SOUND RECORDING REVIEWS

The Glenn Gould Collection on VHS

Volume I. Sony SHV 48402. Prologue: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 110, final movements (1963), and "Eroica" Variations, Op.35 (1960); Bach on the piano and harpsichord (1958 and 1969); Mahler, Symphony No. 2, "Urlicht" movement, with Maureen Forrester, conducted by Gould (1957); Walton, "Scotch Rhapsody" from *Facade* with Patricia Rideout and Glenn Gould, speakers, Boris Brott, cond.(1974-5); intro. by Bruno Monsaingeon, interviews with Forrester, Gould. TT: 57:42

Volume II. SHV 48403. Sonatas and Dialogues: Bach, Sonata No. 4, BWV 1017; Beethoven, Sonata No. 10, Op. 96; and Schoenberg, Phantasy, Op. 47, all with Yehudi Menuhin, violin, and Gould, piano (1965), with conversations about Beethoven and Schoenberg. TT: 58:55

Volume III. SHV 48405. End of Concerts: Bach, Partita No. 5, BWV 829 (1957) and Fugue XXII from WTC, Book II (1963); Sweelinck, Fantasia (1964); Beethoven, Bagatelle Op. 126, No. 3 (1970) and Sonata No. 17, Op. 31, No. 2 "The Tempest" (1960); Krenek, "Wanderlied im Herbst," with Patricia Rideout, contralto (1977); Hindemith, Fugue from Piano Sonata No. 3 (1963); Gould on concerts, Hindemith, and as "Karl-Heinz Klopweisser." TT: 54:17

Volume IV. SHV 48406. So You Want to Write a Fugue?: Bach, Fugue VII (1963) and Prelude and Fugue IX (1969) from WTC, Part II, and Concerto No. 7 for Piano and Orchestra, BWV 1058, with the Toronto Symphony, Vladimir Golschmann, cond. (1967); Berg, Sonata, Op. 1 (1973); Beethoven, Sonata Op. 109 (1964); Gould, "So You Want to Write a Fugue," with vocal and string quartets (1963), and dialogue with Humphrey Burton on Beethoven Op. 109. TT: 56:24

Volume V. SHV 48408. The Conductor: Bach, Cantata "Widerstehe doch der Sunde," BWV 54, with Russell Oberlin, countertenor, and Gould, cond. and "harpsipiano" (1962) and Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, with Julius Baker, flute, Oscar Shumsky, violin, and Gould, conductor and "harpsipiano" (1962); Gould on Wawa, Canada, and playing Liszt's transcription of the first movement of Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony; Gould on Bach and as "Sir Nigel Twitt-Thornwaite." TT: 49:14

Volume VI. SHV 48409. The Earliest Decade: Bach, Concerto No. 1 for Piano and Orchestra, BWV 1052, with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, cond. Thomas Meyer (1957); Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 15, first movement (Gould cadenza), Paul Scherman, cond. (1954), and 32 Variations on an Original Theme (1966). TT: 53:45

Volume VII. SHV 48411. A Russian Interlude: Prokofiev, Visions Fugitives, Op. 22, No. 2 (1974) and Piano Sonata No. 7, Op. 83 (1961); Scriabin, Preludes, Op. 33, No. 3 and Op. 45, No. 3 (1973); Shostakovich, Piano Quintet, Op. 57, minus the Scherzo, with the Symphonia Quartet (1961). TT: 50:54

Volume VIII. SHV 48412. Interweaving Voices: Bach, Contrapunctus IV from The Art of the Fugue (1962); Beethoven, 6 Variations, Op. 34, and Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 69, with Leonard Rose (1960); Hindemith, Das Marienleben, V. "Argwohn Josephs" with Roxolana Roslak, soprano (1974-5); Webern, Variations, Op. 27 (1964). TT: 48:54.

Volume IX. SHV 48414. Mostly Strauss: Strauss, Cacilie, Op. 27, No. 2, with Lois Marshall, soprano (1962), and Burleske for Piano and Orchestra, Toronto Symphony, cond. Vladimir Golschmann

(1967); Mozart, Sonata K. 333 (1966); Gould on Strauss and Mozart (with Humphrey Burton). TT: 53:31.

Volume X. SHV 48415. Rhapsodic Interludes: Schubert, Symphony No. 5, brief excerpt of first movement in piano transcription (1958-9); Strauss, Elektra excerpt in Gould piano transcription (1966), "Beim Schlafengehen" from Four Last Songs, with Lois Marshall (1962), and Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 18, first movement, with Oscar Shumsky (1962); Schoenberg, Pierrot Lunaire, Op. 21, three selections, with Patricia Rideout and ensemble (1974); Ravel, La Valse, transcription by Gould based on Ravel's transcription (1974); Debussy, Premiere Rhapsodie, with James Campbell, clarinet (1973); Gould on Elektra and La Valse. TT: 53:50

Volume XI. SHV 48417. Ecstasy and Wit: Beethoven, Sonata No. 17, "The Tempest" (1966); Scriabin, Prelude, Op. 49, No. 2 (1973); Strauss, Ophelia Lieder, with Roxolana Roslak (1974); Bach, Goldberg Variations, Aria and six canonic variations (1964); Casella, Ricercare No. 1 (1976-7); Gould on Strauss and as "Myron Chianti." TT: 50:52

Volume XII. SHV 48418. Epilogue: Bach, Prelude and Fugue III and XXII from WTC, Part 2; Beethoven, Concerto No. 5, "Emperor," with the Toronto Symphony, cond Karel Ancerl (1970). TT: 52:33

(There is also a tape of "Greatest Hits" from the Collection, SHV 48433, and the series is also available on six videodiscs.)

We have the Canadian Broadcasting Company to thank for most of the original footage, from some 30 CBC TV shows centered on Gould, that went into this series. We also have to thank Bruno Monsaingeon, producer and filmmaker who collaborated with Gould for the CBC, and creator of the European Revcom series which he then arranged into the current format. Not only is he involved in the production of further Gould issues yet to come, but he also has expressed recently his Gouldian devotion by serving both as guiding spirit and violinist in a SONY CD of his subject's original compositions (SK 47184). Our debt of gratitude is enormous.

The release of this video collection marked the tenth anniversary of Gould's death in 1982. So vivid was his personality that it comes as a shock to realize that he has not been among us for over a decade. As the contents listing reveals, this series does not try to present a chronological account of Gould's career, although it does cover most of it, from an energetic Beethoven First Concerto of 1954 (first movement, with his own cadenza, a much more stylistically conformist version than his Regeresque concoction recorded for Columbia in the next decade) to Krenek and Casella recorded in 1976-77. Nor does this series attempt to analyze or offer a unifying interpretation of that spectacular and problematic career—not that it prevents its watchers from doing so, as witness Will Crutchfield's eloquent but misguided argument that Gould's ambition was to become the Liszt of the 20th century, in his *New York Times* review of the collection.

What the series does present, and very handsomely, considering the sometimes variable aural and visual quality of the source material, is an extended demonstration and celebration of the astonishing genius of Glenn Gould. In its loosely thematic way, the collection does portray most of the best known facets of that genius, from his playing of Bach to his verbal talents in musical analysis and description. We are treated to his genuine if rather self-conscious ability as a comic actor, his wonderfully avant-avant-garde "Karlheinz Klopweisser," complete with flowing blond locks. He also makes excellent account of himself in the *Facade* excerpt. His notorious Mozart-died-too-late-rather-than-too-soon argument is here, briefly and rather sheepishly defended, and then contradicted with a lively, beautifully proportioned account of the K. 333 Sonata, free of the extremes that characterize his notorious studio traversal of the sonatas.

Gould's deep admiration for Richard Strauss is much in evidence, not only on the tape devoted to "Mostly Strauss" but also on the "Rhapsodic Interludes" volume. The

former features an illuminating introduction to the teenaged Strauss' brilliant *Burleske,* a work of genuine inspiration undervalued by nearly everyone but Gould. As it happens, the actual performance of the work which follows, despite many fine touches and an abundance of digital panache, is rather leaden at key moments, at least to ears permanently seduced by the incandescent Byron Janis-Fritz Reiner-Chicago RCA recording of the mid-fifties. The Strauss on the "Rhapsodic Interludes" tape, on the other hand, is wholly extraordinary. Oscar Shumsky and the pianist give a dashing account of the first movement of the youthful Violin Sonata, and Lois Marshall and Gould give such a deeply passionate, soaring performance of "Beim Schlafengehen" that a few passing vocal insecurities are forgiven entirely. There is vocal soaring in the *Electra* excerpt also, but it comes from Gould himself when, at the climactic moment in his chosen scene of interrogation between the two sisters, he runs out of fingers and supplies the lack with his own distinctive vocalise. This piece of footage is amazing for several reasons, chiefly for the overflowing musicality of the actual rendering of a dramatic Straussian moment, but not least as a display of the famously prodigious Gould memory. He had this and a number of other whole operas and large chunks of the orchestral repertoire in his head, and never once in these dozen tapes do we see him playing from a score, not even in accompaniments to some very challenging lieder or in the performance of the Schoenberg *Phantasy* with Menuhin (part of a rough-edged but probing and very satisfying joint recital, by the way).

One of the virtues of having nearly twelve hours of Gould to watch, however, is that his powerful memory becomes more than an end in itself and part of a larger portrait of a complete musician. It is a portrait that includes some of his well-known eccentricities—the humming, the habit of conducting himself with his free hand, the impossibly low posture at the piano—but it is not about Gould the Eccentric. It is not about his odd habits and obsessions, or the part they played, or didn't play, in his premature death. Nor, again, is it a full picture of his multifarious career. Gould was fond of referring to himself as a writer, journalist, broadcaster, and filmmaker who happened to play the piano part-time. While his success in those other activities also has been documented recently—the CBC just issued a group of his innovative radio documentaries, *The Solitude Trilogy,* on CDs, for example—this collection is essentially about a great pianist and a great musician who happened to have a multitude of other talents and interests.

His performance of his own version of Ravel's two-hand transcription of *La Valse* has to be one of the most brilliant stretches of piano playing ever caught by a camera. His rendition of the middle work in Prokofiev's monumental trilogy of "War Sonatas" is just as thrilling, despite the fact that the interpretation is somewhat more relaxed—strictly a relative term—than Gould's Columbia studio recording.

There are many interesting comparisons to be made between the performances of those works which appear both in this series and in Gould's studio discography, comparisons that do not always uphold the common view that his interpretations were more "normal" before he gave up concertizing. This is also true of the only duplicated work in this collection, the 1960 and 1966 "Tempest" Sonata performances which for all their interesting differences—the later being generally more severe—are deeply similar, stamped by the same unique musical intelligence.

The pianist's technique was, like his interpretative world view, idiosyncratic, but it was also of the highest order. In a masterful account of Beethoven's "Eroica" Variations, in his rhapsodic, occasionally odd views of the Opus 109 and 110 Sonatas, and in much of his Bach, that technique is fascinating to watch closely for the amazing strength and independence of his fingers. The clarity and shape of inner voices was

always a trademark of his playing; in these performances it is evident why. Those fingers had no weaknesses. Incidentally, the fact that we can study Gould's fingers at work is a tribute to the camera work. Though some have made fun of the camera direction and the sets, the productions generally are intelligent and effective, and even when they do try too hard for effect, as in some of the late color work, they are more interesting than much of what we see these days in visual direction of musical events on the Network of the Three Tenors.

The sustained focus on Gould the musician makes this collection a visual and musical record of the highest importance. The generous sampling of Gould's various activities as a conductor and chamber musician add considerably to that record, in part because we get to see some wonderful artists who rarely are seen in this format, including Russell Oberlin in a deeply expressive Bach Cantata performance, Leonard Rose in a superb Beethoven collaboration, and the young Maureen Forrester being conducted by the even younger Gould in a very fine "Urlicht." We also see the distinguished Czech emigre Karel Ancerl leading the Toronto forces in a remarkable "Emperor" Concerto, remarkable not only for its power and conviction, but also for the circumstances surrounding the performance. With the exception of Gould's deliberate way with his opening arpeggios, this is a much straighter account than his earlier Stokowski-led studio version. When Michelangeli decided late one evening that he would not keep the appointment to record the work for the CBC the next morning, those left holding the contracts for all the musicians and TV technicians realized (as Monsaingeon puts it) that they had their own "difficult" pianist right there in Toronto. After a late-night call, and despite the short notice, Gould and his colleagues accomplished their morning task in one glorious take.

It would be difficult to recommend just one or two tapes from this set. Each one has its marvelous moments, but if forced to choose, I would certainly start with the first volume; and the "Rhapsodic Interludes" and the Russian installments are necessary to any student of the piano. But no one should be without Gould's own "So You Want To Write a Fugue?" with its classic refrain, "Never be clever for the sake of being clever."

It cannot be said that Gould always followed his own advice; with all that talent, it would have taken a saint's restraint not to show off occasionally. But most of what we see in this collection is the furthest thing from such cleverness. It is rather the rarest of spectacles, a genius caught in the fulfillment, often the ecstatic fulfillment, of his gift. If you can manage it, see the whole collection, even if you have to badger a library into buying it. *Reviewed by John Swan*

Cortot plays Debussy and Ravel. Children's Corner Suite, Preludes -Book I, Minstrels (with Jacques Thibaud, violin), Violin Sonata (with Thibaud), La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin and Le Vent dans la Plaine (from Preludes -Book I), Sonatine, Jeux d'eau.
Biddulph Recordings LHW 006 (1991). CD, ADD, r1928-31.
Cortot plays Schumann (Vol. 1). Papillons (Op. 2), Davidsbündlertänze (Op. 6), Piano Concerto (Op. 54).
Biddulph Recordings LHW 003 (1991). CD, ADD, r1927-37.
Cortot plays Schumann (Vol. 2). Carnaval (Op. 9), Symphonic Etudes (Op. 13 and Op. posth.), Piano Trio No. 1 (Op. 63) (with Jacques Thibaud and Pablo Casals).
Biddulph Recordings LHW 004 (1991). CD, ADD, r1928-29.
Cortot plays Schumann (Vol. 3). Kinderscenen (Op. 15), Kreisleriana (Op. 16), Des Abends (from Op. 12), Dichterliebe (Op. 48) (with Charles Panzéra).
Biddulph Recordings LHW 005 (1991). CD, ADD, r1935-37.

Cortot plays Weber and Mendelssohn. Invitation to the Dance (Op. 65), Sonata No. 2 in A-flat (Op. 39), Variations Serieuses (Op. 54), Song Without Words (Op. 19, No. 1), Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor (Op. 49) (with Jacques Thibaud and Pablo Casals). Biddulph Recordings LHW 002 (1991). CD, ADD, r1926-39.

Hearing Cortot play Debussy and Ravel provides one with a different perspective. It is all too easy to linger over the lush melodies and treat the multilayered chords as precious jewels. Instead, Cortot delivers a fast-paced, yet musical interpretation. Other artists attempting to play these pieces at Cortot's tempo sound frantic or mechanical. Cortot does neither. In the original 78 issue, Cortot's ringing tone is evident, especially in the Debussy "Le Vent Dans la Plaine," from the *Preludes,* and the Ravel "Sonatine" and "Jeux d'eau." Unfortunately, this ringing tone has not been transmitted well in the reissue. Much of the surface noise has been eliminated, but the comparative result is as if the lid has been lowered on a concert grand in a medium-sized hall. This same effect was found in the subsequent reissues listed above.

Personal favorites in the subsequent Cortot reissues are Schumann's Papillons, Davidsbündlertänze, Carnaval, Kinderscenen and Dichterliebe. Unfortunately, Panzéra sounds muffled in this reissue of Dichterliebe despite the lack of surface noise. The original 78 issue better reveals Panzéra's intensity, and dynamic contrasts, especially in "Ich grolle Nicht." Personal favorites on the Weber and Mendelssohn reissue are the Weber Sonata and the Mendelssohn Variations Sérieuses and the Piano Trio with Thibaud and Casals. Again, some of the sound seems to be muffled, but the integrity of the performance remains intact.

Despite the caveats, these reissues preserve Cortot's dynamic interpretations of Schumann, Debussy, Ravel, Weber and Mendelssohn. *Reviewed by Laura Gayle Green*

Landowska plays Bach. Partita No. 1 in B flat, Fantasia in C minor (BWV 906), French Suite No. 6 in E, Little Preludes, English Suite No. 2 in A minor, Gavotte from the English Suite No. 3 in G minor, Passapieds from the English Suite No. 5 in E minor, Prelude and Fugue in C minor (BWV 847) from Book I of the Well Tempered Clavier, Toccata in D (BWV 912). Pearl GEMM CD9489 (1991). CD, AAD, r1928-50.

Landowska's intensity and distinct Bach interpretation is evident in this reissue. Some surface noise is apparent, but the full harmonic spectrum of the harpsichord remains in comparison to the original 78 issue. The Prelude and Fugue in C minor is a surprising addition to this reissue, as it is from a live performance and is previously unissued. Landowska has a minor slip in measure 30 of the Prelude, and recovers gracefully, without breaking the musical line or the intensity of a live performance. With today's splice and dice technology, it is important to hear the legendary performers slip, and this slip is forgotten in the graceful recovery. Other favorites on this reissue are the Partita No. 1 in B flat, the selections from the English Suites No. 3 and No. 5, and the Toccata in D. The Partita in particular is delightful, as Landowska demonstrates judicious use of the lute stop, and her own particular sense of ornamentation and phrasing. Landowska recorded only the Gavotte from the English Suite No. 3 and the Passapieds from the English Suite No. 5. These movements are particularly delightful and one wishes that the rest of these suites had been recorded. The Toccata in D is a lengthy work, and Landowska's intensity is evident throughout. This reissue nicely transmits Landowska's legacy in digital form.

Reviewed by Laura Gayle Green

Philadelphia All the Time: Sounds of the Quaker City 1896-1947.

Verdi: *Il Trovatore:* "Di Quella Pira." Ferruchio Giannini, tenor (1896) (NB: *Trovatore:* "La Quella Pina" notation in liner notes)
Traditional Irish Melody, revised by Temple and Battison: *Off to Philadelphia in the Morning.* John McCormack, tenor (1941)
La Marseillaise and Schubert: Standchen (audience singalong), the Philadelphia Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, conductor (1935)
Kalmar and Leslie and Wendling: *All the Quakers are Shoulder Shakers.* Bert Harvey, vocalist (1919)
Sterling: *Ukelele Lou.* Frankie Richardson, vocalist (1924)
Victor Herbert: *Naughty Marietta:* "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life." Jeanette McDonald and Nelson Eddie (sic), vocalists (1935)
Keiffer: *Hail Philadelphia.* Philadelphia Police and Fireman's Band, Capt. Joseph Keiffer, director and conductor (1926)
J. P. Sousa: *March of the Mitten Men.* Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company Cooperative Band, Lt. A. W. Eckenworth, director; J. P. Sousa, conductor (1926)
Dieck, Murphy and Shisler: *Philadelphia All the Time.* Arthur Pryor's Band (1926)
James Bland: *Oh Dem Golden Slippers.* The Ferko String Band. (1946)
Traditional Spiritual (arranger unattributed): *Deep River.* Marian Anderson (1923)
Clarence Williams: *I'm Wild About That Thing.* Bessie Smith (1929)
Artist, Lewis and Young: *Dinah.* Ethel Waters (1925)
Charlie Gaines and Clarence Williams: *I Can't Dance. I Got Ants in My Pants.* Clarence Williams Orchestra (1934)
Composer unattributed: *Everybody Will Be Happy Over There.* Tindley Quaker City Gospel Singers (1932)
Clare, Monaco: *When Eyes of Blue are Fooling You.* Howard Lanin and the Benjamin Franklin Hotel Orchestra (1925)
Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang: *The Wild Dog.* Joe Venuti's Blue Four, with Eddie Lang (1927).
Reichner, Boland: *When I Go Dreamin'* Jan Savitt and the Top Hatters, Bon Bon Tunnell, vocalist (1938)
Russell Conwell: *Acres of Diamonds* (oration by Conwell) (1922)
Shakespeare: *Soliloquy from "Hamlet."* John Barrymore (1928)
W. C. Fields: *The Day I Drank a Glass of Water.* (comedy routine by Fields) (1946)

Compiled by David Goldenberg and Charles Hardy III with numerous period illustrations. Spinning Disc Productions, 840 Winter Rd, Rydal, PA 19046. Spinning Disc 1231 (Cassette tape).

Philadelphia All the Time takes its title from the official theme song of the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial Exposition as recorded by Arthur Pryor's Band and male chorus in 1926. And while this melody and lyric may never earn the sobriquet "timeless," as the compilers of this anthology readily acknowledge, the song and the collection alike bear a certain charm and fascination which should make this cassette both an enjoyable listening experience and a rich scholarly resource. Forty-eight pages of liner notes provide quite solid musical and social historical contexts, although musicological annotation is slender and occasionally an extra detail or two is needed for a more complete discussion of some individual pieces. Yet overall this collection gives a wonderful aural snapshot of Philadelphia-related musical activity: songs, performers, and recordings. This tape should be of particular interest to teachers and scholars of American music for its broad survey of vernacular music within a regional framework.

The anthology is divided into five main categories: From Spinning Discs to Talking Pictures; the Military/Concert and String Band; the Music of Black Philadelphia; the White Bands, and the Spoken Word. The earliest recording, "Di Quella Pira" from *Il Trovatore* is dated 1896 and the last, *Oh Dem Golden Slippers,* dates from 1947. However, the focus is primarily on the decades of the 1920 and 1930s which is helpful to cross-category comparisons and to an assessment of changes in recording technology within a concentrated period.

"Di Quella Pira" is the poorest sounding recording of this set, but one of the most historically important. It was one of the earliest recordings by the inventor Emile Berliner, whose flat disc recording system rivalled Edison's cylinders. The Berliner Gramophone Company was backed by a Philadelphia investment syndicate and the year following this recording opened America's first professional recording studio (and a retail record shop) in downtown Philadelphia. Most significant, Italian tenor Forruchio Giannini heard in this excerpt from *Il Trovatore* is credited with having made the first commercial operatic recordings ever released on disc and his recordings were the only operatic ones in Berliner's first American catalog.

The great John McCormack who sang both operatic and popular airs is heard in a fine rendition of one of the latter, the Irish ballad *Off to Philadelphia in the Morning.* Completing what the compilers may have thought of as their "cultivated" portion of the cassette is an audience sing-along with the Philadelphia Orchestra at a 1935 Pension Fund Concert. This is worth hearing both for the caliber of the audience-chorus and for the witty monologue by Stokowski, at the expense of the critics and to the delight of the crowd.

Performers Bert Harvey (a New Yorker doing a Philadelphia "Quaker"-theme song) and Frankie Richardson (a native Philadelphian doing a faddish "Hawaiian" type song) demonstrate the changes from an older vaudeville style to a newer "intimate and informal microphone-enabled vocal style." McDonald and Eddy (both Philadelphians) give a scintillating presentation of a smash hit from the 1935 film musical *Naughty Marietta* which shows the further evolution of the smooth, sophisticated approach. Howard Lanin's "Society" dance music and Jan Savitt's commercial swing style further exemplify this trend in American popular music.

The Philadelphia jazzmen Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang, on the other hand, display a sure sense of an authentic "swing" approach, improvising with a free-wheeling and inventive flair that influenced players here and abroad. The Clarence Williams Orchestra features the noted black Philadelphia trumpeter and composer, Charlie Gaines, in the hot jazz style he played at home and in New York with Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins, and others. And, of course, the blues and popular styling of African-American artists such as Bessie Smith and Ethel Waters, both with Philadelphia associations, were influential in their own right, and for the future course of jazz and popular music.

Even as jazz was emerging, the wind bands remained strong. Based on military models, civic, industrial, and professional bands were an important part of America's and Philadelphia's musical fabric. In addition to the Pryor band noted above, this collection includes the Philadelphia Police and Fireman's Band and the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company/Cooperative Band (PRT) conducted by John Phillip Sousa. Sousa composed *The March of the Mitten Men* for the PRT Company band. Written for Thomas E. Mitten, president of the PRT, this march concludes with Mitten's favorite hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers," showing the common civic-religious ethos of the time. This is the only Victor recording Sousa made which bears his name as conductor.

The religious dimension *per se* is represented by the then-famous "Acres of Diamonds" oration by evangelist-educator Russell Conwell, and from the African-American tradition by the eloquent version of *Deep River* done by the late Marian Anderson along with a song by the Tindley Quaker City Gospel Singers. Rev. C. A. Tindley was one of the founders of the 1920s gospel music movement and this harmonized approach contrasts nicely with Ms. Anderson's moving solo statement.

Two other spoken word items complete the collection, and two more different

examples of this genre could not be imagined: John Barrymore's *Soliloquy from "Hamlet"* and W. C. Fields' sketch on *The Day I Drank A Glass of Water.* While it is wonderful to hear Barrymore's characterization, the musical accompaniment adds nothing. Fields' dry, laconic delivery is also wonderful in its own right as a humorous conclusion to this highly engaging tour through some of the Philadelphia musical landscape of the earlier part of this century. *Reviewed by Mark Harvey*

Webern Conducts Berg Violin Concerto

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1935). Louis Krasner, violin, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Anton Webern. Recorded in performance (Berg Memorial Concert) May 1, 1936. With Berg: Lyric Suite for String Quartet (1925-26). Galimir Quartet (Felix, Adrienne, Renee, and Marguerite Galimir). Recorded 1936. Continuum SBT 1004. 57'27" Distributed by Allegro Imports.

Alban Berg wrote this concerto on commission from the current violinist, who had played the world premiere in Barcelona in the previous month (April 19, 1936)—and who in the Twenties gave the unofficial premiere of the Casella Concerto, in 1940 was to premiere the Schonberg Concerto, and in 1946, while concertmaster of the Minneapolis Symphony, the Sessions Concerto. The Berg Concerto was written as a memorial to the young Manon Gropius, the eighteen-year-old daughter of Mahler's widow; it ended up serving also as Berg's own memorial. It is the first serial concerto—Schonberg's was written approximately a year later—and the only twelve-tone work which can safely be said to have entered the standard repertoire. Of course, being the product of the deeply lyrical imagination of Alban Berg, it is dodecaphonic with a difference, salted with a Carinthian folk tune, a Bach chorale, waltz and landler rhythms, and an intervalic row that lends itself to an expressive near-tonal molding. Indeed, one of the richer theoretical debates in modern music, involving Boulez, Adorno, and other leading lights, is that concerning the true nature of the relationship between the serial and tonal elements of the work. It is summarized effectively by Anthony Pople in his superb contribution to the Cambridge Music Handbooks series (*Berg Violin Concerto,* 1991).

From its first performances the concerto has been recognized as a masterpiece, although its path to general acceptance has by no means been easy. One measure of the achievement of both its composer and its first champion is a look, cursory and no doubt incomplete, at the range of violinists whose recordings of the work, studio and live, have at one time or another been available on disk: Krasner (3 performances), Szigeti (2 counting the unreleased studio recording), Goldberg, Gitlis, Gertler, Ferras, Stern, Garay, Suk (2), Grumiaux, Szeryng (2), Menuhin (2), Kogan, Scherzer, Wronski, Chung, Perlman, Kremer, Zukerman, Hoelscher, Abel, Zimmermann, Gotkovsky, Zehetmair, Pasquier, and Mutter. At least 16 of these 32 recordings have appeared so far on CD. This is a remarkable indication of the concerto's power of attraction, given its large component of Expressionist grit and its atonal foundation—again, a record not remotely challenged by any other work from that region of modernism.

All of this is meant to provide a dramatic backdrop for the proper appreciation of the current recording: This, the first issue in any format (after a 1985 radio broadcast) of the Krasner-Webern Berg Concerto, which quite literally was rescued by the violinist from his attic, is an event of the first importance. This is obviously true from the historical standpoint. Two weeks after an emotional breakdown in Barcelona rendered him unable to conduct the premiere—a task taken up in the eleventh hour, and by all accounts masterfully, by the great Hermann Scherchen—Anton Webern, the artist perhaps closest to the concerto's creator, rose magnificently to the occasion of the second

performance. The documentary value alone would thus make this one of the most significant historical issues of the CD era, but this is one of those rare occasions when the level of music making matches that of the history making.

From the slow, mesmerizing roll of fifths in the opening, to the massive brass climaxes of the second part of the concerto, from the broadly paced, deeply felt lyricism of the first part, to the hushed resignation of the finale's closing bars, Webern shapes a performance unique among those 32 recordings. (In fact, the beautiful new Mutter-Levine rendition on DG shares these qualities to such a degree that it is tempting to think that the younger artists studied the older.) In 1922 Berg said of his colleague that "without exaggeration, Webern is the greatest conductor since Mahler—in every respect." Although many contemporaries had a similarly high opinion of his conducting, he also was known to be difficult and impractical in rehearsal, and this, along with his commitment to composition, limited his conducting career. The only other recording ever available of Webern conducting, a 1932 performance of his own transcription of Schubert's *Deutsche Tanze* with the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra (included on the fine Sony CD reissue of Boulez's Webern cycle, SM3K 45845) is effective, but this Berg is vastly more revealing—and, if any single performance can stand as evidence, a confirmation of its composer's view of Webern's podium abilities.

Louis Krasner is a full partner in this achievement. His playing is deeply expressive, with rather more portamento than we are used to today, but even that suits the yearning and anguish of the performance perfectly. The canonic cadenza in the second part is extraordinarily compelling. The 1938 Krasner-Fritz Busch performance, now available on a GM CD (2006), is also beautiful and intensely committed, and the somewhat cooler 1940 Columbia studio recording with the violinist accompanied by Rodzinski and the Cleveland Orchestra (last issued on ML 4857), was the pioneer first commercial release, has better sound than either of the live recordings, and is long overdue for a CD incarnation. The Webern performance, however, is the greatest of the three, arguably the greatest of them all. "This time, in London, Webern *became* Alban Berg," asserts Krasner in his essay in the exemplary (if under-proofread) booklet. This indispensable release not only documents this unique identification, but serves as a fitting monument to a very important artist.

In another of the booklet's essays, Richard Burns recounts his efforts to transcribe and refurbish the worn acetates which preserve this performance. Although the sometimes dim and befogged sound and occasional balance problems require some mental adjustment, Burns is to be congratulated for a remarkably clear and listenable piece of sonic excavation—aided, no doubt, by Webern's mastery of Berg's orchestral texture and the BBC Orchestra's devoted and expert realization of the challenging new score.

The historic first recording of the *Lyric Suite* is a thoroughly appropriate companion to the concerto on this CD.

This recording first appeared in this country on a Vox Polydor 78 rpm album (Set 181—discographic information is curiously missing from the booklet). The "Galimir Quartet of Stuttgart," as it is called on the original set, consisted of Felix Galimir, who went on to a very significant career in this country, and his sisters, one of whom, second violinist Adrienne, later married Louis Krasner. This original Galimir Quartet served a vital function as champion of modernism in the 1930s. Along with the Berg, which won a Grand Prix du Disque, they made pioneering composer-supervised recordings of Ravel and Milhaud. The *Lyric Suite,* composed a decade before the concerto, shares its numerological preoccupation with the number 23, as well as its mix of serialism and

overt emotional expression. This is a lovely, accurate, lithe performance, and the transfer is decent, if not exceptional.

Some of us with vivid memories of the shift from mono to stereo in the 1960s remember with dismay the prevailing obsession with the new that for several years consigned to temporary oblivion a great many worthy recordings not blessed with two-channel sound. Whatever problems some of us still have with digital sound, the CD era has welcomed the old with open arms. While the first release of the Krasner-Webern Berg Concerto may well be the most important example of this felicitous opportunism, there are vast numbers of significant historical issues on CD, many of which go un- or under-reviewed because the new still gets preferential treatment. Within the narrow field of the modern violin concerto, there are many such CDs worthy of larger notice and praise. Among them are several vital Szigeti reissues, including his astringent, deeply expressive Berg Concerto, recorded live with Mitropoulos and the New York Philharmonic in 1945. It is found on an AS Disk (AS 626) along with another great—and long-awaited, since it had no LP release—Szigeti performance, the 1952 broadcast premiere of Frank Martin's hauntingly beautiful violin concerto, also with Mitropoulos and the Philharmonic. This performance also is available with another extraordinary musical document, the 1939 Szigeti-Mengelberg Bloch concerto, in a very important 4-CD Music and Arts set (CD 720-4) devoted to live recordings of this most probing of artists.

The bulk of the rich legacy of the commercial recordings of Jascha Heifetz seems to be emerging on CD, but a number of remarkable live performances also have come to (laser) light, among them a brilliant 1951 Sibelius concerto with Mitropoulos (AS Disk 622), and an equally astonishing Prokofiev Second Concerto with Koussevitsky and the Boston Symphony from 1949 (AS Disk 568, coupled with an exciting Beethoven with Koussevitsky and the Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra). The latter is particularly interesting because the balance favors the orchestra, quite the reverse of the usual Heifetz proceedings. Unfortunately, the entire AS Disk Koussevitsky Edition has been legally suppressed, so these disks are now difficult to find in this country.

Another great violinist who finally has been well served by the CD is Louis Kaufman. The result is a virtual cornucopia of historic concerto reissues, including the authoritative 1949 composer-led Milhaud *Concertino de Printemps* and Second Violin Concerto, with the Sauguet *Concerto d'Orphee* and other French works, on Music and Arts CD 620; a vibrant 1955 performance of the Second Martinu Concerto, coupled with the brittle-sounding but still-unsurpassed postwar Khachaturian Concerto, on Cambria CD 1063; and the great pioneering studio recording of the Barber Concerto (1951), Vaughan Williams' *Concerto Accademico* (1951), and a live 1955 rendition of Lars-Erik Larsson's brooding concerto, all on Music and Arts CD 667. Finally, the artistry of a fine, if lesser known violinist, Charles Barkel, is captured in a 1948 recording of a live radio performance of Hilding Rosenberg's superb First Violin Concerto—otherwise unrecorded—found on a fascinating 3-CD set devoted to the remarkable Swedish composer conducting his own works (Caprice CAP 21510). *Reviewed by John Swan*

Pol Plançon—*The Complete Victor Recordings (1903-1908).* Romophone 82001-2.

The French bass Pol Plançon always has been regarded as one of the outstanding exemplars of the golden age of singing. He was born in 1851 and made his recording debut in 1902. All of his recordings were made between 1902 and 1908; thus we are listening to a man of more than 50. Thus, the astonishing virtuosity and beauty of his singing are all the more amazing. He was known as the "Prince of Singers" (not just the Prince of

basses) by his contemporaries, and called "the most polished singer of whose work there are satisfactory gramophone records" by Desmond Shaw-Taylor. Plançon's mastery of all the bel canto techniques is well illustrated in these recordings. Trills, roulades, runs, staccati all are exhibited with such a sense of ease and naturalness that one never feels that their exhibition is mere show. His legato and command of soft singing also are outstanding. Plançon's diction and delivery of text are masterful as well. He seems to be one of the few singers of that age whose style would seem quite normal to us today.

The 46 titles in this issue include duplications since Victor re-recorded some items. Twenty-nine are with piano, the final 17 with orchestra. The voice is very forward in all of these recordings and in these transfers Plançon's voice sounds very clear and natural. The engineers have taken great pains to produce a consistent timbre while not adding artificial resonance. This reissue seems to be the best treatment this material has received.

Romophone, the British company which issued this release, is relatively new to the scene. Having found no information about them in journals, this reviewer faxed their executive producer, Virgina Barder. Her reply stated that: "Romophone is a CD company devoted to the reissue of historical recordings by singers of the past. As reflected in our first releases it is our intent to document the recordings of the great singers in as complete a manner as possible. Rather than choosing a selection of recordings, we aim to present complete editions of the recordings a singer made." Previous releases have included two disc sets of Emma Eames (complete Victor recordings), Emmy Destinn (complete Victor recordings), Galli-Curci (complete acoustic recordings, V. 1), and Claudia Muzio (complete Edison recordings). Future releases include similarly complete sets of Galli Curci, Muzio, Ponselle, Edith Mason, Mary Garden, and Edward Clément. All releases include extensive discographic information, biographical notes, and pictures. No vocal texts are included in the Plançon, but this probably has become the norm for historical reissues and we should not expect them (although it would be nice to see them included as much of this material is hard to locate). Romophone does not have yet a U.S. distributor but Ms. Barder reports that their CDs are available at some stores in the U.S.

Romophone's transfer engineer is Philadelphia-based Ward Marston. Mr. Marston's work has been praised in both this and other journals for its excellence. Notable has been his work with RCA on the complete Rachmaninoff and with Pearl on the complete Caruso. From all evidence, he is the current "man for the job" when it comes to transferring historical recordings. He always has shown particular care that recording speeds are taken into account, relying on score pitch and research into the transposition habits of the singer on which he currently is working. His transfers are notable for their clarity, although it is clear that he does not resort to the kinds of sound enhancement so evident in Nimbus' Prima Voce series. Comparing the sound of this Plançon set to previous issues by Pearl (GEMM CD9497) and the one Plançon selection on Nimbus' Great Singers, V. 2 (N17812) reveal Mr. Marston's superior skill. Using the aria "Chi mi direa" from Flotow's *Martha* as an example, the Romophone release is far superior. Listen to the long cadential trill. In the Romophone release, each pitch is distinct yet on the other two recordings the sound is blurred. Though recognizably a trill, theirs is not nearly so good an illustration of Plançon's amazing abilities. This is an altogether outstanding release that is recommended highly. *Reviewed by Howard Kennett.*

Claire Austin and Don Ewell—"Memories of You." Claire Austin, vocals with Don Ewell, piano. Audiophile Records, 1206 Decatur Street, New Orleans, LA 70116. ACD143.

The history of jazz contains many footnote references to unsung heroes and heroines—including Claire Austin and Don Ewell. Claire Austin stirred the hearts of jazz purists four decades ago singing with Turk Murphy's Jazz Band in San Francisco. The barrelhouse blues recordings she made with Murphy and Kid Ory are classic examples of the genre. Don Ewell achieved some prominence in 1945 as the first and only non-New Orleans musician to play in the Bunk Johnson band. He worked as a sideman with very illustrious jazz groups led by Muggsy Spanier, Sidney Bechet, Kid Ory, and Jack Teagarden. Ewell died in 1983.

With the exception of one "modern" entry, Duke Ellington's 1941 "I Got it Bad and That Ain't Good," this program reflects the rich musical productivity of the 20s and 30s. Most of the songs are about love, remorseful references to lost love and joyful celebrations of fulfilled love. Living every lyric, Claire laments with the former and revels with the latter. She sings them both with deeply felt conviction.

Don Ewell always could generate a virile two-fisted stride. He shows a tender side here with his great feeling as an accompanist. His miniature musical essays between vocal choruses chart fresh approaches to familiar melodies. These 32-bar vignettes, liberally dusted with pertinent tremolos and brief runs, are underscored by a strong left hand. Don gently shifts into overdrive on "All of Me," and adds a rollicking thrust to "My Honey Lovin' Arms."

Claire Austin, taking few chances, never reaches for unnecessary high or low notes. She just sings the song and makes it sound easy. Don't you wish more vocalists employed such restraint? At times, Claire bends a note in an unexpected direction. She tends to "zig" when you expect her to "zag." There are occasional ventures into precarious melodic paths. Don Ewell often anticipates her mood and creates a protective cushion to bolster a smooth landing. Like an agile feline, she always manages to come down on a logical musical footing.

Claire accurately conveys the tune's emotional elements via a strange combination of fragility and conviction. She colors each number in frail pastel hues that frequently create vivid vocal images of Billie Holiday. The emotion seethes during "I Surrender, Dear." When she sings "...and shadows fall," the vision of Lady Day's soulful vulnerability is spine-tingling. This is in vivid contrast to the robust Ma Rainy-Bessie Smith sound Austin evoked many years earlier on recordings with Turk Murphy and Kid Ory. Don Ewell, incidentally, was the pianist on the 1952 Kid Ory album that featured Claire Austin.

Andy Razaf created the philosophically poetic words to Eubie Blake's "Memories of You" more than 60 years ago. Not since Louis Armstrong's recording that introduced the tune have those lyrical gems been polished so brightly. Claire performs the same magic on Duke Ellington's "I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good." The original Ivy Anderson treatment always has been the standard by which we have judged the deeply emotional lyrics—until now.

While Claire Austin and Don Ewell have legions of loyal admirers, the careers of these great artists remain on the edge of full public awareness. The CD release of this 1975 recording should shed additional light on their substantial contribution to jazz's heritage. "Memories of You" is a very prophetic title for this album. The 1930 hit appears twice, and it leaves us with pleasant memories of Claire Austin and Don Ewell. *Reviewed by Floyd Levin*