A CHAMBER OF MUSIC

by W. L. Taitte

Jim Cartwright of Austin owns 25,000 classical records. Then there are the ones for sale.

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ihout a good set of directions it is easy to get lost in this quaint old neighborhood on the west side of Austin. The arched and gabled-brick bungalows have not all been discovered by the fashionable fix-up set, so some of the lawns are shaggy and the houses look their age. When you finally find the address you are searching for, 1404 W. 30th Street of all places, out of one of the more realistic German fairy tales. The door is painted green. On it a small brass plate reads, "Immortal Performances, Classical Records, Bought/Sold."

Jim Cartwright, a tall, scuffily bearded man who is a little shy, is the guardian of the house's secrets. For those enchanted by record collecting, there is an unimaginable treasure in every cranny. There is also clutter—boxes of records on the floor, stacks of catalog pages to be assembled. "Don't set anything down," warns Cartwright. "The house swallows things." With a bit of coaxing he will show you around before he takes you to the garage, where he keeps the rest of the records—the ones that are for sale.

An ancient talking machine sits across from the door of the living room; when Cartwright goes on a picnic, he takes it along and plays old records by Arthur Pryor, such as "Lobster Quadrille," or with Ben Pollack's Dixieland group, or with the Boswell Sisters. A pair of superb Dahlinquist speakers with black grille cloths are the only visible components of his modern stereo rig. They flank an egg-shaped white lamp that illuminates a battered oil portrait of Cartwright's mother, which leans on the mantel. Scores by Chopin litter the Steinway baby grand.

As a collector of classical records, Cartwright designed his collection to be a record of the past. He has a vast collection of 78s, LPs, and CDs, ranging from the early 1900s to the present day. He is particularly interested in the music of the 1940s and 1950s, and he has a large collection of jazz records as well.

The music in Cartwright's house is not just for sale, but also for listening. He often plays his records for friends and visitors, and he is always happy to share his knowledge of the music and the musicians who made it. He is passionate about the music, and he is proud of his collection.

The garage is filled with boxes of records, and Cartwright is always happy to talk about his collection. He has a large collection of rare records, and he is always on the lookout for new additions to his collection.

When asked what he enjoys most about record collecting, Cartwright says, "I love the challenge of finding rare records, and the thrill of discovering new music. But what I really love is the process of organizing and listening to my collection. It's like a never-ending journey of discovery."