

peration. While alive, an author's earnings are classed as income. If an author dies, his copyrights and works are classed as property, and subject to an inheritance tax. This question involves complicated matter of taxation, of economic theory, of law. It also involves the principles of taxation according to the conception of ability to pay. These need not be discussed here.

But the following point is relevant. What logical or practical connection can be drawn, in a *necessary* sense, between the proposal that the AAA own copyrights, in full or in joint trusteeship, and Cain's plan to make the AAA into a lush lobby, using "every means" to have changed the tax laws, and other laws affecting writers? Neither Cain, nor any one else in favor of the plan, has to my knowledge as yet explained this connection.

Cain has stressed that the whole issue here is money. No one with the least sense of equity will complain of efforts which writers make to get money which they ought to have as a result of their own efforts. But what comes first for writers? What principles are to be our guide? What criterion is to be applied to the questions and issues raised in the controversy over the AAA? Cain calls for "a united front" of writers. But it is a united front to make money. The call comes from a large proportion of the most financially successful writers in America.

It is additionally supported in the Stalinist press, and by known

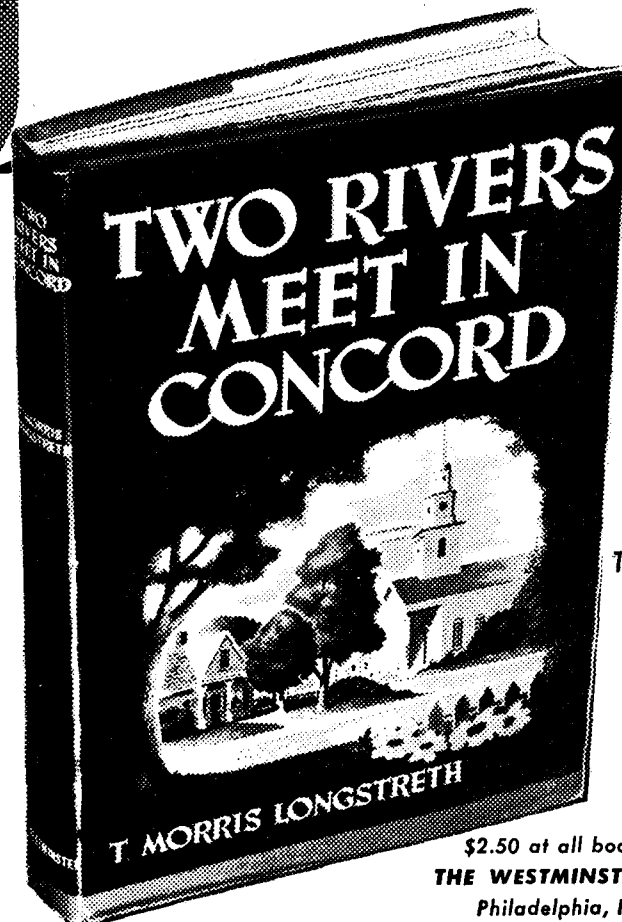
Stalinist writers. This united front is to be formed on economic lines. Concerning these matters, we can lay down the following principle. Organization, collectivization is good on the economic front: but only anarchy, freedom, struggle towards untrammelled freedom in the expression of ideas and the creation of art can be our guide. In the present period in particular this principle comes first, and must be prior to principles of an economic united front if there is any

danger of contradiction between them.

The principle shows us that when the question of the writer's individuality is introduced into this controversy, it has a dual meaning. There is, here, economic individuality and artistic-intellectual individuality. Proponents of the plan talk with a certain contempt of individuality. They say (one feels almost with sneers) that the writer prides himself with an illusory individuality.

(Continued on page 47)

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# The New Recordings

COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS	ENGINEERING		REMARKS
	Recording Technique	Surface	
BRAHMS, CLARINET SONATA in Eb, Opus 120, #2. Benny Goodman, Nadia Reisenberg. Columbia M 629 (3). \$3.85	Piano big, full, orchestral; clarinet sharp, realistic. Perfect balance, fine "presence."	A	Best of late Brahms. Goodman somewhat academic, restrained, tone monotonous. Reisenberg fiery, brash. Yet good recording job brings Brahms through.
BACH, CLAVIER CONCERTO IN D MINOR. Eugene Istomin, pf. Busch Chamber Players. Columbia M 624 (3). \$3.85	A loud, realistic, slightly coarse recording. High fidelity brings out string background. Fine balance.	A	I find Istomin's Bach good; fine rhythm, good phrasing, legato. Busch group vigorous, rhythmic, but still occasionally rough.
PARIS. Lily Pons; Kostelanetz. Columbia M 648 (3). \$3.85	Fine, bland recording of Pons, good balance for this type music.	A	Variety of musical French (Italian) pastry. Some rich, some mineral oil. Verdi <i>Fors'è lui!</i> is first rate.

## THE ART OF MICROPHONING

THE most potent factor in good recording, probably the least known to the general public, and yet that which involves the greatest in human tact and judgment is the art of microphoning—the selection and placing of the microphones that do the recording job. There are other variables in the recording process—plenty. But through long practice many are now relatively standardized, at least in the big companies. Yet why is such distressing variation in the finished product still possible? Why, after these many years, does one recorded piano sound tinny and thumpy, another round and full?

The placing of microphones in relation to the peculiar acoustics and sonorities of a given situation is a complex business, of crucial importance. There are numerous types of mike, each with different sound characteristics, different coverages. There are a million and one acoustical situations and more remedies for the same, plus seating plans, multi-mike combinations, *et al.* In the face of these infinite variables good microphoning becomes a matter of intuition.

It may be the intuition of an engineer or of a musician that does the trick. But no musician can so "intuit," however good his ear, without an uncanny sense for engineering detail and a long and varied observance of it. Few musicians, alas, have the interest and observational power. On the other hand neither can the most skilled engineer do the job without a genuine ear for purely musical values—however much he may deny it!

Fortunately such people do exist

on both sides, in spite of the specialization that puts music and engineering (quite falsely) at opposite ends of the area of learning. They function, too, in spite of the assumed black and white lines that conventionally separate the engineers' and musicians' functions. If not we would have few good recordings and fewer really good broadcasts.

Strictly speaking a musical director holds himself to musical terms. The engineer, who is supposed to be profoundly unconcerned with music, translates these into technical moves, shifts his mikes and his controls (which are assumed to be beyond the musician's understanding or interest). And never the twain shall meet! Yet they do in practice. Musicians, working in the studio, soon observe, if they have ears, which setups give the results they know are good; the sensible engineer likewise begins to listen and to know his music. Though technicalities may be observed, cooperation does the rest.

Most poor recordings thus are not so much the result of disagreement as of simple, unpardonable inattention. In the hysterical atmosphere of the recording session, where every mistake, every argument costs a small fortune, directors may ignore the actual recorded sound in their haste to get the job done with a minimum of expensive palaver. Yet only a long and painfully expensive period of on-the-spot experimenting can, barring luck, produce a well microphoned recording. For this, small companies with small budgets must suffer heroically!

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