

Recordings Reports on Current Pop Releases

PERFORMER, SONG, DATA	REPORT
Beneke, Tex: "Beyond the Sea." Victor 20-2691, 75¢	Conventionalized but pleasant American vocal and dance version of Charles Trenet's fine French song favorite, "La Mer." The master's own is preferable.
Cole, Buddy: "Keys to Romance." Capitol album BD-63, \$3.91	Another of the increasingly numerous "piano-with-rhythm" packages which feature tasteful, clean piano playing, and little definable as inspiration. Obviously designed as innocuous background music, thus making content a secondary factor.
Como, Perry: "Haunted Heart." Victor 20-2713, 75¢	Sturdy balladeering by Como of the "plug" tune from "Inside U.S.A." Not the grandest Schwartz tune, but superior to most of the ballads going the phonographic rounds these days. Como sings it with fine gusto, and a neat turn of style.
Goodman, Benny: "Give Me Those Good Old Days." Capitol 15044, 75¢	Save for the label, one wouldn't suspect this to be the work of the one-time King—unless one remembered that he has an affection for these corny take-offs (assuming it is meant as a take-off). With it is a revival of one of his old-time fancies, "You Turned the Tables on Me." It sounded better in the Thirties.
Herman, Woody: "Sabre Dance." Columbia 38102, 75¢	Another instance of everybody making money except Tchaikovsky—in this case Khatchaturian, from whose "Gayne" ballet this is extracted. It is vulgar enough as decorated by the composer for the symphony orchestra; reduced to the hard-hitting devices of the jazz band, it could be another "Bongo Bongo"—something to run from. With it is the English novelty "Swing Low Sweet Clarinet," not too toothsome either. Judgment on the new Herman band will have to be deferred until something more usual is at hand.
Ingle, Red: "Cigarettes, Whiskey, and Wild Wild Women." Capitol 15045, 79¢	Assisted by his "Might and Main Street Choral Society," Maestro Ingle effects a hilarious satire on the backwoods revival meeting. With a sense of the fitting, Capitol gleefully labels the results "Outdoor Chamber Music." On "Pearly Maude," despite the antics of a singer named Mlle. Fifi Y'Okum, everybody tries a little too hard for laughs.
Kyser, Kay: "Friendship." Columbia 37962, 75¢	Efficient revival of Cole Porter's assault on human amity (originally found in "Du Barry Was a Lady"), done with comic impropriety. Also a revival on the other side, this time the jaunty "Strip Polka."
Lunceford, Jimmy: "I Love You." Columbia 38097, 75¢	Reissue of the grand old 1922 tune (the Thompson-Archer version of the most potent three words in the language), as rendered in 1939 by the sumptuous band of the late Lunceford. The vocal is somewhat on the lavender side, but the rich baritone saxophonizing of Earl Carruthers is more than enough excuse for recommending the side.
Marais, Josef: "Songs from the Veld." Decca 302, \$2.87	Purists may object to including Marais in this category, but the quality of his work is recommended to anyone who likes good tunes, well sung. For those to whom they are unfamiliar, they may be described as a blend of folkish, out-of-door material with a little musical sophistication. Marais is a distinctive personality who has given something to the phonograph which is completely his own.
Powell, Dick: "Souvenir Album." Decca 608, \$3.91	The current tough guy, Powell, is hardly even suggested by these sides, mementos of the days when he was a romantic baritone on the Warner lot. The singing is pleasantly unpretentious, but the material includes only two durable tunes—"Shadow Waltz" and "I Only Have Eyes for You."
Shore, Dinah: "What's Good About a Goodby?" Columbia 38094, 75¢	About the best of Harold Arlen's tunes from the film "Casbah," it is sung with charming effect by Miss Shore. However, it attempts the extended musical form which Arlen handled so well in "Old Black Magic," without as much success.
Stevens, Risé: "Bless this House" and "Through the Years." Columbia 4510, \$1	An arduous exercise in domestic piety (the theme music of the eminent mezzo's radio program) and an over-sentimental rendering of Vincent Youmans's plentifully sentimental ballad. Stevens is more relaxed in the latter than in the former, but it is recommended only to her fans.

Watch for

RECORDS

OVER THE

NATION

The Saturday Review's
Monthly Dealer Survey
of Top-Selling Records
in the Leading Stores of
the Country

Complete, Authoritative,
The Saturday Review
of Recordings
Brings a Full Report of
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a Form That Makes Exciting
Reading.

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April 22

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RECORDINGS

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Letters to the RECORDINGS Editor

Discomaniacs

SIR: Permit me to enter the spirited controversy between Robert Lawrence and Remy Farkas about the "Discomaniacs."

At the outset, let me state that I have just had a physical and mental check-up and have been found to be sane and sound, and free from any manias, disco or otherwise. (Mania, as defined in standard dictionaries: a form of mental unsoundness shown in hallucination, passionate emotional excitement, and delirium; often raving insanity; loosely, insanity in general.) I am, however, a music lover and a record collector and buy a great number of foreign discs. My compelling reason for engaging in this hobby (not mania) is the fact that not only do I find many of such artists as Aksel Schiotz, Charles Münch, Charles Panzera, Eva Turner, Clifford Curzon, Eileen Joyce, Leon Goossens, and Helge Roswaenge, etc., worth hearing, but quite often I am unable to locate a domestic recording of the same work.

Although I greatly enjoy anything which is somewhat off the beaten track, I would never go so far as to buy an imported set simply because "these artists are out of reach and consequently more desirable," as Mr. Lawrence states. Neither have I discovered, as yet, that a rare phonograph record could serve as "the ultimate substitute for sex." (Has he ever tried it?)

Mr. Farkas is entirely correct when he points out the tremendous wealth of artists who give us their best on these discs, and I heartily welcome his initiative and enthusiasm which results in the introduction of such talent.

PAUL W. SAMUEL.

New York, N. Y.

Verbal Billiard Game

SIR: Your March edition had me snarling and chuckling by turns. Mr. Menotti shows some courage in biting his thumb at Hollywood and the radio folk, though you'll pardon me for feeling that it's not the thumb on the hand that he uses to sign contracts.

I was grunting happily at his remarks on the recent Broadway mutilation of Strindberg, when suddenly he started a verbal billiard game with himself. In one paragraph he asks "that we respect the original medium which the artist has chosen," and then about twenty-five slugs down the column he admits that a transference in medium is possible if that artist is around to sanction the job. Where does this carom shot leave a lot of Menotti's operatic predecessors? Gounod and Verdi (to pick obvious examples) got no assist from Shakespeare. Perhaps Menotti thought of Shakespeare, too, at this point, because he chalks his cue importantly and qualifies his proscription still further by allowing that (as in Olivier's "Henry V") "a great play can be made into a good film" if the process is accomplished with sufficient "love and respect for the original." I'm afraid that by now I don't know where Menotti stands.

First he says that a work of art is inseparable from the form in which it is cast. He begs us to respect that form, and offers us a number of ways in which we may with his blessing disregard it. The man is the soul of liberality!

I would direct Menotti's attention to many of the surviving Greek and Elizabethan plays, themselves re-writes of earlier variations on still earlier themes, and then have him look again at his distressed observation that today "on Broadway we even see plays adapted into new plays." (My italics.)

I would also, as a great admirer of "The Medium" and with my fingers crossed for its Hollywood handling, suggest that he drop in to see the recent film version of "Mourning Becomes Electra," which is my idea of how to carry a good play directly to the screen so that by very reason of its faithful, literal, loving, and respectful adaptation you can wind up with a bad movie.

DON FREDERICK.

New York, N. Y.

Basic Record Library

SIR: I have read your article "The Basic Record Library" in the February issue of RECORDINGS, and I also refer to your book now and then, but I am curious about one point.

If the particular recording you recommend is not available any longer, is it your idea that a music lover should do without this particular composition rather than buy some other version of it? For example, RCA-Victor Album DM-158 of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 hasn't been available since I opened my shop almost two years ago, and there is no telling whether or not it will be reprinted soon. Is it your idea that the music lover should do without this concerto until that album is reprinted—if at all—or wouldn't it be better to have and enjoy the Dorfman-Toscanini version than none at all?

Surely other versions of classics must have some merit or they wouldn't be recorded and wouldn't these versions be better than none at all?

LEON FERGUSON.

Memphis, Tenn.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Any recommendation is a statement of personal preference and can only be interpreted as such. If the preferential version is not available, the purchaser must decide for himself whether the shortcomings of another recording are so great that it is not worth an investment. Incidentally, the mere fact that a version has been recorded and released is no guarantee at all of musical quality. The catalogues are full of recordings that no musician would countenance—except the performer.

SIR: Could you kindly tell me since when your series of articles "The Basic Record Library" has been appearing in your magazine and what are my chances of getting any back numbers? I should like to have them.

H. EINZIGER.

New York, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The series began with a Beethoven survey, followed by a Tchaikovsky. Back issues can be obtained by writing to The Saturday Review of Literature, 25 W. 45th St., New York City. Charge is 15¢ per issue, in stamps or coin.

Wire and Tape

SIR: I must let you know that I enjoy your reviews of recordings immensely. In fact I must confess that they are the reason for my becoming a subscriber to SRL.

Your article on tape and wire recordings [RECORDINGS Feb. 28] is timely, but I am puzzled by your comparative listing of recordings. The Amplifier Corporation Model 800B, with a range (manufacturer's claim) of 70-9,000 cycles . . . is rated "good," while the Brush BK 401, which claims a 10-5,000 cycle range and sounds like it (on the dull side) is rated "excellent." It would have been less misleading to your readers if you had published their actual range.

KENNETH E. BRITZIUS.

Minneapolis, Minn.

SIR: . . . We feel that the article "A Survey of Magnetic Recorders for Home Use" . . . undoubtedly answered some questions concerning . . . magnetic recording. Inasmuch as the main basis for comparison is the frequency response in cycles per second, I can see no explanation for the fact that the Brush Soundmirror BK-401, which claims a high response of 5,000 cycles, was rated "excellent" whereas Amplifier Corporation's model 800 E, also with a response of 5,000 cycles and greatly reduced hum and doubled playing time was judged "fair." In addition, Model 800-B, with a high frequency response of 9,000 cycles and many other improvements was marked "good."

SIDNEY KARR,

Asst. to Vice President,
Amplifier Corp. of America.

New York, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: James E. Jump, author of the article in question, states that not all manufacturers were able to provide the pertinent data of frequency response to which the letters above refer, and consequently it was necessary to rely on arbitrary standards of quality. This included "listenability," as well as engineering elements. As to the discrepancy between the Brush and Amplifier Corporation models (in terms of frequency response) Mr. Jump informs us that a late development by Brush, in which a new kind of tape is utilized, considerably increases its frequency response up to 9,000 cycles. It was on the basis of this late information that the rating of "excellent" was assigned to it. If the data can be assembled, a purely statistical evaluation of the many recorders now on the market will be presented in a future issue of RECORDINGS. This, of course, would require that all manufacturers submit accurate data on their equipment, including response curves, plus specifications concerning the kind of tape utilized for the test purposes. At that, it would leave some latitude of preference depending on the other components utilized for reproduction.