

rock. On the A-side, John gave the best of himself in the soulful, bluesy rock numbers: "Come Together," "I Want You-She's So Heavy". George bloomed forth with two of his best songs ever: "Something" (which became a pop standard) and "Here Comes The Sun". All four merged on this ultimate effort, even though their differences were greater than ever. John Lennon was already involved in *avant-garde* art and politics; George Harrison had religious concerns; and Paul McCartney was both apolitical and agnostic. John had a liking for basic primal rock and roll with compelling lyrics; Paul loved melodic pop and ballads; and George favored Neo-Christian rock and Indian mysticism. Ringo was glad he came along for the ride, and what a ride it was! *Reviewed by Jean-Pierre Sevigny.*

Endnotes

1. Charles Hamm. *Yesterdays, Popular Song In America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), p.423.
2. Donald Clarke. *The Penguin Encyclopedia Of Popular Music* (London: Penguin, 1989), p.86.

Blitzstein Symphony: *The Airborne, Dusty Sun*. Leonard Bernstein conducting the New York City Symphony Orchestra and the RCA Victor Chorale (director, Robert Shaw). Walter Schiff, baritone, with Leonard Bernstein, piano. RCA Victor 09026-62568-2 (from RCA Victor DM 1117, recorded October 30, 1946 at the Lotos Club).

The only recording ever made of the New York City Symphony under Leonard Bernstein and the only significant Bernstein recording never transferred to LP, this long-forgotten piece is now available on CD. Marc Blitzstein (1905-64) wrote it as an enlisted man in the Eighth Air Force stationed in England from 1942 to 1945. When he returned to America at the end of the European war, he played the work for Bernstein, who was in his first season with the orchestra that Stokowski had founded a year earlier (Stokowski had recorded Beethoven, Bizet and Strauss with the orchestra for RCA Victor, all transferred to LP). The first performances were April 1-2, 1946 with Robert Shaw directing the chorus and Orson Welles as narrator. Blitzstein called the narrator "Monitor" in the basic sense of "one who admonishes," as the tone of some of his lines makes clear (much more, however, is straight narrative).

Bernstein broadcast the work on May 26 with the NBC Symphony Orchestra and the composer as narrator, then scheduled the work again with his orchestra on October 28-29, 1946, this time with Shaw narrating, as he did the next day for this recording. On October 13-17, 1966 Bernstein conducted the work with the New York Philharmonic, the Choral Art Society under William Jonson, and Robert Hooks as narrator. The recording made at that time brought back Orson Welles as narrator, but it was not released until the bicentennial, a decade later. It's now deleted and not yet on CD.

Blitzstein used the term "symphony" in the sense of Berlioz's *Romeo et Juliette* and Liszt's *Faust Symphony*, but it is really a dramatic cantata in three movements divided into twelve sections. Tenor Charles Holland and baritone Walter Scheff had modest parts as soloists (Andrea Velis and David Watson had the corresponding parts in the remake). With six mostly minor cuts, it runs 55:15. It's still two minutes longer than the later recording which opens up three of the cuts (though not the most significant cut, one involving the soloists). David Hall's lengthy notes for the

original album have been replaced by a briefer essay by Steven Ledbetter (Robert Jones wrote the notes for the LP remake).

Admittedly this is a period piece, heavily dependent on the atmosphere of World War II. It requires a sympathetic audience; for others it will seem altogether too much. The first part is devoted to the theory of flight, mythological and historical antecedents, and the Wright Brothers. The second part focuses on air power inflicted by the enemy in the early years of the European war. The third and longest part is an implicit salute to the Eighth Air Force.

While this disc occupies a significant place in Leonard Bernstein's discography, the playing is less assured than the Philharmonic later provided, the recording (not representative of the state of the art for 1946) is marred by distortion on several sides that run over five minutes (side lengths range from 2:00 to 5:35!), and the performance is riper than the later one. Surprisingly, Robert Shaw is much more flamboyant than Orson Welles, notably in the fifth section, "The Enemy". I wonder which version is closer to Welles's narration at the premiere.

Fortunately, the odd-side filler is included, a rare example of Bernstein as a piano accompanist. Apart from playing and conducting a number of piano concertos and his RCA Victor recordings of Copland's piano sonata and his own Seven Anniversaries, he only accompanied David Oppenheim on a very early recording of his Clarinet Sonata for Hargail, never reissued to my knowledge.

John Pfeiffer produced the reissue with Ward Marston handling the transfers. As expected, "radical methods to eliminate all surface noise have not been used," and the CD sounds much like the 78s (I still have my album in virtually mint condition), for better or worse. Whether the later recording ever turns up on CD or not, this disc has unique historical interest, and I'm happy to have it.
Reviewed by Jerome F. Weber.

Yoruba Street Percussion - Original Music OMCD016

Juju Master I.K. Dairo MBE - The Glory Years - Original Music OMCD009

Popular music in Nigeria is primarily known to the west through *juju*, a highly sophisticated, multi-cultural art form whose leading practitioners - King Sunny Ade and Commander Ebenezer Obey - have attained rockstar status in Europe and the United States. Their most recent recordings are readily available in the west and at their best both men represent modern pop music at its finest: pristinely produced, intelligent both lyrically and musically, catchy and danceable. For most Americans, without the benefit of cultural and historical context, this highly flamboyant, kaleidoscopic music appears to have emerged from Lagos fully developed.

In fact, *juju* represents a case study in the formation of modern urban hybrid music. Its history and social context are well-documented by Christopher Waterman's seminal *Juju: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music* (University of Chicago, 1990). Waterman chronicles the various caste groups and economic forces that led to the development of *juju*, as well as distinguishing the various street musics that preceded and surrounded it. Up until now, however, hearing this music was extremely difficult. Short of scouring dusty LP bins in African specialty shops, the only readily accessible recordings were that book's accompanying cassette, which is of poor sonic quality and is only available by special order.

These two discs of archival recordings go a long way to remedying that