



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

I could hardly believe my ears. My Sunday afternoon nap was being disrupted by the sounds of Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" pouring up the stairs from the living room below. I didn't know anyone in our family, except me, could stand classical music. I had records, almost a hundred of them, that I had collected since my days in college. And occasionally, when the house was empty, I would put them on the record player and sit back and soak in the themes and interludes, the overtures and etudes of the great music of the ages. But I thought I was alone.

Creeping down the stairs I found my high school senior son, Bruce, piled up in the middle of the living room, his head almost inside the blaring stereo from which poured the sounds of Schubert, Brahms, Bach, Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Strauss, Liszt, and Wagner.

I stood on the steps for long moments, listening. Bruce lolled on a couple of giant pillows on the floor, his hand beating time to the music. "I didn't know you liked the classics," I said, as he changed records.

"Sure," he said. "We play this stuff all the time in marching band at high school. Listen to this." He gently lowered the needle on one of my old records and from the cabinet poured the refrain from the William Tell Overture. "You old timers used to think that was written by the Lone Ranger," Bruce grinned. "Bet you didn't know it was written by Antonio Rossini, a 19th century Italian who also wrote an opera called the Barber of Seville."

I smiled in defeat and took a seat on the far side of the room as the music continued. Maybe there is some hope for this rock-oriented younger generation after all.

Interestingly enough, although Bruce's appreciation for classical music did begin with his high school band activities, the real stimulus came when he bought a record which I thought was nothing more than a distorted version of some of the classics. The title piece was a tune called Joy, which was actually a speeded up rendition of Bach's - "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring." It pained me to hear it played so loudly, and so fast; yet, on the other hand, maybe music is supposed to communicate to young and old alike. Next came a jazzed up version of Mendelssohn's Second Movement. Although the tempo pained me, it was obvious that Bruce's taste was improving. I approved.

Now this afternoon he has discovered this treasure house of classical musical albums which I thought were doomed to be wasted on my ears alone. Bach once said, "The aim and final reason of all music should be none else than the Glory of God and the recreation of the mind."

As we come out of Thanksgiving and head into Christmas, we are approaching the one time when some of the world's greatest music will be shared — not only in the churches but on the air waves as well. I, for one, look forward to it. And I'm pleased that at least one other member of our family will be listening alongside me.