

QUARTER NOTES

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NEXT STOP, RIVER CITY IOWA

By Jan C. Snow



▲ MEREDITH WILLSON'S THE MUSIC MAN: Book, music & lyrics by Meredith Willson/Story by Meredith Willson & Franklin Lacey. Timothy Noble as Professor Harold Hill, Kathleen Brett as Marian Paroo, with Doc Severinsen as Marcellus Washburn Erich Kunzel/Cincinnati Pops Orchestra (CD-80276, CS-30276) Available September 1 [70:29]

The cadence of the train is right there, right inside the words. "You can TALK, you can TALK, you can BICKer, you can TALK, you can TALK, talk, TALK, talk, BICKer, bicker, BICKer, you can TALK all you WANna but it's DIFF'rent than it WAS."

You can just feel those steel wheels clacking over the rails as the train makes its way across the flat, flat lands of Iowa, carrying a covey of traveling salesmen (rhythmically debating the latest developments in their business) into the fictional town of River City, and carrying us into Meredith Willson's *The Music Man* (CD-80276, CS-30276), newly recorded by Erich Kunzel and the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra.

"Words holler at me. . . they are more sound than symbol," wrote Willson in his book, *But He Doesn't Know the Territory*. The book chronicles the incredible six-year gestation period and eventual birth of *The Music Man*. Much of the tale told is of Willson's struggle to create a work in which

the words, whether spoken or sung, carry with them an intrinsic rhythm.

"I think there's a way of making rhythmic dialogue to get you unsuspectingly into song," he wrote, "in fact serve as either dialogue or song," which of course is what he ended up doing in the opening train scene, in songs such as "Marian the Librarian", "Pick-a-Little, Talk-a-Little," "Gary, Indiana" (which contains the most lilting hemiola [an across-the-bar-line rhythmic accent] ever to hit Broadway) and, most notably, in the show-stopping "Ya Got Trouble." His achievement is such that in a sense, each and every word of *The Music Man* from "Rock Island" to "Seventy-Six Trombones," is part of the musical score.

"This work is very, very word intensive," says producer Robert Woods. "The greatest challenge for us became getting the text in place."

Musical comedies of the '40s and '50s, Woods points out, were written for a particular kind of voice that was trained for the medium. "Musical theatre today bears no resemblance to the era of *The Music Man*," he says. "We've gone from singing on stage without any amplification at all to microphones and amplifiers everywhere. And you can't cast these roles with opera singers if they're going to sing like opera singers. It doesn't work."

The search for those just-right voices yielded Timothy Noble as Professor Harold Hill and Kathleen Brett as Marian "the librarian" Paroo. A Metropolitan Opera baritone, Noble sang with Fred Waring and The Pennsylvanians for seventeen years and, in his college days, performed Harold Hill at Indiana University. A former member of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble, Brett's busy concert schedule has included frequent appearances in pops concerts with Maestro Kunzel.

"Both leads are *bona fide* opera singers," says Woods, "but both started out in music that was not opera. They haven't forgotten their roots."

An all-American musical comedy, *The Music Man* is red, white and blue theatre, with plenty of brass for sparkle. "The entire story from start to finish takes place on one day: the Fourth of July," says Kunzel. "What could be more American than that?"

Every bit as American as that carefully modulated extravagance of close harmony

known as the barbershop quartet. Willson, a barbershopper himself, included a quartet to play River City's school board, whose determination to expose Professor Hill's chicanery is dissolved time and again in sweet seventh chords.

Originally played by the Buffalo Bills, those four singers were the first cast members of the 1956 Broadway production to be signed. Filling those musical roles in 1991 proved somewhat more difficult.

"Barbershop quartets don't sing the way they did thirty-five years ago," explains Woods. "Practically all tenors are falsetto tenors now, and they've changed the way that they balance the group. It's a different style of singing. This musical demands that old-fashioned kind of barbershop singing."

Unable to find an extant quartet to play the harmonizing school board members, Telarc had to build an ensemble to order, with one singer from the Cincinnati area and three singers coming in from New York.

The first digital recording of Meredith Willson's *The Music Man*, this is also the recording debut of both Noble and Brett and a debut of sorts for veteran Doc Severinsen, who plays Harold Hill's old pal, Marcellus Washburn. "Doc is recorded here for the first time ever as a vocalist," says Kunzel.

The archives of Southern California provided yet another unique feature of the recording. "Meredith Willson's original scores are housed there," says Kunzel. "In preparing the music for the recording I became aware that the love songs were written to be sung in counterpoint but were not done that way on Broadway." On the recording, Marian's "My White Knight" and Harold Hill's "The Sadder but Wiser Girl" are sung in their original counterpoint duet.

A fine cast, including the ever-fabulous Singing Hooiers of Indiana University, makes the townspeople of River City come to life. Making the train that takes us into River City run not only on but in time fell to Telarc's Michael Bishop. Using sounds collected from old steam trains at Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan and on Ohio's Cuyahoga Valley Line, Bishop edited dozens of component sounds to create a train that moves in the exact rhythm and tempo needed for the music. "You could easily do this with a synthesizer or something and get an effect that would be train-like," he says, "but, then, that wouldn't be the real thing." **ON**

JAZZ LIVES ON TELARC WITH OSCAR PETERSON'S SATURDAY NIGHT SET

By Donald Elfman



▲ *THE LEGENDARY OSCAR PETERSON TRIO - SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE BLUE NOTE*: Oscar Peterson, Piano / Herb Ellis, Guitar / Ray Brown, Bass / Bobby Durham, Drums (CD-83306, CS-33306) Available September 1 [67:00]

Oscar Peterson, Ray Brown, and Herb Ellis are back to demonstrate why they were and still are one of the most popular jazz groups in the world. The Saturday night sets have the same breathtaking excitement and volcanic energy that characterized the first album and indeed the lifetime playing of these exceptional artists.

Saturday Night at the Blue Note highlights the organic and timeless new compositions of Oscar Peterson. There are five of his originals that run the gamut from ballads to blues. They are rich sound portraits that display Oscar's all-encompassing approach to the piano as well as an ever-increasing sense of lyricism.

And, of course, there are ebullient readings of jazz standards including "Reunion Blues," written by the Modern Jazz Quartet's Milt Jackson and an incredibly emotional "Old Folks." This is in-the-moment jazz recording of the highest order and a remarkable follow-up to the Grammy winner. **ON**



▲ *Oscar Peterson's premiere Telarc release won two Grammy awards: Best Jazz Instrumental Performance, Soloist, and Best Jazz Instrumental Performance, Group. It was released in September 1990 [73:25]*

SAM PILAFIAN'S TRAVELIN' LIGHT IN HIS FIRST JAZZ TUBA RELEASE

By Donald Elfman

The Empire Brass was in Cleveland recording *Braggin' In Brass*, their collection of jazz and swing tunes. The session was ending as the band was playing the Fats Waller classic "Black And Blue." The producer, Elaine Martone, and the group's exemplary tuba player, Sam Pilafian, realized — with Sam playing solo backed only by light rhythm on the tune — that they had the core of a different kind of jazz album. Thus was born the idea for *Travelin' Light*, the new feature album for Sam Pilafian.

It was not at all a stretch for Sam to be playing jazz. Growing up in Miami in the 1960s, his earliest musical education happened in a thriving musical setting. "Not only were there great retired symphony and jazz players there, but the University of Miami became a hotbed of musical activity. I played a lot with players who are now big in the jazz world — Will Lee from the David Letterman show, Mark Egan, Danny Gottlieb, and many more. Plus, I learned about old styles from a guy named Phil Napoleon who had been famous in the 1920s and who hired me to play at the racetrack."

Back in Cleveland, Sam and guitarist Frank Vignola began to jot down tunes and also got suggestions from pianist Mark Shane. From a large list, they selected the gems on *Travelin' Light*.

"We picked tunes that were less likely to need involved arrangements; great tunes just to jam on," says Sam. "We became a sort of jazz chamber group with several individual voices."

The "voices" here are unique and fresh and are a key element in the album's success.

Frank Vignola is a twenty-six-year-old guitarist whose passion for the late gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt led him to form his own group, Hot Club. Inspired by Django's classic swing group with violinist Stephane Grappelli, Frank's band plays originals, standards, and tunes made famous by their inspirations. Says Sam, "Frank is an original and pretty much the only one I know who's continuing Django's approach. I grew up on those old Hot Club of France records and it's been a dream of mine to play that music the way it was intended."

Pianist Mark Shane plays what he calls "classic jazz piano." He's been playing since age fourteen and has worked with Benny Goodman, Ruby Braff, and Buck Clayton, and other masters of "classic jazz." He has a crisp and fluent attack and an incredible knowledge of tunes. Sam notes, "Mark kept our act clean. He urged and inspired us to play together as a swinging unit."

Joining this unit on rhythm guitar for six tunes is Jimmy George, who was Frank's teacher and, notably, one of the Belmonts, the group that backed pop singer, Dion, in the early '60s.



▲ *TRAVELIN' LIGHT*: Sam Pilafian, tuba player of the Empire Brass, in a collection of jazz standards, with friends, Frank Vignola, guitar; Mark Shane, piano & Jimmy George, rhythm guitar (CD-80281, CS-30281) Available June 1 [50:38]

Travelin' Light is a beautiful sum of the experiences and voices of these players. They create magical, intimate, and swinging versions of great tunes — "Ol' Man River," "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Avalon," and much more. And Sam and Frank do a dazzling version of a Django classic, "Rhythm Futur." In the spirit of these tunes and the brilliance of the playing, Sam Pilafian and friends carry forward the jazz tradition. **ON**

MOVIE MUSIC YOU'LL LOVE TO LOVE

By Jan C. Snow



▲ **MOVIE LOVE THEMES:** Erich Kunzel Cincinnati Pops Orchestra (CD-80243, CS-30243) Available June 1 [70:55]

In a way, the title of *Movie Love Themes* (CD-80243, CS-30243) smacks of redundancy. What, if not love, are movies all about anyway? Love, in one form or another, is the all-pervasive Hollywood theme - the love of an idea, the love of a dream, as well as

romantic love in its many guises.

For this latest collection of cinematic music by the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, Erich Kunzel and producer Robert Woods have chosen music that explores love in its various facets the way a crystal breaks a beam of light into a rainbow of hues.

Love that spans a lifetime is poignantly portrayed by the main theme from *On Golden Pond* and "The Last Time I Felt Like This" from *Same Time Next Year*. Love that extends beyond this life and across time can be felt in "We're Losing Him" from *Somewhere in Time* and the delicate "Unchained Melody" from *Ghost*.

Love that bridges not time but social barriers is central to that quintessential modern romance, *The Way We Were*, and *Arthur*, the theme of which captures the film's winning combination of urban hipness overlaid with wistfulness. "Through the Eyes of Love" from *Ice Castles*, "Evergreen" from *A Star is Born* and "People Alone" from *The Competition* give us love of a dream, the necessity we feel to reach for something larger than ourselves.

Many of these pieces are familiar as memorable songs but are presented in this recording as instrumentals, the success of

which speaks to the strength of the compositions. "When you're taking a vocal tune and doing it as an instrumental, it has to have a particularly well-written line," says Kunzel. "You have to choose tunes that can stand by themselves with no help whatsoever from the words."

Originally sung by Madonna as *Breathless* Mahoney, "Sooner or Later" from *Dick Tracy* is heard here in a lush, deep-pile orchestration by Tommy Newsom that is breathtaking. And when the incredible exuberance of Don Sebesky's arrangement of "Flashdance... What a Feeling" finally breaks loose, it's like sonic white-water rafting.

Fully half of the eighteen selections on the recording are enhanced by the artistry of pianist William Tritt. The quaint waltz from *Cousins* receives fine treatment from accordionist Jean Dulaney and guitarist Angel Romero performs "Cavatina" from *The Deer Hunter*.

From the plaintive calls of the loon that transport you to the northern environs of *On Golden Pond* to the beautiful and bittersweet conclusion of *The Way We Were*, *Movie Love Themes* is unabashedly romantic and, well, love-ly. (Consider listening to it with someone you love.) QN

PREVIN PRESENTS FOURTH IN SERIES OF STRAUSS' TONE POEMS

By Valerie D. Thorson

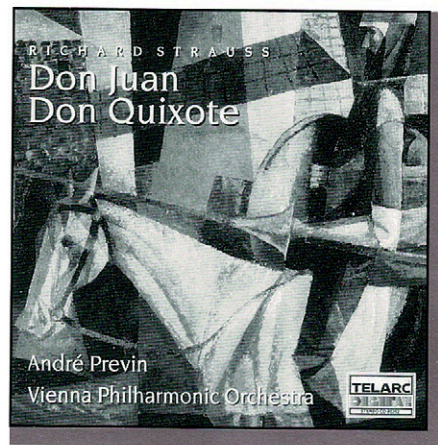
Beginning in 1988, when Telarc's recording of Richard Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra* and *Tod und Verklärung* (CD-80167) with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by André Previn was released, it has become obvious that each of the recordings in this series has had an almost magical appeal. The above-mentioned release won the "Outstanding Orchestral Recording of the Year" award from the Japan Record Academy, as well as enjoying a long ride as number one on the classical chart in the prestigious German music magazine *Audio*. The second Telarc recording of Strauss' music, *Ein Heldenleben* and the *Four Last Songs* (CD-80180, with soprano Arleen Augér) was greeted with equal enthusiasm by the critics and consumers, as can be exemplified by this glowing review from the *Salt Lake Tribune*: "... one of the most truly gorgeous performances of 'Heldenleben.' The Vienna Philharmonic plays with more than its usual golden warmth...the results must stand among the finest."

The 1990 Telarc release of *An Alpine Symphony* (CD-80211) simply continued the flood of acclaim that began with the two

previous recordings. The *Alpine* charted high on the *Billboard* classical chart for thirteen weeks, and in England's *Gramophone* magazine, the reviewer affirmed: "One senses a tangible rapport between [Previn] and the orchestra throughout the symphony which gives this recording a naturalness such as one finds only in a live performance."

With all this in mind, we can only be delighted that Telarc has recently released a fourth recording in this marvelous series of the Strauss tone poems: *Don Juan* and *Don Quixote* (CD-80262). The two works contain some of Strauss' most beautiful and most complex writing, including, in *Don Juan*, some fearfully difficult music for the brass. During rehearsals for the premiere of the piece, one of the horn players moaned, "In what way have we sinned that you should have sent us this scourge!"

In the score to *Don Quixote*, which the composer termed "Fantastic variations on a theme of knightly character," prominent parts for various instruments loosely symbolize the wayward knight and his sidekick, Sancho Panza. The cello part is so difficult that some conductors treat the work as a kind of concerto for cello and orchestra, although this was never Strauss's intention. Here the part is played finely by Franz Bartolomey, in a most



▲ **R. STRAUSS: Don Juan / Don Quixote** André Previn / Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (CD-80262) Available July 1 [59:30]

musical reading.

Upcoming Telarc projects featuring André Previn and the Vienna Philharmonic include a recording of Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Sinfonia domestica*, as well as a release which will take Previn and Vienna in a new direction: the powerful Fourth Symphony of Gustav Mahler. Stay tuned for our next report on these recordings--it promises to be an exciting one. QN

PREVIEWS

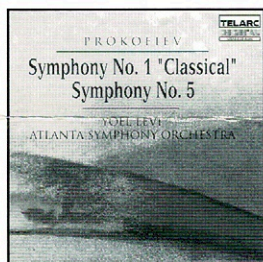
VERDI / STRAVINSKY



◀ **VERDI:** *Four Sacred Pieces*
STRAVINSKY: *Symphony of Psalms*
 Robert Shaw
 Atlanta Symphony Orchestra & Chorus
 (CD-80254)
 Available June 1 [60:09]

Telarc presents Verdi's very last group of works, *Four Sacred Pieces*, in this glorious recording by the "Dean of American Choral Conductors." They are coupled with his finely drawn reading of Stravinsky's expressive, grandly conceived choral symphony.

PROKOFIEV



◀ **PROKOFIEV:** *Symphony No. 1 & No. 5* / Yoel Levi
 Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
 (CD-80289)
 Available August 1 [62:41]

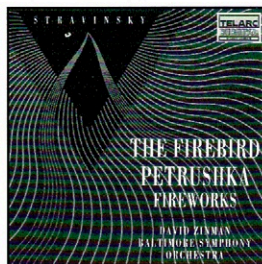
Prokofiev's astonishing First Symphony – a student piece – is a celebration of the classical forms and melodies of Haydn. His Symphony No. 5 is a grand testament to freedom and the human spirit. These are two of the most popular symphonies of the twentieth century and their breadth of expression is brilliantly conveyed by Levi and the Atlanta Symphony.

MOZART SERIES COMPLETED



▲ **MOZART:** *Sym. No. 1, 4, K. 19a, 5, 6, 7 & "55"* (CD-80256) [73:13]; *Sym. No. 8, 9, "44," "47," "45" & 11* (CD-80272) [60:41]; *Sym. No. 10, "42," 12, "46" & 13* (CD-80273) [57:28] Sir Charles Mackerras / Prague Chamber Orchestra Available July 1

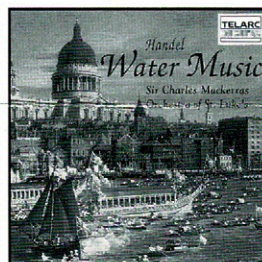
STRAVINSKY



◀ **STRAVINSKY:** *The Firebird*
Petrushka / Fireworks, Op. 4 / David Zinman
 Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
 (CD-80270)
 Available July 1 [56:36]

Stravinsky's compositions are a veritable treasure chest of the rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic splendors of twentieth century music. Here is the 1947 version of the great "fantastic" ballet *Petrushka*, along with a suite taken from his fairy-tale ballet, *The Firebird*, and one of his earliest works, the little tone poem, *Fireworks*. Vital contemporary music played with zest and brilliance by the increasingly acclaimed Baltimore Symphony is led by David Zinman.

HANDEL



◀ **HANDEL:** *Water Music, Suites in G, F & D* / Sir Charles Mackerras / Orchestra Of St. Luke's (CD-80279) Available September 1 [54:18]

Handel's consistently inspired *Water Music*, three naturally harmonious suites, was actually written as entertainment for a gathering on a royal barge on the Thames River in 1717. This is imaginative and openly beautiful music, rich in singable tunes, danceable rhythms, and appealing settings. It's all splendidly played by Sir Charles and the Orchestra of St. Luke's.

SAINT-SAËNS



◀ **SAINT-SAËNS:** *Sym. No. 3, "Organ Symphony,"* Phaëton / Christian Badea / Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Michael Murray, Organ (CD-80274) Available September 1 [45:35]

The majestic *Organ Symphony* is a breathtaking feast for the ears as played with exuberance by virtuoso Michael Murray and the Royal Philharmonic under the baton of Christian Badea.

BRUCKNER



◀ **BRUCKNER:** *Symphony No. 6* Jesús López-Cobos Cincinnati Symphony (CD-80264) Available August 1 [56:41]

The third Telarc recording of Bruckner is a compelling and powerful reading of the symphony the composer considered to be his boldest work.

NOW ON COMPACT DISC

CHAUSSON: *Concert for Violin, Piano & String Quartet* / Lorin Maazel, violin; Israella Margalit, piano / The Cleveland Orchestra String Quartet (CD-80046) Available August 1

WATCH FOR OUR FALL / HOLIDAY QUARTER NOTES ISSUE AND COMPLETE CATALOG IN NOVEMBER



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