

ers that it has frequently scanted the theater's powers, also available to film and also important: dramatic structure and acting. Even some of the best directors—among them, Antonioni, Bergman, Fellini, Visconti, Hitchcock, Ford—have

at times turned out cinematic pieces that were weak in story and cast. The irony with Rudolph is that his very considerable improvement has only made him the latest example of this schism in film history.

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN ON MUSIC

For the Record

I recently heard a recording that existed neither on tape nor on LP nor on CD. In fact, it had never even existed in live form. It was played off a computer disk by a digital editing system in a studio of one of the major record companies. The score was open before us, as the editing engineer demonstrated what he had done to this performance of an extraordinarily difficult composition, played by a young artist of middling talent and showy credentials. The work had been subjected to over two dozen recorded takes of various kinds. The producer had marked the score with colored pencils, showing which take should supply which phrase of the final version—sometimes using just a single note from a given take; the first page alone was a technicolor mosaic.

The editor's job was to splice these fragments into a performance. Using the latest technology, such splices never required handling and cutting tape: the computer selected the digital episodes from a disk and stitched them together. The editor could then boost the volume of one phrase to match another, merge one note from one take into one note from another, even change tempo and pitch all at the touch of a key. The result was amazingly seamless but thoroughly banal. It was a performance manufactured—like many others, I was told—in the engineer's studio, a construction, a fake, lacking the energy and conviction of a true interpretation.

Of course, there still exist integral performances on LP and CD, and some with integrity as well. But technological developments in the recording industry have always transformed the message along with the medium. Each change in the way recordings are made has been accompanied by another change in the way they are thought about and sold. When recordings had to be captured on

hot wax and could not even be heard for several months until a record was cut, companies tended to treat their products as unique, precious records of a fleeting instant. The voice of Caruso, the pianism of Paderewski—these were treasures even as they were made. When Schnabel's version of the Beethoven Sonatas was recorded without edits or corrections, the industry was attuned to these very limitations. What was being sold was the performer's spirit, a captured immediacy, cut into grooves.

Once tape came into use, with its possibilities for splicing and merging tracks, the record became not a captured moment, but a created one. The great producers of this era after the war—Walter Legge, John Culshaw, Goddard Lieberson—were making models of a work, not just records of a performance. Recordings were meant to be representative of all the performances of a work by an artist, not just a single one. They were meant to be more essential than immediate, more purposeful than accidental. Legge, whose recordings for the British company EMI of Karajan, Klemperer, and his wife, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, had a substantial impact on the musical sensibility of a generation, wrote: "It was my aim to make records that would set the standards by which public performances and the artists of the future would be judged." Legge wanted to create a recording that was an archetype: it was not subsidiary to a performance, it was its arbiter. This was a new claim for the record, which in turn found a new niche in the marketplace.

Legge accomplished this not primarily through cut and paste jobs on tape, but through ruthless and obsessive attention to the details of a performance, coaching the artists himself, insisting on his version of perfection, working for hours on a single phrase. Culshaw—whose work

with Decca in England is just as lasting as Legge's for EMI—had similar notions but more humility before the artists he recorded. His emphasis was less on directing the details of the interpretation than on treating the recording itself as a distinct medium, creating, for example, a sonic world that was suited to the work being recorded. The first complete recorded version of Wagner's *Ring* (under Solti's direction) was notorious for its self-conscious use of stereo sound. Lieberman at Columbia Records took yet another approach to the status of recordings, expanding repertory and performers, demanding from his record company both range and seriousness.

But this elevation of the claims of classical recording, and the expansion of the market during these decades, ultimately led to its undoing. For the more the record was thought of as something created, the more it could be thought of as a product that could be custom molded for any market; editing and production choices could be guided by strategies that had little to do either with the music or the artist. Culshaw and Legge fell out with their respective companies in the 1960s, each complaining about a narrowness of vision, a lack of sensitivity to the nature of the musical art. Culshaw referred to the "lack of purpose or direction" at Decca; "rot was starting in the foundations." Legge objected to the "committee ridden" bureaucracy of EMI. At Columbia Masterworks the creative era was also coming to an end.

The musical goals were in fact becoming subordinate to technological ambitions. During the late '60s and the '70s overly miked orchestral recordings were regularly produced in which the engineer tinkered with balance and frequency response, thus taking over what should have been a conductor's role. Splicing was also used to create the technically perfect—if musically mediocre—performance that alone could hold its own in an increasingly crowded marketplace. If the recordings of the "stars" had to be note perfect, how much more so would the recordings of the second- and third-rate players? Recordings became concrete manifestations of the new competition culture, in which instrumentalists were trained to play for juries. The goal of a live performance was to sound as much like a spliced recording as possible.

There were, of course, instances in which the technology was used to create products that were essays in a new form.

Glenn Gould spliced together his recordings with obsessive care. But as some recently released live CDs of Gould's playing from the '50s help demonstrate, Gould did not splice his takes to eliminate errors or construct something he was unable to play. The recordings were fulfillments of his musical vision, true archetypes distilled and condensed from ideas first developed in his live playing.

Gould was the exception, in this as in everything else. More commonly, the newly constructed recordings became apt metaphors for the potpourri of products in the recording company's classical line—here a bit of crossover pop and jazz, there a bit of warhorse virtuosity, here an exotic name, there a sonic showpiece, merged without much thought for the list as a whole. The result in the '70s and early '80s was recordings that were among the worst sounding ever made and the least important musically. (How many classic recordings from that period are there?) The record became neither a "record" nor an archetype. It became a mere commodity, its contours adjusted according to the market.

THIS APPROACH seemed self-defeating, as LP sales began to fall off dramatically after 1978. But what rescued the classical industry was not an infusion of vision and creativity. Instead it was rescued by a new technology that promised better sound, but also made it easier to manipulate the performance. Digital recordings became a premium novelty (despite the horrendous sonics of the early releases), and compact discs finally fulfilled the marketing dream—despite rarely noticed musical defects (see "The Quest for Perfect Sound," *TNR*, December 30, 1985). This seemingly incidental conversion from analog to digital technology is likely to have unexpected ramifications on the nature of recordings, not just on their sound.

First of all, it has turned the product into a novelty. While the great musical advantage of CDs has been the rerelease of hundreds of important historical recordings long lost in the vaults, the marketing emphasis has been on "updating" sound, fetishizing it. The newer recordings, treated digitally from start to finish, have a marketing edge. The older ones, however magnificent, must be made to sound "current" to be rereleased (though many may even sound better in their original form). Many recordings end up receiving attention they never would have received if LPs had main-

tained their dominance, and if Legge's archetypes were still taken seriously. The few LP shelves remaining at Tower Records' New York stores are relegated to back corners, while new bins are stacked with CD "jewel boxes." Though more and more is being released on CD, the catalog still doesn't compare with the LP list.

Meanwhile, it has become increasingly difficult to get any distinct idea about what musical program the larger companies are following. When Culshaw first began to have an influence on recordings in the '50s, he said that "Decca's program was not really a program at all. It

consisted in the main of random leaps into all parts of the repertoire, and it lacked any kind of consistent artistic or indeed commercial policy." Do we see any consistent artistic policy in any of the "majors" today? It has reached the point where one no longer looks to them for the most interesting releases. RCA, which once offered Rubinstein, Heifetz, Kreisler, Munch, Toscanini, and Caruso, now fiddles with Michala Petri and Barry Douglas and André Previn. CBS, which claimed Gould, Serkin, Bernstein, and Stravinsky, now depends on Philip Glass, Zubin Mehta, and Michael Tilson Thomas. Angel—once linked with Klemperer,

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TEDDY KOLLEK MAYOR OF JERUSALEM

BY NAOMI SHEPHERD



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Apart from the comparatively lesser stature of many of these newer releases, how important are even the major ones? How often will we want to hear Karajan's latest preciously canned version of the Beethoven symphonies on Deutsche Grammophon? Do we really need Vladimir Ashkenazy's ordinary, workman-like Chopin on London? For that matter, does anyone foresee a need for the Guarneri Quartet's future releases on Philips or DG's future presentation of the Metropolitan Opera's *Ring*? Of course, in the midst of the newer releases there are unusual performances: Klaus Tennstedt's Mahler or Roger Norrington's Beethoven on Angel, Gidon Kremer and Giuseppe Sinopoli and Maurizio Pollini on DG, Murray Perahia and Yo-Yo Ma on CBS. But the most refined recordings today released by the majors are not part of a coherent program. They are just the most stirring and responsible parts of a generally fragmented catalog that survives and expands due to marketing momentum and technological innovation.

TO A certain extent, this is just a reflection of wider problems in the music world. In the '50s, when the great producers flourished, there was plenty of recorded dross, but there was also the vital postwar music scene—with its personalities set free from exiled or embattled pasts—to be tapped. There were vast quantities of repertoire to be recorded for the first time—on LP and then in stereo. The classical companies were smaller, more mobile, their leaders musically trained and driven. It was also the last decade in which the 19th-century concert tradition could still be thought of as flourishing. By the '70s the repetition of repertoire on the concert stage, and the schism between audiences and new music, had worn down even the classical tradition. And why shouldn't our recordings mirror in some way our concert life—especially since they are both driven by similar dreams?

It is perhaps no accident, then, that the most interesting recordings being made today are coming from smaller companies. One such company, Chesky Records, has actually taken as its project the scrupulous rerelease of great recordings made by the majors in the

'50s and early '60s (such as the RCA recordings of Reiner). Most smaller companies at the very least have clearer notions of what they are about than the majors, and find their motivations not in the concert hall, but in the various musical traditions that have little to do with it—the early music of the Renaissance, or the late medieval and early modern traditions of religious polyphony, or the Baroque court, or the chamber music of the bourgeoisie, or the postmodern musings of the avant-garde. They are thus not driven by the same ideology of recording that propels the majors. Consider for example, the achievements of two very different companies: Nonesuch and Harmonia Mundi U.S.A.

NONESUCH is part of a division of Warner Communications, which also releases the pop labels Elektra and Asylum. But it has had a tradition of independence, beginning with the achievements of Teresa Sterne, who turned it into a high-quality budget label during the 1960s and '70s, offering Baroque and contemporary repertoire that the majors were passing by. Its Explorer series features ethnomusicological treasures from around the world. Under the direction of Keith Holzman in the early '80s, the company signed other interesting performers, such as Richard Goode and Ivan Moravec. Now Robert Hurwitz has given the label a twist at once eminently marketable and intriguing: it has begun to pay homage to the contemporary avant-garde as it continues to pursue other paths through the classical tradition. I don't care for most of these postmodern releases—the Kronos Quartet performances, John Adams's music, or the playing of John Zorn—but they are presented with conviction rather than calculation.

Moreover, these releases fit into Nonesuch's larger enterprise, which treats recordings with a fair degree of modesty. Releases become part of an on-going exploration; they are not magisterial tablets from a pantheon of masterworks. Nonesuch recordings generally seem expressions of taste, to be argued with at times, but worth attending to. Nonesuch can afford this because its releases, like those in its Explorer series, offer the music of particular cultures well played and decently recorded. Recent recordings include music by such underplayed contemporary composers as Joseph Schwanter and Steven Al-

bert, along with significant works by Elliott Carter and George Perle, the singing of Teresa Stratas and the pianism of Goode and Mieczyslaw Horszowski, and fine early music, including Elizabethan lute music played by Paul O'Dette. The result is a catalog that is like the list of a first-rate publisher—full of highs and lows, but embodying a particular vision that one samples with hope and interest.

HARMONIA MUNDI U.S.A. is a more complicated case. Aside from producing its own recordings under the guidance of René Goiffon and Robina G. Young, the company imports with great acumen the most subtle and intriguing examples of European recordings, from companies including the French Harmonia Mundi, Accent, Musique D'Abord, Caprice, Chandos, Meridian, Hyperion, Marco Polo, Gimell, and Orfeo. These are small companies that have distinguished themselves over the years for extraordinary devotion to neglected repertoire and sophisticated treatment of sound. (Listen, for example, to nearly any Harmonia Mundi release engineered by Jean-François Pontefract.) In a given month the company's release schedule might present the works of Lully along with an opera of Monteverdi and the music of William Byrd. The performers have become the center of devoted attention—such as the countertenor René Jacobs (who conducts a new recording of Gluck's "Echo et Narcisse") and the conductor Philippe Herreweghe (whose Bach's "St. John Passion" has just been released). But the recordings also reach well beyond the authenticity movement. Liszt transcriptions of Beethoven symphonies have been finding their way to record in often striking piano performances. There are symphonies of Glazunov and Vaughan Williams and works by Peter Maxwell Davies. The American division has also had the great good sense to record the pianism of Robert Taub and the early music performances of the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. Harmonia Mundi's catalog is a distillation of the best of what is possible in small label recording.

In fact, the cases of Harmonia Mundi and Nonesuch offer proof that musically sophisticated and important things can still be accomplished in the world of recording, that the industry need not be guided by technological novelty or the star system or attempts to custom cut music for a market. These compa-

nies and others are generally driven by scholarship and exploration. To a certain extent they treat the record not as a model for future performances, but as a presentation of musical worlds we might never otherwise experience or

understand. In this the small labels are returning to an older recording aesthetic when all of music was fleeting and new. At best they create a record that itself becomes a musical tool, perhaps even an instrument.

learned a great deal about the problem, though basic disagreements remain.

The American predicament can be broadly characterized as follows. First, in contrast to genuinely mobilized Western European democracies (or Canada, for that matter), American turnout levels since the beginning of the century have shown persistent long-term decline, only partially—and temporarily—reversed (as always, outside of the South) during the quarter century following the New Deal realignment of the 1930s. Second, this means that turnout and abstention in the United States, unlike in other countries, are intimately linked to the structure of partisan politics in any given era; voting levels reflect the level of party organization of American electoral politics as a whole.

Third, again unlike other countries, participation levels in the United States differ greatly along class lines. Upper-status citizens—measured by education, income, or occupation—mobilize themselves. They do not need partisan organizations or other encouragements to participate in politics. Their voting rates are high, in the upper 70s and even the mid-80s—equal to general turnout levels in Scandinavia, West Germany, or France. By contrast, the lower down the American class structure one goes, the lower the participation rates become. Today, barely two-fifths of voters among the bottom segments of the working class and among the unemployed vote even in presidential elections. The class gap during the 1980s has been 40 percent or more. It follows (as analysis of the Census surveys duly reveals) that the lower the general level of turnout, the larger the class gap grows.

Fourth, though surveys do not capture this point very well (and the Census Bureau's surveys, which don't ask about party choice, do not capture it at all), the class bias in turnout has very strong partisan implications. Analysis of returns from three metropolitan areas (Boston, Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles) demonstrates a very powerful relationship between social status, turnout, and partisan vote. When the first two are at a maximum, Republican support reaches overwhelming levels—between 5- and 10-to-1 over Democrats. Lower-class voters and low turnout produce, as a rule, substantial Democratic majorities within that electorate as a whole; but the huge plurality is abstainers, "the party of non-voters." This was as true of the 1920s as of the '80s. By contrast, in the interval (say, 1940 or 1960), when

THE CLASS GAP

Why Americans Don't Vote

by Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward

(Pantheon, 325 pp., \$19.95)

It is by now common knowledge that participation in American elections has been steadily declining for the past quarter century, with only limited and temporary reversals. By 1986 the national turnout had fallen to 37.6 percent of the adult citizen electorate. Outside the South (where anomalous voting trends skew the national picture), 39 percent of potential voters actually came to the polls. This figure represents the lowest non-Southern participation rate since 1798—that is, since a time when democracy had not fully arrived in America. Moreover, by 1986 off-year participation had declined by 30 percent from 1962 levels. The presidential participation rate, of course, is substantially higher: 57.8 percent of the non-Southern electorate in 1984. But that marks a drop of more than one-fifth from the postwar high of 72.8 percent in the 1960 election, and it means that 75 million Americans failed to come to the polls in 1984. In 1986 more than 107 million failed to cast ballots.

There has long been a notable turnout problem in this country, but it has only been recently rediscovered. Back in the 1920s, Charles Merriam undertook a pioneering study on non-voting—impelled, no doubt, by the high levels of abstention during this earlier period of Republican and big-business control of the American political system. But then professional interest in the problem waned. Where it was sustained (in the works of V. O. Key Jr. and other notable students of politics in the 1940s and '50s), abstention was generally considered a problem specific to the Southern states, where a dense network of disfranchisements, legal and extralegal, was imposed after 1890 to exclude blacks. Few considered

that the South, rather than being a unique case, might in fact be an extreme example of a broader national pattern of legal changes and obstacles that excluded certain categories of citizens from the polls.

Postwar political scientists also tended to dismiss low American turnouts on several grounds. Some, writing in light of the Nazi takeover of Germany and the acute class polarizations in Western Europe during the early cold war period, pointed to America's low turnout as a symptom of a "politics of happiness": the country was blessed with a consensus on fundamentals. Others, working in the survey research tradition dominant since the '60s, tended to dismiss turnout issues as operationally insignificant: there were no traceable differences in the political attitudes and candidate choices of those who voted and those who didn't. Low turnout might represent a cosmetic or image problem of some kind, but there was absolutely no sign of "huddled masses" longing to enter the system as soon as its entrepreneurs offered candidates and issues that spoke to their interests.

There has been a dramatic increase in attention to the turnout problem since the 1970s, and a growing recognition of the immensity of the social bias that now exists in American elections. Like earlier efforts, this outpouring of analysis is the result of a significant crisis of representation, and thus of legitimacy, in the United States. It is no longer possible to assume a quiet consensus, a happy apathy; a recent study of the Reagan elections reveals significant differences between the preferences of voters and non-voters. Over the past 20 years, as interest and research have increased, we have

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