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HERE AND THERE

I have often thought that I should like to meet the man who designs the balustrades which adorn the more recent road bridges throughout the country. Good and solid they undoubtedly are, but how irritating they can be during a journey by road. One's interest is usually aroused at a distant view of a tree-lined stream after a particularly dreary stretch of road, and as one approaches one idly wonders whether the stream is 'deep and wide' like the Weser at Hamelin, or shallow and sparkling like Tennyson's Brook; whether it promises a likely stretch for an hour or so's fly-casting or whether it contains a pool attractive enough for a quick swim. On nearing the bridge one is encouraged by the sight of a chipping, soft-sounding Maori name. And then, suddenly, one is clamped on either side by a solid wall of concrete which looks massive enough to restrain a runaway traction engine and one is off the bridge again without so much as a glimpse of the water.

If I ever meet the designer I must ask him why something a little less ponderous and rather more transparent could not be devised to keep the traffic from running off the bridge. I'm sure that it could be done, and if he will bear with me I may even be so bold as to offer one or two suggestions on the back of an envelope.

* * *

We are prepared to tolerate shortages while there is a prospect of their being overcome. But we have been short of steel and cement for building for twelve years, and now, instead of the long hoped for improvement, rearrangement has meant that steel is again to be used for war production. Our building programme was already several years behind at the start of the Second World War, and there are few who are not feeling the pinch of the fifteen years lag.

What we must now realize is that we should build permanent nonresidential buildings in materials other than reinforced concrete. In the cities we should allow four story commercial buildings and flats in timber framing set well apart for fire protection. In setting the buildings apart, space for light, air and parking would be gained. Difficulties such as the small size of most city sections would be overcome if owners knew the new standards of layout required. We are already seeing a foretaste of the only alternative — the conversion of boarding rooms, rooming houses and other living accommodation around the present business centres into factories, offices and warehouses, and the building of one-storey wood and asbestos 'temporary' buildings on vacant land. This trend is transferring the areas of our cities between the business centres and suburbs into great junk yards where fire, health and traffic dangers are growing daily. The old wooden Government Buildings, now 75 years old, can set a new pattern of urban development.

* * *

Because of earthquakes we use more steel in our reinforced concrete buildings in New Zealand than is necessary in other countries. I understand from some of our more knowledgeable structural engineers that our by-laws for earthquake-proof construction are partly arbitrary and that a big saving could be made if they were based on a scientific study of the peculiar and individual habits of quakes. This is a matter for building research.
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HOUSE AT MEADOWBANK, AUCKLAND

Architect: M. B. Patience

This house was planned to accommodate a family of five, with the added requirements of study space for father and play space for children. The access road to the subdivision lies to the south of the site, slightly elevated, and the ground slopes gently to the north.

The structure of the house is weatherboarded timber framing on a concrete foundation, with a fabric roof of low pitch. Wide eaves are designed to shade large glass areas from hot summer sun, while allowing full penetration of winter sun.

An attempt has been made to cater for the rush-hour demand on bathing facilities by arranging plumbing units in compartments.
The combination Electric Laundry is designed especially for the modern home. This unit comprises Electric Washer Boiler, Electric Wringer, all metal tubs, metal storage bin and ironing facilities—all in a space of 5ft 2in x 1ft 10in x 2in. Save space—Haymanise your Home!

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The small plan to the left shows the house as it was. Alterations have been so extensive that it is a little difficult to relate the old to the new. But the room marked '3' in the lower left-hand corner of each plan gives the key.
A FAMILY HOUSE AND GARDEN

Architect: Gordon T. Wilson

(a) Outdoor room  (b) Sitting room windows  (c) To the front door
Apart from its size—which is large for these days—this is an unusual and remarkable house. It is composed of strikingly contrasted elements, yet it has the effect of most agreeable harmony; the unexpected becomes the inevitable. Approaching the door up a rather rough Wellington hillside drive overhung with dark pine trees, one would hardly imagine that on the other side of the house lay a secluded garden, warm enough to grow hibiscus, sheltered enough to sit outside, and planted with a blend of formality and freedom that puts a personal seal on the house, inside and out.

The same resolution of contrast is apparent within the house—for example, the brick wall in the living room opposes a wall of silky honey-coloured panelling; and the flax matting borrows quite an air from the fine Persian rug that lies over one end of it. The deliberate contrast of textures and materials—glass, metal, brick, wood and fabric—enhances the natural values of each component.

The final harmony is not, of course, the result of caprice. It is the result of trained sensibility and hard work.

As you will see from the plan, the rooms are grouped: the dining room hall is really part of the living room, the division between them suggested by a clear glass screen; the main bedroom, dressing room and bathroom are separate from the children's bedrooms and playroom; the kitchen, pantry and children's mealroom form another group.

These rooms are bound together by colour. A discerning visitor will notice that the colours derive from the Persian carpet in the living room. Its rosy pinks and reds, soft blues, dull yellow and rich deep brown reappear in varying tones and intensity throughout the house. The panelled wood of the dining room hall is light yellow like the table and chairs and flax matting. Behind glass, on shelves in the panelling is a pale shell-pink tea service. To the left is the living room; the fireplace wall is brick, the rest of the walls that are not glass are panelled in unobtrusively formal squares of the same light-coloured wood. The armchairs and sofa are dark brown, the carpet over the flax matting a clear blue. The curtains are a broken sourish red, deeper than the bricks, which contrasts agreeably with the pink elsewhere. Large windows in the brick wall make the secluded garden (planted, it seems, to contrast with the interior) part of the room.

And so through the rest of the house: there is a good deal of soft pink in the main bedroom; blue rubber material covers the floor of the rest of the rooms. The small bedrooms are identical in size, shape, and furniture—beds, cupboards, desks and drawers are built in; only the colours are different.

It is a large house, kept warm in winter by a slow-burning stove. And the work? Much less, plainly, than in most other large houses.

A dissection of this kind always reduces the object under review to a series of contrived strokes. There is, however, nothing studied about this house, although its effect is quite candidly displayed—it is designed to please and not to impress. It has an air of comfort and good-feeling which all the skill and 'good taste' in the world cannot contrive, and which, in the end, defies analysis.

(d) The north end of the living room
(e) The dining room from the living room
(f) The main bedroom
(g) Living room fireplace
(h) The living room
(i) The children's playroom
The arrangement of the built-in fittings in the living-dining room is lively and informal. The apparent size of the stair hall is greatly increased by the use of a light and open stair (on opposite page).
Two main factors have influenced the planning of this house: a narrow frontage with neighbouring houses close on either side; and a site which slopes steeply towards a magnificent view of Wellington Harbour. The principal rooms have been placed on the first floor above street level to take full advantage of the view, and thoughtful planning has produced an internal arrangement which though compact still creates a generous impression of space.
To the street the house presents a crispness and simplicity of line which stresses its essentially urban character.

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HEATING THE HOME

R. T. Parry

Most of us, when we are considering the heating of our houses, think only of temperature. But heating, to be comfortable, always involves another important element: humidity. ‘Humidity’, briefly, is the amount of water vapour in the atmosphere. Some forms of heating lower the humidity; in other words, they make the atmosphere dry and give rise to various physical discomforts such as parched throats and headaches. This is a matter which has to be taken into consideration.

(1) OPEN COAL FIRE. In British and probably all Western countries the fireplace is traditionally the focal point of the household. Apart from its function as a source of heat, it has a psychological value which often outweighs the technical advantages of other possible means. A summary of the technical features of various forms of heating is given at the end of this article, but with the open fire, the cosy appearance, the satisfying appeal of flame and glowing embers are factors which will probably leave the open fire a prime favourite for a long time.

The open fire has also the useful property of inducing a draught and thus changing the air in a room. The fireplace should preferably be sited in the middle of a building so that all the heat from the chimney is used and fresh air circulated.

Such an induced draught is, however, not an unmixed blessing. This is evident on a cold night in a poorly insulated room when the occupants grouped round the fireplace are toasted in front and frozen behind. This is one of the greatest deficiencies of the open fire, particularly when passages and bedrooms are unheated—the source of heat is too concentrated, too canalsised and too limited.

Other disadvantages are dust and smoke (which lead to costly renovation of decorations); erratic quality of fuel; necessity of storage and service of fuel; the constructional expense of the fireplace and chimney.

(2) GAS FIRE. The greatest virtue of the gas fire is its convenience. Other virtues depend too much on the local supply; that is, on cost, cleanliness, availability and pressure.

In New Zealand, proper and effective use is not so general as in Britain, owing partly to the greater development of our electricity supply and partly to the nature of the coal resources and qualities in the two countries. Also New Zealand, a new country with its towns sparsely spread, does not lend itself to economic reticulation.

In Britain the use of gas has continued to grow in parallel with the greater utilisation of electricity; strangely enough, the increasing use of electricity has in no way diminished the use of gas; evidently there is still room for both utilisation for some years to come.

One of the main drawbacks of the gas fire is that it produces a dry atmosphere, which in extreme cases gives rise to throat dryness and headaches; this is particularly so when the appliance is fitted in a fireplace or replaces an open fire.

Coal gas needs oxygen for complete combustion; hence when the flame burns it absorbs the oxygen from the air, leading to the feeling of dryness and heaviness. This defect can largely be rectified by placing a humidifier (e.g., a bowl of water) near the gas fire—an expedient used much too rarely.

Advantages of gas heating are its convenience and flexibility, with proper attention it can be cleaner in use than a coal fire, and of course involves less labour. Some cleaning is necessary, depending on the cleanliness of the gas supply. A gas stove which is not regularly cleaned soon gives evidence of its owner’s neglect.

In New Zealand gas fires are generally of the open or semi-open type with refractory bases and elements for the storage and distribution of heat; their most noticeable feature, as of all gas appliances, is the quick warmth they bring, a response speedier than with any other form of appliance.

Its very nature, however, restricts its variety and application, and a flue for the dispersal of the products of combustion is usually necessary. There are on the market patented proprietary appliances which dispense with the flue. Although these are not yet in very general use, they are worth further investigation and development.

Gas firing with a central heating furnace is convenient and usable with several types, but in New Zealand its full use in all forms is retarded by its high cost—high, that is, compared with the price of electricity here and of gas in overseas countries.

This is inevitably the result of the high cost and poor quality of New Zealand coal. Gas supplies are slowly improving in some places, and in normal times in the main centres there will probably be no shortage.

(3) ENCLOSED STOVE. The slow combustion stove was developed in its present form in Europe, where greater extremes of temperature and the need for economy led to conservation of fuel and financial resources. This stove, enclosed, continuous burning, either inset or free standing, is already popular in Britain and is becoming increasingly so in New Zealand.
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Its optimum efficiency (around 70 per cent) is obtainable only with a good slow burning coal such as Welsh anthracite. Various types of stove, however, burn other fuels such as coke, and synthetic fuel such as briquettes.

Apart from being self-contained and very clean (bearing in mind the fuel burned) stoves of this type are economical of fuel compared with the much more wasteful open fire.

Unfortunately, the poor quality, dirty coal usually found in New Zealand today, with its low calorific value and high ash content, make it poor fuel for the enclosed, slow combustion stove, but even so it is more economical.

The free standing stove is more efficient than one inset in a fireplace, unless the latter can be used for heating a room at the back—for example, where the kitchen backs on to the living room.

In this case there should be access to the chimney if coal is burned. The convenience of the stove, particularly with anthracite, is a valuable feature: a room can be warm in the early morning; plates can be warmed; with a back-of-the-grate-boiler hot water is readily available; in a back-to-back grate the oven can quickly be raised to a high temperature; there is a minimum of cleaning and attention involved; controlled heat is obtained by opening and closing door and damper.

(4) ELECTRIC HEATING. This is the most modern, flexible and convenient of all forms of heating. But it is not at the moment as much used as it should be owing to the limitations of supply. Strangely, its very shortage has led to a greater appreciation of its value: its convenience, its flexibility and (in New Zealand) its reasonable cost.

There is no function of heating which cannot be performed electrically; no application where it cannot be used.

In the past, and today, various forms of proprietary electric fires emulate the coal fire and simulate flame and flicker effect. It would be far better, as many people are coming to realize, if the inherent features of cleanliness and convenience had been more emphasized.

Two factors which should be considered when the benefits of electric heating are discussed: (a) its cost. This ideally should not exceed a farthing per unit. (b) It should be the sole means of heating; full advantage can then be taken of its efficiency. If this is fully gone into when the house is being built, chimneys, storage space and fireplaces can all be eliminated with a saving in capital expenditure and a freedom from the restrictions imposed by conventional building design. Generous provision in the design stage of an electrical installation means ultimate saving; but it also presupposes an adequate electricity supply.

The most usual applications of electric heating are:

1. Tubular heater or hot pipes, working at a low surface temperature and low electrical consumption. These are usually fitted beneath windows. They are very useful for
supplementing existing heating schemes and for heating halls, passages and landings, a field of application almost entirely its own.

2. Panel heating units which can be fitted on walls, on floors or on ceilings. Here again there is almost infinite choice in design and position.

3. The closed or open fire which can sit in the open fireplace or be placed anywhere convenient.

4. Wallpapers are now made containing electric elements which work at a low surface temperature.

All such forms of electric heating depend on the heating value of an electric current flowing through a wire having resistance, the energy being dissipated in the form of heat, ranging from black to cherry red.

An outstanding advantage of electric heating is that it can (best of all systems) be thermostatically controlled.

(5) CENTRAL HEATING. This will go without more than mention because in only very few New Zealand homes can such an installation be justified on grounds of economy or climate.

**SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUEL</th>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COAL (Open Fire)</td>
<td>Psychologically traditional; not dependent on any other</td>
<td>Dirty, inefficient, efficiency as low as 15%; limits design of house, wasteful of labour and fuel, inflexible, non-adaptable, needs storage. Expensive in decoration restoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENCLOSED SLOW COMBUSTION STOVE</td>
<td>More efficient and cleaner than open fire; more economical in fuel and labour; continuous availability</td>
<td>Disadvantages reduced but coal or other fuel still needs handling and storage. Four times as efficient as open fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOOD</td>
<td>Largely as for coal but cheaper.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAS</td>
<td>Convenient, fairly flexible and adaptable. No storage or handling nuisance.</td>
<td>Expensive in renovation of decoration. ‘Dries the air’. Some explosion risk and lethal danger. Expensive. Modern fire 50% efficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELECTRICITY</td>
<td>Clean, flexible, adaptable; needs no storage or handling, economical in decoration charges.</td>
<td>Not fully available; in the past not cheap; fire cost; to get full advantages house must be primarily designed for its use. Appliance efficiency of 100%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL HEATING</td>
<td>Satisfactory and comprehensive warming; storage properties; positively controlled; can be adapted for all fuels.</td>
<td>Expensive in first cost; only applicable to large buildings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REVIEW**

I.C.I. CALENDAR

I can well remember the favourable comment aroused by the issue, in 1949, of the first I.C.I. calendar, the advent of which was not allowed to pass without mention in this magazine. The company is evidently pursuing its enlightened policy of employing a first-rate artist each year in the illustration of its calendar, and we have come to expect an extremely high standard.

As Christmas approaches one casts an eye over the annual haul of calendars, and marks with appreciation the compliments of the donor. The calendars themselves, I'm afraid, are usually pretty grisly and one selects the least offensive and reluctantly hangs it on a convenient nail, more or less resigned to the prospect of its uninspiring company for the next twelve months. One is considerably relieved, therefore, when a package turns up from the I.C.I. and the prospect brightens.

This year one of our foremost illustrators, Russell Clark, has produced a series of pen drawings to enliven our progress through the weeks and months. The drawings which depict scenes of pioneering in this country, are crisp, lively, and extremely decorative without being over-formalized.

Full marks to Imperial Chemical Industries for keeping up the good work and may other firms follow their example in 1952.

The above illustration is one of a series of six drawings by Russell Clark. Reduced from 7½ inches.

**TO THE SUBSCRIBERS OF DESIGN REVIEW**

The Editors very much regret that owing to the increased cost of production the price of Design Review has had to be raised to ten shillings a year. The new rate begins with this March-April issue and includes postage.
THE NEED FOR CRITICISM

The enthusiastic people who have for five years supported the Arts Year Book will be glad it has achieved substantial recognition as a national institution which is likely to remain with us. It will be clear, as it proceeds, that this review is quite narrowly concerned with a deficiency in this year's volume which should not be perpetuated.

It is a thick book. The title lettering on the cover is thick, the type lies thick on the glossy paper, the 'exhibits' are thickly crammed between its solid covers, and the written comment and criticism are, with two exceptions, pretty thick too. It has no edge.

What purpose engendered it? And who is it for? The book itself is evidence of some deliberation. In the preface 'they' (unspecified) write that . . . a periodic stocktaking of a country's assets in the various fields of the arts is a desirable thing. . . . With the all-over view supplied by an annual survey of developments in all branches of the arts the individual worker has a clearer picture of where he stands. The artist individually and collectively, is assisted to plot his course with intelligence, and so everyone is able to proceed with increased confidence. Coordination in the progress of all the arts is encouraged. Form and direction are given to widely differing yet essentially related creative activity, making for a higher degree of aesthetic order.' That is what the editors set out to do. It is clear that they are to do it for the benefit of practising artists. The actual problem of editing, they say, may be comparatively simple.

And what happens? A sample will show: beneath this crudely optimistic preface is jammed as a tailpiece Mr Russell's sensitive picture, Melancholia. The essential disrespect which this incongruity suggests, arising from a desire to show regard for the painting and to use it for the advantage of the book, sounds the confusion of purpose which weakens the book in almost every part. It has its expressed object of being an 'all-embracing' review for the benefit of working artists and at the same time it is acutely concerned with itself as an Arts Year Book - 'A.Y.B.' It is muzzy with self-consciousness. Look at the self-advertising title on the dust-jacket, at the inside flap, where are offered the Arts in a self-conscious convention (mystery, suspense, thrills galore). Read the preface and the comments introducing the pictorial art and poetry sections, sudden with self-justification.

Asking myself if I make too much of these weaknesses - not allowing for New Zealand conditions, giving credit for the effort made, and so on - I am reminded of the need, mentioned more than once in the book, for adhering to single standards of judgement. Then little about the book seems really satisfactory. Like a woman seeking assurance in a mirror - without either simplicity or profound self-knowledge - it mars its virtues.

Inhibiting self-consciousness is a chronic New Zealand complaint, and in the arts we are constantly getting in the way of our work. When I have seen the splendid complete absorption of human energy and skill in a task, it was generally sheep-shearing or curiodocing, building a henhouse or preparing a meal. And it was a delight to watch the union of the door with the object. We are at home in these activities and feel reasonably sure about them, a born sheep is something on which we are able to pass a confident judgement. But our artists look abroad. They
feel their isolation, the lack of a local tradition, and of a disciplinary, informed, critical opinion. Because they are unsure, their concern with themselves as artists is no obstacle to their work. We see the picture and the painter being a painter, the poem and the poet being a poet, and the individual quality of the object, which is for the artist's special sensibility to perceive, which he must lose himself in representing, which gives a work of art its own life, its reason for being— is lost.

This may be amply illustrated from the work shown in the Year Book. (My remarks about the work of individuals are intended to criticise it only in so far as it is related to my contention here, and because it seems to illustrate characteristics significantly common in the sections where it appears.) An artist who does not heed Matthew Arnold's advice to keep his eye on the object will hardly avoid the cliché. It may be a community cliché, or one which he creates for himself. Not being freshly united with each new object he can but repeat a worn generalization. In J. Edward Murphy's drawings the uninteresting repetition of what was not, I think, in any case a very original conception is an example of how this may occur in an effort to escape the 'conventional'; conversely, T. A. McCormick's Still Life shows how absorption in the object produces a completely individual result, which also tells something about the quality of flowers generally—and tells it in paint. This picture with Beatrix Christie's Tobacco Queen, M. T. Wallis's Landscape, and a few others, is an exception to what seems to me a stiff literalness in the pictorial section—for example, The Parentis, by Gordon McCausland, appears to be the laborious translation of a verbal idea into pigment. Contrast this with New Year's Day, by Evelyn Page, a picture which directly apprehends its subject.

Again, in the poetry—Denis Glover shows his ability as a parodist, Basil Dowling is refreshingly content with his modest accomplishment, and there is genuine and sometimes moving particularity in James Baxter's Rocket Show and in Ruth Dallas's poems—but there is not a rhythmically individual and exciting poem in the collection. The piece which leads off portentously—Sonnet For Our Time—shows the characteristic interference of the poet's self-consciousness in the poem he is writing. Why use the sonnet form, which demands progression, when there is so little movement? The simple theme, the clinging in a doomed world to the satisfaction of personal relations, remains undeveloped (scarcely justified, I should say, but the poem may be intended ironically). It is extended into a sonnet through a series of heterogeneous images (tidal wave which is the slatternly woman of a pantomime, 'soggy structure'—pantomime or tidal wave—which 'feels good and sways like a dying dinosaur through worlds...').

The Allanwork is overworked, and the balance of this style, which presages a book. It appears that the potentialities of an idea have not been served by poetic exercise.

Now it is true that it must be left to the artist to grapple with his situation, to get and digest his experience as best he can—chiefly, in many cases, to escape the overwhelmingly verbal nature of his education. But he can be helped by criticism which will enable him to find himself, and to forget himself. The Arts Year Book, which sets out with unqualified honesty but with confusion of interest to help artists, gives little room to criticism in its 'All-embracing' review, and the space that is allowed is generally not well used.

One exception, which should be mentioned first because it is the kind of criticism which ought to inform the whole book, is E. H. McCormick's contribution, in which he traces the pattern of New Zealand's culture over the last hundred years through an examination of tide pages. The writing is closely packed with sense, exact and incisive. Mr. McCormick moves surely through documentation and detailed observation to his general conclusions. Apart from Roger Duff's note on Maori cave drawings and, in part, H. V. Brigent's on the amateur theatre, this article is the only instance where the writer really faces his material squarely and ventures his judgement on particular points.

Patrick Macaskill's article on the year's fiction is comparable in its attempt, but is nullified by loose writing, by its lack of specific reference (later, however, the novel seems to lack the central thread or emotional theme necessary to integrate it and indicate some sort of structural plan...), and its liking for vague, superficial generalities ('the cultural scene', 'New Zealand atmosphere...'). Particularly Sargesson, whose style and technique are especially suitable.

The jargon of criticism keeps the reader once removed from the writer's material.

In the section on architecture—but why go wearily on? Generalities, generalities, generalities. Fat ones, thin ones, fuzzy ones, dizzy ones, grave old plodders and fresh young friskers—who will lead them to the river and drown them all... Except one. The one which arrives without being asked.

The idea of a periodic review of the country's art is not questioned, and one must acknowledge the energy and concern for art in New Zealand which produced this one. But a review which is not critical misses its opportunity and is likely to make unsure artists more self-conscious than they already are. If the review is for artists it should be workmanlike and particular in its approach to the material it is treating. The lay public will not lose by that either.

The desire to be 'all-embracing' is paralysing. Surely it is enough to include as much of significance as can be handled conveniently. Nor does there seem to be any reason why all sections should be included in one volume. Separate publications might lessen problems of editing—it may be seen in this book how unsuitable the type is to the paper and to the double column—and some might be more cheaply produced. Best of all, that insidious spirit, 'A-Y-B', might be laid at last.

P. EARLE

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

John Gray

Long-playing records have been an established fact for three years, and first supplies for New Zealand were officially on order. The time has come for a definite assessment of this biggest advance in the gramophone world since the advent of electrical recording a quarter of a century ago.

First, as to practical details. The records are made in the 'normal' sizes of 10-inch and 12-inch, and play on a turntable revolving at 33 1/3 revolutions a minute instead of the standard 78. (It is convenient to ignore the 45 r.p.m. disc introduced by one or two companies in America — this disc is not so much
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just can’t hitch up an LP turntable to your ordinary radio and expect to get all there is to get out of the new records – these discs, especially English Decca, are of a greatly extended range and nothing will do except a properly constructed amplifier and speaker. I am no technician and cannot elaborate this side of the matter, though it is obviously one to consider carefully. It is for every collector to decide whether he is getting enough of the music reproduced to satisfy his own taste.

The most amazing and heartening aspect of the whole LP revolution has been the increased repertoire which has appeared on records. That most of these records are released only in America (though largely recorded in Europe) and would be most difficult to obtain here cannot lessen our wonder and admiration. Who would have thought five years ago that by today there would be no fewer than 50 of Haydn’s 104 symphonies obtainable on records? That almost half a dozen of this composer’s Masses would be recorded? That the repertoire of complete or substantially complete operas would by now include Idomeneo, Il Seraglio, Fidelio, Tha Flying Dutchman, Ernani, L’amore di tre re, Fledermann, Puccini’s three one-act operas and his Girl of the Golden West? That recorded choral works would include Bach’s St John Passion, Mozart’s Coronation Mass, an early Beethoven mass and Haydn’s Creation? Other achievements of LP include recordings of practically the whole of the Bach Festival given under the direction of Casals in the town of Prades last year, Strauss’s Elektra recorded complete at the Florence Festival, and a complete Die Meistersinger done in Vienna.

In this article it has not been possible to do more than touch the surface of a fascinating subject. LP is here to stay and the newest records are markedly better than the earlier ones, but the serious record collector will welcome it as an additional feature rather than a replacement of the old system. Those of us who have been collecting for some years are not going to discard our pre-war Busch and Budapest quartet recordings, our Glyndebourne Mozart operas or our Mozart symphonies conducted by Beecham. If we wish to march with the times we must have apparatus that can give us the best of both worlds, and even here there may be some loss, for I am afraid that these new playing desks make us rather painfully aware of the technical limitations of some of the older records. But I cannot see that the enormous amount of music now being recorded would ever have been possible without the advent of LP, and for that reason at least we should treat the newcomer with respect.
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