

collections. Others who have read this far are encouraged to look for the Columbia/Molajoli set (excerpts from it are on Voce del Padrone 3M 065-17802 M), which is superior in nearly every way.

John W. N. Francis

**MASTER PIANIST: The Artistry of Carl Friedberg.** Carl Friedberg, piano. (recorded in 1949, 1951, and 1953) IPAM 1102/3 (4 sides, mono), \$15.00. (Available from International Piano Archives at Maryland, Hornbake 3210, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742)

**WNYC broadcast, late 1930s.** BRAHMS: Quintet in F Minor for piano and strings, Op. 34. with Perolé Quartet (Joseph Coleman, Max Hollander, violinists; Lillian Fuchs, violist; Ernest Silverstein, cellist).

**Juilliard recital, August 2, 1949.** BRAHMS: Ballade in G Minor, Op. 118, No. 3. CHOPIN: Impromptu No. 3 in G-flat, Op. 51; Nocturne in F-sharp, Op. 15, No. 2; Ballade No. 3 in A-flat, Op. 47. FRIEDBERG: Improvisation, "Remembrance."

**Juilliard recital, July 24, 1951.** BRAHMS: Intermezzo in C, Op. 119, No. 3. PARADIES: Sonata No. 6 in A for clavier--Toccata.

**Zodiac Records session, April 28, 1953.** MENDELSSOHN: Rondo capriccioso in E, Op. 14. PAUER: Old French gavotte.

**Zodiac Records session, May 28, 1953.** SCHUMANN: Etudes symphoniques, Op. 13; Romance in F-sharp, Op. 28, No. 2. BEETHOVEN: Sonata No. 10 in G, Op. 14, No. 2. CRAMER: Etude in C, Op. 81, No. 1.

Karl Rudolf Hermann Friedberg is one of the legendary figures of the past hundred years or so--he was born in Bingen, Germany, in 1872 and died on a visit back to Europe in 1955--who is particularly frustrating to a posterity which has lived long enough into the age of recording to prefer the actual sounds of musical history, in whatever condition, to words about that history, however vivid. Although his career as a pianist spanned more than six decades, he held out firmly against the new age until he was convinced to give high fidelity a try. By then he was 81 years old. The first issued product of several trips to the New York studios of Zodiac Records in 1953 was Zodiac 1001, which included two Brahms Intermezzi and a Scherzo, as well as Schumann's Kinderszenen and a Novelette. That was, apparently, the last of Zodiac, and it continues to be so, because those recordings are not reissued here, though several of the selections do come from the Zodiac sessions.

The history sounding in these records is rich indeed. A pupil of Clara Schumann, Friedberg turned pages for Brahms and played a pioneering all-Brahms recital with the Master

in the audience. Brahms approved of the playing, and later spent hours going over his music with the young man, but he disapproved of an all-Brahms concert: "People don't like that; they don't want me." In the early Nineties Friedberg toured with Sarasate and was accorded an official debut as soloist with the Vienna Philharmonic under Mahler, winning high praise from Hanslick. In the Teens he won more praise in a tour of the U.S. with Kreisler and also as a soloist. Back in Europe he replaced Schnabel in the famed Schnabel-Flesch-Becker trio in 1920, and in the Twenties he published two influential editions of the Beethoven piano sonatas. Frank Damrosch lured him in 1923 to the faculty of the Institute of Musical Art in New York, and the next year he joined the faculty of the new Juilliard Graduate School (with which the Institute later merged). He taught at Juilliard until he retired in 1946. Friedberg taught in one setting or another throughout his career, and his pupils included Malcolm Frager, Bruce Hungerford, William Masselos, Elly Ney, John Ranck, Ferrante and Teicher, and many other significant performers and teachers. One of them, Julia Smith, wrote a comprehensive biography of Friedberg, published in 1963 and liberally quoted in the excellent notes for this set.

So much for the history; what about the sounds themselves? The sound quality itself is variable. That for the Zodiac studio work is generally excellent for its time, slightly constricted but faithful to tonal production of one who put into inimitable practice what he preached: "The tone an artist draws from his instrument should be round, full and expressive, capable of being shaded and varied, just as is the bel canto of the singer. We should learn to sing with our fingers." The sound of the live material is marred by a bit of radio interference in the 1949 Juilliard recital and is rather dim in the late-Thirties broadcast of the Brahms Quintet, but most of this material is clear enough to be enjoyed without strain and to project the shape, the force, the lyrical line so central to the art of Friedberg.

As to the performances themselves, honesty compels me to mention that a recent Fanfare review displays a much more dry-eyed attitude than mine toward this release, but after many hearings, after the seductions of historical presence and pent-up curiosity have worn off, what remains is a collection of immense musical value. The Friedberg tone is not an end in itself; it is wedded to an unflinching sense of architecture and detail that enabled the artist to take full measure of each work. His Schumann, Chopin, and Brahms share a legato and an expressiveness, but each also has its own sound, its own expressive character. Friedberg applies a tasteful rubato often, but his approach is basically straightforward and clear-textured.

In many respects, the Brahms Quintet, for all its Depression-vintage broadcast sound, is the most exciting discovery in this set. The pianist was roughly a decade younger than at the time of any of his other recordings, and he played with a massive, muscular force as well as with his patented lyricism. The Perolé Quartet's contribution is also well worth attention--this fine group made recordings for Musicraft of Dittersdorf, Mozart, and J.C.F. Bach, around the time of this performance, which were well received, but here they accommodate themselves very well to the breadth and warmth of Brahms. As might be expected, the work of the young Lillian Fuchs is particularly outstanding. Friedberg's later recordings of the Intermezzo and the Ballade also have abundant Brahmsian strength and impetuosity, and only slightly less security in the Ballade.

The effect of eight decades of life on the 1949-1953 performances cannot be denied, but it is mostly to be noted only in passing--some unevenness in the sixteenth-note triplets of the otherwise delightful Beethoven Tenth Sonata, moments of hard labor in the march finale of the Symphonic Etudes, some heavy moments in the quicksilver Mendelssohn. Even if these performances were patently geriatric, they'd be important. But the music-making here is ageless, though rooted in a great age of pianism.

Ward Marston (who did the remastering), and behind him Neil Ratliff, Morgan Cundiff, and Gregor Benko, deserve our deepest thanks. Such projects also deserve support--I note that Adelina de Lara, along with Ilona Eibenschütz and Fanny Davies, has recently been rescued from discographic oblivion by way of a new series on Pearl devoted to the pupils of Clara Schumann. Now, perhaps, IPAM can be persuaded to turn its attention to Etelka Freund, Isadore Philipp, and others whose recorded legacy is, like Friedberg's, generally too small and too late to assert itself in our sound heritage, but far too precious to lose.

John Swan