

True classical *rubato*, in which the beat shifts imperceptibly to accentuate the phrase, without undermining the underlying tempo, is almost unknown to American musicians; I cannot think of one who has mastered it.

Mere imitation of a recorded performance propitiates the arbitrary opinions of the powers who determine who shall have a career, and who not—in the case of the violinists, the “Kosher Nostra” over which Isaac Stern presides.

Much worse, however, is the mental damage suffered by musicians who learn from recordings. The great guitarist Andres Segovia told a newspaper interviewer not long before his recent death, of his contempt for the present generation of conductors: “Their academy has been the mirror and the gramophone,” Segovia sniffed. That is precisely how Kogan describes the preparation of Juilliard conductors: “Despite the long hours spent standing before the stereo conducting Herbert von Karajan and the Vienna Philharmonic, the conductor is largely helpless without an assembly of live bodies.” That is what produces such trolley-car conductors as James Levine (the Metropolitan Opera), Dennis Russell Davies (the Bonn Tonhalle), or Leonard Slatkin (the St. Louis Symphony).

True musical memory absorbs the underlying geometry of musical ideas, at least at some level of the musician’s consciousness. Phonographic memory merely fixes the surface events of a musical composition. Only a generation ago, a serious student would be expelled without recourse or remorse from any serious institution, were it proven he had listened to a recording of a work he was studying. Young musicians were isolated for summer work in establishments where means of electronic musical reproduction were prohibited, and for good reason: The damage done to a musician in the formative years, through dependence upon recording, is probably irreversible.

The undead of Juilliard do not fight through to the composer’s ideas, by means of the unretouched score. They kiss the foul end of what is politely known as “performance tradition.” Here is how Ms. Kogan reports the Juilliard Orchestra’s preparations to play the Strauss work, “Thus Spake Zarathustra,” under a famous guest conductor:

“In the cafeteria, the players debated the merits of the Ormandy-Philadelphia Orchestra and the von Karajan-Vienna Philharmonic recordings of Zarathustra, wagering guesses as to which would be closer to the Skrowaczewski interpretation. The concert master, with Zarathustra solos that soar up the fingerboard and above the orchestra, put his money on Ormandy-Philadelphia. He listened to the recording enough to learn the piece, but not so much that Ormandy’s ideas would harden in his mind. . . . The trumpeter had been practicing like a madman ever since he found out the part would be his. He bought the score to follow as he listened to his Solti-Chicago Symphony recording, to see how his part fit into the whole. . . . [At the first rehearsal] it was clear that the players had listened to recordings of the piece. Most of them had never played Zarathustra, but they knew of things,

## Books Received

**The Master Terrorist: The True Story of Abu-Nidal**, by Yossi Melman. New York: Avon Publishers, 1986. \$3.95 paperback, 277 pages.

**Sarum: The Novel of England**, by Edward Rutherford. New York: Crown Publishers, 1987. \$19.95 hardcover, 897 pages.

**War Games: The Secret World of Creators, Players and Policy Makers Rehearsing World War III Today**, by Thomas B. Allen. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co. \$19.95 hardcover.

**Fearful Majesty: The Life and Reign of Ivan the Terrible**, by Benson Bobrick. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1987. \$22.95 hardcover, 398 pages.

**American Espionage and the Soviet Target**, by Jeffrey Richelson. New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc. \$18.95 hardcover, 383 pages.

**Nuclear Crisis Management: A Dangerous Illusion**, by Richard Ned Lebow. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987. \$24.95 hardcover, 226 pages.

**Containing the Soviet Union**, edited by Terry L. Deibel and John Lewis Gaddis. Washington, D.C. et al. Pergamon-Brassey’s International Defense Publishers, Inc. (a member of the Pergamon Group), 1987. 251 pages.

**Managing Nuclear Operations**, edited by Ashton B. Carter, John D. Steinbrunner, and Charles A. Zraket. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1987. \$39.95 hardcover, \$18.95 paperback, 751 pages.

like changes of tempo, not marked in the music.”

Never mind that “Zarathustra” is one of the ugliest works of a Richard Strauss, whose music the great Wilhelm Furtwängler described as “Wagner puffed up with hot air,” or that von Karajan and Ormandy are the two postwar conductors best suited to conduct Sousa marches. The musicians prepared for the work by brainwashing themselves according to accepted “performance tradition,” making no effort to grasp the composer’s intent.

There is reason to suspect that the situation is even worse than Kogan presents it to be. She recounts, for example, one anecdote of an incompetent conductor forced off the podium by a rebellious student orchestra. The student protest, she claims, persuaded the college’s president to promise never to engage the conductor again. In fact, according to a leader of