

Music-makers 1978

# 'Hory' heads year's best performers

**GG records**

CLASSICALS by FORESTER

A GOLDEN jubilee is an event worth celebrating. Marking that anniversary of his American debut, pianist Vladimir ('Hory') Horowitz gave a performance in January this year, with the same orchestra, and at the same venue — Carnegie Hall — of Rachmaninoff's Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op 30 (RCA, CRL1-2633).



James Levine



Isidor Goodman

The album is this listener's choice for the classical recording of the year nomination.

An easy choice it would seem when written in print, but, taken from a couple of hundred or so albums and album sets listened to in 1978, there were naturally moments of equivocation.

Nevertheless, from a period which included some superlative performances, it was Horowitz' playing and the electrifying sense of presence of the occasion that secured the vote.

A recording treasure.

Now on to the other excellent recorded moments which constituted about 30 performances and roughly 10 per cent of the listening time.

James Levine, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and singers, paid scrupulous attention to Mahler's phrasing, in a magnificent reading of Mahler's Third Symphony (RCA, RL01757).

The timeless tranquility of Durufle's Requiem (CBS, SBR 235881) with principal singers Kiri Te Kanawa and Siegmund Nimsgern, with the New Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Andrew Davis, was unerringly beautiful — steadfastly spiritual and delicate.

Years spanned by a none-too-simple mechanical expedient, linked the late Percy Grainger and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Hopkins, in a recital of Grieg: Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16 (RCA, Red Seal VRL1 0168).

And the late Artur Schnabel, who in the world of Beethoven performances set a standard rarely equalled, was remembered through a previously unissued recording, Beethoven Sonatas: E Major, Op. 109 and C Minor, Op. 111 (RCA, Victrola, AMV 11410).

Had RCA gone into the seance business?



Two visitors to Melbourne — the sumptuously rich-voiced soprano Jessye Norman and the brilliant young Italian pianist Michele Campanella — are recalled by outstanding releases.

Norman for the fluid life she gave to a collection of 20th Century French songs by Henri Dupare, Maurice Ravel, Francis Poulenc and Erik Satie (Philips, 9500365).

Pianist Campanella remained in the memory with a trio of Liszt collections, the pre-eminent Franz Liszt (Astor, SPLP 1532) a marvel in performance of immense power, strength and agility.

Master hapsichordist Gustav Leonhardt gave a distinguished account of Virtuoso Chamber Music (Telefunken, 642090 AP), mostly taken from Francis Tregian's Fitzwilliam Virginal Book; and flautists James Galway and Michel Debost gave

mesmeric recitals of pieces by Telemann, Six Sonatas For Flutes (World Record Club, R04221).

Another reissue that is a "must" for those whose tastes run to Ravel and Debussy, has the refined playing of duo pianists Alfons and Aloys Kontarsky, Four Hand Piano Music (DGG, 2707072).

Mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne proved an irresistible advocate of Ravel's song cycle Sheherazade (CBS, SBR 235913); and the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by John Lanchberry, gave excellent performances of melodies by the incurably romantic Albert W. Ketelbey, with In A Monastery Garden: Music Of Albert Ketelbey (HMV, OASD 3542).

Operas were high in nutritional content, but many were reissues. Of these, the Walton romantic

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NEXT WEEK: Forester nominates the top quality non-classical records in a year that was dominated by the disco sound.



# Best of classics

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opera *Troilus And Cressida* (World Record Club, QR 04688/89/90) with Janet Baker in the leading role, sustained most interest.

What of the new fare? Giordano's opera set in the days of the French Revolution, *Andre Chenier* (RCA, Red Seal RL 02046) constituted a fine example of committed singers lifting a lesser work to greater heights. Singers Placido Domingo, Renato Scotto, Sherrill Milnes and Maria Ewing joined with the National Philharmonic conducted by James Levine in the performance.

Superb characterisations, too, brought justice at last to Mozart's *La Clemenza Di Tito* (Philips, 6703079).

The Royal Opera House Covent Garden conducted by Colin Davis, with Janet Baker, Yvonne Minton, Frederica Von Stade, Lucia Popp, Robert Lloyd and Stuart Burrows brought the tale of intrigues in Rome, to life with subtlety and passion.

Another Davis reading that enchanted, was his revised account of Berlioz' *L'Enfance Du Christ* (Philips, 6700106), emphasising the sweetness and natural naivety of the oratorio's music. Janet Baker and Eric Tappy were soloists.

Von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic brought their own uniquely luminous, glowing warmth to Bruckner's *Symphony No. 9 in D Minor* (DGG, 2530828). It's one of the finest accounts on disc.

And again, that same magic extended to Beethoven's *Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93*, and the *No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125 "Choral"* (DGG, 2707-109) from Von Karajan's Beethoven cycle marking his 22 years association with the Berlin Philharmonic.

There were lighter, quirkier moments that gave pleasure too. A collection of "corny old tunes" from

a programme of *Turn Of The Century Cornet Favorites* (CBS, SBR 235910) played by Gerard Schwartz to name one.

Another was the brilliant "fiddlestickery" romp through violin favorites — music by Kreisler, Paganini, Tchaikovsky, Toselli and others — by John Georgiodis, in *Moto Perpetua* (CBS, SBR of 20th century

Also relished was a collection of delectable Viennese-style classics entitled *Beethoven And Mozart: Marching And Dancing* (Philips, 9500080) from the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Edo De Waart.

Violinist Pinchas Zukerman and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Daniel Barenboim (DGG, 2530 903) gave an irresistible performance of Beethoven's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D Major, Op. 61*, sharing a partnership that it would be hard-pressed to better.

Pianist Lazar Berman put new life into the term *Encores* (CBS, SBR 235886) with a knock-out collection of a little bit of this and a little bit of that — music of Rachmaninoff, Chopin, Khachaturian, Scriabin, Liszt and De Falla.

And the year was ushered in by a landmark in Australian recording — the inclusion of pianist Isador Goodman on Philip's Red Label, with a similar repertoire of frequently requested pieces. *Isador Goodman: Schuman/Debussy-Blumfeld/Eladov/Liszt* (6508002).

Direct-to-disc recordings scored with an impressive pair of shatteringly clear organ recitals by Virgil Fox at the large Fratelli-Ruffatti pipe organ, of works comprising those by Bach, Jongen, Franck, Alain, Widor, Dupre, Gigot and Louis Vierne (CCS, 7001 and CCS, 7001).

A recent performance of Handel's *Music For The Royal Fireworks* (EMI, OASD 3395) from Charles Mackerras and the London Symphony Orchestra, also brimmed with rich sound.

Impeccable performances of *Lute Concertos And Trios* (Archiv Produktion, 2533376) by Konrad Ragossnig and Eduard Melkus gave quieter but equally appreciated moments.

Finally, that persuasive interpreter of lieder, Dutch soprano Elly Ameling was heard in a beautiful, melting performance of Schubert entitled *Songs For Gretchen, Ellen And Suleika* (Philips, 9500169; and Canadian guitarist Liona Boyd made poetry of guitar music spanning four centuries with *The Guitar Artistry Of Liona Boyd* (Image, ILP 779)

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