# The New Records

## Rubinstein's 'Appassionata' — Villa-Lobos Novelty—The Lighter Side.

By IRVING KOLODIN.

How great an artist Artur Rubinstein has become is better exemplified by his playing of Beethoven's "Appassionata" in a new Victor release than by anything previously from his hand. For he has, in this single feat, scaled the barriers of his reputation as a Chopinzee, shown himself able for anything in the width and breadth of the piano literature.

The peculiar problems of this sonata may be suggested by the statement that none of three other contemporary recordings —by Edwin Fischer, Walter Gieseking and Rudolf Serkin— was a wholly satisfactory answer to its challenge. From Rubinstein, however, one hears a conception which embodies the strength of Fischer, the subtlety of Gieseking and the erudition of Serkin with a tempestuous intellectuality all his own.

There are moments, indeed, when one momentarily expects the molten flow of sound to flood over the mold that Rubinstein makes of the keyboard, but his amazing dexterity and sureness are equal to all the demands he puts upon them. Some of the impact in these remarkable sides may be attributed to the sheer vividness of the sound itself; from clangorous bass to piping treble the likeness to a full-length concert grand is remarkably delineated. Even the rich bass sounds in the first variation of the andante are truly piano tones.

The sixth side contains the "Minuetto" of Beethoven's E flat sonata (Opus 31, No. 3) played with a similar completeness of response, though here the qualities Rubinstein produces in impressive abundance are simplicity and grace. (Victor Set 1018.)

### Villa-Lobos Novelty.

Any pessimists who contend that there is no consequential music being written these days can be refuted in the seven minutes or so it takes to play the two sides of Columbia 71670, containing the "Bachianas Brasileiras, No. 5" of Heitor Villa-Lobos. This is an altogether extraordinary piece of writing, combining a melodic flow of Bachian amplitude with a contemporary coloration that definitely adds something to our musical experience.

Bidu Sayao is the soprano soloist, and the composer, who conducts, has coached her to a realization of his purpose, which entitles her to new respect as an artist. She sings the ecstatic introductory and closing section with a fine repose, and the contrasting section between with a proper kind of Puccinian agitation. The scoring of the background for eight celli and bass impresses me as a touch of eccentricity, for some more conventional design would have permitted more contrast. Leonard Rose plays the solo celli part with admirable poise and tonal breadth.

### The Lighter Side.

Another kind of stylistic assimilation is contained in a pleasureful volume of arrangements by Morton Gould which Columbia dubs "South of the Border." There is much to enjoy in Gould's refining hand with such standard Latin-Americana as "Brazil," "La Cumparsita" and "El Relicario," but I esteem the one original piece in the set as worth all of the other seven. This is three and a half minutes of delight which Gould calls "Tropical" and is a blend of invention and arranging skill destined to be as popular as his engaging "Pavanne." (Columbia Set 593.)

However, if you want (to paraphrase "Alexander's Ragtime Band") to hear "I Get a Kick Out of You" played like "The Ride of the Valkyrie," you are commended to another Gould album with the title of "After Dark." It is only infrequently that the ingenious Morton stumbles over a pretention this way— for the most part the dress he tailors for "Speak Low," "The Very Thought of You," "Dancing in the Dark," "That Old Black Magic" and several others is svelte in outline and tasteful in color. As for the orchestral playing, it is fanatically accurate and impeccably reproduced. (Columbia Set 107.)