

NOTICES

read, *Romeo and Juliet*, among the first of Shakespeare's plays, finds its pendant in *The Tempest*, the last, when youth goes forward to a "brave new world," but it is a world lit by an apocalyptic light, hardly of this earth.

Of Ibsen, and the excellent presentation of him at the CRITERION THEATRE, Piccadilly, I hope to speak next month.

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GRAMOPHONE

Somebody has recently called Handel the G.O.M. of English music. Of course, *omnis comparatio claudicat*; but even so, this is surely going a bit far. Handel's dignity is not often pompous or ponderous; his most massive rectitude certainly does not suggest a Victorian Sunday afternoon; he can be as debonair as Dizzy. *Samson* is one of his great overtures, too seldom heard: it begins in quite un-Gladstonian majesty, and continues in the grace and vivacity of a Brandenburg *allegro*. Decca add to their list of successes by issuing a recording of this by Sir Henry Wood (K 812). Mozart, thank heaven, is hardly likely to be compared to Mr. Gladstone, though on the other hand he is sometimes spoken of as if a dainty elegance were his best attribute, as though he were capable of no better than pirouetting round the ballroom in high-heeled shoes and a periwig. He can at times be carefree; the *Serenata Notturmo*, if not in his greatest vein, is a lovely example of his combination of daintiness and strength; the Boyd Neel again give a beautiful rendering (K 813-4). Arthur Bliss should make the Wells film *Things to Come* worth while if the film itself is not; the incidental *Ballet for Children* and "melodramatic" music are excellent, and worth possessing for their own sake (K 810-11). Prokofieff in *Sarcasme no. 5* is naughty but nice; the Glazounow *Concert Etude in G major* on the other side is a concert *étude*; the capable pianist who plays both is Borowsky (DE 7053). Milhaud's Quartet no. 7 (*Allegro, Andante, Lento, Vivace*), played by the Galimir with great delicacy, is charming, and grows more so with better acquaintance; the *lento* particularly lovely (DE 7054-5).

Of first rank among the H.M.V. recordings is the Franck Sonata for Violin and Piano, played by Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin. Their treatment is sympathetic; if the piano compares at times unfavourably with Blanche Selva's playing in the older Columbia version, it is at any rate a great improvement on the recent rendering of the Kreutzer; the fiddle is excellent, the recording flawless (DB 2742-5). The Czech Philharmonic, who made so fine a recording of Dvorak's 4th Symphony last month, now play his Slavonic Dances, nos. 1 and 2 with equal vivacity (C 2825).

BLACKFRIARS

Anyone who wishes to convert a friend to the liturgical movement could hardly do better than play him the Liszt *Missa Choralis*. It is all that a Mass ought not to be. It goes on for ten 12 in. sides; there is no particular reason why it should stop there. The singing is poor, though to English ears diverting. The discs should be allowed to go on turning some moments after the official noise has ceased, for they then produce an engaging sort of groan (CA 8219-23).

The World's Nightingale—which being interpreted is Erna Sack—sings *I Give My Heart* and *Now I Have Found You* from Lily Pons' recent film; coloratura with urge and a tendency to untidiness (O 132). To Maria Gentile's singing of two arias from Donizetti much the same applies (DE 7052). *Per contra*, Elisabeth Schumann's singing of Kjerulf's *Last Night* and Ronald's *Down in the Forest* is as clear-cut and sterling as ever, though the songs are not the happiest of material, and, talking of nightingales, Mme. Schumann's imitation of this bird, charming as it is, ought not to feature in too many records (DA 1457). The sentimental ballad seems definitely not to be Noel Coward's happiest medium; *We were Dancing*, from *To-night at 8-30*, is as unsuccessful (so is the coupling, *Parisian Pierrot*) as *Red Peppers* was a triumph (B 8414).

There are now two versions available of *Solitude* played by Ellington himself; in addition to the Brunswick version mentioned some time ago there is an H.M.V. disc (B 8410). The two differ considerably: the H.M.V. gives great prominence to the brass, which is inclined to galumph in a manner ill-suited to the music; the thing as a whole is less simple than the Brunswick which is throughout smooth, quiet and full of dignity. While the former is much the better recording, the latter seems as far as the music is concerned to carry off an easy victory.

Jack Buchanan puts his personality across successfully in two successful songs from *Come Out of the Pantry* (O 2125); Connie Boswell does likewise, with her usual excellent technique, in *Moon over Miami* and *With All My Heart* (O 2127); while the Boswell Sisters are a cheery euphonious riot in *The Music Goes Round and Around* (O 2142). Elsie Carlisle continues her tale of true but unrequited love in *My Shadow* (yes, it's come to that) 's *Where My Sweetheart Used to Be*; but she shouldn't have sung *Up the Wooden Hill to Bedfordshire*, shadow or no shadow (F 5877). A singularly rich and meaty version of the *Cavalleria Intermezzo* and the *Sadko Song of India* is provided by the Boston Orchestra on B 8412; for those who would like to hear George Scott-Wood make a noise like a mighty Wurlitzer on a piano-accordion there is *The Whistler and His Dog* and *Stars and Stripes* on BD 329.

(Key.—H.M.V.: DB series, 6/-; C, 4/-; DA, 4/-; B, 2/6; BD, 1/6. Decca: CA series, 4/-; DE, 2/6; K, 2/6; O (12 in.), 4/-; O (10 in.), 2/6; F, 1/6.) G. V.