

REVINYLIZATION

BY ART DUDLEY

Think of the greatest commercial LPs made during the past 72 years: the Solti-Culshaw recording of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Magda Tagliaferro's *D'Ombre et de Lumiere*, Ornette Coleman's *The Shape of Jazz to Come*, John Lennon's *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*, and a thousand or so others.

Music lovers were able to buy those records because somebody believed that selling them could be profitable. If that's capitalism at its best, then capitalism at its second-best is surely those somebodies who rescue long-unavailable LPs from commercial and/or sonic oblivion by investing time and money in tracking down the original master tapes, acquiring permission to reissue them and the artwork that accompanied their original release (the latter more daunting than it sounds), and remastering and re-pressing high-quality LPs for contemporary listeners.

The opportunity no longer exists to hear the above-named artists in concert; the opportunity to buy their original recordings has also come and gone. Yet, today one can purchase on LP a greater number of historically great titles than even five years ago, and more are on the way.

Since making a name for themselves in the 1990s by reissuing a great many titles from Decca's SXL series of classical LPs—recordings that have few if any peers, musically and sonically—German reissue house Speakers Corner has directed their attention to other labels, including classical titles from Columbia (US). Their most recent LP in that series is a reissue of the recording by George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra of Richard Strauss's *Symphonia Domestica* (Columbia MS 6627), originally released in 1964. Szell's catalog with the Cleveland is inconsistent, some recorded performances offering little beneath their icy crust, but this one is full of passion. The recorded sound is like the playing: crisp, clear, and forceful, but not at all lacking color. If you think Columbia never made good-sounding classical recordings, you really must hear this.

Also new from Speakers Corner is a 1960 live recording from Charles Mingus and assorted luminaries: *Mingus at Antibes*, a two-LP set that was originally released in 1976 on Atlantic (SD 2-3001). The program of mostly Mingus originals is challenging yet



accessible, the performances are electrifying, and the live sound is almost miraculously good.