

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

Performances: **Beautiful**
Recording: **Beautiful**
Stereo Quality: **Beautiful**

The Marlboro Music Festival, Rudolf Serkin's summer establishment in the Vermont hills, has been drawing delighted week-end crowds from all over New England for quite a few years, and the warmth of its concert atmosphere and music-making is such that I have never heard from anyone that he found the trip less than worthwhile. Previously, some recordings were made by Columbia; now there are some new ones issued by the Marlboro Recording Society. The two I have on hand are simply beautiful. I cannot say with certainty that they were taped in the

lovely little auditorium at Marlboro. The absence of any program notes whatsoever (my only complaint about these releases) doesn't help in the information department. However, I strongly suspect they were recorded at Marlboro, for the resonant, airy quality of sound, and the mood of the playing—most aptly described, I think, by the word *affettuoso*—evoke exactly the pleasant attributes one encounters on a visit to the Festival.

With Serkin himself playing in the Schubert Introduction and Variations, Op. 160, for flute and piano, one is not surprised to find that the performance is totally splendid. But for winter-time Serkin fans, the special warmth and tenderness of his and Paula Sylvester's playing may come as a small revelation. This is Serkin in his most personal and intimate state of mind—Summer Serkin, as it were.

The two Schoenberg works conducted by Leon Kirchner are favored with the same atmosphere of relaxation and "music-for-the-love-of-it" that color the older music. The composer-conductor has directed exceedingly suave, clean performances, in the sense that every motive and every nuance is exactly in place and smoothly displayed. The music sings out in all its oddly glowing, expressionistic color. The unusual *élan* of the playing, however, has to be credited equally to the virtuoso instrumentalists who, at Marlboro, behave like chamber-music devotees instead of footlight prima donnas. At least, this is the impression one gets from their playing, and it's a fine impression indeed.

L. T.

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

Marlboro

Fidelity and care shape the recordings of the Vermont festival's past performances

By Louis Snyder

It's almost Marlboro Festival time again (for the 20th year), and connoisseurs of the assorted musical wonders to be heard in this idyllic Vermont spot should know about the four recordings of past performances of lesser known works currently issued by the Marlboro Recording Society, in addition to its Columbia "Music from Marlboro" releases. These four are available only by mail from Marlboro Recording Society, 1430 Spruce St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102:

Brahms: Serenade in A major, Op. 16; Mozart: Sonata in A major, K. 12; Sonata in F major, K. 13 (MRS-1).

Schoenberg: Suite, Op. 29; Boccherini: Quintet in F minor, Op. 42 (MRS-2).

Schoenberg: Serenade, Op. 24; Schubert: Introduction and Variations, Op. 160 (MRS-3).

Beethoven: Trio in C major, Op. 87; Variations in E-flat major, Op. 44 (MRS-4).

The rather special repertory that has been made available on these discs is not aimed at casual devotees of chamber music. One may be sure that everything which bears the Marlboro stamp has been exhaustively prepared, as such star names as Casals (Brahms), Serkin (Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven), and Pina Carmirelli (Mozart, Boccherini), just for instance, would indicate, plus the participation of a covey of our country's most mature young musicians. The sound reproduction, which is excellent, relays their collaborative results (nothing is programmed publicly at Marlboro until the participants agree that

it is ready) with the kind of fidelity that bespeaks a definitive performance.

One can point to the luscious Brahms Serenade, with Casals conducting; the crisp Mozart Sonatas played by Miss Carmirelli and Serkin, with cellist David Cole, or the two Schoenberg pieces, Suite and Serenade, meticulously examined by Leon Kirchner as conductor of groups of virtuoso players, one with bass singer Thomas Paul.

The particular appeal of all these records is in the undeniable spontaneity of performance evident in each case. When live concert applause comes after the Casals-Brahms collaboration and the two Mozart sonatas, one would not be embarrassed to join in—it's that immediate. And the others have an individual communicative quality.

Not all the fine playing is done by the big names. The Beethoven C major Trio is beautifully performed by John Mack and Joseph Turner, oboes, and Patricia Grignet, English horn; Paula Sylvester's flute and Mr. Serkin's piano make exquisite music of the Schubert, while Serkin again joins violinist Hidetaro Suzuki and cellist Ronald Leonard to give a rewarding reading of the Beethoven variations.

Best of all, of course, is to sample the Marlboro type of musicmaking on its home ground (if you can get a ticket). Lacking that, these recordings are a splendid reminder of, or introduction to, a festival where pure music, with intentions to match, is still the unswerving rule of the day.

MARLBORO RECORDING SOCIETY

Mischa Schneider, Artistic Director

Through the newly formed Marlboro Recording Society, the Marlboro Music Festival will release some of the Festival performances of lesser known works which appeal essentially to a small audience.

Columbia Records will continue to record and release the Music From Marlboro series according to its regular distribution, whereas, these, and all future releases of the Marlboro Recording Society will only be available by mail order.

Brahms
SERENADE IN A MAJOR, Op. 16
Pablo Casals, Conducting
The Marlboro Festival Orchestra

Mozart
SONATA IN A MAJOR, K. 12
SONATA IN F MAJOR, K. 13
Pina Carmirelli, violin
Rudolf Serkin, piano
David Cole, cello
MRS-1

Schoenberg
SUITE, Op. 29
James Corwin, Eb clarinet
Harold Wright, Bb clarinet
Don Stewart, bass clarinet
Jaime Laredo, violin; Samuel Rhodes, viola
Madeline Foley, cello; Ruth Laredo, piano
Conducted by Leon Kirchner

Boccherini
QUINTET IN F MINOR, Op. 42, No. 1
Pina Carmirelli, violin
Jon Toth, violin
Philipp Naegele, viola
Fortunato Arico, cello
Dorothy Reichenberger, cello
MRS-2

Schoenberg
SERENADE, Op. 24
Harold Wright, Bb clarinet
Don Stewart, bass clarinet
Stanley Silverman, guitar
Jacob Glick, mandolin
Jaime Laredo, violin
Samuel Rhodes, viola
Madeline Foley, cello
Thomas Paul, basso
Conducted by
Leon Kirchner

Schubert
INTRODUCTION & VARIATIONS, Op. 160
Paula Sylvester, flute
Rudolf Serkin, piano
MRS-3

Beethoven
TRIO IN C MAJOR, Op. 87
John Mack, oboe
Joseph Turner, oboe
Patricia Grignet, English horn

Beethoven
VARIATIONS IN Eb MAJOR, Op. 44
Hidetaro Suzuki, violin
Ronald Leonard, cello
Rudolf Serkin, piano
MRS-4

All records are processed in stereo at 33 1/3 rpm

The Marlboro Style: Intimate and Intense

By DONAL HENAHAN

WHEN grizzled record collectors converse, the name-dropping byplay can get a trifle esoteric, even when they go no further back in history than the long-play era. If you don't own, or at least know about, say, a Roland-Hayes recital on A 440 Records, or Paggiughi's "Lucia" on Cetra, or Cherkassy's Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2 on Concert Hall, then you at least had better be able to discuss the "Flying Dutchman" highlights by Astrid Varnay and Paul Schoeffler on Remington. Lacking any specific information, you might try sparing for time by dropping names of labels that long ago disappeared under the long-playing waves. Zodiac, perhaps, or Rachmaninoff. Or, make up a label and contend that its products were the only "real" records ever made.

In principle, you could even be almost right. Minor labels, since the start of the LP period in 1948, have contributed enormously to keeping the commercial monsters in touch with the needs and wants of the musical audience.

Bach Guild, Soria, Haydn Society, Bartok and a hundred others prowled in paths that less-specialized labels later found it profitable to follow. Many of the brave little adventurers paid for their success, of course, by ending up in the belly of the whale, swallowed by larger companies.

Now we see what may be a new phenomenon: the partial splitting off from the mother cell, as by sporification, of a group that has been recording for one of the giant labels. Rudolf Serkin and his fellow artists of the Marlboro Music Festival in Ver-

mont, who have issued 15 disks in the "Music from Marlboro" series under the Columbia imprint, now have gone into business for themselves. They will continue to put out a couple of records a year for Columbia, but also will offer — by mail order only and on a nonprofit basis — a new series of stereo disks on the Marlboro Recording Society label.

Mischa Schneider is artistic director of the project. The disks are available at \$6.50 each, including postage and handling, from the Marlboro Recording Society, 1430 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, Pa., 19102.

Frank Salomon, one of the Vermont festival's managers who is helping to administer the new project, says the Society merely hopes to supplement the Columbia disks, and will not be in direct competition with the parent company. A work will be recorded only "if the musicians like the way a performance went, and if they feel it can be an addition to the catalogue." He said that Serkin, Schneider and the other Marlboro regulars have wanted for some time to issue more records but that "when a big company has 50 or 100 artists under contract, it is limited to what it can do for any one artist or group." About two releases a year seems to be the average allotment.

The first release of four disks containing nine works offers little that can be considered standard repertory, although several items are masterpieces and all are well known in specialized circles. The Brahms *Serenade in A* (Op. 16), with Pablo Casals conducting, leads off (MRS-1) in a performance that typifies the Marlboro style: intimate, loving and intensely *songful*. On the same

disk are two works composed by Mozart at the age of 7, the *Sonatas in A* (K. 12) and *F* (K. 13). Although usually listed as being for violin and piano, the sonatas are heard here with an ad lib cello part, following the trio-sonata practice of the 18th Century.

The performing lineups in the Brahms and in the Mozart sonatas are characteristically Marlboro, blending experience and youth. The sonatas are played by Rudolf Serkin, piano; Pina Carmirelli, violin, and David Cole, cello. They discover surprising substance in these early pieces without inflating them beyond their pretensions.

Except for one performance, of Boccherini's *Quintet in F Minor* (Op. 42, No. 1), which was recorded in Columbia's East Side studios here, everything on the first four Marlboro Recording Society disks originated at the festival. Most of the performances were recorded live, although two chamber works of Schoenberg, conducted by Leon Kirchner, were put on tape after concerts. The Marlboro equipment, according to Frank Salomon, is fully professional (Scully 4-track tape machines, AKG-3 mikes, and so forth), and operated by technicians from major record companies who like to spend vacations at Marlboro. The Boccherini quintet shares a disk (MRS-2) with Schoenberg's *Suite* (Op. 29), and it is enlightening to hear how similar in some respects is the approach in both works.

The Schoenberg *Suite* is not played, for instance, purely for structural elucidation, or as a demonstration of his brilliance in finding new sonorities; instead, every effort is made to discover and sustain a musical line. At times, individual players

seem to be phrasing as if the score were by Brahms, a questionable approach in theory that happens to work in this case.

In Schoenberg's *Serenade* (Op. 24), also conducted by Kirchner, the effort to link the 20th Century master to the older Viennese school seems even more pronounced.

Here we have the *Serenade* done as a comfortable, ingratiating piece, with none of the purposely abrasive attacks and stiff avoidance of subtlety that some musicians feel represent a genuine Schoenberg style. Joining the *Serenade* on this disk (MRS-3) is Schubert's *Introduction and Variations* (Op. 160) for piano (Serkin) and flute (Paula Sylvester). The Schubert variations, on his song "Trockne Blumen," throw a stiff challenge at Miss Sylvester's virtuosity and she handles it superbly, even when the writing takes a wildly florid turn.

Two Beethoven works, neither heard much in concerts though known to records, add up to the fourth disk (MRS-4) in the Society's initial release: Beethoven's *Trio in C* (Op. 87) for two oboes (John Mack and Joseph Turner) and English horn (Patricia Grignet) and *Variations in E Flat* (Op. 44) for violin Hidetaro Suzuki, cello (Ronald Leonard) and Serkin (piano). Each is a worthwhile minor piece, caught in an excellent recording while the performers were deeply into the score. (It is not unusual for musicians at the Marlboro Festival to work on a piece for five or six weeks before playing it in concert. The Schoenberg *Serenade*, according to Frank Salomon, had been rehearsed and played for two seasons before the taped performance.)

The Washington Post

'Lesser Known Works' Top Latest Recordings by MRS

By PAUL HUME
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — If you want to give a record-loving friend — and this could mean you — some records you are sure he doesn't have, you will be interested in the new series being issued by the Marlboro Recording Society (MRS).

While Columbia Records has issued some things done at Marlboro, the new series has items described as "lesser known works which appeal especially to a small audience."

The first list includes: Brahms: *Serenade in A Major*, Opus 16, Marlboro Festival Orchestra under Pablo Casals, K. 12 and 13, with Pina Carmirelli, Rudolf Serkin, and David Cole. MRS-1.

Schoenberg: *Suite*, Opus 29; also Boccherini: *Quintet in F Minor*. Marlboro Artists. MRS-2.

Schoenberg: *Serenade*, Opus 24; also Schubert: *Introduction and Variations*, Opus 160, with Paula Sylvester, flute, Rudolf Serkin, piano. MRS-3.

Beethoven: *Trio in C*, Opus 87; also *Variations in E Flat Major*, Opus 44. Rudolf Serkin, Hidetaro Suzuki, Violin, John Mack, Joseph Turner, Oboes, Patricia Grignet, English horn, Ronald Leonard, cello. Mrs-4. 6.50 each. The records can be ordered from the Marlboro Recording Society, 1430 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, Pa., 19102.

The record quality is uniformly superb. As for the performances, well, Casals' Brahms has a singular warm-hearted spirit that is not to be heard anywhere else, and the orchestral ensemble is an inspired outfit. As for the little sonatas Mozart wrote when he was in London, at the age of 8, they could not be played more enchantingly.

The Schoenberg suite is played by such artists as Jaime and Ruth Laredo, Harold Wright, Samuel Rhodes, and Madeline Foley, with Leon Kirchner leading a performance of extraordinary lucidity and conviction.

It is a revelation. The accompanying Boccherini is sheer delight.

In conducting the serenade, Kirchner Joines his name to a list that includes Mitropoulos, Boulez, Craft and Maderna. He has the advantage of Tom Paul as a superbly agile bass, and again, Rhodes, Wright, James Laredo, Foley, with Stanley Silverman on guitar and Jacob Glick on Mandolin. It is an astonishing work, and this is one of its great readings. That its partner is nothing less than Serkin and Sylvester in Schubert's variations on his own song, "Trockne Blumen," is a bonus full of light and joy. Do not miss.

Both Beethoven works are among those rarely heard. If you are looking for the pleasures the composer found in writing for two oboes and English horn or his early tries in the field of the piano trio (do not be misled by the opus numbered 44 that he wrote it around 1792), you will find the playing full of alternating gallant spirits and tender songs.