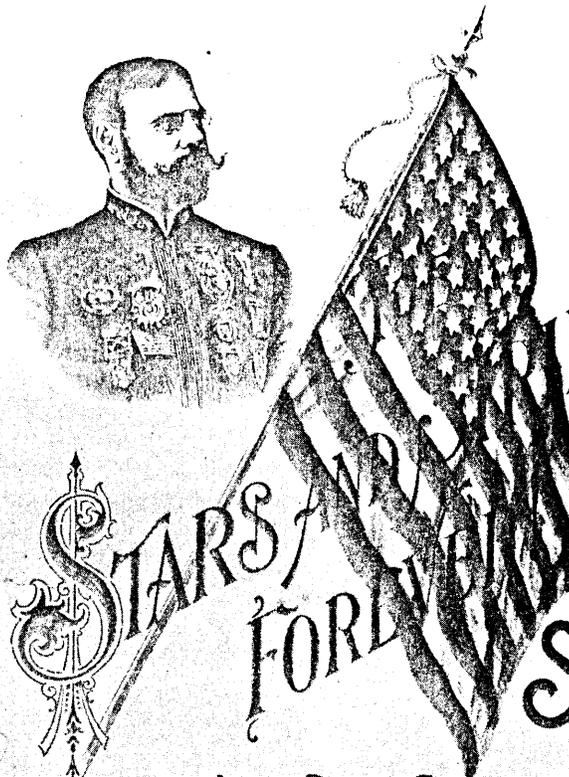


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# ARG

## American Record Guide

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**STARS AND STRIPES  
FORWARD SONG.**

By JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

PUBLISHED BY  
THE JOHN CHURCH COMPANY.  
CINCINNATI. NEW YORK. CHICAGO. LEIPSI.

**BARTOK:** *Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano; Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano; First Rhapsody (Folk Dances); Second Rhapsody (Folk Dances); Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano; (arr. SZEKELY): Roumanian Folk Dances*

Sergiu Luca, violin; Paul Schoenfield, piano; David Shifrin, clarinet

Nonesuch DB 79021 (digital), 2 LPs \$23.96

Although this record is labeled as containing the complete music for violin and piano of Bartók, that appellation is misleading. The two discs in this

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album in fact contain a somewhat arbitrary collection of works that include violin and piano.

Since *Contrasts* is included, perhaps the unpublished Piano Quartet of 1898 and the unpublished Piano Quintet of 1904 might also have been considered. If the notion was to include only published works, then why include the *Roumanian Dances* which were composed for piano alone and were recorded as such, at least three times, by Bartók himself?

The performances, however, are of high quality. Sonata No. 1 is a tough nut, both musically and technically, but Luca has a good feel for the work. He is at his best in the tender moments, such as during the second movement:

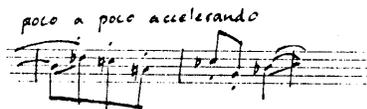


He seems not to have a strong enough tone to carry the big moments with their full effect, though.

Sonata No. 2 contains music that is more immediately approachable, and Luca plays with sensitivity to the many nuances of the score. Schoenfield's performance is not as sharply etched as his partner's, but nonetheless they give a fine interpretation of the work. Note for example the rhythm changes at:



and again at:



in the *Allegretto*.

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Both musicians give characterful performances of the two rhapsodies. Luca perfectly catches the gentle gait at the start of the *friss* of the First Rhapsody, but finishes up with a rhythmic whirling that sets the feet tapping. Again, his fiery performance of the Second Rhapsody indicates that Luca appears to have the music in his blood.

The performance of the *Roumanian Folk Dances* is generally tender in character, but with plenty of excitement in the final movements. It is also in the final movement of *Contrasts* that the performance has its finest moments.

From the point of view of performances, then, this is a fine set. I cannot say as much for the quality of the recorded sound.

To hear a fine, natural sound of the violin and piano, listen to Menuhin and Kempff playing the *Kreutzer Sonata* (DG 2563 093, no longer available) recorded in 1970. It seems as though the listener is in an auditorium listening to the two performers, and one can hear the space around the players, neither of whom is too closely recorded. This latter is probably the most common fault of violin recording.

The liner notes on the Bartók release are informative and contain information regarding the recording itself.

IFAN PAYNE

**BARTÓK:** *Mikrokosmos (Complete Recording)*

Homero Francesch, piano; Heinz Wildhagen, second piano (in Nos. 43, 44, 55, 65, 68, 74, 95, 127)

Deutsche Grammophon DG 2740 239, 3 LPs \$32.94

*Mikrokosmos* belongs to the species of etude, or study piece, that can be traced back at least to the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century,

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that, theoretically, the 45 rpm pressing will offer: "improved tracking of the complex transients which are an important component of 'live' sound; a minimized possibility of 'inner groove distortion'; the increased dynamic range inherent in digital recording should be even more accurately reproduced on disc—particularly the higher frequencies."

If the expected differences are to have any real validity for the consumer market, it must be kept in mind that the vast majority of record listeners (and perhaps reviewers) do not own the likes of Grado Signatures, Audio Research SP 6 and so on. Therefore I used the same stereo equipment (a Linn Sondek turntable and a Shure V15 Type 4 cartridge) used for all my reviewing to listen to this recording.

I listened to the two records, switching them back and forth myself. I listened to them in a blind test. I listened to them through loudspeakers and I listened to them through headphones. I tell you that I am unable to tell the difference between them. In order to check my perceptions I went back to compare the Elgar and Walton Marches on EMI ASD 3388 (33 1/3 rpm) and Angel SS-45009 (45 rpm) and I can hear the differences, not all of which are to the advantage of the 45 rpm version.

The Holdridge recording in either version has poor digital sound, a high cost, and only 25 min. 36 sec. of music on side 1 and 14 min. 55 sec. on side 2; the record is hardly a bargain any way you look at it.

IFAN PAYNE

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**HOLDRIDGE: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 2; Symphonic Suite from the Opera "Lazarus and His Beloved"*;**

Glenn Dicterow, violin; The London Symphony Orchestra; Lee Holdridge, conductor

Varèse Sarabande VCDM 100040 (digital), \$15.00

I recently reviewed the 45 rpm version of this digital recording and was interested to make the comparison between that disc and this more normal pressing.

In theory, the faster cutting speed employed for the 45 rpm version should make for a greater dynamic range and a greater impression of sonic spaciousness. Varèse Sarabande, on the sleeve note, claims

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