

Fanfare

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THE WANT LIST—'81 Our Critics' Annual Summary

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Despite performances which I like less than P.S. does (see *Fanfare* IV:5), I strongly recommend the Wergo set of Karl Amadeus Hartmann's eight symphonies and *Gesangszene*. These eloquent, powerful, at times shattering works reveal Hartmann as a major figure in the history of the symphony. This set fills a hole in the recorded repertory which had been staring at us for far too long. Another hole which has at last been given some attention was the nonexistence on records of any music by Kaikhosru Sorabji, who has written so much of such importance and difficulty that we will hardly be able to talk about an adequate recorded representation of him in this century. Michael Habermann's performance of some relatively early works is spellbinding.

As it is fashionable these days to take swipes at difficult music, Elliott Carter has gotten his share of them, mostly, I suspect, from people without the desire or perhaps the ability to penetrate his necessarily complex style. Actually, the two newish pieces recorded on CBS (*Symphony of Three Orchestras* and *A Mirror on Which to Dwell*) are less abstruse than some earlier ones and form a fine introduction to his recent work.

Finally, I urge you to hear Ben Johnston's fourth quartet and Easley Blackwood's 12 etudes. These gentlemen often find themselves on opposite sides of discussions about pitch relations in microtonal music, but they are both fine composers whose above-mentioned works are ear-opening in ways that *nothing* else is. If you think microtonal music sounds awful or is only for Asian Indians, mathematicians, or kooks, then these records ought to change your mind. Given widespread dissemination of microtonal performing instruments (e.g., the Motorolā Scalatron), music like this could change the courses of music history radically.

HARTMANN: *The Eight Symphonies, Gesangszene*. Various conductors/Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. (WERGO 60086, five discs)

SORABJI: *Shorter piano works*. Habermann. (MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4271)

CARTER: *Symphony of Three Orchestras, A Mirror on which to Dwell*. Boulez/New York Philharmonic, Wyner, Fitz/Speculum Musicae. (CBS MASTERWORKS M 35171)

JOHNSTON: *String Quartet No. 4*. **DOWNEY:** *String Quartet No. 2*. **CRAWFORD-SEEGER:** *String Quartet*. Fine Arts Quartet. (GASPARO GS 205)

BLACKWOOD: *Twelve Microtonal Etudes for Electronic Music Media*. Blackwood. (No record label; available only from the composer at 5300 South Shore Drive, Apt. 44, Chicago IL 60615)