

the "Final Dance"—the LSO performance was a degree warmer, the Pittsburgh one equally intense is crisper and more refined. The fill-up of the "Ritual Fire Dance" is not generous, but provides an attractive makeweight. E.G.

(See also "Here and There" on page 1141)

HAYDN. Violin Concerto in C major, HobVlla/1.
VIEXTEMPS. Violin Concerto No. 5 in A minor, Op. 37. **Cho-Liang Lin** (vin); **Minnesota Orchestra / Neville Marriner.** CBS Masterworks digital © 37796.

Haydn—selected comparison:
Grumiaux, ECO, Leppard
(4/65) (10/82) (R) 6527 120

Vieuxtemps—selected comparisons:

Chung, LSO, Foster (9/76) SXL6759
Perlman, Orch de Paris, Barenboim
(11/78) ASD3555

Strange bedfellows, Haydn and Vieuxtemps: the one conspicuous for his lack of the virtuosic streak and rarely at his best in his concertos, the second a virtuoso *par excellence* and as a composer remembered (if at all) by his seven violin concertos rather than by anything else. The formidable technical demands of Vieuxtemps's Fifth, and best known, Concerto hold no terrors for the young Taiwanese-born violinist Cho-Liang Lin, and he gives a stunning performance of it, ably supported by the Minnesota Orchestra under Neville Marriner. Technically, of course, he is no less good in the Haydn, though the gleaming, chromium-plated brilliance of his playing is far less appropriate to this kind of music.

Although Cho-Liang Lin tells us he and Marriner felt it was a "good idea" to record two concertos that had "settled" into his repertoire, it is difficult to see what sort of audience or collector this disc is aimed at: those primarily interested in Haydn will not need to be reminded of the beauty and stylishness of Grumiaux's Philips recording, which also includes both of Bach's solo concertos, in A minor and E major; while Vieuxtemps buffs cannot do better than Perlman's HMV recording, which has as its coupling Vieuxtemps's less familiar Fourth Concerto in D minor (or, at a less committed level, that of Kyung Wha Chung on Decca, with Saint-Saëns's Concerto No. 3 in B minor as a coupling). The new CBS recording is of demonstration quality, and it certainly reveals violinistic talent of no mean order. R.G.

(See also "Here and There" on page 1141)

KETELBEY. ORCHESTRAL WORKS. ***Laurence Dale** (ten); †**Michael Reeves** (pno); ‡**Ambrosian Chorus; London Promenade Orchestra / Alexander Faris.** Philips Compact Disc © 400 011-2. From 6514 152 (4/82).

In a Chinese temple garden†. In a monastery garden‡. Sanctuary of the heart. Bank Holiday. Dance of the merry mascots†. In a Persian market‡. In the mystic land of Egypt*. Bells across the meadows. The clock and the Dresden figurest. With honour crowned.

Ketelbey's popular formula of sending his tinkly and catchy tunes "over the top" finds superb advocates in Alexander Faris and the London Promenade Orchestra, not to mention the singers whose contributions add another dimension to textures designed for cajoling the ear. What with Arabs crying, "Baksheesh, Allah!" in a Persian market, bells chiming across the meadow, birds chirping enthusiastically in a monastery garden, not to mention a piano tinkling out Weber's *Invitation to the Dance* for merry mascots to perform, this makes a superb demonstration disc, vivid and real if more than life-size. You might say, echoing the BBC's long-established radio programme, "Friday Night is Reality Night". The sound is so precise that you can almost tell how many strings there are—not a big band but quite enough—and though some may feel that atmosphere in this music is better caught with vagueness rather than presence and reality, no one will doubt the real gain of Compact Disc in this recording. E.G.

HOLST. The Planets, H125. **Children's Choir; French National Orchestra / Lorin Maazel.** CBS Compact Disc © CD37249. From 37249 (4/82).

The clarification brought by the CD system works splendidly in this instance to give a degree of transparency to what on LP was a recording

which was pleasing and warm but inclined to be opaque. So in "Mars"—taken with magisterial slowness but impressively so—the tapping of the side-drum in the *pianissimo* passage at fig. VI has a reality in space with plenty of air round it. At the start of such quiet movements as "Venus" and "Neptune" one detects rather too readily what sounds very like tape-hiss before the music starts, but it is a minimal background compared with LP or cassette. The triplets of "Mercury" and the melodic line at the opening of "Jupiter" are not so sharply defined as they might be, but that is a question of the original recording and generally this is a warmly enjoyable performance, beautifully played by this fine French orchestra, which gains considerably from the CD format. It suggests that other CBS recordings may not have been presented to their best advantage in the LP transfers. The off-stage choir in "Neptune" is both beautifully defined and atmospheric, but I would still not have identified the singers as children rather than women. The long fade at the end might have been designed to show off the advantages of the CD system. E.G.

RAVEL. Mother Goose—complete ballet.

SAINT-SAËNS. Carnival of the Animals*. **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra / André Previn** with ***Joseph Villa** and **Patricia Prattis Jennings** (pnos). Philips Compact Disc © 400 016-2. From 9500 973 (2/82).

With total absence of background and a transfer to Compact Disc which keeps the mellowness of the original LP, atmospheric but finely transparent, the Ravel side comes near to matching in beauty the model Decca recording of Ravel on Compact Disc—the superb Montreal Symphony Orchestra/Dutoit version of *Daphnis et Chloé* (400 055-2, 3/83). There is not quite such a sense of electric immediacy here in the Pittsburgh recording, but that may be a question of the transfer being at a relative low level. The same qualities are a great asset in the Saint-Saëns too, notably so in the beautifully transparent account of "Aquarium" and in the finely judged not-too-close balance of the solo cello in "The swan", played with exquisite tenderness by Anne Martindale Williams. The piano tone is extremely faithful too, bright but never aggressive, with the piano chords rightly kept as a pulsing background against the string melody (Offenbach-based) of "Tortoises", and though the double-basses sound rather distant in "The elephant", the sepulchral quality in their timbre is very realistic. The full ensemble used in the opening and closing movements is not so transparent, but that is mostly a question of instrumentation. I have rarely if ever known a more exuberant account of the final procession of the animals.

Since reviewing the LP, I have had the chance of making further comparisons when this work was the subject of "Building a Library" on Radio 3's *Record Review*, and now more than ever I am convinced that this is the best version in any format. My one reservation is a purely technical one. There is no banding except between the two works, which means that if you simply want to play "The swan"—as many will with such a performance as this—you have to use the fast-forward button for an excessive span. Though it might be impossible to band all 20 movements in the two works, surely there ought to be bands for those popular movements likely to be wanted separately. E.G.

(See also "Here and There" on page 1141)

MAHLER. Symphony No. 4. **Lucia Popp** (sop); **London Philharmonic Orchestra / Klaus Tennstedt.** HMV digital © ASD4344; TCC-ASD4344.

Selected comparisons:

NYPO, Walter (r.1946) (7/73) (R) 61357-8
Cleveland, Szell (8/67) (4/69) (R) 61056
Bav RO, Kubelik (12/68) (8/75) (R) 2535 119

At least eight of the currently available versions of Mahler's Fourth Symphony are recommendable in one way or another, though if I forswear earnest perusal of the symphony's entry in the *Gramophone Classical Catalogue* I am left recalling a handful of specially memorable things:

Bruno Walter's inimitable motioning of the music (CBS), Szell's rapt detailing (also on CBS) and the alfresco charm of Kubelik's Bavarian recording on DG. To which I think it's safe to add Tennstedt's delightful open-handedness. Tennstedt's is as spirited and unaffected a reading as any I've heard since Kletzki's (HMV SXL30054, 9/66—nla); but because Tennstedt's treatment of Mahler's frequently unanticipated changes of tempo is frank without being in any sense disruptive of the work's structure, vitality and organic integrity are better reconciled by him than they were by Kletzki's more free-wheeling approach. Tennstedt's is a genuinely *naïf* reading which eschews editorializing—once, that is, we are past the huge *ritardando* (a putative 'once upon a time') which he makes into the first melody. There's no lack of power in his reading but there is a consistent and pleasing absence of wilfulness. Mahler's remark "there are no *fortissimos* in my Fourth Symphony", a literal lie but a metaphorical truth, is well adhered to here. The first movement climax is full of exhilaration and joy, bereft of the kind of portentousness and looming darkness which a conductor like Solti draws from the music (Decca 7BB178, 11/75).

Tennstedt's handling of tempos and detail is equally impressive in the second and third movements. The devilish *Scherzo* is trenchant and brightly lit, as engagingly grotesque as an illustration by Rackham. The playing of the LPO cellos at the start of the slow movement is masterly, eloquent and restful, the players using Tennstedt's breadth (his tempo is as slow as Szell's or Mengelberg's) to suggest space and ease of utterance. Later, Tennstedt's open-handed approach to tempo changes ensures, once again, a continuous flow of musical incident. Lucia Popp, who is given a natural concert-hall balance, makes no attempt to ladle out Viennese charm.

Tennstedt's performance is, in sum, as direct, as specific, as unsentimental, and as affecting as a well-told fairy tale. The digital recording is pleasingly clear, whilst the playing of the LPO mellow in manner but wonderfully sharp in points of detail and style—is everything Sir Thomas Beecham might have wished it to be 50 years after the orchestra's foundation. R.O.

SHOSTAKOVICH. Symphony No. 10 in E minor, Op. 93. **London Symphony Orchestra / André Previn.** HMV digital © ASD4405; TCC-ASD4405.

Selected comparisons:

NYPO, Mitropoulos (7/55) (2/81) (R) 61457
LPO, Haitink (10/77) SXL6838
BPO, Karajan (3/82) 2532 030

This is one of the finest yet in Previn's always enjoyable Shostakovich series. Each of the LP versions listed above—the recent Karajan (DG), also a digital recording—has its claims, but this newcomer immediately establishes its special place. RL has many times in these columns praised the old Mitropoulos/CBS version, still highly commendable in spite of limited mono sound. It was the performance on which I myself got to know the work, and I too hold it in special affection. In the long *Moderato* first movement above all, the new Previn comes closer to that model than do either Haitink (Decca) or Karajan, the one very measured and severe, the other also abrupt and a little detached. Both Mitropoulos and Previn allow themselves a degree more expressiveness in the phrasing, the manner more involved, and with that approach goes a more emotional rendering of the big central climax of the movement. The hint of *stringendo* is in neither case enough to undermine the structural massiveness of the movement, but the hint of urgency makes the result more gripping as well as more passionate. And with very full digital sound, much more spacious, less congested at *fortissimo* than the Karajan, with more body than the beautifully refined Haitink analogue, the result is overpowering. The close of the movement brings less feeling of desolation than with Haitink or Karajan, more of warmth and beauty. In principle the very slow speed and direct manner of Haitink are what I would opt for, but in practice I find Previn is more concentratedly compelling.