



Turning the Tables

Well, do you know that last week I took my own suggestion, and did dig out my old turntable and a few LP records. I have to admit right away that it was not my intention to have a 'faceoff' between the turntable and my CD player, to see which was 'better' - analog or digital reproduction. And indeed, as soon as I played the first record, and heard the hissing and scratchy tone that came from the speakers, I knew that I certainly wouldn't be making a permanent 'switch' back to analog! For a casual listener like myself, CDs will do just fine!

But I did have a most enjoyable time digging through the boxes of records and becoming reacquainted with some old friends - some very old friends! I must have started buying records when I was about 15, and continued picking up new ones until I was about 30 or so. The genres of the albums in the boxes show clearly the changes in my musical interests during that span. The earliest records are of classical flute performances, because in those days I was buried in learning to play the flute; my interests then widened slightly and I acquired music of other classical types - orchestra, chamber, and some choral. After I started building classical guitars, I of course became interested in their music, so there are quite a few guitar albums; still later, after getting a job playing saxophone in a hotel orchestra, I switched to collecting jazz records, and as I then had more money available, these make up the largest proportion.

But then the important question - which one to play first! Should I follow that same order, and start with a flute concerto? No; honestly speaking, I can't take much pleasure in listening to such a thing these days. Although the flute can make a beautiful sound, the idea of listening to it for an hour or so leaves me cold - I want something richer and deeper. So I turned to the albums of symphonic music, and one in particular seemed to catch my eye - a double album recording of the Brahms German Requiem. Yes, this would do! I dusted off the first disc, and started it playing while I returned to my printing work.

I got settled at the bench while the first movement of the Brahms began to play; this piece begins quietly but soon expands into glorious broad washes of sound. As I listen to this sort of music, I can so easily slip deeply 'into' it - I know very well exactly what it is like to sit in the flute 'chair' of an orchestra, with the oboist at my left side and the clarinet and bassoon behind me. I can mentally play along from 'inside' the music ...

And although I never conducted a professional orchestra, I did enough ensemble conducting to know how that feels too ... in between strokes with my printing baren, I can reach out and bring in the horn player at the proper moment with a flick of my finger ...

I am not, however, much of a singer at all, so it is very lucky indeed that my workroom is a solid concrete structure, otherwise the neighbours would be looking around in puzzlement - where is that strange sound coming from?

"Herr, lehre doch mich, daß ein Ende mit mir haben muß, und mein Leben ein Ziel hat, und ich davon muß ..."

And here I see that yet again, I have started a story that I can't finish in one page! This 'thread' will have to continue next week, because I have a big question to ask about this. What was I doing - singing at the top of my voice - words that I don't believe?!

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