

RECORDS: CIVIL WAR PORTRAIT OF THE UNION

By JOHN BRIGGS

AN old joke runs: "Who won the Civil War?" The correct answer of course being: "The American Booksellers Association." There appears to be no saturation point for Civil War fiction, historical surveys and biographies of Confederate and Federal leaders. Record-makers, too, are moving into the field.

Columbia, which evidently was pleased by the reception given its earlier album, "The Confederacy," now offers a companion piece, "The Union."

Like its predecessor, "The Union" is a handsome package consisting of essays by Bruce Catton, Clifford Dowdley and Allan Nevins, illustrated with Civil War photographs, and music of the period recorded by an orchestra, chorus and soloists under the direction of Richard Bales.

Music heard on "The Confederacy" included a song, "The Yellow Rose of Texas," which with the addition of new lyrics became a juke-box hit. In "The Union" the process is reversed: a song already popular is presented in its original form. Admirers of Elvis Presley will be interested to discover that the Presley favorite "Love Me Tender" is merely a new text fitted to the sentimental Civil War song "Aura Lea."

Another piece heard here is a simple but important United States contribution to music literature, the bugle-call "Taps," with which the United States Army officially closes its day.

Most of our bugle-calls go back to remote times. "Retreat" was used in medieval armies, and "Tattoo," according to one authority, is a corruption of "Tap-zu," used in Wallenstein's army as a sign the taps were closed and the night's beer-drinking at an end.

"Taps," on the other hand, is of native origin. It was composed by Daniel O. Butterfield, Brigadier General of Volunteers, while recuperating from a



FROM "THE UNION" ALBUM—Officers at Fairfax Court House, Va., June, 1863.

wound received at the Battle of Gaines' Mill on June 21, 1862.

Having no valves, the bugle can play only the intervals of the "natural scale"—the octave, fifth, fourth, major third and minor third. Out of these spare materials General Butterfield framed the sweet, melancholy tune whose popularity would nowadays win its composer a double-A rating from ASCAP.

How did General Butterfield happen to compose the tune? He was not a musician. When the Civil War began he was the youthful Eastern Division man-

ager of the American Express Company. After the war he interested himself in railroads, hotels and banking and made two unsuccessful trips to Russia seeking a concession to build the Trans-Siberian Railway.

At any rate, having arranged the notes to his satisfaction, he "taught them" (How? By humming or whistling? Or perhaps in staff notation? Military historians are infuriatingly vague on such points) to his bugler, a soldier named Norton. The first performance took place at

Harrison's Landing on the James River in July, 1862.

A rather more sophisticated selection is "Abraham Lincoln's Funeral March," Op. 7 of the Philadelphia composer William Wolfieffer. It is a composition in mid-nineteenth-century style, showing its composer to have been familiar among other things with the Funeral March from Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony and the slow movement of the Seventh. At any rate, the music has a simple dignity quite appropriate to the subject; and (unless Mr. Bales has touched up the instrumentation) it shows the composer to have been fluent in writing for orchestra.

Another piece that does not deserve oblivion is "The President's Hymn," published by A. D. F. Randolph of 683 Broadway in 1863, but with no clue to the identity of composer or author. The straightforward text is neither banal nor mawkish, and the tune is well adapted to congregational singing. This is an item for revisers of hymnals to keep in mind.

Sprightly tunes all but forgotten today are included, like "Hold On, Abraham," by William B. Bradbury, and Henry Clay Work's "Year of Jubilo." The latter song also was used in "The Confederacy," interpolated between stanzas of "Dixie."

The music is admirably performed by the National Gallery Orchestra of Washington, of which Mr. Bales is the conductor, and the Cantata Choir of the Lutheran Church of the Reformation. The capable soloists are Peggy Zabawa, soprano, and Julie Zabawa, baritone.

Gettysburg Address
Raymond Massey is narrator in a re-creation of the delivery of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, which is preceded by an extremely effective processional march composed by Mr. Bales.

A disappointment is the sound of a cannon at Manassas Battlefield fired especially for the recording. The cannon, with a length of 58.6 inches and bore of 4.62 inches, produces sound at such low frequency that the effect is rather like that of a stone heaved into a mud-puddle. Even modern recording techniques, evidently cannot reproduce the sound accurately; cannon are at their best in outdoor performances of the "1812" Overture.

Among the most fascinating features of this fascinating album are the wartime photographs by Matthew Brady, Alexander Gardner and others. These examples of the photographer's art, all the more astonishing for having been made with wet plates, pre-anastigmat lenses and relatively long time-exposures, are always fascinating, and Columbia has included a generous sampling. "The Union" is worthy to take its place beside "The Confederacy" on the collector's shelf.

COMMENT IN BRIEF ON NEW DISKS

AN ARTHUR GRUMIAUX RECITAL: Arthur Grumiaux, violinist (Epic). Elegant interpretations and fine technical performances of Tartin's "Devil's Trill" Sonata, Corelli's "Le Follia," and other baroque staples of the violin repertoire.

AN ITALIAN IN PARIS: Ni toi ni moi, Ciel de Paris, Bedelia, Mes mains, Les Feuilles mortes, Trois fois merci and others; Luciano Sangiorgi, pianist, with rhythm accompaniment. Duetting ripples with agreeably clear tone through a number of sentimental French songs.

BARTOK: The Miraculous Mandarin; STRAVINSKY Fireworks; The Firebird; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Fernando Previtali conducting (Angel). Good, workmanlike, but not very imaginative performances. The colorful orchestration is well recorded.

DVORAK: Symphony No. 2; Rafael Kubelik and the Vienna Philharmonic (London). Mr. Kubelik is less successful with this D minor symphony than he is with the "New World." He has trouble maintaining the proper balances, especially in the third movement, and some of the sections lack rhythmic vitality. The old recording with Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, also a London disk, is preferable.

HAYDN: Symphony No. 96 in D; MOZART: Haffner Symphony in D (K. 385); Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Paul Paavay conducting (Mercury). The Haydn receives a very spirited performance, the finale especially is witty, sparkling and a delight. Mozart's "Haffner" Symphony fares less brilliantly although it is adequately presented.

KAYLIN: Reverie, Rhapsody Americana, etc.; Trilby Lundberg, pianist (Prologue). Although Miss Lundberg's age is not given, the sleeve photographs show her to be well under 10. This probably qualifies her as a prodigy, although the pieces by her teacher, Samuel Kaylin, are not all very difficult. Musically they hold little interest.

MOZART: Eine kleine Nachtmusik; Linz Symphony (K. 425); London Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati conducting (Mercury). Straightforward but not very distinguished performances. Dorati's "Nachtmusik" tends to be heavy-handed except in the lively finale.

MUSIC OF LEROY ANDERSON: Sleight Ride, Irish Suite, Trumpeter's Lullabye, etc.; Eastman-Rochester Pops Orchestra, Frederick Fennell conducting (Mercury). Jaunty performances of four original pieces and four arrangements by one of the principal arrangers of the Boston Pops repertoire. Good sound.

SESSIONS: Suite from The Black Maskers; HOVHANESS: Prelude and Quadruple Fugue; LO PRESTI: The Masks; Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra, Howard Hanson conducting (Mercury). Vivid performances of early works by three contemporary Americans. The longest and the most individual of the three is Roger Sessions' suite drawn from his incidental music written in 1923 for the macabre drama of Leonid Andreyev.

THE GOLDEN LINE OF POLYPHONY FROM SWEE-LINK TO MOZART: The Alma Musica Instrumental Sextet (London Ducretet-Thomson). A pretentious title for this rather haphazard collection of six pieces by Willaert, Sweelinck, Giovanni Gabrieli, Vivaldi and Mozart. But the pieces are all interesting and the performances charmingly done, especially Gusta van Royan's harpsichord performance of a set of Sweelinck Variations.

TOCCATAS FOR PIANO: Raymond Lewenthal (Westminster). Pieces by Bach, Czerny, Alkan, Schumann, Prokofiev, Debussy, Ravel, Lewenthal himself and others. Some interesting music, nearly all of it highly pianistic, played with a good deal of skill.

TROMBONE: A Study in High Fidelity; Davis Shuman, trombonist, chamber orchestra, Tibor Serly conducting (Audio Fidelity). Magnificent reproduction of some very uneven trombone playing. In addition to Mr. Serly's Trombone Concerto and "Miniature Suite," Mr. Shuman plays Schumann's song, "Ich grolle nicht," a Bach coloratura aria, and other trombone arrangements suited neither to the music, nor the instrument nor to Mr. Shuman's technique.

VERDI: Prelude to La Traviata; MASCAGNI: Intermezzo from Cavalleria Rusticana; MANICELLI: Overture to Cleopatra; PONCHIELLI: Dance of the Hours from La Gioconda; London Symphony Orchestra, Pierino Gamba conducting (London). The overture to Manicelli's long-forgotten opera may be new to many listeners. Along with the other, familiar works, it receives a fluent performance.

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