Leonard Bernstein's historic recording of Gershwin's ever-popular *Rhapsody in Blue* makes an ideal candidate for Speakers Corner's programme of LP re-releases. This recording has sparked considerable controversy ever since it was originally published in 1959 by American Columbia, with whom Bernstein had a virtually open-ended recording contract. What sparked the controversy was Bernstein's recognition that in its episodic structure and musical style, drawn from the dance hall and jazz, this work was as close to improvised music as it was to formal concert music. Consequently he himself as a major creative musician had no compunction in adjusting the score to suit his own tastes and style. Gershwin probably would have applauded the results, but who can actually say? When Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau recorded a recital of Mahler songs with Bernstein accompanying at the piano, he remarked that it was an unnerving experience, because he felt as though Bernstein was composing the songs as he went along, rather than simply reproducing Mahler's notes on the printed page. And of course that is what great creative musicians do. So this is not any old recording of *Rhapsody in Blue* but a major re-imagining of it by one of the twentieth century's key creative forces in music. And to have it in such an immaculate reproduction of the first impression, so to speak, as is provided by Speakers Corner's superb production, is a privilege indeed. The playing of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra is exemplary - at this time it had the ability to "swing" in a way unknown to other orchestras. This innate understanding of style is also to the fore in the highly appropriate coupling of Gershwin's colourful score, *An American in Paris*. With a sound document of this quality considerations of price are immaterial - if you love LPs, buy it!

David Patmore