

JAZZ PICKS OF THE WEEK

"THE BEWITCHING SHIRLEY BASSEY"—Shirley Bassey—Epic 3834

This interesting package of sturdies and newies showcases the sophisticated, supper club side of the Bassey coin. The thrush begins the session with her theme song "Burn My Candle" and follows it with some warm and throaty renditions of "My Funny Valentine" and "Night And Day." Lark has admirable backing from Wally Stott's ork and chorus. Disk should be a good number with Bassey fans.

"DANNY PEPPERMINT TWIST"—Danny Peppermint—Carlton LP 20,001

The Danny Peppermint group presents a session of twist items most of which are currently on the charts by other artists. Along with the pop titles are heard some individual stylings of the "Night Train Twist," "Let's Twist Again" and "Run-around Sue." Although the twist band wagon is getting crowded, Danny Peppermint and ensemble could score with the fans.

"THEMES FROM TV'S TOP 12"—Neal Hefti—Reprise R 6018

Neal Hefti has come up with a first-rate package of themes from TV's top-rated series and delivers them with his distinctive musical interpretations. Hefti has created some sparkling arrangements as well as composed extra passages for this listenable outing from Reprise. Conductor-arranger features forty guitars and eight pianos for his renditions of themes from "Wagon Train," "Perry Mason," and "Gunsmoke." Potent programming fare.

"MOTION PICTURE THEMES CHA CHA CHA"—Tito Rodriguez—Ultra Audio WW7507

Tito Rodriguez turns to the film greats as a sounding board for his Latin tempos, replete with the popular percussive sounds of the times. The cha cha proves itself an acceptable beat for the rhythmic orchestrations of "Theme From The Unforgiven," "Theme From The Apartment" and "Gigi." LP provides exceptional dancing fare.

"PANORAMA MUSICAL DO BRASIL"—Juca Mestre—Audio Fidelity AFSD 5954

The fascinating heterogeneous blending of Portuguese and African elements that makes up Brazilian music is faithfully captured by Juca Mestre and his Brasileiros on this listenable, danceable LP from Audio Fidelity. Cut in Rio de Janeiro a year ago, the disk contains loads of enjoyment as the orkster and his boys render "O Apito No Samba," "Poema Do Adeus," and "Chora Tua Tristeza."

"GOLDEN BLUEGRASS HITS"—Barrier Brothers—Philips PHS 600 003

The Barrier Brothers, who have often worked as the Ozark Mountain Boys, offer a who's who of Bluegrass hits on this class country package from Philips. The boys play the traditional bluegrass stringed instruments as they go through the paces of rendering past hits of Bill Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs and company. Country music lovers should like the boys' renditions of "Blue Moon Of Kentucky," "Polka On A Banjo," and "Cabin In The Hills."

"OPRY TIME IN TENNESSEE"—Various Artists—Starday SLP 177

A generous helping of country music and humor is dished up in this selection of 20 performances by stars and guests of the Grand Ole Opry recorded live in Nashville. Items of interest are "That's Good—That's Bad" by Archie Campbell, "One Is A Lonely Number" by George Jones, and "Salty Dog Blues" by Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs. LP should make some noise with devotees of country music.

"WEST SIDE STORY"—Oscar Peterson Trio—Verve V/V6-8451

The basic moods and melodies of "West Side Story" are carefully balanced with the individual stylings and improvisations of the members of the Oscar Peterson Trio. A brilliant bass solo by Ray Brown in "Somewhere" along with the 88er's offering of "Tonight" and "I Feel Pretty" masterfully proclaim their right to experiment with the Bernstein score. Disk is a noteworthy addition to the catalog of jazz versions of Broadway shows and should score saleswise.

"STATEMENTS"—Milt Jackson Quartet—Impulse A-11

Milt Jackson and his quartet which consists of Milt on vibraharp, Hank Jones on piano, Paul Chambers on bass and Connie Kay on drums demonstrate their artistry as top-drawer musicians on listenable disk from Impulse. The quartet's ebullient, feelingful style carries them in good stead as they render "A Thrill From The Blues," a Jackson original, "Paris Blues," and Sonny Rollins' "Sonnymoon for Two." Set should be a welcome asset with most jazz lovers.

"THE BEST OF BASIE"—Count Basie—Roulette R 52081

Jazzophiles should really dig this quality album of the great instrumental hits created by the Count Basie ork during the late 30's and early 40's. The 88'er leads his boys through their paces with the warmth and simplicity that has long been regarded as the Basie sound. Some best bands here are "Jumpin' At The Woodside," "Jive At Five," and "Swingin' The Blues." Top-rung jazz album.

"LOVER MAN"—Carmen McRae—Columbia CL 1730

For her premiere album from Columbia, Carmen McRae pays a musical tribute to Billie Holiday by rendering a dozen of the late lark's songs with the dramatic soul that marks the best jazz singers. The songstress brings exactly the right mood and flavor to each tune she offers. She does not use gimmicks, but sings straight from the heart as she delivers "Them There Eyes," "Miss Brown To You," and the immortal "Lover Man." Jazzophiles should come out in droves for this excellent package.

"THE CAT WALK"—Donald Byrd—Blue Note 1075

The well-rounded, individual and authoritative talents of Donald Byrd are teamed up with Pepper Adams on haritone sax, Duke Pearson on piano, Laymon Jackson on bass and Philly Joe Jones on drums for this free-flowing melodically improvised session from Blue Note. The trumpeter has the ability to build fresh melodic lines while showing a firm understanding of theoretical knowledge. The boys read a number of exceptional self-penned items including "Say You're Mine," "Each Time I Think Of You," and "Hello Bright Sunflower."

CLASSICAL PICK OF THE WEEK

"NORMA HIGHLIGHTS"—Maria Callas—Angel 35666

In this La Scala presentation of Highlights from "Norma" by Bellini, the soprano's portrayal of Norma, an extremely difficult role, is done with authority and brilliance. Her artistry is never more evident than in the "Casta Diva" aria, which won her so many plaudits at her debut with the Met. Originally recorded in 1953, this new stereo version of "Norma" should be a strong seller.

