

Amahl and the Night Visitors, probably the first opera conceived for a television audience, is set to English words and sung here by an all-American cast under the direction of Thomas Schippers, a conductor closely associated with performances of Menotti's works. Amahl, a crippled boy, is visited by The Three Kings while on their way to Bethlehem. The boy's simple generosity is rewarded by a miraculous return to unimpeded activity and he goes off with the Kings in search of the Child. The story is moving, with many beguiling moments; and its well contrived construction abounds with opportunities for varying combinations of vocal ensemble. In particular the contrast between the boy's clear treble and his mother's richer mezzo is most skilfully exploited. In the case of each disc the recording is clear and generally satisfactory.

Two more recent Columbia issues can be recommended. The first volume of Bartók's piano pieces called *For Children* is coupled with the delightful piano *Sonatina* on 33CX1176. The pianist is Geza Anda, who brings a sound technique and scrupulously faithful adherence to the composer's marks. The pieces are performed straight through in the printed order. This was probably not the composer's original intention and for this reason Gerald Moore's selection of fourteen numbers (from both volumes on H.M.V. B9882-3), may seem a more acceptable quantity. The real value of this record will certainly be recognised by those enlightened teachers who accept *For Children* and Bartók's other great contribution, *Mikrokosmos*, as an important asset to the available music for teaching the piano.

The string section of the Philharmonia Orchestra is presented on 33CX1159; two works by English composers receive good performances. The effervescent brilliance of Benjamin Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* is a far cry from the reverent solemnity of Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* on the reverse side. The orchestra, however, demonstrates its flexibility by spirited and vital playing in the Britten and rich warmth in the *Fantasia*.

From Decca comes Zoltán Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus*—a work which dates from 1923 and which was written, together with Bartók's *Dance Suite*, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the union of the towns of Buda and Pesth. It is a striking setting of a paraphrase of the fifty-fifth Psalm for tenor solo, choir and orchestra. On LXT2878 The London Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra combine under Georg Solti in a robust performance

with the important tenor part well sung by William McAlpine. Another fiftieth anniversary, the Concertgebouw Orchestra's, brought forth the same composer's delightful *Variations on a Hungarian Folksong*—"The Peacock" which are performed on the other side. LXT2977 is devoted to a complete performance of Walton's *Façade*, with the English Opera Group Ensemble conducted by Anthony Collins accompanying Dame Edith Sitwell and Peter Pears, who share the prodigious difficulty of actually reciting the poems. There is little one can find wrong with this recording. So good is the enunciation of each speaker that the leaflet containing the words of the poems (available on sale, price 9d.), serves a useful purpose only occasionally when the rapidity of the tempo and staccato delivery incline to distract one with the sheer virtuosity of it all. A faultless recording was required here and the artists have been rewarded with one.

A Capitol record, CTL7056, contains contemporary American music by Copland, Barber, Creston and Diamond. Copland's *Quiet City* is a beautifully evocative piece of writing that deserves to become as popular as Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings*. Paul Creston's *Choric Dances* and David Diamond's *Sounds* are not well known here but both works are examples of good craftsmanship and individuality. The Concert Arts Orchestra play under Vladimir Golschmann in a recording that, for most of the time, is particularly good.

E.T.

LETTERS

RUGBY SCHOOL,
RUGBY.

DEAR SIR, November 24th, 1954
TEMPO—Autumn Number 1954, quotation from page 7:

" . . . in the last *Wozzeck* excerpt, Mr. Ormandy chose to indulge in a concluding *ritardando* diametrically opposed to the composer's expressed intentions."

I hesitate to challenge Mr. Donald Mitchell on any point—but: although this passage as it occurs in the vocal score of the complete opera is marked clearly *senza rit.*—the corresponding passage as it appears in the miniature score of the 'fragments' alone is marked quite differently—*rit. poco . . . rit. molto* which justifies Mr. Ormandy's ending.

Perhaps Mr. Mitchell can explain how it comes about that this same passage can be

NEW FULL SCORES

	<i>net</i>
ALBINONI Sonata a Cinque Op. 5, No. 9. Concerto in D, Op. 7, No. 1 <i>for strings and continuo.</i> <i>Elaborated by Ber- nard Paumgartner</i>	12/-
BRITTEN Symphonic Suite, "Gloriana," Op. 53a	30/-
DONATONI Sinfonia per Orchestra d'Archi	21/-
FINZI Grand Fantasia and Toccata <i>for piano- forte and orchestra</i>	21/-
MUDGE Concerto No. 4 in D minor <i>for orches- tra and continuo,</i> <i>edited and arranged by Gerald Finzi</i> ..	12/-
STANLEY Concerto No. 4 in D minor <i>for string orchestra or piano (organ or harpsichord) with string accompani- ment</i>	8/-
Concerto No. 5 for string orchestra	10/-
VLAD Divertimento per 11 instrumenti ..	25/-

Published by

Boosey & Hawkes

marked with opposite instructions in the two scores. Or is that miniature score *rallentando* an unofficial marking?

Yours sincerely,

M. S. TILLET.

Donald Mitchell replies:—If Mr. Tillett is right—as he doubtless is—then I owe Mr. Ormandy an apology. I have never seen the score of the three *Wozzeck* fragments and have always assumed that the *senza rit.* of the opera's closing bars would apply equally to the suite. Since, when one knows the opera very well, one listens to the suite through, as it were, one's total emotional experience of the opera, the *rit. molto* comes as a nasty jar. After all, the whole point of the *senza rit.* in the opera is to avoid burdening the children's scene with sentiment. The *senza rit.* in fact, ensures the *senza espress* with which the children receive the news of the dead Marie. This deliberate non-sentimentality, of course, touches off the deepest springs of feeling. Why Berg abandoned this central feature in the three fragments I do not know. Perhaps he thought a *ritardando* made for a more effective close in the concert hall. Perhaps he thought the *senza rit.* had no point when detached from the main body of the opera. It is my view that he was wrong on both points. But there seems no doubt that Mr. Ormandy was strictly fulfilling Berg's intentions in his Scheveningen performance and I regret having blamed him for what—thinking it over—seems to have been an aberration on the part of the composer.

THE EDITOR,
TEMPO,

13th December, 1954

SIR,

Your review of the new Decca recording of my *SERENADE FOR TENOR, HORN AND STRINGS* has recently been shown to me. I should like, if you will allow me, to make a comment on it.

In the Prologue and Epilogue the horn is directed to play on the natural harmonics of the instrument; this causes the apparent "out-of-tuneness" of which your reviewer complains, and which is, in fact, exactly the effect I intend.

In the many brilliant performances of his part that Dennis Brain has given he has always I am sure, played it as I have marked it in the score. Anyone, therefore, who plays it "in tune" is going directly against my wishes!

If the critics do not like this effect they should blame me and not Mr. Brain.

Yours etc.,

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

IGOR STRAWINSKY

IN MEMORIAM:
DYLAN THOMAS

*for tenor voice, string quartet and four
trombones*

FULL SCORE 8/-:

HAWKES POCKET SCORE (No. 688) 3/-

Boosey & Hawkes

TEMPO

Publishers:

BOOSEY & HAWKES LIMITED
295 Regent Street, London W.1.

OVERSEAS AFFILIATIONS:

PARIS: Boosey & Hawkes, S.A.
22 Rue d'Anjou, Paris 8.
NEW YORK: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., 30, West
57th Street, New York 19.
TORONTO: Boosey & Hawkes (Canada) Ltd.,
209-213 Victoria Street.
SYDNEY: Boosey & Hawkes (Australia) Ltd.,
250, Pitt Street.
CAPETOWN: Boosey & Hawkes (South Africa)
(Pty), Ltd., 92 Loop Street.
BUENOS AIRES: Barry & Cia, Montevideo
264, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
BONN: Boosey & Hawkes, G.m.b.H., Kron-
prinzenstrasse 26, Bonn a.Rh., Germany.

"Tempo" subscriptions may be taken out, or
single copies obtained, through any of the above.

**Nothing in this magazine may be
reproduced without permission**

12th November, 1954

DEAR SIR,

I should like to query something said by your Record Guide Critic in the Autumn number of *TEMPO* which I have just received. Speaking of the recent Decca issue of Britten's *Serenade* your critic says: "The only disappointments here lie in the opening and closing horn solos; a curiously *faulty intonation* (my italics) is apparent here and there which jars the magic of both the Prologue and Epilogue. Fortunately this disappears in the first song and from then on Dennis Brain's outstanding musicianship and brilliance are very much in evidence."

Now while I am diffident about questioning this statement, as I have not heard the new record (though I possess the old one), it does occur to me that your critic may have overlooked the fact that both Prologue and Epilogue are directed by Mr. Britten to be played "on natural harmonics." I have, like most of Mr. Brain's admirers enough confidence in his outstanding skill, to think that the fault lay not in his intonation but in the ear of your critic, in which case surely this criticism should be corrected in your next issue?

Yours sincerely,

PEGGY SHIMMIN.

* * *

Our Record Critic writes:—

An unreserved apology is due to Mr. Britten, Mr. Brain and no doubt other readers as well as Miss Shimmin. The mistake came from thinking I knew the work well enough not to bother with a score when listening to the performance.

BOOK REVIEWS

in this issue are by:—

JAW	J. A. Westrup
I.H.	Imogen Holst
D.M.	Donald Mitchell

RECORD GUIDE

E.T. Eric Thompson

