: those like E. Simms Campbell, to whom "Blues are the Negro's lament" or correlative ideas seem adequately definitive.

Naturally, with such differences of opinion existing, differences of judgements as to what is good and bad in jazz will vary. But low

account for the extreme positions? Surely Dr. Rodzinski's notion that jazz causes young girls to go to bed with sailors is not reasoned from any of these three notions as to what jazz is. Indeed, from the statement it is not clear that it was arrived at by reason at all; and if it was, the reasoning certainly did not come from an opinion as to the musical worth of jazz. It would seem that musicians approach jazz from other directions beside the musical. What are these approaches, and how do they function as standards of judgement?

Most common is the moral, or, if you prefer, emotional approach. The men most closely associated with the beginnings of jazz, or with jazz as a profession, have never asked or decided consciously whether or not it is good; they just know it's good; the very question has to be put into their heads by someone else. Their response to criticism is an emotional one - automatic anger. Deeply rooted in the meanings and motivations of jazz, in the struggles of its performers, the financial suffering and artistic disappointment which are the lot of most jazz musicians, the defensive cynicism toward their work which grows out of being paid best for their worst work, these men are brought growling to their feet by critical remarks from the opposition. Once they're up, however, they have no clear refutation to offer; they've never given the question real consideration.

The same approach appears among the opposition, among men whose backgrounds, for reasons of upbringing, cultural atmosphere of a previous nation, or long study of remoter elements of music, lie so far afield of any possible frame of reference that could include jazz, that their feelings and tastes are unable to embrace it. These are the men who, like Rodzinski or the late Dr. Stock, turn a subjective, largely unreasoned dislike for jazz into ridiculous accusations about its ethical or sociological importance; doubly ridiculous because as men grounded in all the refinements of 300 years of aesthetics, they should have known how minute a part ethical considerations play in any art form.

There have been, as well, many men who approached jazz as music. There is no knowing just how many serious musicians there were who were willing and able to consider jazz honestly as a form of music, deserving the same kind of examination as any other form, but who were alienated by the arguments of its articulate moral-emotional propagandists; but in any case their opposition probably is as easily discouraged as their support, and their effect on the public hence only an increasing of that apathy which an educational campaign such as Esquire's is quite competent to counteract. There do exist large numbers of musicians who have given jazz a musical examination and have offered us considered, reasoned yeas and nays -- men like Ansermet and Bernstein who were impressed by the sincerity of jazz musicians, the remarkable things they could do in what seemed at first to be a limited idiom, and by the thousands of listeners to whom their efforts seemed valid; and men like Daniel Gregory Mason, who were most impressed by the limitations of the form, but did not decide against jazz without a fair and clear analysis, in print, of how and why they arrived at their decisions.

Finally, since jazz, unlike most other types of music, involves large amounts of money, there has been the opportune approach. It is represented by the students like Copland who, though interested more in aesthetic than in financial considerations, saw the way the

world was going and bowed to it; the shrewd men like Parnassus who anticipated the coming gold rush and placed a biddable enthusiasm on the ground floor; and reeds in the wind like Deems Taylor, whom the Messrs Feather and Miller regard with a not unwarranted suspicion. Perhaps a fourth group could be established for sensationalists like Westbrook Pegler who denounce jazz whenever there is nothing else handy to denounce, but, to the eternal credit of the human juridical sense, the opposition generally has declined to accept such despicable assistance; for that matter, the other opportunists have derived but little comfort from either side.

It is no wonder that, adding to these variations the lack of a basic reference-point (What is jazz?), the men who have written in defence of jazz mainly have augmented rather than mitigated the confusion. No one could be expected to strike out very heroically at an enemy while trying to put two feet on three pedestals.

The loose reasoning of those who have used the emotional-moral approach, for instance, confirms its basic weakness. One of the principle moral notions is that jazz - "hot" jazz, for we are not concerning ourselves with popular ballads - is a folk music. Actually it is not and cannot be one (except conveniently, whenever the critic chooses to call in the Negroes); in the sense of a general, preferably universal folk-idiom peculiar to the American people, it never had a chance next to the popular ballad itself, the type of music purveyed by confectionaires such as Lombardo, King, Kaye, or their peers, Waring and Kostelanetz. In 1936, during the rise of Benny Goodman to the top of the radio polls, it appeared to be attaining to the desideratum of a real universal folkway, but the Tin Pan Alley version really was not even threatened (the Awful Truth about American musical taste to the hot-jazzman and the symphonist alike.) On top of all this has come the publicity devoted to teen-age jive-jargon, scat-language, and the antics of jitterbugs, which will require more than a little counter-education; so that any chance hot jazz ever had of becoming a true people's music has been put off indefinitely. It is informative to note that the one prominent non-musician who might have been expected to subscribe to the "people's music" theory most readily, Thomas Wolfe, whose *so* soggant reaffirmation of America was anything but selective - found himself violently opposed to the spurious intellection of 1920's moral support.

Beyond this philosophical observation, the folk-music idea revealed an ignorance of musical facts very typical of the arguments of the emotional-moral approach. Jazz simply was not treated in this country as a folk-idiom; it only began as one, and its later course was controlled by factors very different, factors immediately visible to any student of the history of music in general. Granted that our people, having grown up outside the literature and traditions of music as an autonomous art-form, and with a sense of inferiority to things European only very recently outgrown, were ready to sieze eagerly upon any locally produced material, and lacking the background to distinguish the mediocre from the valid, were willing to "Buy American" no matter how shoddy the bargain. This tendency has been even more marked in "legit" music than in jazz - critics with over-developed patriotic feelings have hailed a long succession of pygmies from MacDowell to Gershwin as Great Composers. After over 160 years, during which we were occupied with putting up a basic economic and political structure in a raw and comfortless land, we have just begun to erect scaffolding for the

wing in which our aesthetic life as a nation is to be lived. During that time many generations have grown up with the uncorrected, nay, the encouraged notion that their local and temporary folk-customs and achievements were the only ones worth heeding. Jazz originally was but one of these local and temporary customs, along with 16th Century Netherlands hymnology as practised in New England and British madrigal as metamorphosized into dance tunes in the Great Smokies; and now a perversion of it, the popular ballad, is for most Americans the sum total of worthwhile music. Unfortunate? Of course; and yet many of jazz's most enthusiastic spokesmen are responsible, those who trumpeted jazz to the heavens as the New Music, destined, God guard us, to replace the older, stodgier forms of a bygone age!

"The stomp time of European music has been pushed aside for the complex rhythms of our machine civilization," said Howard Scott, who as an engineer was competent to talk about machines. Music critics who should know better are in no position to accuse him of speaking out of turn. Take a look at the Jazz Book published by Esquire in 1944. On p. 8 P. E. Miller quotes with approval B. H. Haggin's "the fallacious notion that since American life included jazz and riveting, the music which 'expresses' this life also had to include them." Very good; apparently Mr. Miller agrees that the people of Wagner's time didn't necessarily carry tuned anvils to work because there are some in the score of Das Rheingold. Yet on p. 88 he repeats the tiresome association of "the accelerated tempo of modern life" with jazz! On this ground one wonders whether the people of Wagner's time traveled at the heavy gallop of the Walkür-enritt, the five-legged reel of Tchaikovsky's Movement-2-Symphony-VI, or simply rolled in the streets with Scriabine; if the 4/4 time of jazz is the tempo of modern life, which of the score of time signatures of the Romantic age most adequately represents the Romantic spirit? Syncopation is hardly the answer. Syncopation in the jazz sense was present in Mozart, and B. S. Rogers' naive idea that nobody before Buddy Bolden ever consistently accented the second and fourth beats of a cut-time passage is laughable.

Neither tempi, time-patterns, nor speed of presentation have anything to do with everyday living; nor can any common practice in these matters be discerned in music from one age to another. What is, or was, new and startling in jazz derived from other sources; the new tonal colors for a minor revolution in instrumentation about which I shall speak in a moment, and the new harmonic twists which more respected idioms already had explored extensively; these elements served to disguise and make interesting the incessant tomtomming of that very stomp time which jazz was supposed to have bypassed. It is from such excuses - they can hardly be dignified with the name of propositions - that the argument for jazz replacing previous music is argued; they derive from the folk-music idea, which, tenuous in itself, could not be expected to bear further rarification.

Compare this with the reaction to jazz in Europe, which met it on the same grounds, as a local and temporary folk-idiom, originating with the Negroes, and subject to several possible developments. The reaction there was tradition-oriented - which means, history-oriented - even though it occurred in the midst of a period when composers everywhere were discontentedly breaking up old standards for equally confusing new ones. Two classes of composers made use

of it: those who like Krenek had nothing important to say and were looking for some strikingly novel way of saying it; and like Stravinski, who had styles of their own which were specially suited to its incorporation. These are precisely the reactions of an artistically mature culture upon the discovery of any new, limited folk-idiom. Compare, for instance, the use of Balkan superstitions in European and American literature; the exploitation of them by talented nonentities like Stoker; the incorporation of them into a previously-formed sympathetic style like Maturin's; the attempt to base an entire aesthetic theory upon them made by Poe; and the commercialization of their limited effectiveness by the hundreds of writers for the Naked Horror Magazine. The two reactions are exactly comparable: substitute Krenek for Stoker, Stravinski for Maturin, Gershwin for Poe, and Dinner for One, Please, James for The Blonde-Hungry Werewolf. In Europe, there was no attempt to sweep away the accumulation of previous achievement in favor of the new sensation. Even men who followed certain Americans in superimposition of jazz material upon symphonic procedure did not make the attempt without cautious inquiry into the nature of problems involved. Compare the knowledgeable and literate unpretentiousness of Forsythe with the superficial, from-the-outside-in methods of Grofe; or, put Stravinski's Capriccio side by side with Gershwin's Concerto in F; listen to both with a hot jazz ear entirely, and observe which one tells best and can be reheard most often.

This demonstration could be further elaborated, but enough has been said to show the nature of the emotional argument. No one needs to be told that the emotional-moral type arguments against jazz have been equally fallacious. Jazzmen have been sputtering for nearly forty years at remarks like "Jazz is not music," or "It is exactly analogous to the hoochie-coochie," or "It appeals to the lowest part of our anatomy." Any such arguments, regardless of whether it condemns or condones jazz, may be tested immediately by asking whether or not it can be documented in musical terms; if it cannot, then it is a moral, not a musical argument and cannot be admitted; if it can, then it is entitled to some attention. To say that jazz isn't music is senseless, unless one is prepared to show how any idiom, regardless of intent, can use the media and materials of music without partaking of its nature. To call jazz "America's folk-music" is making a meaningless noise unless the arguer is ready to show how an idiom can be a folk-music without corresponding to any visible definition of a folk-music.

Among the men who have done their best to stick close to the musical in their discussions of jazz, a surprisingly large number may be caught presenting emotional propositions as if they were musically valid. Thus "the accelerated tempo of modern life" has appeared in many an analysis, otherwise excellent from the musician's standpoint. Congruent is the sloppy use of the term "modern music" for jazz. Jazz at its best is but one wave in the general stream of modern music; an influential one, without question, but hardly the only modern music. It has grown parallel with atonality, Expressionism, Neoclassicism, and a large number of other movements, all of which have as much right to be called "modern" as jazz has. Some recent symphonic styles, particularly that of Roy Harris, are more modern, in the sense of more recently come into use, than jazz; and if the term is used to mean that jazz better expresses

the taste of the times than other styles, whether recent or traditional, then we are face to face with another intensional judgement.

Moreover, many of the strictly musical analysis could be much better than they are, and could do much more justice to jazz. Explanations of the improvisatory nature of jazz - which certainly exists, whether or not you agree that it is all of jazz - can be traced back six years without going out of the Jazz Book, and several years farther if you are enterprising; and yet, so inadequately did the propounders of this proposition treat it that Gilbert Seldes, jazz's finest middle-jumper, in 1944 was still able to accuse the art of "the sterility of the coloratura", and to wonder, at that late date, wherein the improvisation concerned differed from mere uninspired technical proficiency at cooking up obligatti. The question was worth raising, but if jazzmen had been on their toes it would have been answered by 1938, not by piecing together isolated phrases from half a dozen long articles, but in three or four concise, musically meaningful paragraphs as it was done in the September, 1944 Harper's Magazine. This little squib - it is hardly long enough to be an essay except in the Baconian sense - is a beautiful example of how to say worthwhile things about jazz without the liberal padding so universally thought necessary - the shower of sentences like "With ecstatic abandon he pursues his unattainable objective", without which no ordinary jazz critic seems able to write. Minor arts deserve no more than equitable respect. Granted that the fault is shared by the writers of program notes for many other types of music, and especially the symphonic; but if again one may make a fruitful comparison: only in America does the Gothic story have sixteen full length magazines and anthologies of its own; sensibly its critical literature is composed only of one definitive work, The Golden Bough, and an occasional minor discussion which does not take itself too seriously.

The very tentative way jazzmen have of handling musicological material is often evident in the writings of experts who, like Robert Goffin, are rarely guilty of empurpled prose. Goffin's recent Esquire article, Saxophone's One Hundredth Birthday, is in many ways a model for jazz criticism; the anniversary was timely, the parallels between Sax's struggles and those of the men who have made the greatest use of his instrument pointed, treatment of the material almost devoid of specious argument or ecstatic passages; but it is still a long way from considered. Ignoring the fact that much of his documentation was strictly surface*, it is nonetheless evident that the author missed a magnificent opportunity to show the aesthetic origins and lines of development of jazz in a period long before Buddy Bolden, an exposition he could have made without materially lengthening his essay by a little better selection of his material. (Whether or not Esquire's editors would even have been able to read such an article, let alone print it, is problematical.) The great movement, largely unnoticed or unacknowledged by "legit" musicians, to simplify the materials and intentions of music to a point where they could both be understood and

*Neither Sax nor the men Goffin lists as praising the instrument actually approved of it, nor is most of the history Goffin narrates anything near the real history of the saxophone.

used by enormous masses of people who were unable to profit by the complex contents of the symphonic library, ran parallel to the development of jazz, actually prepared the soil which made it possible for jazz to father an industry; the Sax-designed instruments - dozens of them besides the most famous one--which conquered the country band by band, the still-increasing tendency to write all band parts in treble clef which has made musical literacy much more easily attainable, the growth of the popular ballad which assembled century-old musical symbols in simple, instantly understandable patterns - Goffin missed all these, which could have converted a merely timely high-school "appreciative essay" into a major contribution to the understanding of jazz as music.

All this critical confusion has done much damage to jazz. When historians of the next age get around to summarising what they will probably call the Silver Age of this music, no aspect of it will be quite so striking as this one. The last two decades have produced enough talk, and seen enough money change hands, to satisfy all but the most rabid of enthusiasts. If the years from 1906 to 1925 were the golden years of important musical production, the succeeding ones have been those of what was supposed to be appreciation. We have been blessed with uncountable millions of words on the subject and yet our historian will have to read endlessly to salvage but a few words of real musical material, and will not be surprised to notice that despite all the talk the pattern of reaction has remained about the same. In addition, the public has not been convinced. It is still unprepared to bear the weight of a mature musical culture, and has clung closely to the nursery script and alphabet-block equipment represented by the popular ballad and its purveyors; unable and unwilling to become a fan of symphonic music, in the average American the high-flown rhapsodies of jazz critics have aroused the same feeling, his ever-ready suspicion of the esoteric.

The Silver Age is not likely to last much longer. Jazz already is a specialists' hobby, like stamp collecting, of no importance whatever to the general culture of the country. The word jazz itself has lost all meaning except as an opposite for "classical," the meaningless black-and-white distinction jazzmen have fought so long; and complaints about a dearth of real "hot" musicians sound from the very middle of the friendly camp. (The not-surprising end product of a decade of technical corruption, beginning with the embouchectomy of saxophone-unmanned clarinetists, and now involving a third of the musicians in America.) Probably the one victory hot jazz will be able to claim ten years from now is that it succeeded, for the short time it lasted, in generating eight times as many words as it was worth.

performance with the Philadelphians, on V-M-341, offering Bruno Walter's richly warm treatment, played by the London Philharmonic, while you can!

DEBUSSY Nocturnes ("Nuages" and "Fêtes" only). Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Two 12" records; four sides. CX-247.

(Complete set: "Nuages," "Fêtes," and "Sirènes" -- Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Three 12" records; six sides, and one 10" record; two sides. V-M-630)

(Also complete: Inghelbrocht and Debussy Festival Orchestra. Four 12" records; eight sides. *)

("Fêtes" - Pierné and Paris Conservatory Orchestra. One 12" record; two sides. D-25545.)

While I have the greatest admiration for Pierné's old recording of "Fêtes," it would be foolish to recommend it over the bright, well-conceived playing of the two Nocturnes by Ormandy. The main virtue of the Stokowski set is that it contains "Sirènes," but I have never been overly impressed with the Stokowski treatment of Debussy. While it is sonorous and physically exciting -- both of which qualities are germane to Debussy's orchestral works -- the third requisite, delicacy, is hardly to be found. Not that the Ormandy performance can be described as the apex of delicate feeling, but it is reasonably close to it and the excessive lushness of Stokowski is gratefully absent.

VILLA - LOBOS Serestas (Brazilian Serenades) Jennie Tourel, mezzo - soprano, with orchestra conducted by Villa-Lobos. 2 12" records; four sides. C-MX-249.

This set contains Modinha (Love Song) Abril (April), Na paz do Outono (In the Peace of Autumn), Cancão do Carreiro (Song of the Ox-Cart Driver), Desejo (Desire), and Sino de Aldois (The Village Bell.)

Tourel's singing is magnificent and her voice is well reproduced on these records. In some songs, Villa-Lobos

doesn't seem to know when to stop filling up the background with orchestral effects, but the fault is not a great one -- at least, not in these exhibits.

Just how these songs would fare with a less persuasive voice is something to be wondered, but as things stand, the present set is one to own.

FRANCK Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue. Artur Rubenstein (Piano). Two 12" records; four sides.

Unable to comment upon the other two recordings of this work, I can only assure the listener that Rubenstein's piano playing is magnificent, and that the set is splendidly reproduced. As to how well it coincides with Franck's intentions, I am unable to say.

R. STRAUSS Der Rosenkavalier Suite. Eugene Goossens and the Cincinnati Orchestra. Three 12" records; six sides. VM-997

The Suite here presented is the one made by Antal Dorati. It is a charming work, well played and finely reproduced. After much soul-searching, I find that this cannot be put in the category of the usual symphonic "synthesis" of opera, and merits naught but enthusiasm.

A different arrangement, by Nambu, played by Karl Alwin and the Vienna Philharmonic, is on V-11217/8. *

For those who may be interested in an orchestral suite Strauss himself arranged for an English movie version of the opera -- the Tivoli Suite, which contains, among other things, a presentation march not to be found in the Silver Rose music of the opera at all -- it is on records as conducted by the composer and the augmented Tivoli Orchestra; V-9280/3. *

Tod und Verklärung (Tone poem for orchestra) Leopold Stokowski and the New York City Symphony Orchestra. Three 12" records; six sides. V-11-1006.

(Stokowski and the All-American Youth Orchestra. Three 12" records; 6 sides. C-M-492. *)

(Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Three 12" records; six sides. V-DM-217.)

(Coates and the London Symphony Orchestra. Three 12" records; five sides. Beethoven; Prometheus Overture, on side six. V-G11.)

(Weissman and unidentified orchestra, 3 12" records; six sides. D-25350/2.)

It is a bit unfortunate that the two best performances of this music, those of Coates and Weissman, are the least acceptable as reproductions. The Coates is, however, a good reproduction -- far better than many war releases -- and can be recommended. Weissman's fine performance (while still preferable to either of the Victor Stokowskis) is to be recommended only to collectors; the reproduction is often muffled and in a few spots distorted.

Reading the various comprehensive volumes covering music on records one is likely to get the impression that Leopold Stokowski has been living under a pall of general execration for 10 these many years. The "Stokowski treatment" has become something of a death-sentence phrase....Which is understandable enough -- a goodly amount of fire can be discerned beneath the smoke -- but it is unfortunate if one loses sight of the fact that Stokowski is a fine musician and is one of the great conductors of the day. Against him are the numerous instances

where he has shown questionable taste -- transcriptions of Bach (some of them) or the special editions of Moussorgsky; the many symphonic syntheses, and so on; and there are also the instances where the "Stokowski treatment" was wedded to music entirely unsuitable for the match. But it should not be forgotten that this conductorial style is admirably suited for much music, and where Leopold and the music see eye to eye, you have an experience to cherish.

Strauss' Tod und Verklärung, unfortunately, is not such an instance and this newest Stokowski recording of it reveals the fact rather starkly.

DEBUSSY Piano music ("Soiree dans Grenade," "Jardins sous la pluie," "Reflets dans l'eau," "Homage a Rameau," "Poissons d'or" and "La plus que lente - Valse") Artur Schnabel (piano). Three records; 6 sides. V-DM-998.

The first two selections are from Estampes; the second two from Imagos, Book I; the fifth from Imagos, Book II. All are played with admirable delicacy, entirely suited to this music, and the reproduction is very good. My copies show a bit of scratch here and there, but not enough to mar my enjoyment. Recommended -- heartily!

*In the reviews above, the following symbols are used:
 V -- Victor (Single discs.) V-DM -- Victor album.
 (In referring to older recording VM means an album in manual sequence; V-AM an album in the old-style automatic sequence.)
 C -- Columbia (single discs.) C-MM -- Columbia album. Older albums may be referred to as C-/, indicating a manual set.
 CX -- Columbia two-disc album. D -- Decca (singles.) DS -- Decca album.

An asterisk after a listing indicates that I have not been able to hear it, and therefore cannot compare. - RVL

WORKSHOP



Robert W. Lowndes:

MASKS

Prologue

Living consists of
Polyphasal motions of concealment,
Design for weaving illusion
To clothe the accident of life with aspects of direction.
There is frightfulness in contemplation of chaos;
All imperatives center upon the mask of purpose.

Silence is the final nakedness, the unresolved
Barrier that knowledge-fruit reveals.
We stand as if before a faceless idol
And feel relentless forces stripping us; we stand
With makeshift tools in hand,
Desperately carving features
To fasten on the outlines of reality.

Robert W. Lowndes

MASKS

I

Not only at night,
When the ears are stethoscopes
Listening for the treadmill heart;
Not only when
Alarm-clock shrill disrupts the die of dreams;
But in the synchronized
And tightly-meshed coordinates of day,
Where every minute, analyzed and sub-divided,
Must be accounted for --
Here, too, the voices wait.

There is silent understanding, without comprehension,
giving directives,

There is fear-surge, rationalized caution, calling
the shots;

Impulse, seen from afar, is seized and channeled into
irrelevant pyrotechnics,

And the voices are beaten down to a muttering in the
low strings.

Run faster,
Faster than rocket-ships,
If you would stay in one place
Long enough to live.

Marcus Lyons:

THE CONVERSATION LAGS

For Dr. Rawson the world was a denuded place. Too many years of staring fixedly into the night sky, where the only light was concentrated into feeble points, had drawn the sense of color from his eyes; too much silence, where the only sound was concentrated into the muffled ticks of clock and telescope drive, had stolen music from his ears. During the day he slept, and constellations marched beneath his inner sight, marched without majesty or beauty, a succession of patterns. When he awoke, he would see perhaps an hour of the distorted values of dusk, and then night would seep into him, like ink. Then he saw the raw hues of neon signs, and heard a clangor of trolley cars in the shadows, but they carried no meaning.

The world of Dr. Rawson was a place of primary qualities - mass, state, form; the attributes of sound and color and odor became more illusory each year. Their fading made of him a robot-like sort, vaguely repellent even to his colleagues.

Astronomers are in intense and clannish set, driven by an urge for information considered useless by other scientists, who regard the stars as places where there are probably no men. That urge had moved even Rawson; he, too, had had visions of sweeping space with a broom of light, catching new worlds in nets of fine-spun figures. Tonight, crouching in the cold dome, clocking variable stars, he saw a planet creep into the edge of the field. For a moment the column of air through which its image came to the great mirror steadied, the shimmering blurs hovered on the edge of clarity. The slow-gliding world showed a dark crescent, its night side, a crescent with a feeble spark in it - like the glow of a city. Rawson straightened wearily away from the eyepiece. The bright globe was dimming the star-cluster and spoiling his count.

Voices obtruded upon his wait, and footfalls which rang out of the corridor entrance and went wowwowing liquidly about the dome. He blinked stolidly to a recrudescence of memory; he was to have visitors; two of the University's promising astronomy majors, who had been given permission to play with the great instrument for a busman's holiday. He arched his aching back cautiously and crept down the ladder.

The girl was laughing, and her laughter made agonizing echoes and was broadcast down the mountainside through the slit in the dome.

"Hello, Dr. Rawson! Isn't it a perfect night! No lights to fog things!"

"What were you doing when we interrupted?" the boy asked politely.

"Clocking a Cepheid." Their intense youth was out of tune with the necroptic quiet of the observatory, and he disapproved of them for reasons long unfelt.

"On a night like this?" the girl marvelled. "You must work very hard."

"It has to be done," he said emotionlessly.

The boy, a sober youth with a proper awe for astronomy's esoterica, nodded. I suppose after you use the big baby for a while, you get over the urge to go peering at the whole universe..."

Rawson did not comment.

"Well...could we start now, sir?"

"The instrument is ready."

He went up the ladder like a cat, the girl behind him, her skirts whipping about bare knees. Rawson retired to his desk in the adjacent office, leaving the door ajar to call instructions if necessary, and watched with suspicion through the glass panel. He put his coat collar down, turned on the radiator, and began to go aimlessly through the top drawer of the filing cabinet. Through the open door their voices came clearly.

"There," said the boy. "How's that for a spiral?"

The girl said, "Beautiful," so that the dome sang sonorously like solemn bells.

Rawson sniffed and closed the door. Beauty, tertiary quality entirely mental, he did not remember. He watched his visitors as they looked into the mirror and made silly mouths. To him a spiral nebula was a cloudy smear upon a photographic plate; if it were a new one, it would be marked by a punched arrow; a subject for red-sensitive cameras. N.C.G. 5867.

He stopped watching and opened a book. They were typical amateurs, doing nothing worth while, trying to see everything in the cosmos before the sun rose. He got out pencil and paper and turned the pages to the well-worn chapter on the atomic structure of star-cores. Here was a place where a man might find a beauty of consequence, provided his calculus was good.

After a long silent two hours he sighed and dropped the pencil. The desk was littered with shavings and scribbled sheets, and on the margin of a page he had drawn a little pattern of symbols which represented a conclusion, a truth, a rock around which a surf of figures had foamed. He closed the book and cocked his head. No voices. They

had gone. The dome was closed, the telescope axis locked; nice of them not to disturb him.

He swept the stuff on the desktop off into the wastebasket, shut off the radiator, and walked slowly out into the chilly dome, turning up his coat collar. The silence was uncomfortable, and somehow he did not feel very satisfied with the little picture he had inscribed in the book. He stood still for a moment, aimlessly fingering the mechanism of the 'scope-clack.

Then he snapped off the lights, kicked the unfeeling base of the telescope as hard as he could, and limped out.

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"The dog could almost have told you the story, if he could talk," said the priest. "All I complain is because that he couldn't talk, you made up his story for him, and made him talk with the tongues of men and angels. It's part of something I've noticed more and more in the modern world, appearing in all sort of newspaper rumors and conversational catchwords; something that's arbitrary without being authoritative. People readily swallow the untested claims of this, that, or the other. It's drowning all your old rationalism and scepticism, it's coming in like a sea; and the name of it is superstition. . . It's the first effect of not believing in God that you lose your common sense, and can't see things as they are. Anything that anybody talks about, and says there's a good deal in it, extends itself indefinitely like a vision in a nightmare. And a dog is an omen and a cat is a mystery and a pig is a mascot and a beetle is a scorpion, calling up all the monogerie of polytheism from Egypt and old India; Dog Anubis and great green-eyed Pasht and all the howling holy Bulls of Bashan; reeling back to the bestial gods of the beginning, ooseping into elephants and snakes and crocodiles; and all because you are frightened of four words, 'He was made Man.'"

G. K. Chesterton;
The Oracle of the Dog

Frederik Pohl:

SHAFT

Through a die one-sixteenth of an inch in diameter drawn,
cold when drawn, emerging smoke-hot, a metal strand,
This, and a thousand others, woven tight together,
attached to an electric winch and to a car;

A hole is bored through sheets of blue-print cap,
created then, a steel and stonework frame to fit,
Straight up and down three hundred feet, the pit,
the womb of emptiness, becomes a fact;

Then, blindly, humans enter, wary men,
yet blind. Ascending viciously, they viciously
go down again, to rise, to fall, on vicious errands.

Iron cord in iron-bound vacuum;
iron consciousness, inflexible and dull;
iron all (vicious), iron (vicious) all.

Henry E. Sostman:

THE EVERLASTING EXILES

He drummed the silence with his queen's knight's pawn
Under the double star by Brunanburh
after the rout.

In the hour of the pearl he came to a fertile plain
neither too cold nor hot, the water fresh,
a chromo land, bright earth, bright leaf, bright rain.

He built his house with care, in algebra
founded his beams. With dull knives cut the sod
easily. The grass, transplanted, grew.

In the hour of the poppy, hedge exuded thorn
laced into thorn. At later date a bird
founded a sterile nest under their shade.

For many years he labored and he did not rest.
Many came to the big house to toil with him,
others to sleep in the cellar and drink his tea.

In the hour of the moon the house was alive with lamps
in twenty colors. By the offensive light
he walked the grass with pebbles in his hands.

Denn was ich nicht gefürchtet habe
ist über mich gekommen
und was ich sorgte nicht
hat mich getroffen.

Watching the dark, and darker for the watching,
after the walking in the sun on bones,
and wrapped to the bird's disgust within the thorn,

War ich nicht glücklich?
war ich nicht fein stille?
hatte ich nicht gute Ruhe?
Es kommt solche Unruhe!