

THE ART OF HERBERT VON KARAJAN: Monaural Recordings with The Philharmonia Orchestra.

Vol. I. MOZART: Symphony No. 39 (rec. July 10, October 10/11, 1955); Clarinet Concerto (Bernard Walton, clarinet; July 9/10, 1955) (EAC-37001). Sinfonia Concertante, K. 297b (Sidney Sutcliffe, oboe; Bernard Walton, clarinet; Cecil James, bassoon; Dennis Brain, horn; November 17/18, 1953); Eine kleine Nachtmusik (November 18, 1953) (EAC-37002). Divertimento in B-flat major, K. 287 (April 28 and May 21, 1952 and May 28, 1955); Symphony No. 35 (November 6, 1954 and May 28, 1955) (EAC-37003). Horn Concertos 1-4 (Dennis Brain, horn; November 12/13, 23, 1953) (EAC-37004). Piano Concerto No. 23, K. 488 (Walter Giesecking; June 10, 1951); Piano Concerto No. 24, K. 491 (Walter Giesecking; August 25, 1953) (EAC 37005). BEETHOVEN: Egmont-Overture (June 24 and July 15, 1953); Leonore Overture No. 3 (July 13/14, 1953); Symphony No. 1 (November 21, 1953) (EAC-37006). Coriolanus, Overture; Symphony No. 2 (November 12/13 and 23, 1953) (EAC-37007). Symphony No. 3 (November 20/22, 1953) (EAC-37008). Symphony No. 4 (September 13, 16, 19, 1953); Ah, perfido! (Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano; September 20, 1954) (EAC-37009). Symphony No. 5 (November 9/10, 1954); Fidelio--Abscheulicher, wo eilst du hin? (Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano; September 20, 1954) (EAC-37010). Symphony No. 6 (July 9/10, 1953) (EAC-37011). Symphony No. 7 (November 28/30, 1951) (EAC-37012). Symphony No. 8 (November 13, 1953); Symphony No. 9 (Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano; Marga Höffgen, alto; Ernst Hafliger, tenor; Otto Edelman, bass; Chorus of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde im Wien; July 24/29, 1955) (EAC-37013/4). Piano Concerto No. 5 (Walter Giesecking, piano; June 7/9, 1951) (EAC-37015). Piano Concerto No. 4 (Walter Giesecking; June 9, 11, 1951); SCHUMANN: Piano Concerto (Dinu Lipatti, piano; April 9/10, 1948) (EAC-37016). SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 8 (May 19/20, 1955); BRAHMS: Variations on a theme of Haydn (May 17/18, 1955) (EAC-37017). BERLIOZ: Symphonie fantastique (July 7/9 and 21, 1954) (EAC-37018). SCHUMANN: Piano Concerto (Walter Giesecking; August 24/25, 1953); GRIEG: Piano Concerto (Walter Giesecking; June 6, 11, 1951) (EAC-37019). FRANCK: Variations symphoniques (Walter Giesecking; June 7, 1951); BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 8 (May 19/20, 1955) (BRC-8025). Toshiba/Angel EAC-37001-19 and BRC-8025; twenty records.

Vol. II. BRAHMS: Symphony No. 1 (May 7, July 26, 28, 1952) (EAC-37020). Symphony No. 2 (May 24/25, 1955) (EAC-37021). Symphony No. 4 (May 26/27, 1955) (EAC-37022). BALAKIREV: Symphony No. 1 (November 18 and 21, 1949) (EAC-37023). TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 4 (July 6/7, 1953) (EAC-37024). Symphony No. 5 (July 25, 1952 and June 19, August 1 and 8, 1953) (EAC-37025). Symphony No. 6 (May 17, 21, 23, 24, 27, 1955 and June 18, 1956) (EAC-37026). Swan Lake--Suite (November 9, 24, 1952); Sleeping Beauty--Suite (November 24, 1952) (EAC-37027). The Nutcracker --Suite (July 30/31, 1952); HANDEL (arr. Harty): Water Music--Suite (December 1, 1951, April 26 and July 31, 1952) (EAC-37028). DEBUSSY: La Mer (July 20/22, 1953); RAVEL: Rapsodie espagnole (July 16/17, 1953) (EAC-37029). ROUSSEL: Symphony No. 4 (November 22, 28/29, 1949); R. STRAUSS: Don Juan (December 3, 1951); Till Eulenspiegel (December 4,

1951)(EAC-37030). SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 4 (July 6/7, 1953); Tapiola (July 14/15, 1953)(EAC-37031). Symphony No. 5 (July 28/29, 1952); Finlandia (July 29/31, 1952)(EAC-37032). Symphony No. 6 (July 4/5, 1955); Symphony No. 7 (July 5/6, 1955)(EAC-37033). BARTÓK: Concerto for Orchestra (July 17, 21/22, 1953); Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta (November 29, 1949)(EAC-37034). JOHANN STRAUSS JR.: Der Zigeunerbaron--Overture; Künstlerleben; Kaiser; An der schönen blauen Donau; Pizzicato (with Josef Strass): JOSEF STRAUSS: Delirien (May 25 and 27, July 6/9, 1955)(EAC-37035). "Philharmonia Promenade Concert": Waldteufel: Skaters; JOHANN STRAUSS JR.: Tritsch-tratsch; Unter Donner und Blitz; JOHANN STRAUSS SR.: Radetzky Marsch; CHABRIER: España; Marche joyeuse; SUPPÉ: Leichte Kavallerie-Overture; WEINBERGER: Schwanda der Dudelsackpfeifer-Polka; OFFENBACH: Orphée aux enfers--Overture (July 21, 1953, July 23, 1954, July 8/9, 1955)(EAC-37036). "Ballet Music from the Operas": VERDI: Aida--Ballet Music from Act II; MOUSSORGSKY: Khovanshchina--Dance of the Persian Slaves; BORODIN: Prince Igor--Dance of the Polovtsian Maidens; Polovtsian Dances; PONCHIELLI: La Gioconda--Danza delle ore; WAGNER: Tannhauser-Venusberg Music (July 23, November 5/6, 8, 1954)(EAC-37037). "Operatic Intermezzi": MASCAGNI: Cavalleria Rusticana-Intermezzo (Dennis Brain, organ); L'Amico Fritz-Intermezzo; LEONCAVALLO: Pagliacci--Intermezzo; OFFENBACH: Les Contes d'Hoffmann-Barcarolle; KODALY: Háy János-Intermezzo; PUCCINI: Manon Lescaut-Intermezzo; BIZET: Carmen-Entr'acte, Act IV; MASSENET: Thaïs-Meditation; MOUSSORGSKY: Khovanshchina-Entr'acte, Act IV; GRANADOS: Goyescas-Intermezzo; VERDI: La Traviata-Prelude to Act III (July 21/24, 1954)(EAC-37038). BRITTEN: Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge (November 10, 23, 1953); VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis (November 11, 23, 1953)(BRC-8026). Toshiba/Angel EAC-37020/38 and BRC-8026, twenty records.

THE ART OF KARAJAN AND THE PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA (Stereo recordings)

TCHAIKOVSKY: Swan Lake-Suite; Sleeping Beauty-Suite (January 7, 1959). Toshiba/Angel EAC-30254

BIZET: L'Arlésienne--Suites 1 and 2 (January 14/15, 1958); Carmen--Suite No. 1 (January 5, 1958). Toshiba/Angel EAC-30255

ROSSINI: Overtures to: Il Barbiere di Siviglia; La Gazza ladra; Guillaume Tell; L'Italiana in Algeri; La Scala di seta; Semiramide (March 26/27 and 29/30, 1960). Toshiba/Angel EAC-30256

MOUSSORGSKY (arr. Ravel): Pictures from an Exhibition (October 11/12, 1955 and June 18, 1956). Toshiba/Angel EAC-30257

OFFENBACH (arr. Rosenthal): Gaité Parisienne (January 13/16, 18, 1958); GOUNOD: Faust-Ballet Music; ROSSINI: Guillaume Tell-Ballet Music (January 18, 1958). Toshiba/Angel EAC-30258

TCHAIKOVSKY: Overture 1812 (January 17, 1958 and February 6, 1959); WEBER (arr. Berlioz): Aufforderung zum Tanz (January 9, 18, 1958);

LISZT (arr. Müller-Berghaus): Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 (January 9/10, 1958); SIBELIUS: Valse triste (January 16/17, 1958); BERLIOZ: La damnation de Faust-Marche hongroise (January 18, 1959). Toshiba/Angel EAC-30259

"Philharmonic Promenade Concert" (contents as above, EAC-37036) (September 21 and 23, 1960). Toshiba/Angel EAC-30260

"Ballet Music from the Operas" (contents as above, EAC-37037) (September 21/23, 1960). Toshiba/Angel EAC-30261

"Operatic Intermezzi" (contents as above, EAC-37038, except that selections from Cavalleria rusticana, Háry János, Carmen, and Thaïs are replaced by SCHMIDT: Notre Dame-Intermezzo; BERLIOZ: Les Troyens: Royal Hunt and Storm) (January 3, 5/6, 1959). Toshiba/Angel EAC-30262

LISZT: Les Preludes (January 17, 1959); RESPIGHI: The Pines of Rome (January 10, 1959); BERLIOZ: Le carnaval romain-Overture (January 17 and February ?, 1959). Toshiba/Angel EAC-30263

On the heels of its reissue of Herbert von Karajan's EMI recordings with the Vienna Philharmonic between 1946 and 1950 (reviewed in this Journal, IX/1, pp. 105ff.), Toshiba/Angel now presents the bulk of his work with the Philharmonia Orchestra-Chapter Three, as it were, of the Karajan career on records, added to Chapter Two. Still current in the catalogues, for the most part, is Chapter Four, more than twenty years of work with the Berlin Philharmonic, along with its still-growing appendix of recordings (mostly operatic) with the Vienna Philharmonic. That leaves Chapter One, the Nazi-period recordings, still in limbo, but it wouldn't surprise me if somebody eventually packaged that as well (about nine LPs worth, I reckon).

The Philharmonia mono recordings fill two big boxes of twenty discs each. The individual discs are in paper sleeves titled in English, in which language are also offered recording dates, names of producers and engineers, and original catalogue numbers; the rest is in Japanese, as are the accompanying booklets. Like the Vienna series, the Philharmonia reissue eschews the complete operas (Humperdinck's Hansel, Richard Strauss's Ariadne and Rosenkavalier, Mozart's Così, Johann Strauss's Fledermaus, Verdi's Falstaff) as well as two large choral works (Bach's Mass in B minor and Beethoven's Missa solemnis); all of these are at present available in one country or another. Not so easy to fill in will be another lacuna, the two piano concertos of Kurt Leimer, with the composer as soloist, recorded in November 1954 and published in Germany (Columbia WCX-1508, C-90282, SME-91793--the last presumably in electronic stereo). Also excluded are the aria accompaniments conducted anonymously for Boris Christoff, recently reissued (and credited) in Germany (Electrola LC 147-03 336/7) and Great Britain (HMV RLS-735); there may well be other material of this sort as yet undiscovered.

The stereo series, like the earlier VPO series, is offered as single discs, ten in number, presented in regular-weight cardboard sleeves; the linguistic distribution of information is similar to that of the mono discs. No doubt because the remaining stereo items are currently in print in Japan, the coverage is rather less comprehensive. In fact, many of these recordings are still listed in American and British catalogues, while such omissions as the Sibelius Second and the Mozart "Prague" Symphonies are not. Curiously, at least two recordings that could be in the stereo series are presented only in mono: the 1955 Beethoven Eighth Symphony (published in real stereo in HMV SLS-5053, along with electronic-stereo reprocessings of the other eight Philharmonia Beethoven symphony recordings) and the Mozart 39th (see this Journal, X/2-3, p. 293). And I have little doubt that most of the other sessions from May and July 1955 were taken down in stereo, including the Beethoven Ninth recorded in Vienna (the Mozart Ave verum corpus from that session has long been available in stereo, on Angel 35948), though some of these may have been defective.

Except for the Beethoven symphonies and that perennial bestseller, Dennis Brain's record of the Mozart horn concertos, these Philharmonia mono recordings haven't been available in quite a while. Nearly all of them circulated in America: the early ones on Columbia, the later ones on Angel, whose early catalogue was massively dependent on Karajan (More than a fifth of the first hundred Angel numbers, in fact!). Exceptions: the Balakirev Symphony, the Strauss tone poems, and the Roussel Fourth (which, from the LP matrix number, appears to have been mastered for LP sometime around 1952, though it was never thus issued in any country). Oddly, I cannot trace any American release of the Tchaikovsky Sixth, which seems highly improbable.

The Philharmonia connection was Karajan's central recording relationship between his banishment from the Vienna Philharmonic because of Furtwängler's animosity and his election as Furtwängler's successor at the Berlin Philharmonic in 1955. (During these years, Karajan retained a Viennese "presence" as music director of the Wiener Symphoniker, but his recordings were all made "in exile," as it were.) After that, Berlin soon became the clear focus of his most serious recording work--the Philharmonic was his own orchestra, while the Philharmonia was Walter Legge's. (Back in 1945, Beecham, after conducting its first concert, aspired to make the Philharmonia his orchestra, but Legge had long ago decided that there would be no permanent conductor; his 1942 memo on the planned orchestra noted that "A 'one-man band' inevitably bears the mark of its permanent conductor's personality, his own particular sonority and his approach to music. The Philharmonia Orchestra should have style, not 'a style.'"¹

Karajan first conducted the Philharmonia in concert on April 11, 1948, at the Royal Albert Hall; the program included Strauss's Don Juan,

1. Stephen Pettit, Dennis Brain: A Biography, London, 1976, pp. 83ff.

Beethoven's Fifth, and the Schumann Piano Concerto with Dinu Lipatti, which had been recorded during the two preceding days. The only work in the present series to be recorded only on wax, this famous recording still sounds well; I like this transfer (matrix 2XEA-3121) much better than my U. S. Columbia copy (ML-4525, matrix XLP-9105), with its twangy piano. Despite some momentary shakiness in the very extroverted finale, this is an impressive performance, with much care devoted to the precise articulation of the simple phrases that begin the second movement, for instance.

Karajan's next Philharmonia recordings present more exotic repertory: Balakirev's First Symphony, Roussel's Fourth, and Bartók's Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta (then little more than a decade old). The explanation was the music-loving Maharajah of Mysore, who in the late Forties underwrote the recording of a number of neglected works by composers he fancied. None of these performances is especially idiomatic (cf., for example, Beecham's Balakirev, in which the rhythms are so much more vividly profiled), and the recorded sound is grey of tone and muddy of texture, especially disabling to the Bartók score, in which the percussion is erratically balanced.

There was worse to come: the five piano concertos recorded with Walter Gieseking in June 1951 represent the low point of the Karajan/Philharmonia series and, though I don't have comparisons available in all cases, it seems to represent the low point of technical work in the Japanese reissue. The Franck Variations symphoniques, which bear a Japanese matrix (2XJ series) are veiled and fuzzy, with an unpleasant ringing to the piano tone; the opening pages of the Grieg concerto fade in and out; the "Emperor" offers a nobbly piano tone and a cavernous ambience, while in the last movement can be heard the mismatching of takes with different microphone placements. The final two recordings in this lot, Beethoven's Fourth Concerto and Mozart's K. 488, sound better; perhaps somebody was learning on the job.

These aren't very satisfactory performances, either. The Grieg is pompous, often too slow, and sloppy on Gieseking's part. The contrasts in the "Emperor" are strained and exaggerated. The G major Beethoven is played with great clarity, so that the passing dissonances in the writing really sound, but the playing is glib (the short cadenza is played in the first movement, but--as in his earlier recording with Böhm--Gieseking can't seem to think of anything to do with it except race through it; however, the Böhm performance is often tenser and more forceful, even on the pianist's part). In K. 488, on the other hand, Gieseking's glib and limpid playing--superficial though we may find it--is at least preferable to the elephantine work of the orchestra (cf. the dotted rhythm in the second tune of the first movement, which has no spring until the pianist takes it up).

In August 1953, Gieseking, Karajan, and the Philharmonia had another session, devoted to the Schumann Concerto and Mozart's K. 491. This went much better, to judge from the results, though the last

movement of the Schumann is less specifically (and less accurately) played than by Lipatti. Juxtaposition of the products of these two groups of sessions reveals not only a distinct improvement in the sound quality, but also the increasing distinction of the orchestra's playing: the wind solos in the Mozart, the variety and clarity of articulations are especially noteworthy.

In late 1951, with the Beethoven Seventh Symphony, began the heyday of the Karajan/Philharmonia recordings; sessions took place every few months for the next four years. The quality of sound gradually clears up; the 1953 recordings are quite presentable, though those of 1952 can be on the fierce side (e.g., the shrill, close, boxy sound of the Nut-cracker Suite); an exception is the clean and solid Brahms First. Some of these 1952 performances might be described as eccentric: the Tchaikovsky Fifth Symphony, with its slow and too frequently articulated tempos in the first movement, is a prime example, and the last movement of the Brahms First is similarly flawed. Others are simply impersonal: the Mozart Divertimento, K. 287 (begun in 1952 and completed in 1955) seems exclusively concerned with how neatly the piece can be played, and the strings do indeed stay together through some very fussy, hair-pinny phrasing in the Adagio. Here, in the Tchaikovsky ballet music, and in the Handel-Harty suite, we encounter the beginning of the Karajan sables-and-diamonds style--big, rich-toned, rhetorically skillful performances that don't dig very deeply into the individuality of each piece. In music in which character is more significant than structure (a category that includes most French music, most dance music, a good deal of Russian music, among other things), this approach leaves much to be desired--one has but to compare recordings by Karajan and Beecham to hear the difference.

As I read the evidence of the recordings, Karajan's concern with structure changed during the early Fifties. One assumes that those tempo articulations in the Brahms First and Tchaikovsky Fifth were motivated by a desire to clarify structure--an interpretive resource common to a certain tradition of German music-making, most prominently in the conducting of Wilhelm Furtwängler. Karajan in these years gradually abjures that resource; it appears that his decisions were increasingly made on the basis of ideals of textural clarity and rhythmic continuity, ideals that he has since pursued with ever greater refinement and persistence.

I'm not going to comment on each and every one of these recordings, if only because that would become repetitive; to these ears, once Karajan has settled in his stride and the orchestra achieved the kind of virtuosity that he required (the landmark in this respect being La Mer in July 1953, an amazing achievement for the band that had played the Gieseke sessions two years earlier), the performances become expert and not especially interesting except for that expertise. I don't mean to underrate them--but if you value this approach to musical performance, you will find it even better exemplified by later Karajan recordings, with even better orchestras and recorded sound. The Philharmonia series

(aside from the operas and a few other works that remain unique in the Karajan discography) is now primarily of documentary and biographical interest.

Among the important things it documents, one deserves special mention. The mono set constitutes a major repository of the orchestral work of Dennis Brain, the great horn player who died in an auto crash on September 1, 1957. According to Pettit's biography (p. 184), Brain "is almost certain to be on every Philharmonia record issued up to the end of 1958," and he is probably on all of these mono recordings--unmistakably so in such celebrated solos as the slow movement of the Tchaikovsky Fifth, the Intermezzo from Háry János, and of course Till Eulenspiegel, as well as the Mozart works for which he is specifically credited.

After the completion of the 1956 opera sessions, Karajan's work with the Philharmonia diminishes, and his sessions there are mostly devoted to pop-concert repertory; he had turned towards Berlin for his serious work, and the Philharmonia's concert work was more and more in the hands of Otto Klemperer (one might argue that the enduring significance of Karajan's work with the Philharmonia was that he prepared a suitable instrument for the older conductor's more individual and controversial interpretations, while his own reached their ultimate realizations elsewhere). Around this time, too, Karajan appears to have become restless with EMI, perhaps feeling that they were not making the best exploitation of the possibilities of stereo sound. At any rate, in 1959 he began working for other labels: on DG with the Berlin Philharmonic, on Decca/London and its then-affiliate RCA with the Vienna Philharmonic. The latter connection continued sporadically until 1965, and the former soon became Karajan's principal affiliation. After 1960, he made no recordings for EMI until 1969, when--his recording requirements now evidently too ambitious for a single company to handle--he began the current joint arrangement with DG and EMI, again leavened with occasional work for Decca/London, primarily on operatic projects.

By any measure, this is one of the extraordinary recording careers --more than forty years of significant activity, and not over yet. Earlier conductors may have made multiple recordings of some few works in their repertory (Stokowski an obvious example, of course, while Bruno Walter seems to have made six versions of the Siegfried Idyll); many of the central works in Karajan's repertory have been recorded three times or more--all of the Beethoven and Brahms symphonies at least that, while he has recorded the Zigeunerbaron Overture and Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony six times to date. Some of these repetitions were certainly stimulated by technological improvement (e.g., EMI's stereo remakes of "Philharmonia Promenade Concert" and such), others probably to fill out contractual obligations. What do they tell us?

Out of curiosity, I undertook to listen to those six recordings of the Zigeunerbaron Overture:

- 1) Berlin Philharmonic, 1942 (DG 67997; LP: BASF 98-22177-6);
- 2) Vienna Philharmonic, 1946 (Col. LX-1009; LP: Toshiba/Angel EAC-30110);
- 3) Philharmonia, 1955 (Angel 35342; Toshiba/Angel EAC-37035);
- 4) Vienna Philharmonic, 1959 (RCA LSC-2538; London STS-15163);
- 5) Berlin Philharmonic, 1966 (DG 139014);
- 6) Berlin Philharmonic, 1975 (Angel 37144).

There are many readily observable differences among these performances, in tempo (and its modifications), in execution, in points of style, in balance. Karajan wavers between slower (1, 3, 4, 6) and faster (2, 5) tempos for the principal oboe melody (the "Hier in diesem Land" tune, m. 54), and returns in his latest recording to the slower tempo for the "Schatzwalzer" (m. 180) that he favored back in 1942. The degrees of crescendo and accelerando (both unrequested) that he applies to the little tune with the glockenspiel ("Darum nur klopf, klopf," m. 110) and to the final strain of the "Schatzwalzer" (m. 220 and m. 283) vary from one performance to the next, sometimes converting the former spot into one long upbeat to the subsequent section, which is not, I think, what Johann Strauss had in mind.

Another category of differences points more clearly to the refinement of Karajan's purposes. After the oboe has played the "Hier in diesem Land" melody alone, it is doubled in a second strain by the cellos an octave lower, the oboe reserving for itself a few little ornamental details. It's very easy for the cellos to swamp the oboe if they make too much tone, and this happens in both the Vienna recordings, especially the first one. The oboe comes through quite clearly in the Philharmonia recording, at the price of a rather anemic cello tone. Only in the later Berlin recordings is something like a perfect balance achieved--and this is, of course, one reason why a Karajan would prefer working primarily with his "own" orchestra, training them to listen to each other and make sounds that blend, teaching them the pieces so that they know what he wants. It is this kind of detail--or, for example, the sixteenth-note running figures in the cellos and basses at m. 259 (under the "Her die Hand" tune), which finally come really clean in the 1966 recording, only to be obscured again in 1975 by a boomier sound--that Karajan would point to as a significant aspect of his achievement as a conductor. (The Berlin Philharmonic has, indeed, come a long way since 1942; listen to the string runs in the Più Allegro section preceding the "Schatzwalzer," leaden in 1942 but sizzling from the Vienna orchestra even in 1946, less good from the Philharmonia, and eventually very fine in the recent Berlin performances.)

Having noted all these differences, and especially the rather striking contrast between the last two recordings (No. 5 perhaps the tightest and fastest of all six, No. 6 nearly as slow as the 1942 version though hardly as ponderous), it remains to be said that these are still six variations, more or less successful, on the same basic performance. Just turn to Clemens Krauss (conducting the Vienna Philharmonic, in the "complete" Decca/London Zigeunerbaron or various

miscellaneous compilations) or Bruno Walter conducting a New York pickup group (recently reissued on Odyssey Y-35218) to hear that a considerable range of interpretive possibility has not been touched in any of the Karajan recordings.

Right after the flute cadenza in the overture's introduction, the strings play a short phrase, in a dotted rhythm. Under that phrase, the cellos articulate a neighbor-note figure that is subsequently, in an exposed manner, echoed by the clarinet; both Krauss and Walter make something of the cello phrase--which, after all, relates to the opening notes of the piece as well as to other "Hungarian" turns of phrase--but in none of Karajan's performances is it played in anything but a routine way. Both these conductors inflect the "Hier in diesem Land" melody with far more warmth and sentiment and eschew the unmarked accelerandos noted above; they convey a more vivid sense of the wayward and distinctive rhythmic character of these tunes, the "Hungarian-ness" of the piece, as well as the sensuous possibilities of the big waltz tune. And yet they are quite different performances, the Walter not only faster but more mannered: notice how the opening measures are dramatized, given a more improvisatory character.

Broad generalizations from this single example would be unwise, though I believe one implication it bears to be sound: most performers operate, consciously or not, within a relatively limited range of possibilities, a particular set of assumptions about what is important in making music, and the specific decisions they make within that range are, in the long run, not as determinative of their success as interpreters as is the appropriateness of those assumptions to a given piece or musical style. Karajan's assumptions don't allow room for the kind of musical characterization that brings to vivid life such works as the Zigeunerbaron Overture, though he always gives a proficient performance of it. Mutatis mutandis, the assumptions that enabled a Beecham to conduct Chabrier or Bizet so flavourfully did not yield equally successful results with Beethoven symphonies.

Having made so much note of Karajan's repeated recordings of the same repertory, let me close on a different note. Perhaps impelled by the demands of recording contracts and the impossibility of repeating works more often than five years, he has--at an age when most conductors have stopped learning "new" pieces--taken up the music of Mahler, of the Second Viennese School, of Mendelssohn (none of whose symphonies he has recorded before 1971--but then he probably didn't have much opportunity to conduct them in his younger years). He still shies away from Haydn: a total of five recordings of four symphonies in all these years hardly argues much enthusiasm, or even sympathy. Nor do the Russians, including Stravinsky, loom large in his discography; perhaps he's saving them for his eighth decade. Sparse indeed is his attention to composers of his own generation: Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony, Britten's Bridge Variations, and the Leimer piano concertos are the only works on the list by men born after 1900. (Karajan's exact contemporaries include both Olivier Messiaen and Elliott Carter:

dare we imagine him conducting either Turangalila or the Concerto for Orchestra?)

As already suggested, the technical work on this series is nothing special, unlike the Vienna recordings that were so impressively transferred by Anthony Griffith. It doesn't seem as if any effort has been made to go back to the original 30 ips master tapes, and the Beethoven symphonies, for example, are more than marginally cleaner and brighter in the British electronic-stereo versions in SLS-5053. (Concerning the Eighth Symphony, the annotations, like the Karajan discography reviewed in this Journal, X/2-3, p. 291ff, are misleading. The version offered as filler to the Ninth Symphony, with matrix number XAX-814, is assigned the dates 13 November 1953, 19th and 20th May, 1955, and is listed as published on 33CX-1392; the version on the "bonus" disc, coupled with the Franck Variations symphoniques, has the matrix number YAX-325, is assigned the same dates as the other recording, and is described as "unissued." They are certainly different performances; what is more, the second one is identical to the stereo version included in SLS-5053, which must date entirely from 1955--so presumably the other one is the 1953 recording. Was that ever previously issued? I do not have a copy of the original issue of the Eighth and Ninth Symphonies to check it against.)

Of the major works in this series, Karajan never remade the Balakirev, Roussel, Britten, and Vaughan Williams pieces, most of the concertos, and quite a few of the lollipops (though a goodly number of the last are still available domestically in the stereo versions); for these, for the biographical significance of these recordings, for the fascination of comparisons that they make possible, this reissue of the Karajan/Philharmonia recordings is welcome. These recordings belong in every archive seriously devoted to the history of orchestral performance in the mid-twentieth century. Faced with such a mammoth and obviously significant republication, we can only wonder at the appetite of Japanese record buyers--and we may also wish that a little more enterprise had been shown in tracing the best possible source material for such a project.

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