The Harp

EDWARD VITO
JOSEPH VITO

Valse Celebre — Moszkowski
Etude in C — Vito
Gigue in Olden Style — Vito
Fantasie Impromptu — Chopin
Malaguena — Lecuona
Concerto for Harp — Zabel
Clair de Lune — Debussy
Jesu Joy of Man’s Desiring — Bach
THERE are duo-piano recordings and performance teams — there are even piano quartets; but as far as we know this is the first and only recording of duo-harps. This in itself may or may not be important — but the story behind the pursuit and capture with microphone of the two unique Vito brothers has a special flavor.

THE performances here can not be considered as a "recital" of the usual type found on records at all. Actually, it is a condensed version of what happened when two famous brother-harpists of our day got together for a family wedding and our microphone dropped in by accident one Sunday afternoon. Starting from a chance remark by Ed Vito, for three years it looked as if this record would never be made. It was that long before busy Joe Vito's Chicago Symphony concerts and busy Ed Vito's Toscanini schedule allowed them any free time together.

WE SET up our recording equipment in the living room of Ed's home in Greenwich, Conn. Along with the playing came reminiscences — unconnected fragments from a unique story of events which helped shape the careers of two of this country's leading harpists. In the days before our many highly developed symphonic organizations when harp playing could hardly be considered a "profession," the brothers Vito were busy studying and practicing on the one family harp they all shared. (Including father Vito and Ed's daughter, the Vito clan boasts three generations of expert harpists.) Joe being the eldest assumed the role of passing on what he learned at lessons to the others and even today Ed refers to him as his teacher.

EDWARD VITO played all sorts of engagements, even in gin mills, and a triumph of sorts was the day 14 year old Ed was given a spot with a touring vaudeville show. A youngster playing such an improbable instrument was a big hit — and also gave the barber shop quartet time for a fast change of costume and scenery before the sword-swallower came on. Joe remembers mostly the salary — $7 a week and considerably less than "all you can eat." Those days it was a case of knuckles-to-the-bone and starving as well; artistry was nourished later in the frugal comfort of conservatories and with symphony orchestras — Joe again acting as trail-blazer. (First symphonic post 1915 with Henry Hadley)

THE untraveled roads which led Ed and Joe Vito to become symphonic harpists curiously intertwined at the start, ended in artistic independence of each.

Side A
Edward Vito, solo:
CONCERTO IN C MINOR
(1st Movt.) — Zabel
VALSE CELEBRE — Moszkowski
FANTASIE IMPROMPTU — Chopin
CLAIR DE LUNE — Debussy
MALAGUENA — Lecuona

Side B
JESU JOY OF MAN'S DESIRING
(duo) — Bach
GIGUE IN OLDEN STYLE
(Edward Vito solo) — Vito
ETUDE IN C (Edward Vito solo) — Vito
MINUET IN G (duo) — Haydn
FEERIE PRELUDE & DANSE
(Jos. Vito solo) — Tournier

All arrangements by Edward Vito