

if ever have been as plastically delineated in actual sound as they are here, or made as evident to the untrained auditor as they long have been to the technically trained score-reader.

Yet what most spectacularly -" rejuvenates" the "Organ Symphony" -and will keep present-day listeners replaying it again and again, long after they know every melody by heart-is the magical appeal of its imaginative combinations and permutations of instrumental timbres and dynamics. Heard in the matchless lucidity of the stereo medium, few if any, other symphonic works more richly illustrate the art of sound-weaving in its dual aspects of instrumentation (writing idiomatically for individual instruments) and orchestration (combining instrumental choirs to achieve both maximum sonic diversity and maximum overall sonority).

To enumerate all the aural high spots here would demand a bar-by-bar analysis of the 176-page written score, but thanks to the latest advances in audio technology, the listener can hear each one. All that's necessary is responsive attentiveness-from the Adagio introduction's first plaintive phrases for contrasting string and woodwind timbres, with vibrant low-string pizzicati ... to the thunderous last words hammered out by the timpani just before the full orchestra and organ conclude the entire work on an apocalyptic cadential chord which surely represents the ultimate in both sonic and dramatic impact.

The great Symphony Hall organ was designed by C.. Donald Hanison built by the Aeolian-Skinner Company and installed in 1949. The particular registrations employed by Mr. Zamkochian here are, in the symphony's Paco adagio, first the Diapason and Flute stops of the Swell Organ; then the latter's Viole-de-Gamhe and Viole-Celeste stops with the subterranean 32-foot Pedal Coultre Violone; and, in the ending of this movement, the barely audible ethereal tones of the 8-foot Aeolian stop of the Swell Organ. In dramatic contrast, the second half of the second movement calls for the unleashing of the tremendous resources of the full organ, sonically dominated by its Bombarde division, which comprises six ranks of Plein Jeu, 16-foot Bombarde, 8-foot Trompette Harmonique, and 4-foot Clairon Harmonique. Notes by R. D. DARRELL

A STEREO SPECTACULAR
SAINT-SAËNS Symphony No. 3
BOSTON SYMPHONY/MUNCH

Berj Zamkochian, organ



Not the least singular phenomenon of our high fidelity age is its phonographic rejuvenation of music once considered revolutionary, which complacent concert audiences have allowed to fade into near obscurity. A striking example of such restoration has been the recent popularity among audiophiles of the mighty "Organ" Symphony by Camille Saint-Saens.

Yet this work's scope is so broad its performance and recording problems are so complex, (especially in maintaining sonic equilibrium between the organ and orchestra at both, the lowest and highest dynamic levels, while still preserving distinctive individualization of kaleidoscopically varied tonal colors) that the most skillful of monophonic engineering techniques have never captured the full range of sonorities achievable in "live" performances. Even the best of this latter seldom can command the acoustical balance and transparency of which the composer perhaps over-ambitiously dreamed.

It has remained for the stereophonic era, demonstrating its artistic as well as the technological coming of age, not only to discover solutions to these problems but also to electrify home listeners with a belated realization of Saint-Saens goal—a transcendently new and quite incomparable musical-dramatic experience.

The music's wealth of melodic and rhythmic attractions, like its dramatic range and power, always has been evident at first hearing. The secret of their redemption from the fate of so much ultra-romantic tone poetry, which has come to be disdained by cognoscenti as old-fashionedly lush and lofty, is their revitalization in both sonic expressiveness and interpretative eloquence: for Charles Munch himself, a compatriot of the composer and heir to the latter's tradition, not only has long been a supreme exponent of this particular work but here is enabled to draw upon resources in engineering and orchestral virtuosity never before available to him in recreating this symphony for records as freshly and passionately as if it was being heard for the first time.

The means of accomplishing this are fascinatingly novel. When it was proved that optimum spatial breadth and sound-source differentiations, as well as max our exploitation of the superb acoustics of Boston's Symphony Hall, were impossible to achieve with the conventional

stage-seating pattern, the entire orchestra was boldly spread out over the front half and the full width of the auditorium itself, from which, of course, the normal audience seats had been removed. And although the organ's pipe chambers are permanently located behind the decorative pipe-work at the upper rear of the stage itself, the use of a separate three-channel microphone array in the recording effectively shifts the apparent sources of the organ tones right into and all across the space physically occupied by the orchestra, and so ensures both perfect clarity of even pianissimo organ passages and their forlissimos' sonic equilibrium with even the most thunderous of orchestral tuttis.

But it is the end result which really counts—and the recording enables the home stereo-listener, who closes his eyes and obeys Shakespeare's injunction to "Look with thine ears!" to vividly "see" the orchestra before him:

Left, front: the massed first and (behind them) second violins, with the piano still farther back and to the extreme left.

Right, front: the massed violas, violoncellos, and (rear) basses.

Farther back and spread across the center: the woodwinds (3 flutes—the third doubling with piccolo, 2 oboes and English horn, 2 clarinets and bass clarinet, 2 bassoons and double-bassoon); behind them, the brasses (4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, and tuba J; still farther back and to the extreme right, the percussion section (3 timpani, bass drum, triangle, and cymbals).

And, permeating all of these (when it is called for, in the second halves of both the first and second movements I, the organ, with its deepest pedal tones (the 36.7-cps low D-flats of Side I and ~2.6-cps low C's of Side 2 I provide the rock-solid foundations on which the whole towering, sonic structure is securely hashed.

The C Minor Symphony's architecture long has been esteemed for its cunningly patterned design, its thematic "transformations," and its programmatic triumph of a "calm and lofty" motive over a "restless, diabolical element"—features stressed by the composer himself in his often-quoted annotations for the first performance of the work in 1886, but which seldom

Saint-Saëns SYMPHONY No. 3 IN C MINOR, Op. 78

Boston Symphony Orchestra • Charles Munch, Conductor

Berj Zamkochian, Organist

Leo Litwin and Bernard Zighera, Pianists

1 Allegro moderato 9:51

2 Poco adagio 9:35

3 Allegro moderato 7:32

4 Maestoso; Allegro 7:43

Recorded in Symphony Hall, Boston, April 5 and 6 1959 by RCA
Engineer [Recording] – Lewis Layton Music Director – Richard Mohr



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