



By **BERT WHYTE**

THE music lover who lives in the City of New York is a very lucky person. Few places in the world can offer such quantity and quality of musical events—operas, choral works, symphony concerts, chamber recitals. All these and more are available to the New Yorker. If the music lover is a hi-fi fan, New York is seventh heaven. Live concerts on high quality FM are common, along with recorded music programs from some of this country's finest FM stations. If our hi-fi fan wants to hear a new piece of equipment, he has dozens of hi-fi distributors who will cater to his demands. When records are to be purchased, he can whet his musical appetites in famous record stores, where the "Golden Rule" is not silence, but "thirty percent off list." I could go on and on. It's no wonder many people envy the luck of the New Yorker.

There is little chance of anyone becoming bored with the musical life of New York. Take for instance this nifty idea I came across not long ago. I was in N.Y. with a few friends, fairly late in the evening. We had just come from a recording session and everyone was hungry and thirsty. Now if there is one thing New York is more amply endowed with than anything else it's eating places. After the usual suggestions that we eat, "in the restaurant," or "the cute little place on 48th," someone in the crowd insisted that we go to the Prince George Hotel. He said we would find something really unique in their restaurant. With no disrespect intended, the Prince George Hotel would never have entered our minds as a place to eat. It's sort of out of the main stream of activities, on the lower part of Madison Avenue. The hotel has seen better days and is now what you might call "genteel." It is neither high class nor is it shabby or seedy. More out of curiosity than anything else we decided to go. As we entered the dining room, a very large and handsome room in the old tradition, I looked to the right and what I saw nearly floored me! There was a sort of counter about 12 feet in length at that end of the room. Behind this counter was a very attractive young brunette presiding over a microphone,

a professional *Fairchild* transcription table and turret arm, and several high power amplifiers! In three display racks in front of the counter were the familiar bright jackets of classical LP records. In the wall behind the counter was a large screen or grille which concealed four 15-inch woofers, four tweeters, and associated networks in a large theater-type baffle. There could be no doubt! It was a hi-fi system, by Gad! After we were seated I noticed what looked like a menu on the table. And so it was, except that it was a musical menu. On this were listed selections ranging from Bartok's "Miraculous Mandarin" to the "Nutcracker Suite." You checked off what you would like to hear and the waiter conveyed this to the young lady in charge, and presto!, believe it or not, up comes your selection and it is played at a good room-filling level! No background music here. I looked around to see if there would be squawks about the high volume from some of the other patrons. Far from this, they were listening raptly. The system was very good and everything was well balanced. After the initial shock wore off, I decided to find out how long this sort of thing had been going on. The young lady was most helpful and introduced me to Mr. John Andrews, head of a firm called "Music of Distinction." The principal activity of this company is wired music, but in this instance, this was the initial effort with a high-fidelity installation, *not* intended for background music use. The evening I was there marked the third week since its inception. And what was the public's reaction? Shock at first, of course, but it was not long before the room became known to the hi-fi bugs and it was smoother sailing from then on. Most record companies cooperate with the venture and all the latest releases can be heard. Yes, people still talk while the selections are being played, but it is the people who are subdued, *not* the music. I think you will agree this is indeed something unique and something which might well be introduced in other cities. After enduring the mis-

The opinions expressed in this column are those of the reviewer and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the editors or the publisher of this magazine.

erable audio and corny music on background systems for so long, this was a treat. Yessir! New Yorkers are lucky people. They have everything in music. But you can't tell me there aren't plenty of other towns capable of supporting a high-fidelity eating emporium. P.S. The food was good too!

**WAGNER
LOHENGRIN**

Chorus and orchestra of the Bayreuth Festival 1953 conducted by Joseph Keilberth. Lohengrin-Wolfgang Windgassen; Elsa-Eleanor Steber; Ortrud-Astrid Varnay; Telramund-Hermann Uhde; King Henry-Josef Greindl; Herald-Hans Braun. London LLA-16. RIAA curve. Price \$29.75.

This is the third version of "Lohengrin" to appear on LP and by all odds the best. The fact of primary importance is, of course, the authenticity of the performance. Since this "Lohengrin" was recorded at an actual concert of the 1953 Bayreuth Festival, there can be no question on this point. Naturally, mere authenticity in itself is not a guarantee of a good performance. So it is a happy thing to report that this is a good performance, and the recording has much to recommend itself over the competing versions. One thing you must accept from the start. This is a typical "actual concert" recording with all that this implies. Coughing, creaking of music stands and risers, shuffling of feet, all manner of extraneous noises are heard in quantity. Either you feel that these "noises" lend an "on hand atmosphere" to the recording (as I do) or they annoy you. It must be said that although there is a large quantity of noise, most of it is at such a level that it does not intrude upon the score.

The cast is well chosen. Eleanor Steber is in magnificent voice and her "Elsa" is a brilliant portrayal. Certainly this is one of Miss Steber's most effective roles. Astrid Varnay is perfect as Ortrud, a role in which she is familiar to most opera-goers. The "Lohengrin" in this recording, Wolfgang Windgassen, is unknown to me. His performance indicates he is thoroughly familiar with the demands of the role. While he has a strong, robust voice, there was evidence of straining at times and at other times his tone was somewhat nasal. In spite of these minor shortcomings his is the best "Lohengrin" of the three available recordings. Mr. Windgassen lends an air of delicacy, a sensitive restraint that is refreshing in contrast to the usual German heavy-handedness. The other soloists are competent but not outstanding. Choral work is good and the famous "Wedding March" is well done.

Sound on this recording is generally good, but quite variable. Some parts are very clean and wide range, other parts sound constricted and compressed. String tone is good with some edginess, brasses come through best of all and percussion is weighty but at

(Continued on page 107)

tion with an English amateur on 20.2 meters.

During the period from 1927 to 1941 the ultra-high frequencies were developed largely through the efforts of the amateur. Public address systems, facsimile, amateur television, sound-on-film recording, tape recording, and many other new developments were being worked on in many a basement shop.

The late '20's and the '30's were years of continuous development and experimenting with new circuits, improved vacuum tubes, a.c. power supplies, and scanning-disc television.

When the United States entered World War II thousands of amateurs were eager to serve with the Signal Corps and other branches as radio operators, technicians, etc., and on the home front thousands more joined up with industry to produce the finest military communications equipment almost overnight.

Dr. Lee de Forest, in 1941, wrote of "Color in Television" and described the CBS tests of Peter Goldmark. The difference between the *Farnsworth* dissector tube and the *RCA* Iconoscope were explained. Alfred Ghirardi and John F. Rider were monthly columnists in RADIO NEWS. ASCAP and BMI were quarreling over the air. The sale of phono-radios increased tremendously. The term "high-fidelity" was used frequently by this magazine as far back as 1941. FCC stepped in to stop ham contacts with foreign stations. RADIO NEWS scooped the press with its article, "British Radio Combats Blitz."

The Japs struck at Pearl Harbor while the January, 1942 National Defense Issue was on our presses. This special and well-timed review of military communications was the forerunner of four historical "firsts" for a technical magazine. These issues became essential reference for all military communications and are still in demand. Throughout the war RADIO NEWS reported extensively on radio developments and its editors were active with the Radio Intelligence Division of FCC and the Foreign Broadcast monitoring stations—reporting techniques employed and results achieved in combating clandestine radio.

Following World War II we were privileged to witness the Atom Bomb Tests at Bikini and to publish our exclusive reports on communications at "Operation Crossroads." There follows the impact of television, microwaves, color TV, and interest in hi-fi.

When RADIO & TELEVISION NEWS made its debut in July, 1919, radio was still in its swaddling clothes of spark coils and oatmeal box receivers. To cover all of the highlights of the past 35 years is not possible in one article and we have touched only a few. The growth of our industry still continues and we welcome many new readers each month. The success of any publication is a measure of reader and advertiser loyalty. To both we say thanks—and to pledge ourselves to a continued effort on your behalf. —50—

Certified Record Revue

(Continued from page 58)

times muddy. It's easy to tell that you're in a large hall, as acoustic perspective here is almost over-reverberant. Soloists sound far away, until you hear the orchestra and then you realize the balance is correct. I heard a distinct "wow" or two in the recording. This is probably due to the curse of much European recording; electric voltage fluctuation which affects tape speed adversely. Is this "Lohengrin" worth the outlay of nearly thirty dollars? I would say yes. In spite of its faults, the virtues are many. While this version may not earn the appellation "definitive," it is close enough to it to warrant your interest. Now that there are three versions of this opera, it will likely be a long time before another edition becomes available. If you've held off buying "Lohengrin" until now, take a listen to this version. As far as I'm concerned, the combination of better over-all sound and the authenticity of the Bayreuth performance makes this the preferred recording. The recording conformed to the new RIAA curve with a slight boost in the bass and a slight cut in the treble. Surfaces were moderately quiet. An excellent English-German libretto is furnished.

TCHAIKOVSKY

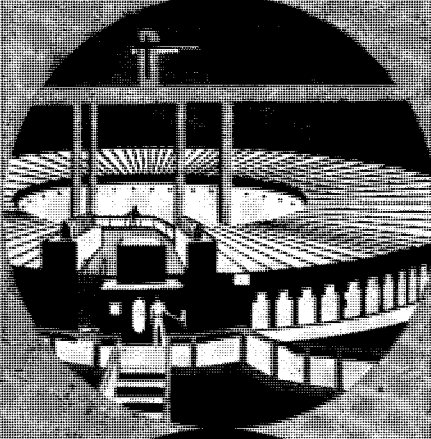
THE NUTCRACKER

Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati. Mercury "Olympian" OL-2-101, Old AES curve. Price \$11.90.

Before you sigh and say in disgust, "What's this, another Nutcracker Suite?," take a good look at the title in this heading. For this is *not* the Suite from the "Nutcracker," this is the first complete recording of the "Nutcracker Ballet." And what a delightful treat it is to hear. One wonders what dictated the selection of the familiar music in the Suite, and the deletion of much music that is infinitely more interesting. Taken as a whole, with all of the well known music of the Suite in its proper sequence, this is an utterly new listening experience. Why a score so rich and colorful has not been committed to LP before is a mystery. At any rate, it's ours now to enjoy and Mercury has given the project its most deluxe treatment. The album is two heavy wooden covers bound by a linen-like material in peppermint candy striping and a fancy red cord holds the illustrated pages of the "program notes" in place. On the front cover and throughout the pages which tell the story of the "Nutcracker," are some of the most charming and delightful line drawings of the various characters in the ballet. The album came "factory sealed" in cellophane, certainly a step in the right direction.

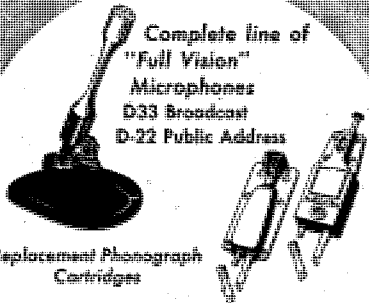
The recording itself is magnificent. Antal Dorati's conducting is obviously a labor of love and each section of the

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ballet is meticulously detailed, each musical fragment polished and burnished, until it becomes a scintillant gem of perfection. Dorati is, of course, a ballet conductor of note, and his previous recordings in this field have been well received, as have his transcription of Strauss' "Graduation Ball" and other ballet scores. In the more familiar sections of the "Nutcracker," his tempo is faster than most but seems justified in the light of the ballet taken as a whole.

Soundwise, the recording is fantastic. Certainly this score lends itself to hi-fi treatment and Mercury's engineers have gone whole hog on this one. Super clean, edgeless strings, bright brilliant brass, woodwinds which really soar and some incredible percussion. You'll hear thunderous tympani rolls here, and in the section which is prelude to the "Battle with the Mouse King" a combination of bass drum and cymbal clash which is positively awesome. WHAM!! If your system is a good one with a big speaker, this will rock your walls. At the start of the battle, a toy soldier calls out "Who goes there?", and fires his rifle. The score actually calls for a pistol shot here and if you are not expecting it, you'll really jump! Boy, if this doesn't test your system's transient response, nothing ever will. The battle itself is replete with tympani, triangles, cymbals and just about anything else you would care to mention. Throughout the ballet the reproduction is startling, and it's not hard to predict that this recording will find much use as a demonstration piece. I also predict Mercury will sell carloads of this one. It has every quality to make it a sure winner. A delightful and listenable score, fabulous sound, great conducting, smart packaging. Unreservedly recommended to you. The AES curve was adequate with controls flat. Quiet surfaces.

MONTEVERDI VESPERS OF 1610

The London Singers, Ensemble Orchestral de L'Oiseau Lyre conducted by Anthony Lewis. Margaret Ritchie, soprano; Elsie Morrison, soprano; William Herbert, tenor; Richard Lewis tenor; Bruce Boyce, baritone; Geraint Jones, organist. London "Editions de L'Oiseau Lyre" OL-50021/2. RIAA curve. Price \$11.90.

Another of the initial releases in the "Editions de L'Oiseau Lyre," and one of the best musically and soundwise. I had a particular interest in this recording since I was fortunate enough to have made a binaural recording of the American premiere of the work conducted by Leopold Stokowski. Which makes for an interesting comparison.

As with most of the first releases of "L'Oiseau Lyre," the musicianship was of very high order in this recording. Of the soloists involved, Americans are most familiar with the work of Margaret Ritchie and Richard Lewis. Both are in their usual good voice here and their performances are entirely convincing. The other soloists

have less luster, but are nonetheless competent. Choral work, especially important in this piece, is very good indeed, with some of the best ensemble singing I have heard from Europe. If you are not familiar with this work and the title sounds a little formidable, don't let that scare you away. Here you will find a lovely, altogether ingratiating score, beautifully balanced between soft, tender, most lyrical passages, and rousing, exciting masses of sound as full chorus, orchestra, and organ join forces. The closing sections of the "Magnificat" are especially thrilling.

Mr. Lewis is an astute conductor and has full command of his considerable forces. Soundwise, the recording is good, but not distinguished. An occasional "fuzziness" was annoying and strings were edgy at times. Brass came through best of all and percussion, while muddy in sections, was adequate to the demands of the score. Excellent balance was maintained between orchestral and vocal elements, and spacious acoustics helped matters considerably. When you hear a work like this, and you happen to have a binaural version of the same work, the case for binaural sound is certainly valid. In the binaural recording, the choral work and the big climaxes took on a quality altogether different from the discs. In the disc, there was the almost inescapable choral "blur." On the binaural tape the chorus is completely distinct and articulate, the delineation of all elements very obvious. The directivity and depth of the binaural reproduction lends a perspective of uncanny reality. Well, who knows? It may not be too long before wonderful works like this are available in binaural editions. In the meantime, this recording is as good an exposition of this work as you're likely to get, and certainly worthy of your interest. The recording uses the new RIAA curve, but sounds better to me with a little treble cut and a little bass boost.

BRAHMS

CONCERTO #1 IN D MINOR FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA

Rudolph Serkin, pianist with Cleveland Orchestra conducted by George Szell. Columbia ML4829. Old NARTB curve. Price \$5.95.

Wilhelm Backhaus, pianist with The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karl Bohm. London frr LL-911. RIAA curve. Price \$5.95.

What does one do about two recordings like this? In other words, when faced with such formidable talent on both discs, how do you decide who wins the potted palm? Serkin and Szell have come up with a version of this concerto that for brilliance and sheer musicianship is hard to beat. The gifted Serkin essays the work at a tempo much faster than the score would seem to indicate and receives support from Szell in this contention. Backhaus, one of the "piano giants" of our time, takes his Brahms at a more leisurely pace. His is the more

constrained, more deliberate reading and, for that matter, closer to Brahms' intentions. Bohm and the Vienna Philharmonic are in splendid rapport with Mr. Backhaus. In matter of sound, the Cleveland disc has a closer, dry type of sound and the Serkin tone is more percussive than Backhaus. The Vienna Philharmonic has a more spacious acoustic perspective and the Backhaus piano more smoothly liquid, than percussive. I think each version must stand on its own merits. If you want a reading more to the classic mold, then the *London* may be your choice. If on the other hand you want your Brahms with more dash and fire, the *Columbia* disc is for you. It's strictly a matter of taste here. Both discs conformed perfectly to their respective curves. Quiet surfaces.

BARTOK
PIANO CONCERTO #3
PROKOFIEV
PIANO CONCERTO #3

Leonard Pennario, pianist with The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Golschmann. Capitol FDS, P8253. RIAA curve. Price \$5.95.

This arrived too late to compare with the *London* disc of these works last month. Pennario is a young pianist with a terrific technique. His performance is the most dazzling yet recorded. While his tempo may be regarded by some as too fast, it lends a certain life, a spontaneity to these works, in keeping with their musical content. I still think Mr. Katchen on the *London* disc is the more polished performer, but there is much to be said for Pennario's exuberance. Soundwise, it's a toss-up. The Bartok is better sounding here than on the *London* disc and the Prokofiev sounds better on the *London* than on this *Capitol* disc. Both are very close to each other. Piano tone is more percussive in this version than the *London*, recording generally is "close-up" with good string tone, excellent brass and percussion. Mr. Golschmann lends sympathetic support to Mr. Pennario, and the orchestra sounds much better in this disc than in its previous efforts for *Capitol*. The RIAA curve (Continued on page 110)

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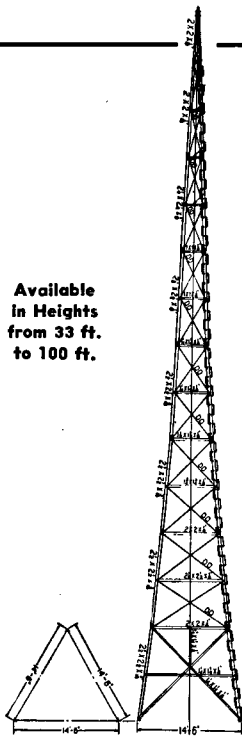
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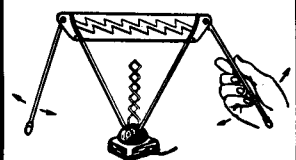
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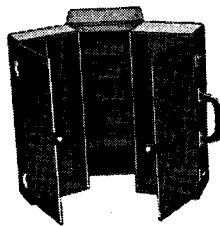
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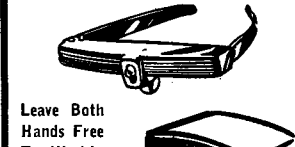
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was adequate with controls set flat. Surfaces not as quiet as is usual with Capitol discs.

MOZART SYMPHONY #41 (JUPITER) SYMPHONY #35 (HAFFNER)

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by William Steinberg. Capitol FDS, P8242. RIAA curve. Price \$5.95.

Both of these works have been recorded many times previously, but never in this particular coupling. Mr. Steinberg has chosen a rather slow tempo for the "Jupiter," which however, he uses to good advantage in creating some splendid sonorities with the ever-improving Pittsburgh Symphony. His deliberateness is fortunately never heavy-handed which saves this particular performance from the downright "stodginess" typical of this treatment with other conductors. Steinberg's reading of the "Haffner" is something else again. Here is all glitter and brilliance. This is the light-hearted Mozart at his sparkling best. As to preferences, I still like Sir Thomas Beecham's version of the "Jupiter," but in the "Haffner," Steinberg takes his hat off to no one.

From the sound standpoint, both symphonies receive the best recording yet afforded them. String tone is very clean, woodwinds are exceptionally bright. All other elements are sharply in focus. Good spacious acoustics help to maintain the illusion of liveness. A little treble roll-off helped the RIAA curve to my ear.

RUSSIAN PROGRAM Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML4856. Old NARTB curve. Price \$5.95.

An attractive potpourri of works by Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky. While all of them have been recorded before, none (with the exception of the "Capriccio Espagnol") has ever been afforded such a virtuoso performance and such excellent sound. More or less frankly intended as display pieces for the Philadelphia Orchestra, the results are magnificent. The Philadelphia is truly an incredible instrument. The luster of its strings, the brilliance of the first desk men, is a revelation to the ear. Of the Rimsky-Korsakov works, the "Dance of the Tumblers" is the most effective and exciting. The well known "Flight of the Bumble Bee" is taken in stride by the orchestra and the "Capriccio Espagnol" is well performed, although I still prefer the sound of the Paray-Detroit Symphony version on Mercury. In the "Capriccio Italien" of Tchaikovsky, the orchestra turns in a stunning reading under the baton of the perceptive Mr. Ormandy and even out-guns the reading of the redoubtable Sir Thomas Beecham. Plenty of fire and fury here. The "Andante Cantabile" from Tchaikovsky's "Quartet #1" is a pleasant little interlude from the bang and bang of the other works on the disc. Throughout, the recording is very clean and well balanced. Notable percussion and brass sounds. A

premier disc from all aspects. NARTB curve was just right with controls set flat. Quiet surfaces in my copy.

SCARLATTI THE PASSION ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

Choir of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, New Haven, Conn., members of Yale University Orchestra conducted by Howard Boatwright. Blake Stern—Evangelist; David Laurant—Jesus; James Borden—Pilate; C. George—organist. Overtone LPI. Old NARTB curve. Price \$5.95.

Another worthy effort from that venturesome small company, Overtone records. This is not only a first performance on LP it is, as far as anybody knows, the first performance since the days of Scarlatti! The reason for its neglect is preoccupation with the "Passions" of Bach and Schutz, although that can't be the entire story. Certainly it should not have been neglected from a musical standpoint, for this is a remarkable documentation of Christ's Passion. In contradistinction to the "Passions" of other composers, Scarlatti used the complete text of the Passion. This is unusual, as is his use of the orchestra in a work that is purely liturgical. Whatever his reasons, the result is to our musical enrichment. Blake Stern, who has been heard in the "St. John Passion" of Bach on the Victor label, is as effective and telling here as he was in that performance. His traversal of difficult phrasings and intonations is a miracle of fluency. The other soloists are excellent singers and carry off their roles with ease. The Choir was evidently thoroughly trained for this event and it has a solid, satisfying sound.

The reproduction of a work as complex as this is always a problem, which has been met successfully on this disc. There is a minimum of choral "blasting" or blur, and the whole is cleanly articulate. If you are a lover of the baroque in music, you'll like this splendid work. I liked a little bass boost in conjunction with the NARTB curve. Good surfaces.

McDONALD (HARL) SUITE FROM CHILDHOOD CAPLET

THE MASK OF THE RED DEATH Ann Mason Stockton, harpist with The Concert Arts Orchestra conducted by Felix Slatkin. Capitol FDS, P8255. RIAA curve. Price \$5.95.

Two attractive "first time on LP" selections make up the music on this disc. "The Mask of the Red Death" is a modern work scored for string orchestra and harp. It is as eerie as its name, being frankly programmatic. The story is taken from the work by Edgar Allen Poe, and it certainly is a grisly tale. The harp plays a very important role in this work, being used in abstract form and descriptively as well. The harp realistically tolls the midnight hour like an old clock, and the string orchestra uses all sorts of devices like harmonics and mutes, and odd bowing techniques to convey

the eerie terror of the work. In this composition you will hear some wonderful string playing and some of the best reproduction of strings on record.

The "Suite From Childhood" is a very engaging work with fragments of nursery tunes running all through it. The composer engages in clever transposition of these nursery themes, but they are not grotesquely distorted and the themes are easily recognizable. The harp is again of major import in this work and is used most effectively. The work is, in general, very colorful and gay, and while "modern" in structure, is easy to assimilate. Miss Mason is a superb harpist and in this recording you will hear some really outstanding reproduction of the harp. The over-all level of sound quality is the best to come from Capitol thus far. The RIAA curve was adequate, with controls set flat, and surfaces were quiet.

MOZART

CONCERTO #23 FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA
CONCERTO #24 FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA

Clifford Curzon, pianist with The London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Josef Krips. London ffr LL-918. RIAA curve. Price \$5.95.

Among the most popular of Mozart's piano concerti are the two recorded on this London disc. Their popularity is well deserved as they are certainly among the most "tuneful" music Mozart ever wrote. As with nearly all the standard repertoire on LP, these concerti have been recorded many times before. So, we come to the old question; is this new version superior to what has appeared previously? The answer is a decided "yes." There may be those who prefer the old Lili Krauss recordings, or those of Schnabel. I'll admit they were my favorites up to now. Curzon is one of today's better pianists and it would be a real crank who could find major faults with his reading of these concerti. Dynamics, phrasing, articulation, he is masterful in all of these. His tempi come closer to Krauss' than anybody else's reading, and Madame Krauss was always known to hew the straight and narrow in matter of tempo. A master craftsman, Curzon handles the concerti with a light touch throughout and brings a sort of liquid grace to these lovely works. Krips is an old hand with Mozart and his accompaniment is complementary to Mr. Curzon. A good balance between piano and orchestra is maintained.

The sound is by far the best on records, with bright, clean-toned piano, and smooth strings. About the only thing I could quibble with is that the action of the piano, the thumping of the hammers, could be heard at times. This is most unusual for London, as they are usually very careful about such things. The RIAA curve needed an assist in the bass end to sound right to my ears. Surface slightly ticky.



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2A6	.49	6B8H	.48	6K7	.49	8H7	.61	12Q5GT	.64	2244	.89
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2B7	.62	6B8J	.48	6M7	.49	8J7	.61	12S5GT	.64	2244	.89
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2X2A	1.15	6B8L	.48	6O7	.49	8L7	.61	12U5GT	.64	2244	.89
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3A5	.93	6B8N	.79	6Q7	.49	8N7	.61	12W5GT	.64	2244	.89
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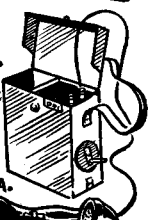
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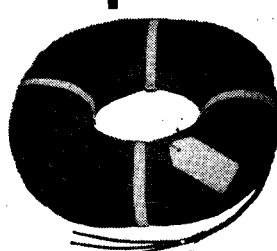
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