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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING
By WILLIAM ANDERSON

END OF THE HEINZ PERIOD

"P"op music... evokes the deepest feelings of the shallowest men," wrote Margot Hentoff in The New York Review not long ago on the subject of (who else?) Rod McKuen, who seems to be well on the way to replacing Edgar Guest as the ideal whipping boy for middle-American taste. Like all good aphorisms, the statement has wit and a surface reasonableness that tempts off-the-cuff credibility—but I just don't believe it. Granted that popular music, at least lately, has been manufactured largely by musically unschooled folk using the simplest of musical materials, it does not follow, as Ms. Hentoff seems to imply, that it is incapable of carrying deep meanings, that those who listen to it do so to exercise their feelings, or that those feelings are the deepest of which they are capable. (It is, after all, no proof of the quality of their palates that kings and presidents eat the lowly but nourishing hotdog—an analogy I will not pursue further.) The making of such flat generalizations about music, it seems to me, is quite simply impossible until we know more than we do now about the nature of all music and what it means both to those who create it and those who "consume" it. In the case of pop music, I am more and more persuaded that it is what it is because it has to be. What the vast majority of people seem to look for in music is no more than a presence, a comforting, uninvolving, undemanding background susurrus (ask Muzak). But however fine it is, music that asks for attention, that demands involvement, that "evokes the deepest feelings" will simply not be widely popular—not because people lack the capacity for either attention or involvement, nor because they have no deep feelings, but because they choose not to exercise them on anything but a superficial level in music.

It is a minor source of wonder to me that music, certainly an enormously time-consuming (and therefore important) activity of human kind, should be so little understood, so little studied by the social, behavioral, and psychological sciences. Too bad, for we might then have some hard information either to prove or disprove the entirely subjective reactions of Ms. Hentoff, me, and composer Alec Wilder, who offers the opinion in his recent book, American Popular Song—The Great Innovators, 1900-1970, that popular music comes in three levels of sophistication: theater songs, film songs, and Tin Pan Alley songs—in descending order. Though Mr. Wilder is far from out of touch musically, that phrase "Tin Pan Alley" certainly is: the kind of music it describes is now practically extinct, its decline dating almost precisely from the year—1950—that Mr. Wilder considers the "twilight" of the great tradition in American song writing. Hardly mere coincidence, for the Tin Pan Alley song fed on the style and example of the American musical theater which, despite some brilliant exceptions, had also lost its grip on public taste by the end of the Forties. Thus, for about the last twenty years, we have been standing on an even lower rung of Mr. Wilder's ladder of sophistication, in what might be called the Heinz Period—fifty-seven or more varieties of folk music. As sophistication goes, moreover, this is surely the bottom, so there is nowhere to go but up.

There are signs that the upward movement has already begun. Even the most casual listening will reveal evidences of increasing sophistication in both the composition and the execution of current pop music, and such examples as Tommy (not an opera, really, but a musical), Hair, Godspell, and (Lord help us all!) Jesus Christ Superstar, despite their obvious shortcomings, are not so much evidence of unseemly ambitions as they are tributes to the form and the staying power of a somnolent but still viable genre. The portents are good, and the Greek models for a Roman renaissance are still very much with us. We celebrate one of the most inspiring of these models—Jerome Kern—in an article in this issue, the first in a new series on the great composers and lyricists of the American musical theater.
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Quo Vadis, Leonard Bernstein?"

May I commend you on the publication in May of Eric Salzman's excellent piece on Leonard Bernstein ("Quo Vadis, Leonard Bernstein?"). Undoubtedly, there will be many who will take Mr. Salzman to task for the unashamedly laudatory tone of the piece. As Mr. Salzman implicitly points out, such critics seem to equate popularity and wide appeal with commercialism, selling out, and a general lack of seriousness. Though surely this is sometimes the case, and though there may be many who "appreciate" Lennie for the wrong reasons, it would be wise to remember that this most inviolate of musical personalities has suffered some of the bitterest invective in recent memory. Meanwhile, he has gone quietly about the relatively thankless business of single-handedly revitalizing the American music scene. His honesty, commitment, and involvement have brought him sneering charges of insincerity, and his attempts to bring great music to larger audiences without bastardizing and "pablumizing" the music itself have been all but laughed off and quickly forgotten. We would do well not to forget that beneath the volatile showmanship there is a consummate musician; rather than wait for Bernstein's death and suddenly "remember" this fact (as seems to be the American way), we ought to welcome what Mr. Salzman has done for us: reminding this sensitive and brilliant man that his very real contributions to the music world have not gone entirely unnoticed.

Jon Bowden, Music Editor, Arts & Music Magazine
Riverdale, N.Y.

The Editor replies: "Our thanks to Mr. Bowden for reassuring us that the point of Mr. Salzman's piece was not missed. America's ivory towers are not only still standing, but they are stubbornly defended as well, and as long as 'popularize' continues to be a dirty word in the vocabularies of America's cultural administrators, the arts will be but rootless air plants in the conservatories of exquisites. As critic Benjamin DeMott pointed out in a recent (March 25) issue of Saturday Review, this is an enormous (and enormously important) subject: '... the continuing national obliviousness to the job of learning how to exchange, how to 'popularize' without lying, how to effect nonexploitative communication between levels of mind in a democratic society.' We must get it straight once and for all: there is nothing wrong with knowledge if it wants to teach; there is nothing wrong with ignorance if it wants to learn."

Eric Salzman, in his article on Leonard Bernstein (May), makes the claim that Mr. Bernstein is currently the sole representative of the Romantic tradition. I take nothing away from Mr. Bernstein's abilities, but would suggest that if Mr. Salzman really wants to hear the one survivor of the Romantic epoch who is still active on the podium and in the recording studio, who was born when Liszt, Wagner, Brahms, Franck, Bruckner, and Tchaikovsky were still alive, and who was ninety years old on April 18, then he should waste no time in going to the next concert given by Maestro Leopold Stokowski. His performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall were electrifying, and thoroughly deserved the standing ovations they received. It was well worth my coming all the way from London to New York to hear Stokowski enter his ninety-first year with such a dynamic explosion of music-making.

Edward Johnson
London, England

We refer Mr. Johnson to Eric Salzman's review (April) of two Stokowski performances from the Twenties—Beethoven's Seventh and Schubert's "Unfinished"—reissued on the Parnassus label for evidence that Mr. Salzman shares his view of Stokowski's stature. "Perhaps," Mr. Salzman says, "old Stoky will again receive the recognition he once had and which he is certainly still due."

Eric Salzman's musings about Lenny have an urbanity and polish not always commensurate with his subject. Bernstein's saga is quite boring, and his future plans do not interest me any more than Glenn Gould's, Nikolaus Harnoncourt's, or, for that matter, John Lennon's. I can see that he is someone of note in New York circles, but I hope Stereo Review transcends that blighted city.

Manny Mandelbaum
Methone, Mass.

We are with Mr. Mandelbaum in one respect: we also hope that Stereo Review transcends provincialism—indeed, that we transcend it as successfully as Leonard Bernstein has.

Record-Quality Misconception

I must attempt to rectify some of the misconceptions and misrepresentations contained in the letter of Dan Wallack (May). The critics of poor record-quality and noisy pressings are not, as a group, agitated by a "miniscule imperfection," as Mr. Wallack contends. Rather, it is the inherent quality of grossly apparent (through a high-quality playback system) thumps, pops, ticks, etc., which raise the ire of the critical listener. Furthermore, what is desired is not some "utopian ideal" depicted by Mr. Wallack, but merely the kind of clean pressing within the range of technical feasibility and currently being consistently offered by such companies as Philips.

Mr. Wallack's comparison of the extra-expensive records with the less-expensive ones is not comparable because the gross record noise is clearly not legitimate. Having sat through many concerts myself, I can state that the coughs and rustlings accompanying any concert, whether sometimes distracting, are not generally comparable in relative audibility to the objectionable levels of noise I described above. Indeed, the spatial dimensions of a concert hall and the sonic ambiance of a "live" concert tend to dampen most audience noise to unobjectionable levels. Also, such noise as is heard in a "live" concert is heard but once by the concertgoer, while the noise on a recording is obviously heard every time the record is played (a prospect tending to increase its capacity to annoy).

Anthony F. Granza
Urbana, Ill.

Critics on the Met

I enjoyed Stephen E. Rubin's article about the critics and the Met ("Changing the Guard at the Met," April) not because the critics were so good but that Mr. Rubin is a good journalist, but what a sorry, cautious, unimaginative, opinionated lot the critics are! And how ill-informed! One of them speaks enviously of Covent Garden; he should have heard as many operas there as I have. What's wrong with Covent Garden is that it is just too English. And what the Met needs more than anything else is money. Pity not one of your critics mentioned it.

Lathrop Crawford
London, England

Stephen E. Rubin's article "Changing the Guard at the Met" in your April issue was fascinating. I was not surprised that the various music critics Rubin interviewed did not agree among themselves in their recommendations for what Goering Gentile, the new General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera, should do to revitalize the Met. But, had these critics read Robert S. Clark's article "Learning from Callas" in your March issue, I think they would all have agreed at least that the first thing Gentile should do is hire Mme. Callas to coach the Met's singers.

John C. Lowe
New York, N.Y.

Rózsa's Cello Concerto

It seems ironic indeed that the issue of Stereo Review (April) carrying the announcement of the formation of a Miklós Rózsa Society in its Letters column also contained (Continued on page 10)
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An infinite choice of speeds.

The variable control Lenco manual turntables offer an infinite selection of speed—a continuous sweep from 30 to 86 rpm. At the standard 16-2/3, 33-1/3, 45 or 78.26 rpm, there are click stops that can be precisely set or adjusted at any time.

With this, you can slow down a complex rush of notes, the better to appreciate the inner voices when you listen next at normal speeds. You can tune a recorded orchestra to match the instrument you play, and join in. Your tuning is not restricted to a paltry fraction of a note, either. You can exercise your urge to conduct, choosing whatever tempo suits you. And you can use it to extend your knowledge of the dance or language, or to accompany your slide or movie shows.

And at every one of these speeds, Swiss precision takes over. For example, the Lenco L-75’s sleekly polished transcription tonearm shares many design concepts (such as gravity-controlled anti-skating, hydraulic cushioning, and adjustable tonearm bearings) with arms costing more alone than the entire L-75 arm and turntable unit. And the dynamically balanced 8.8 lb. turntable reduces rumble, wow and flutter to inaudibility.

The L-75 complete with handsome walnut base at $99.95 offers professional quality and versatility but at far less than studio-equipment prices. The B55 (lighter platter and an arm of almost equal specification) is only $79.95 with base. Both are available now at your Benjamin/Lenco dealer. Benjamin Electronic Sound Corporation, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735, a division of Instrument Systems Corporation.

Lenco turntables from Benjamin

Prices subject to change without notice.

CIRCLE NO. 10 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Mr. Jacobson replies: "Maybe Rózsa's Cello Concerto is too virtuoso—a boat too far out to sea. Serious. However, since Mr. Koldy's is far enough to 'know' the answers to aesthetic questions, whereas I, poor fellow, am just a critic whose dealings are in mere opinions, there is plainly no point in my arguing with him. We will only begin to have a chance of understanding each other when Mr. Koldy's has read a few basic philosophy texts and found out the difference between factual statement and value judgment, between knowledge and belief (whether true or false).

"As for the mention of Mr. Starker, whom I hold in high regard, let me just say that—like all but a handful of exceptional performers in this age of nineteenth-century oriented musical training—even he is susceptible to the attractive of a youth-club, by which I mean gracefully written works without much musical value. This, too, I stress, is an opinion. Mr. Koldy's doubtless 'knows' better."

Sounding Off on the Moog

1. I see there are still some people who think the Moog synthesizer sounds "like some monstrous Wurlitzer being played by a robot." I am referring to Paul Kresh's review of the cassette "Everything You Always Wanted to Hear on the Moog But Were Afraid to Ask For" in the April tape section of Stereo Review.

Mr. Kresh seems terribly uninformed about the Moog's characteristics. To say that arrangements for it "parrot the orchestral languages" and that they have "a muscles gift for mimicry" is a prime example. Although the Moog can sound a great deal like a violin, castanets, or a guitar, it is incorrect to say that it mimics them. A parrot can recite words, but that is as far as the bird can go. The Moog is an incredibly complex electronic instrument which, in skilled hands, comes very close to achieving the "flat" sound that composers long to hear. It generates a more perfect wave than a regular musical instrument, which gives it its appealingly rich voice. By using filters, shapers, oscillators, and a good head, it gives the music a deeper, more full-bodied sound.

Perhaps the sound heard by the reviewer was somewhat altered by the cassette medium. I don't believe you can hear the same music from a narrow tape as from a vinyl disc played on a fine stereo system.

JEFFREY D. BIPES
Minneapolis, Minn.

Music Editor James Goodfriend comments: "When any composer I respect writes a piece that I can respect expressly for the Moog, then I will begin to respect the Moog as a musical instrument. As long as it plays only transcriptions, it is merely a gimmick. The keyed trumpet was abolished for a reason. Haydn wrote a magnificent concerto for it, for until then there was no music for it to play that it could play better than the instruments for which that music was originally written. Of course, the keyed trumpet faded into oblivion because a valved trumpet was invented, because the latter could play the music better than the keyed trumpet could. That is the risk the Moog may also run when and if it establishes itself as a musical instrument. But it hasn't even done that yet. The point is that the instrument itself—a medium—is not the music; the music is the music.

"Swing, Volume I"

1. In his review of RCA's "Swing, Volume I" (February) Joel Vance pays me a compliment by calling my liner notes "thorough and enthusiastic," and then proceeds to misinterpret what I said to a degree that compels me to set the record straight.

I did not state that Bunny Berigan was "soulful because he played with a 'hurt-tone'" (whatever that may be), but that he was one of the few white swing trumpeters who employed lip vibrato. This statement did not by any stretch of the imagination imply that he was listening to technical trends (he wasn't!) or that real black players were supposed to lack technique. Where Mr. Vance got these odd notions I don't know, but it certainly wasn't from my notes.

Apprently, Mr. Vance still can't read, and it seems he can't listen either. Frankie Newton is not bucked by Fats Waller on three cuts, but by James P. Johnson. Expropriating from this error, Mr. Vance claims that "Fats' playing behind trumpeter JB Bamboo Smith a decade earlier was a lot jazzier than the earlier cuts made with Smith, he plays pipe organ, not piano, and these are not very 'jazzy' records at all.

Mr. Vance's long diatribe against Mezz Mezzrow seems out of place in a review that scarcely deals with the music on the album at all. His comment that Eddie Condon "organized the first integrated jazz recording date in 1929" is erroneous; Jelly Roll Morton recorded with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings in 1923, and there are other earlier instances. His observation that "black players in the Thirties may not have had any formal training" is arrant nonsense, and his comments about New Orleans clarinetists are pointless.

Mr. Vance concludes by calling on RCA to issue various recordings which are already available. To wit: the Condon Footwarmers sides are on the "Vintage Jack Teagarden" L.P., the Bix/Hoagy Carmichael sides and some of his Goulkettic things are on the "Leg-end of Bix Beiderbecke" album, and there are five Jelly Roll Morton L.P.'s in the RCA catalog. (Curiously, Mr. Vance started out by commenting that there is almost too much Morton among the RCA reissues.) Furthermore, the contents of the "Swing" album in (Continued on page 12)
Most of the congregation of Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, thought the Rector had just started speaking louder. At the pulpit, where there was a microphone, his voice sounded exactly the same as it did at the altar, where there was no microphone. Just louder. There was no difference in voice quality. When told that the new P.A. system was installed, some members were disappointed. It “didn’t sound like a P.A. system.”

What they did not know was that a new “Heresy” had been introduced into the church. Mounted on a beam thirty feet above the altar, it works unobtrusively, reinforcing the spoken word. And it does this with such naturalness that no one realizes it is there. Yet even the people on the back row understand clearly everything that is said.

Natural reproduction is designed into the Klipsch HERESY® as well as the KLIPSCHORN® and other Klipsch speakers. For honest reproduction of music, speech, or any other sound, where space or budget limit size, use the HERESY® loudspeaker. Since it reproduces speech with such naturalness, consider what it can do for your home music system.

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What would you do if your tape was so good nobody believed you?

That's the situation we found ourselves in, with our Ultra Dynamic formulations.

Audio demonstrations weren't enough. People refused to believe their ears. We had to prove how good we are.

So, we developed a visual demonstration of sound that enables people to see the difference between our U.D. tape and any other tape they choose. By looking at an oscilloscope screen, they can compare energy output, range, distortion, signal-to-noise ratio and presence of dropouts.

**Public Proof**

Our first big public screening was the 1971 Consumer Electronics Show. Since then, we've been touring our demonstration all around the country. And since then, people have started to believe their ears as well as their eyes.

If you don't have an opportunity to see one of our demonstrations, try the Maxell Ultra Dynamic tape, in cassette or reel to reel, and try to believe your ears!

**Technicalities**

We use a Hewlett Packard dual trace storage oscilloscope and a Hewlett Packard audio sweep generator. The lower trace on the oscilloscope provides a view of the output signal of the sweep generator. The upper trace provides a view of the same signal having been recorded and played back so you can see the performance characteristics of the tape. In the picture above, Maxell Ultra Dynamic tape is shown against the sweep generator trace. The flare at the right indicates extended high frequency response. The uniformity of the trace indicates an extremely accurate overall response.

**Maxell Ultra Dynamic Tape**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency Response (dB)</th>
<th>1,000 Hz</th>
<th>7,500 Hz</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+1.0</td>
<td>+6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+8.0</td>
<td>+10.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Output Uniformity (dB)**

| 7,500 Hz | 0.2 |

**Distortion (%)**

| 3.0 |

**Dropout**

| 0.0 |

**Saturation Level (dB)**

| +15.0 |

**Signal to Noise Ratio (dB)**

| 63 |

**Erasure (dB)**

| 0.9 |

Maxell includes not "two others" as listed, but three additional tracks.

**Dan Morgenstern, Editor**

Down Beat
New York, N. Y.

Mr. Vance replies: "I quote from Mr. Morgenstern's liner notes: 'Unlike most white (i.e., legitimately trained) trumpeters, [Berigan] employed a lip vibrate, which added soulfulness to his lovely tone.' That is what he said, even if it is not what he meant. The inferences I drew from his statement refer to an attitude about jazz that is most certainly that of far too many critics, historians, and musicians who distort what jazz was and is. Therefore my comments about New Orleans clarinetists are not pointless, nor is my opinion of Mezzrow out of place, nor my comments on Thirties musicians arrant nonsense.

"Musicians who matured in the Thirties had the benefit of hearing the first generation of jazzmen, some of whom had legitimate training and could show a youngster some of the technical ropes or inspire by example. The wider distribution of records also influenced Thirties jazzmen who learned, in part, by ear.

"If you are an expert on the Johnson-Newton cuts, whether or not Waller with Smith was or wasn't a 'jazzier' is a matter of opinion. And Morgenstern is correct historically about the Morton-NORK sessions, which I knew about, incidentally, but for personal reasons I consider the Codon date the first really integrated one.

"Thanks for the Footwear tip. The complete Bird/Houng sides have not been available for fifteen years, unless you can find the ten-inch 'X' (Victor) LP, the only one of them on the 'Legend' LP is Barnacle Bill. 'Too much' of Waller and Morton means that not every record they ever cut was great, very good, or even good, but RCA seems intent on issuing every side it has in the vaults. 'Two others' instead of three additional tracks on this album is a typo, I believe it was brought on, perhaps, with wishful thinking."

**Short-changing Sinatra**

I haven't yet seen a correction in Stereo Review regarding an important omission from Henry Pleasants' list of "every song recorded by Frank Sinatra from his first recording session in 1939 to the present" ("Frank Sinatra—A Great Vocal Artist Retires," November). It is The Road to Mandalay, originally recorded for the "Come Fly with Me" LP (conducted by Billy May) and later replaced by French Foreign Legion (Nelson Riddle) after protests from an old lady who I seem to remember was Rudyard Kipling's grand-daughter or something. This, however, didn't prevent Sinatra from performing his swinging version of the song at the now-demolished Sydney Stadium during his second tour of Australia in 1961. This song, along with Angel Eyes and One for My Baby, were for me the highlights of a truly memorable concert.

**Ron Herbert**

Austin, N. S. W.

**Casals Archives**

The Casals Archives desires recordings from any source of Pablo Casals as cellist, conductor, or composer. Please contact me at the address below with any information.

**Joseph D. Alfaro**

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Stereo Review
Nothing is hard to get...

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NOTHING

True "NOTHING" would be the elimination of everything that interferes with the perfect reproduction of sound. So, the closer you get to "NOTHING" in sound, the better stereo equipment you own.

The ELAC 50H MARK II comes closer to the "NOTHING" in sound reproduction than any other automatic turntable. And for good reason. You see, we've spent a million dollars in research to eliminate motor noise, vibration, rumble, wow, and distortion. The closer we get to "NOTHING", the better it is for you. With rumble down to -42db, wow down to 0.05% and flutter to 0.01%, we're really coming close to "NOTHING!"

And we've even reduced record wear. Imagine an automatic tone-arm that lowers so slowly, so lightly to your records that you can hardly tell when it touches the groove. You certainly can't hear it. At your command, a touch of the exclusive pushbutton control picks the arm up automatically and a silicone-damped piston lowers it lighter than a floating feather to your record. It's the ultimate in protection for stylus and record.

Fisher 100 Series Speaker Systems

- Fisher has a new line of moderately priced bookshelf-size speaker systems: the 100 Series. All are of the direct-radiator acoustic-suspension type, with sealed walnut-finish enclosures. Woofer sizes range from an 8-inch unit in the two-way Model 101 ($59.95) to a 12-inch unit in the three-way Model 105 ($129.92). All models except the 103 are equipped with 3-inch cone tweeters (the 103's tweeter is 2½ inches), while the two three-way systems—Models 104 and 105—have mid-ranges with cone diameters of 5 and 5¾ inches, respectively. Within the enclosures the tweeters and mid-ranges are acoustically isolated from the back pressures of the woofers. The nominal impedance of all systems is 8 ohms, and power-handling capabilities range from 30 watts music power for the smallest (Model 101) to 50 watts music power for the large Model 105. All the systems have fretwork grilles, and they closely resemble the top-of-line Model 105 shown. Dimensions range from 20 x 10½ x 7½ inches to approximately 24 x 13½ x 12 inches. The prices of the intermediate models are $89.95, $99.95, and $109.95.

Circle 115 on reader service card

Soundcraftsmen RP10-12 Professional Equalizer

- Soundcraftsmen now manufactures a single-channel (mono) ten-band frequency equalizer for home audio installations, public-address systems, and other specialized applications. The RP10-12's ten slider controls act at the nominal centers of the ten octaves of the audio-frequency range, providing up to 12 dB of continuously variable boost or cut each. After the controls have been set, a large VU meter is used in conjunction with two more slider controls to match the overall input and output levels of the equalizer. A rocker switch sets the meter to read the audio signal before or after equalization, and another turns the meter off. Three more switches control tape-monitoring functions (if a system's tape-monitoring circuits are used for the equalizer's installation), route an equalized signal to a tape machine for recording, and bypass the equalization for flat response. The frequency response of the RP10-12 is 20 to 20,480 Hz ±0.25 dB when the controls are centered. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are both under 0.08 percent for a 2-volt output. Input and output impedances are 100,000 and 600 ohms, respectively, and maximum output into a typical high-impedance load is 7 volts. The Soundcraftsmen RP10-12 is supplied with a walnut-finish wood cabinet (18 x 5¾ x 11 inches overall) or with a panel for relay-rack mounting. Price: $349.50.

Circle 116 on reader service card

Teac TCA-43 Four-Channel Modular Tape Deck

- Teac's new Model TCA-43 is intended for the serious tape hobbyist who wants facilities for multi-track recording that approach the flexibility of professional equipment. The transport of the TCA-43 is a two-speed (3⅛ and 7⅛ ips), three-motor, solenoid-operated mechanism that affords the options of quarter-track two-channel and four-channel recording and playback, with automatic reverse for two-channel playback (activated by a foil strip applied to the tape at the desired reversing point). It also offers mono recording and playback on any or all of the four tracks. Half-track two-channel tapes can also be played when playback gaps Nos. 1 and 4 are activated simultaneously. In addition, any of the four gaps of the record head can be independently switched into playback operation while the other gaps remain in record. This "track-sync" feature permits any new material to be recorded on separate tracks in complete synchronization with an existing recording on some other track; it also facilitates the erasure of any unwanted material and the re-recording in synchronization with existing material on other tracks. The recording and playback electronics for the TCA-43 are contained in two separate modules, each of which has two channels with recording-level meters and controls (separate for microphone and line inputs), concentrically mounted playback-level controls, and record-interlock pushbuttons for both. Each module also has a stereo-headphone jack and a source/tape monitoring switch.

Specifications for 7⅛-ips operation with low-noise tape include a frequency response of 50 to 15,000 Hz ±3 dB, a signal-to-noise ratio of better than 50 dB, and less than 0.12 percent wow and flutter. Interchannel crosstalk is -48 dB. Reels up to 7 inches in diameter can be used; the fast-forward and rewind time for 1,200 feet of tape is less than 2 minutes. The microphone inputs have an impedance of 10,000 ohms, with a minimum sensitivity of 0.25 millivolt. Corresponding specifications for the line inputs are 100,000 ohms and 0.14 volt. The outputs deliver 1 volt into 100,000 ohms or more, and the headphone jacks (Continued on page 16)
When music becomes more than just something to listen to, Altec is involved.
NEW PRODUCTS

THE LATEST IN HIGH-FIDELITY EQUIPMENT

are rated at a 10,000-ohm minimum. Dimensions of the modules, all of which come with wooden cases, are 17½ x 12 x 7 inches for transport and 17¼ x 4¼ x 7¼ inches for each electronics section. Price: $729. The wood mounting cradle shown is $15 extra.

Circle 117 on reader service card

Design Acoustics D-12
Speaker System

• Design Acoustics, a new company, has introduced the D-12 speaker system, which, by use of multiple drivers mounted to project in various directions, achieves close to complete omnidirectional performance. A twelve-sided (dodecahedral) vented enclosure is used, with a downward-facing 10-inch woofer, a 5-inch mid-range that faces upward, and nine 2½-inch cone tweeters—one each for nine of the enclosure’s ten side-directed facets. The output of the mid-range is restricted to the frequency range of about 700 to 1,500 Hz to maintain dispersion. Frequencies below their intended operating ranges are kept from the mid-range and tweeters by capacitance crossover networks with slopes of 6 dB per octave. The woofer and tweeter outputs can both be varied 3 dB by means of jumper interconnections at a terminal strip on the enclosure’s lower rear edge. The system’s nominal impedance is 8 ohms; a 50-watt continuous input of pink noise will produce a 103-dB sound-pressure level in the reverberant field of a 4,400-cubic-foot room with moderately high damping. Amplifiers capable of 100 watts continuous output per channel can be used safely; at least 20 watts per channel is advised. On the pedestal supplied, the D-12 stands 30 inches high and about 22 inches across at its widest dimension. The pentagonal grille-cloth panels can be ordered in shades of avocado, gold, orange-red, ivory, blue, and the black shown. With black panels the exposed wood surfaces are finished in walnut, including the upright of the pedestal. The models with other grille-cloth colors come with black lacquered surfaces and chrome-plated pedestal. Price: $325.

Circle 118 on reader service card

Bib Model 42
Groove-Kleen

• Revox is importing the Bib Model 42 record cleaner, a pivoted aluminum arm with brushes at the end that track the disc as it plays to remove dust. A small brush of sable bristles initially dislodges the dust particles, after which they are collected on the pile of a velvet cylinder that rides just ahead of the sable brush on its own pivoted subassembly. An adhesive base with a height adjustment and rest for the cleaning arm secures the device to the motorboard of a turntable. An adjustable counterweight controls the downward force the brushes exert on the disc surface, and therefore the amount of drag on the turntable’s rotation. The Model 42 comes packaged with a small accessory brush for cleaning dust from the velvet cylinder. Price: $7.50.

Circle 119 on reader service card

Norman Laboratories
Model Five Equalizer

• Norman Laboratories’ Model Five Acoustic Equalizer is a stereo device specifically designed to augment the low bass performance of ten of the most popular U.S.-made bookshelf speaker systems. Anechoic measurements of the systems were used to create compensation curves for response rolloff at the extreme low frequencies. This compensation, in the form of electronic bass boost, is provided by the Model Five, with the appropriate predetermined contours selected by means of a trio of three-position slide switches in the rear of the unit. The correct settings for each of the ten speakers are listed in the instruction manual. (It should be noted that these equalization settings will substantially increase demands on the amplifier’s low-frequency output capability.) A front-panel rotary control permits four increments of additional bass boost to be obtained for different acoustical circumstances. There are also two similar five-position controls for the mid-range and treble frequencies; these afford an overall adjustment range of roughly ±4 dB over about two octaves of their respective frequency areas. Since the Model Five will tolerate an input of up to 10 volts at mid-frequencies before overload, it can be connected between preamplifier and amplifier as well as in the tape-monitor loop of an integrated amplifier or receiver. (The equalizer has the usual tape inputs, outputs, and monitor pushbutton to replace those used in its installation.) Distortion is under 0.1 per cent and the signal-to-noise ratio is 82 dB, both referred to a 1-volt output level. Input and output impedances are said to be compatible with any combination of associated components. The overall size of the Model Five, including a walnut-finish wood cabinet that is supplied with the unit, is 11½ x 3½ x 7¾ inches. Price: $87.

Circle 120 on reader service card

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1972 Spring Edition

On Sale May 1972
The age of quadrasonomics has arrived—and it's all spelled out for you in TAPE RECORDER GUIDE...4-Channel Sound—What, How and When?, plus complete Directories of 4-channel components, matrix discs and discrete 8-track tapes! And if you're not quite ready for 4-channel yet, this is still the book for you! It delivers everything your tape-recording heart desires—like The Dolby Noise-Reduction System...Sound-on-Sound, Sound-with-Sound, and Echo...Tips For Buyers of Cassette Machines...Home Video Tape Machines...Facts on Reel-to-Reel Tape Recorders...The "Compact" Stereo System...The Cassette Tape Recorder...Tape Terminology...Tips For Buyers of 8-Track Cartridge Machines...Microphones...Headphones...The Works! PLUS—A complete buyer's guide for—reel-to-reel tape machines, cassette tape machines, 8-track tape machines, Raw tape, Microphones, Headphones and Accessories! All the advice, All the equipment, All the expertise you need to get more out of your present rig...get more when you trade up.

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"Many professional audio people, including our reviewer, use the AR-3a as a standard by which to judge other speaker systems." *Electronics Illustrated, March 1972*

From the beginning, AR speaker systems have been characterized by independent reviewers as embodying the state of the art in home music reproduction.

**Standard of performance**

Soon after the AR-1 was introduced, as AR's first "top-of-the-line" speaker system, the *Audio League Report* stated, "We do not specifically know of any other speaker system which is comparable to [the AR-1] from the standpoint of extended low frequency response, flatness of response, and most of all, low distortion."

**Seventeen years later**

In a recent review of the AR-3a, published in *Stereo Review*, Hirsch-Houck Laboratories made the following observation:

"For the benefit of newcomers to the audio world, the AR-3a is the direct descendant of the AR-1, the first acoustic suspension speaker system, which AR introduced in 1954. The AR-1 upset many previously held notions about the size required for a speaker to be capable of reproducing the lowest audible frequencies. The 'bookshelf'-size AR speakers set new standards for low distortion, low-frequency reproduction, and in our view have never been surpassed in this respect."

**Durability of accomplishment**

AR's research program is aimed at producing the most accurate loudspeaker that the state of the art permits, without regard to size or price. *Consumer Guide* recently confirmed the effectiveness of this approach, stating that "AR is the manufacturer with the best track record in producing consistently high-quality speakers," and summarized their feelings this way:

"The AR-3a was judged by our listening panelists to be the ultimate in performance."

**Frequency response of AR-3a tweeter: top curve measured on axis, middle and lower curves measured 30° and 60° off axis, respectively.**

The AR-3a is the best home speaker system that AR knows how to make. At a price of $250 (in oiled walnut), the AR-3a represents what *Audio* magazine recently called "a new high standard of performance at what must be considered a bargain price."

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Please send detailed information on the AR-3a speaker system to

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**Acoustic Research, Inc.**
24 Thorndike St., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02141

CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD
The 4-channel Sansui MQ2000 is not a second-class component system.

It's a first-class compact.

Sansui has never made anything but components until now. So our engineers just couldn't break the old habit when we asked them to come up with a four-channel compact. They took the ingredients of a state-of-the-art component system and packed them into a single housing, then crowned them with an acclaimed, first-line automatic turntable and magnetic cartridge.

The MQ2000 complete four-channel music center. It's an AM/FM receiver. A decoder for all compatibly matrixed four-channel recordings and broadcasts. A four-channel synthesizer for your entire collection of conventional stereo records, as well as for regular stereo broadcasts, it can handle any discrete four-channel source, taped or otherwise, and can take any adapter for any future four-channel medium that might come along.

Total IHF music power: 74 watts. FM sensitivity: 5 microvolts IHF. Normal-level response: 30 to 30,000 Hz ±2 db, with harmonic or IM distortion below 1% at rated output.

The automatic turntable is Perpetuum Ebner's Model 2032 with calibrated stylus-force adjustment, variable-speed control, damped cueing, anti-skating and a host of other features. The cartridge is Shure's M75-6, specially recommended for four-channel discs.

The speakers are Sansui's exciting new AS100 two-way acoustic-suspension designs. Not scaled-down performers made just to go along with a package, but full-fledged performers in their own right—regular members of Sansui's new AS speaker line. Two of them come as part of the package, because most people already have a stereo pair, but you can match up another pair of Sansui's regular line, if you wish, for a perfectly balanced system. Wait till you hear this at your franchised Sansui dealer!
It sounds like reel-to-reel.
It looks like cassette. It is.
It is the new Sansui SC700.

Close your eyes and your ears tell you you're listening to a reel-to-reel deck of the highest caliber. Open your eyes and you know that cassette recording has finally made the grade.

The performance-packed, feature-packed SC700 Stereo Cassette Deck incorporates Dolby™ noise reduction, adjustable bias for either chromium dioxide or ferric oxide tapes, three-microphone mixing and specs that will make your eyes—as long as they're open—pop even wider.

Undistorted response is 40 to 16,000 Hz with chromium dioxide tape and close to that with standard ferric oxide tape. Record/playback signal-to-noise ratio is better than 56 to 58 db with Dolby in—and commendably better than 50 db even with Dolby out! Wow and flutter are below 0.12% weighted RMS.

A DC servo motor (solid-state controlled) assures rock-steady speed. The tape-selector adjusts both bias and equalization for ferric-oxide or chromium-dioxide formulations. The large, slant-panel VU meters are softly illuminated. Contourless heads keep response smooth, and a head gap one micron narrow brings high-frequency output right up to reel-to-reel standards.

With so much in its favor, Sansui engineers decided it deserved all the features of a first-rank open-reel deck, and more: Pause/edit control. 3-digit tape counter. Separate record/playback level controls (independent but friction-coupled). Automatic end-of-tape shut-off with full disengagement and capstan retraction . . . and much, much more.

The SC700 is practically a self-contained recording studio. Which makes it quite a bargain at $299.95.

*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories Inc.
Audio Questions and Answers

By Larry Klein Technical Editor

FM Hiss

Q. I have a stereo tuner and find that there is usually a hiss in the stereo mode which I suppose is generated by the multiplex circuits. There is no hiss in mono. Can one of the noise-reduction units reported on in your December 1971 issue be connected between my tuner and amplifier to reduce hiss?

Albert Eng
Vacaville, Cal.

A. First of all, the hiss is probably not generated by the multiplex circuits in your tuner. From your description, it appears that there is not enough signal strength on stereo broadcasts for your tuner to be "quieted." (With a stereo broadcast, it takes more signal at the antenna terminals to achieve the same noise level heard in mono.) On the assumption that this is the case, it would make sense for you to: (1) check your tuner's sensitivity specifications to determine if they are adequate for your location; (2) check to determine if your specific tuner lives up to its specifications—it may need overhaul or alignment; and (3) determine if your antenna is adequate for your tuner and location (your dealer or the tuner's manufacturer should be able to answer these questions for you). I suspect that your investigations will lead you to the conclusion that it will make more sense to get a better tuner and/or antenna than a noise-reduction unit.

Frequency-of-Repair Records

Q. I feel that you missed two important points in your discussion on the value of frequency-of-repair data in the March Q & A column. The speed with which a manufacturer can act to correct design faults brought to his attention is all too often not rapid enough to save a significant number of customers annoyance and expense. The second point is that there exists a brisk business in used components. Information on the reliability of these used components would be extremely helpful for a used-equipment shopper.

Barry Winthrop
Brooklyn, N.Y.

A. True, manufacturers frequently cannot act fast enough to prevent components with built-in design flaws from reaching the customer. But how would frequency-of-repair data help either the manufacturer or the consumer? The first persons to become aware that a problem exists are the dealers who sell the merchandise. And they have to sell a significant number of a particular model and have enough complaints come in on a specific aspect of its performance before they can be sure that the problem is indeed inherent in the model. If one out of every five units sold provokes a specific complaint, they know something's amiss. The dealers and the warranty stations will ultimately communicate their findings to the factory, which also may be getting direct returns from unhappy consumers. It may take a month or more after the product has been shipped to stores to alert the company's engineering staff that a problem exists "in the field." They then, as rapidly as possible, redesign a circuit or tighten their specifications for a part, and the new production from that time on doesn't have the problem. By the time the word that 20 per cent of the units have a built-in flaw gets through the grapevine to the small dealers, the customers, or the audio publications (none of them having handled enough samples to generalize on their experiences validly), the problem may have been eliminated.

Other factors also invalidate frequency-of-repair records as a guide to shopping for used equipment. Unlike the situation with cars, for example, where a given model may tend to drop its drive shaft after 100,000 miles, I know of no equivalent situation with audio equipment. As far as electronic components are concerned, old tube amplifiers need (Continued on page 24)
For $239.95 we think you deserve something more than just another stereo receiver. KLH introduces something more.

Most stereo receivers that cost between $200 and $250 don't sound half bad. Some even look kind of nice, if not exactly sexy. And they usually work more times than not. Perhaps they can best be described as predictably adequate.

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We figure a couple of hundred dollars or so entitles you to something more. Something like our new Model Fifty-One AM/FM Stereo Receiver. For one thing, it has big dependable power; it'll drive loudspeakers that leave lesser instruments gasping. It looks more expensive than similarly priced stereo receivers. And it feels more expensive too. Each knob, switch and sliding control gives you a real sense of authority. Stations literally lock in when you turn the dial. The controls are crisp and flawless. No mushiness here. Also, both the AM and FM sections will pull in stations you didn't even know were on the dial. But most important, the Fifty-One has the overall quality that most people expect from KLH. And you get it all for just $239.95† (including walnut-grain enclosure).

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For more information on the Model Fifty-One, write to KLH Research and Development, 30 Cross St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139. Or visit your KLH dealer.

†Suggested east coast retail price; suggested retail price in the south and in the west $249.95
‡A trademark of The Singer Company.
new output and rectifier tubes, switches usually become noisy or intermittent, and electrolytic capacitors dry up. Old tape recorders will have some of the above problems plus worn heads, worn drive belts, idlers, bushings, etc. Old record players will have equivalent mechanical problems. These things happen to all brands and models.

In my view, anyone interested in used equipment will learn more from reading the original test report on the product than he could from checking a frequency-of-repair listing—if one could be compiled. True, the test lab may have tested one of the 80 per cent that worked well (to return to our earlier example), and the used unit may be one of the early 20 per cent with the uncorrected defect. But anyone who buys a used anything without a ten-day money-back guarantee deserves what he gets.

A Long, Long-Play Disc

Q. I recently heard about a technique that can record on a 7-inch, 33 1/2 rpm disc the amount of playing time normally found on a 12-inch disc. Do you know anything about this breakthrough?

R. Suskind
New York, N.Y.

A. I suspect that the Fleetwood "Microsonic" disc that you are referring to may be something less than a "breakthrough." I recently received a press kit from them that included a sample of their first full-scale recorded effort: Jesus Christ Superstar. Included in the press kit was a statement that the U.S. Testing Co., Inc. had "surveyed 1,000 households known to be record purchasers, primarily in the teen and young adult markets," and that those participating judged the 7-inch sample to be of the same quality as a 12-inch with "fidelity rated A." I don't know if the record used in the sampling was the same one I found in the press kit, but what I heard was a 6-dB per-octave rolloff starting at about 300 Hz and continuing down to the lowest recorded frequencies. In short, the bass was severely attenuated. This came as no surprise, since it quickly answers the question of just how a 7-inch disc could provide so much playing time. Bass notes produce much wider groove swings than treble notes, and if you eliminate the bass, the grooves can be packed much more closely together; it's that simple.

Fleetwood claims to have patents pending on their "microsonic" process, and since there is nothing patentable in having no bass, there may be something more to their technique than meets the ear. But even using a graphic equalizer I was not able to get satisfactory bass. Aside from the lack of low end, the record sounded okay.
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Total Energy Response gives every Jensen speaker a fuller, richer sound than ever before. It improves musical balance throughout a listening area, so your whole component system sounds better.

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Then we put all this sound together in a beautiful hand rubbed walnut cabinet with black console base. So when you take in a demonstration of Jensen's new Model 6, you'll get the maximum response.

Model 6 Speaker System.
IS YOUR PREAMPLIFIER AS GOOD AS YOUR EARS?

IC 150

Your first preamplifier was probably a kit or prebuilt economy model with minimum quality and just the basic features. Since then you no doubt have become more discerning and can hear more music than your old preamp "lets through". Perhaps it is hindering the development of your music appreciation? We suggest that you consider the new Crown IC150 control center for significantly increased enjoyment. For example, does the loudness control on your present unit really do much? The IC150 provides beautifully natural compensation whatever the volume. Similarly, your tone controls may give inaccurate effects, while the IC150 has new "natural contour" exponential equalizers for correct compensation at low settings. Is your preamp plagued with turn-on thump and switching pops? Crown's IC150 is almost silent. The three-year parts and labor warranty is based upon totally new op-amp circuitry, not just a converted tube design. Most dramatic of all is the IC150 phono preamp. No other preamplifier, regardless its price, can give you disc-to-tape recordings so free of distortion, hum or noise, and so perfect in transient response. It also has adjustable gain controls to match the exact output of your cartridge.

These are some of the refinements which make the IC150 competitive with $400 units, although you can own it for just $265. Only a live demonstration can tell you whether you are ready to graduate to the IC150 and explore new horizons in music appreciation. May we send you detailed product literature today?

D 150

Ask your dealer also about Crown's new companion D150 power amplifier, which delivers 150 watts RMS output at 8 ohms (150 watts per channel at 4 ohms). No amp in this power range - however expensive - has better frequency response or lower hum, noise or distortion. It offers performance equal to the famous DC300, but at medium power and price. It's worth listening into!

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CIRCLE NO. 14 ON READER SERVICE CARD

WOW AND FLUTTER

If a turntable makes one revolution every 0.555 second (33⅓ revolutions per minute), its speed is accurate — that is, it is correct for playing LP records — and a recording of Chopin's "Minute Waltz" will run just as long as the original performance. But correct and accurate speed does not necessarily mean regular speed. Speed irregularities are usually cyclical (they follow a recurrent pattern), relatively rapid waverings that average out to what is nominally accurate speed. (Noncyclical speed variations, such as would be caused by a slipping turntable drive mechanism, mean either that the design itself is at fault or the turntable needs servicing.) To some extent wow and flutter, the cyclical types of speed irregularity, will always be present, although they can be minimized by care in design and manufacture.

The only difference between wow and flutter is the rate at which the speed fluctuations occur — a significant distinction only because the rate affects the way each is perceived. Flutter is anything from a shuddering warble (low flutter rate) to a muddiness and lack of clarity in the reproduced sound (high flutter rate), and it ranges from about ten speed-fluctuation cycles per second on up. Wow, the term for slower rates of waverings, gives reproduced music an almost painful, groaning intonation. Both record players and tape machines can suffer from audible wow and flutter. Some common causes are: worn or dirty rotating parts (flutter), a deformed record-player idler wheel (wow), high internal friction in a cartridge (wow and flutter), or an off-center disc hole (wow). The long, steady tones of a piano or other instrument that has no vibrato are the best detection material.

Wow and flutter measurements are made using a recorded test tone of about 3,000 Hz, a frequency at which the ear is very sensitive to changes in pitch. What is measured is the amount of deviation from the test frequency introduced by the player or recorder, expressed as a percentage of the test frequency. For example, 0.1 per cent flutter with a 3,000-Hz test tone means a cyclical deviation of 0.03 Hz. Straightforward as this may seem, the correlation between the numbers and the audible effects is not too well established. Audibility also depends on both the frequency of the test tone and/or program material and the rate of fluctuation, and these effects can only be determined statistically through experiments with volunteer listeners. Nevertheless, as in rumble measurements, a few "weighting" systems have emerged that try to cope with the variables. Most prominent are the DIN (German National Institute) system and the more recent IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) standard. Similar as these are, there exist differences between them that are probably the result of different hearing sensitivities of individuals. In testing, STEREO REVIEW keeps to an unweighted system of wow-and-flutter evaluation in which 0.15 per cent speed irregularity or less has usually proved audibly acceptable, with 0.2 per cent being "borderline." Unfortunately, what is "acceptable" to one individual may not be equally acceptable to all.
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Our $1319 Marantz stereo component system for example includes:

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TECHNICAL TALK
By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

• TESTING STEREO HEADPHONES: Headphones, like loudspeakers, have the task of converting electrical signals to acoustic energy. It is not surprising, therefore, that somewhat similar laboratory test and evaluation techniques are used for both. Loudspeaker response is measured in an artificial environment, either anechoic or reverberant; headphones are usually tested with a coupler (it was designed by the American National Standards Institute—ANSI, formerly ASA), which may be thought of as an artificial ear.

Just as the laboratory environment for speaker tests differs greatly from that of a normal listening room, the ANSI coupler provides a poor simulation of even a hypothetical “average” human ear, let alone that of any given individual. Primarily designed for testing and rating communications and telephone headsets, it provides reasonably valid results only from 300 to 5,000 Hz, which is far short of the range encompassed by any modern stereo headphone costing more than about $6.

Frequency-response and distortion measurements made with some type of wide-band artificial ear can be useful for comparing headphone performance, in the same way that loudspeaker measurements can aid in the evaluating process. In both cases, they are no substitute for critical listening, since our understanding of the relationship between measurements and the subjective reaction of the human listener is sketchy at best. Unfortunately, for headphone testing we know of no technique for instantaneous comparison between headphone sound and the original program analogous to the simulated “live-vs.-recorded” technique we use for loudspeaker testing.

In the past, we have rarely presented test reports on stereo phones. Part of our reluctance, quite frankly, was caused by the difficulty of interpreting our measurements. In the absence of any reliable reference standard or agreed-upon test technique for wide-range headphones, we felt that the evaluation would be little more than a personal listening test. However, we finally embarked on a large-scale test of some thirty headphones in the hope that we could in the process develop test techniques that would correlate with our listening comparisons to provide a relatively solid basis for our conclusions. We believe we have achieved our goal and that the test reports in the survey of representative headphones for this issue present a reasonably valid picture of the levels of stereo-headphone performance being offered today.

For acoustic measurements we used a nonstandard, home-made coupler. It consisted of a piece of %4-inch plywood with a calibrated microphone mounted flush with its surface. The earpiece under test was centered over the microphone, with a one-pound weight pressing it to the board. The test signal, for frequency-response measurements, came from a power amplifier driven from the swept oscillator of our General Radio response plotter; the microphone output was connected directly to the synchronized chart recorder. The tone-burst response over the full audio range of each phone was examined on an oscilloscope.

We then drove each phone with a 1,000-Hz test signal until the test microphone’s output had 1 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD; this was usually second-harmonic) and noted the drive voltage at which this occurred. The calibrated microphone output voltage enabled us to establish the actual acoustic sound-pressure level (SPL) at the 1 per cent distortion point. In a few cases, the phone under test had a severe response irregularity at 1,000 Hz, so we used a 400-Hz signal for the distortion test. Several of the phones had more than 1 per cent THD at any level sufficient to drive our distortion analyzer, and could not be rated in this part of the test. Even in these cases, however, the
phones were not ruled out for serious high-fidelity listening, since the distortion was typically no more than 1.5 to 2 per cent up to a rather high SPL.

The sensitivity—how much audio power is required for a given SPL (we used 100 dB as a reference level)—was tested with an octave of random noise centered at 1,000 Hz, to avoid problems with narrow-band response irregularities in the headphones. The impedance of the headphones was measured by driving them from a high-impedance source and plotting the voltage across the phones on the chart recorder. Substituting precision resistors for the phones then provided calibration points on our charts.

Acoustic isolation—the degree to which a phone’s ear seal excludes external noises (and, generally, prevents the headphone sound from reaching others in the room)—was measured with a “white-noise” signal from a loudspeaker directed at the artificial ear. The drop in microphone output when the earpiece was placed over it was a measure of the isolation. This was later supplemented by listening tests, in which we judged the relative audible effectiveness of the ear seals. Interestingly, this second test proved to be a much more satisfactory method, since the relative audibility of energy passing through the ear seals is a function of frequency, and our measurements did not employ weighting that could have correlated with ear response.

The final test, of course, involved listening to the phones, and comparing them in pairs when this seemed advisable. One model—the Koss ESP-9—performed so outstandingly in our tests that we compared each of the others against it to estimate the practical significance of some of their response irregularities (the ESP-9 had a nearly ideal toneburst and frequency response).

The full story of the headphone tests is presented elsewhere in this issue. Reviewing the entire program, we feel confident that the strengths and weaknesses of the various models have been fairly and accurately presented. Since all phones, like loudspeakers, have their individual imperfections, it would be foolhardy to try to apply any overall ratings of quality. As with speakers, there will be many cases where your choice will differ from ours. This is not to say that some phones are not both subjectively and objectively better than others. But when you are trying to choose among a variety of imperfections occurring in a variety of areas, taste certainly plays a part. Fortunately, if our test group is at all typical of the present offerings of headphone manufacturers, the odds are heavily in favor of your getting a satisfactory phone.

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EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS
By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Audio Dynamics ADC-XLM Phono Cartridge

- The new ADC-XLM cartridge is offered as an improved version of the ADC 10E Mk IV, which we found to be outstanding in a previous test (STEREO REVIEW, December 1971). The XLM is externally quite different, and the stylus assemblies of the two cartridges are not interchangeable. In addition to having a low-mass stylus (the “LM” stands for “low mass”), the ADC-XLM cartridge weighs significantly less than the 10E Mk IV. This gives it an additional tracking advantage when playing warped records.

Like the other ADC cartridges, the XLM uses the inducted-magnet principle. Its stylus has a rated compliance of $50 \times 10^{-6}$ cm per dyne. The nominal tracking force is 0.6 gram, with a useful range of 0.4 to 1 gram. The stylus tip is elliptical, with radii of 0.3 and 0.7 mil. The coils of the ADC-XLM have a low winding inductance (the electrical equivalent of mass) and, as a result, the cartridge's overall frequency response is relatively unaffected by differences in cable and preamplifier input capacitance. Price: $50. A similar cartridge, the ADC-VLM ($40), uses the identical body design, but has a less compliant stylus designed to track at forces above 1 gram.

- Laboratory Measurements. The ADC-XLM was able to track high-velocity test records at low and middle frequencies at the same forces we used with the 10E Mk IV (0.4 and 0.6 gram, respectively). No other cartridge we have tested has matched this achievement. We used 0.6 gram throughout our other tests.

The XLM output was about 3 millivolts for a 3.54 cm/sec (centimeters per second) recorded velocity, which was slightly lower than that of the 10E Mk IV. The frequency response with the CBS STR-100 test record showed less than ±1.5 dB variation up to 20,000 Hz, using a standard 47,000-ohm load and 235 pf (picofarads) of input capacitance. Although we had found the 10E Mk IV quite sensitive to load capacitance, the XLM was almost immune. Increasing the capacitance to 470 pf increased the output in the 6,000 to 20,000-Hz range by a decibel or less, with no effect on the overall response limits. The channel separation was better than 25 dB up to about 6,000 Hz, falling gradually to between 10 and 15 dB.

(Continued on page 32)
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The LR-440 has a built-in SQ Decoder. We've chosen SQ because it offers the widest, most popular catalog of artists and titles. Because it offers full 4-channel realism, without sacrificing compatibility—no special turntables or cartridges are needed. And, because the SQ record does not compromise playing time—it plays the same length of time as a conventional stereo disc. Our engineers appreciate technical excellence, and the LR-440's SQ Decoder is a reflection of that appreciation.

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CIRCLE NO. 35 ON READER SERVICE CARD
dB in the 10,000 to 20,000-Hz octave. We used the CBS STR-120 record to measure the cartridge response to 50,000 Hz, and found that some 10 dB of separation was maintained all the way to 35,000 Hz, where the crosstalk fell below the noise level. The 1,000-Hz square-wave response showed some overshoot and about two cycles of ringing at about 20,000 Hz. The cartridge had very good shielding against induced hum.

The 1M distortion measurements were very similar to those we made on the 10E Mk IV. At 0.6 gram, the distortion was low (under 1.5 per cent) for 14.3 cm/sec and lower velocities; the distortion increased rapidly above 18 cm/sec. We increased the force to the allowable maximum of 1 gram, which reduced the distortion to a very low 2.5 per cent at the very high velocity of 27.1 cm/sec.

In the “trackability” test, the ADC-XLM was essentially identical to the 10E Mk IV, delivering perfect reproduction of the Shure “Audio Obstacle Course” record at 0.75 gram. At 0.6 gram, the only audible mistracking occurred on the highest level of the bass-drum band. (In these listening tests, we disregarded the high-level orchestral bells, since no cartridge we know of can track them!).

**Comment.** The ADC-XLM is an excellent example of how an outstanding cartridge can be further refined in the important areas of reduced cartridge mass and winding inductance. This is the only cartridge we have seen that is really capable of tracking almost all stereo discs at 0.4 gram when installed in a good tone arm. (We obtained satisfactory results with the Shure SME 3012 and the Empire 980 arms; doubtless there are others also suitable for this low force.) Nevertheless, we felt more comfortable with a tracking force of about 0.7 gram, which not only gives absolute assurance that the cartridge will track any recorded velocity it is likely to encounter, but makes the arm somewhat easier to handle. As we commented in our review of the 10E Mk IV (and it applies equally well to the XLM), this would be a very hard cartridge to surpass at any price. At $50, it seems to be in a class by itself.

For more information, circle 105 on reader service card

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**BSR McDonald 810X Automatic Turntable**

The BSR McDonald 810X “Total Turntable” package consists of a BSR 810 automatic turntable installed on a wooden base, fitted with a Shure M91E cartridge, and supplied with a tinted plastic dust cover. The BSR 810 turntable has a 12-inch cast-aluminum balanced platter, whose weight is specified at 7 pounds. It is driven by a synchronous induction motor, capable of operation from 100 to 130-volt or 200 to 260-volt power lines. This, plus the interchangeable motor-shaft bushings supplied to adapt the unit to either 50- or 60-Hz power sources, makes the 810 ideal for those who need a machine that will work both in the United States and overseas.

The 810 is a two-speed (33⅓ and 45 rpm) turntable, with a rocker-type mechanical switch for speed change. Surrounding the speed-selector switch is a ring that varies the speed approximately ±3 per cent. A stroboscope disc forms a center insert for the ribbed rubber mat. The tone arm, which is an aluminum tube of square cross-section, is mounted on dual gimbal pivots, with four miniature ball-bearing assemblies for low friction. At the rear end of the arm there is a counterweight adjustable by a knob on its side. Once the arm is balanced using the counterweight, any tracking force from 0 to 6 grams can be dialed by turning a calibrated scale on one of the gimbal pivot rings.

The arm is relatively long—8½ inches from pivot to stylus—and has removable plastic phono-cartridge slide to simplify installation and cartridge inspection. The stylus overhang can be adjusted for minimum lateral tracking error, using a removable index post on the motorboard as a guide for positioning the cartridge. The post is then replaced by a soft brush that removes dust from the stylus each time the arm returns to the rest. The finger lift on the arm is well shaped for easy handling.

The BSR 810 has an unusually complete array of operating controls and adjustments, yet is simple to use. In either automatic or single-play operation, pressing one of three buttons (7, 10, or 12 inches) initiates the playing cycle and indexes the arm for the selected record size. A rotary knob (it looks like one of the pushbuttons) selects single-play or automatic mode. Two interchangeable spindles are supplied: a short single-play spindle that ro-

(Continued on page 34)
Silent Partners

If you’re involved in the business of tape recording either professionally or simply for the love of it, we have an interesting proposition for you.

A couple of silent partners, who will work day and night, assure excellent results, let you maintain full control and be unfailingly reliable.

They’re the new Revox/Dolby B tape recorder and the Beyer DT 480 headphones. And both of them come with excellent credentials.

The Revox/Dolby B is the most recent version of the critically acclaimed Revox A77, a machine which was described by the Stereophile magazine as, “Unquestionably the best tape recorder we have ever tested.”

Listening to tapes made on the new Revox with its built-in Dolby Noise Reduction system is a revelatory experience. Tape hiss is virtually nonexistent. The music seems to emerge from a background of velvety silence. And at 3¼ i.p.s. the absence of extraneous noise is truly startling.

As for the Beyer DT 480 headphones, they are in a class by themselves. Their superb frequency response and enormous dynamic range permit you to critically monitor and evaluate recording quality and balance. Add featherweight comfort and an ingenious “ear seal” that effectively screens out ambient noise and you begin to understand why a modified version of the DT 480 was chosen as the European Din Standard in headphones.

Together or separately, our remarkable silent partners could open your ears to recording possibilities you never knew existed.

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We think once you’ve met them, you’ll wonder how you ever did without them.

For additional information and complete technical specifications, write: Revox Corporation, 155 Michael Drive, Syosset, New York 11791.


JULY 1972
tates with the turntable, and an automatic spindle that simply drops into the turntable center hole. It supports (and drops, quite gently) a stack of up to six records of the same size and speed. The automatic spindle must be lifted out to remove records from the turntable.

In the single-play mode, the 810 can also be used manually. Pressing the manual button starts the turntable rotating, and the pickup can be lowered to the record either manually or with the cueing system. The cueing action is smooth and damped during lift as well as descent. The BSR 810 has a unique, effective automatic arm lock. A few seconds after the arm returns to its rest, it is automatically locked in place to prevent accidental damage to the stylus or a record. Moving the cueing lever disengages the lock, as does pressing one of the start buttons.

When the single-play spindle is inserted and the mode switch set to auto, the 810 will repeat a record indefinitely. The stop button must be used to return the arm to its rest and shut off the motor. In automatic operation, pressing stop will drop the next record (if there is one on the spindle) and return the pickup to the rest before shutting off the motor. Any record in a stack can be rejected by pressing the starting button.

The arm-indexing position is controlled by a knob on the motorboard instead of the usual screwdriver adjustment. This can be a convenience when using records having different lead-in groove widths. Anti-skating correction is applied by a calibrated knob, with separate scales for conical and elliptical stylus. The BSR 810X's dimensions are 17½ inches wide, 12½ inches deep, and 9½ inches high (with dust cover in place). It weighs 22 lbs.

The BSR 810 automatic turntable alone is available for $149.50. The 810X Total Turntable package comes with a tinted plastic dust cover and is already mounted on a handsome walnut base that has a storage compartment for unused record spindles and other accessories. The Shure M91E cartridge is installed and correctly positioned. The normal retail price for these components is about $240, but the 810X package can be purchased for less than $190.

**Laboratory Measurements.** The turntable rotated at exact speed with the vernier control at its center setting, and the vernier adjustment range was ±3.2 per cent. Speed was unaffected by a line voltage change of 95 to 140 volts. The wow and flutter were very low—respectively 0.03 and 0.045 per cent at 33⅓ rpm, and 0.08 and 0.04 per cent at 45 rpm. The unweighted rumble was −31 dB including both vertical and lateral components, and −36.5 dB with vertical rumble canceled out by paralleling the two cartridge channels. With the CBS RRLI weighting (which correlates with the relative audibility of different rumble frequencies), the rumble was −54 dB. It was predominantly 30 Hz, the motor-revolution rate. This low rumble is typical of other top-grade turntables, both single-play and automatic, that we have recently tested.

The arm tracking-force dial calibration was very close at 1 gram (the actual force was 1.05 grams), but at higher settings the true force was 10 to 12 per cent higher than indicated. There was only a 0.05-gram decrease in force (at 1 gram) when playing the top record of a six-record stack. The arm friction, as indicated by the freedom with which the arm floated when balanced, was very low.

The tracking error was less than 0.6 degree per inch of radius over the entire record, and was typically under 0.4 degree per inch. These are normal (and negligible) errors for a properly designed arm of this length. The anti-skating compensation was slightly lower than required when its dial was set to agree with the 1-gram tracking force we used. Exact compensation required a setting of 1.3 grams. This difference is so slight that it can safely be ignored.

The cueing system worked very smoothly, with negligible outward drift (less than one groove) of the pickup during descent. The change cycle required 13½ seconds at 33⅓ rpm and 10 seconds at 45 rpm—times typical of most automatic turntables.

**Comment.** The BSR 810X, undeniably a well-constructed and attractively styled record player, was also a very easy one to operate. The controls had a smooth, positive feel and action. The Shure M91E cartridge (which we tested in July 1969) is an ideal choice for the low-friction arm of the 810 turntable, and will track any record at 1 gram. Like the 810X, the Shure cartridge ranks with the very best in overall quality. It would be difficult to match the overall performance, flexibility, and convenience of the Total Turntable package with user-assembled components, at its price. Anyone who has installed his own cartridge and made the necessary positioning adjustments will appreciate the convenience of buying a quality "ready-to-play" unit.

For more information, circle 106 on reader service card.

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**Pioneer SX-727 AM/Stereo FM Receiver**

Pioneer's moderately priced SX-727 has a degree of operating flexibility and electrical performance previous-
“Our summer drink secret? Pre-chill the glasses in the freezer. And make every drink with the perfect martini gin, Seagram’s Extra Dry.”

Seagram’s Extra Dry. The Perfect Martini Gin. Perfect all ways.
The SX-727's three pairs of speaker outputs accept the special plug-in connectors supplied with the receiver. One of these is shown in place, without the speaker leads attached.

was flat within ±0.5 dB from 30 to 11,500 Hz; it was down 2.6 dB at 15,000 Hz. The AM tuner was unexceptional in quality, with restricted high-frequency response that was down 6 dB at 2,300 Hz.

The audio section of the SX-727 easily surpassed its ratings in every respect. The output clipped at almost 60 watts per channel (continuous) into 4 ohms, 44 watts into 8 ohms, and 25.4 watts into 16 ohms. Harmonic and intermodulation (1M) distortion were very low. HD was under 0.05 per cent at most frequencies and power levels up to 40 watts per channel into 8 ohms, and reaching a maximum of 0.2 per cent at 20,000 Hz and 40 watts output. For a 1,000-Hz test signal, the distortion was under 0.03 per cent from less than 1 watt to slightly over 40 watts (it was below the noise level at power outputs much below 1 watt). The IM distortion remained under 0.1 per cent at all power outputs from 45 watts to 15 milliwatts, and reached 0.3 per cent only at the very low minimum measurable level of 1.5 milliwatts. This indicates a virtually complete absence of "crossover distortion," which means that in this area the unit is comparable to the finest amplifiers we have tested.

The phono gain was high (1.15 millivolts for a 10-watt output), yet the overload level was 100 millivolts—an excellent safety margin. Noise levels were very low: −80 dB on aux and −78 dB on the phono inputs, referred to a 10-watt output. The audio tone-control characteristics were conventional, with a moderate boost and cut range at low frequencies and somewhat less at high frequencies. The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies at volume-control settings of −20 dB or less. The filters had mildly effective 6-dB-per-octave slopes, with the −3-dB points at 60 and 5,000 Hz. RIAA equalization was very accurate—with in ±0.8 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. The microphone frequency response was flat from 20 to about 4,000 Hz, falling off slightly to −3 dB at 15,000 Hz. This is considerably beyond the frequency range of any microphone likely to be used with the unit.

Comment. When we examined the features and tested the performance of the Pioneer SX-727, it was clear that in its flexibility and in many areas of its measured performance it is somewhat better than much of the competition at its price level. Perhaps no one of the SX-727’s characteristics gives it a clear advantage over any other receiver, but taken in the aggregate they define a really superb product.

In use tests, everything worked smoothly and exactly as intended. The muting was noise- and thump-free, and its threshold of about 4 microvolts means that any station strong enough to un-mute the receiver will be heard free of distortion and noise. With a combination of tasteful styling and top-notch performance, the SX-727 speaks well for the new line of Pioneer receivers.

For more information, circle 107 on reader service card

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On November 18, 1971, a capacity audience of three thousand people filled the Jubilee Auditorium in Edmonton, Canada to experience the music of Procol Harum live in concert with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and the Da Camera Singers. It was recorded in its entirety. From the tapping of the baton at the opening of "Conquistador" to the cries of the seagulls in "A Salty Dog," all the dynamics and exuberance of that night, captured forever, "Procol Harum Live in Concert with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra." On A&M Records.

It took a 77-man group and Procol Harum to record this album.
“Our summer drink secret? Pre-chill the glasses in the freezer. And make every drink with the perfect martini gin, Seagram’s Extra Dry.”
The FM tuning-dial scale has linear calibration intervals, and there are two tuning meters: zero-center for FM, and signal-strength for FM and AM.

The SX-727's array of operating features is impressive. The power switch also selects one of three pairs of speakers, or two combinations of two pairs simultaneously. Like other Pioneer receivers, the SX-727 uses convenient plugs to which the speaker wires are connected before they are plugged into the rear of the receiver. Next to the speaker selector is the phone jack, followed by the bass and treble tone controls, of which there are two each, concentrically mounted for separate adjustment of each channel. They are detented, with five positions of both boost and cut plus a center "off" position for flat response. Two pushbuttons control the low- and high-cut filters.

In the center of the control lineup is the balance control. At its right are the FM interstation-noise muting and audio-muting pushbuttons (the audio-mute button drops the volume by 20 dB for temporary listening interruptions). Next is the volume control, followed by the loudness-compensation and stereo/mono pushbuttons. Two others control tape-monitoring for two tape recorders. With these buttons one can also dub from one recorder to the other, monitoring from the playback amplifiers of the second recorder.

The input-selector knob has positions for AM, FM MONO, FM AUTO (automatic stereo/mono switching), two magnetic-phono cartridges, a microphone, and a high-level AUX source. The front-panel microphone jack accepts a single mono microphone, the signal from which is fed into both channels. The microphone signal is present at the tape-output jacks, but there is no independent control of microphone level.

In the rear are the normal inputs and outputs, including FM and AM antenna terminals (there is also the usual pivoted AM ferrite-rod antenna) and three a.c. convenience outlets, one of which is switched. The preamplifier outputs and main amplifier inputs are brought out to separate jacks, normally joined by jumper plugs. This facility can be used to connect external electronic-crossover networks, equalizers, and similar accessories. The TAPE 1 connectors are paralleled by a DIN socket. The TAPE 2 inputs and outputs can be used for connections to and from an external quadrasonic decoder and separate stereo amplifier to convert the system to four-channel operation. The Pioneer SX-727 is supplied complete with a walnut-finish wooden cabinet. Price: $349.95.

Laboratory Measurements. We measured the IHF sensitivity of the SX-727's FM tuner at 2 microvolts. A 50-dB signal-to-noise ratio was achieved with only a 2.5-microvolt input, and the ultimate quieting was 74 dB (better than the rated 70 dB). These figures indicate that the Pioneer will provide more listenable stations than other FM receivers that may have slightly better sensitivity, but without the Pioneer's very steep limiting curve. The image rejection and alternate-channel selectivity were also exceptionally good: 95 dB and 90 dB, respectively—both considerably better than Pioneer's ratings. The AM rejection was 57 dB, and the capture ratio was a good 1.6 dB. The stereo FM separation was among the best we have measured, exceeding 40 dB from 300 to 2,000 Hz; it was no lower than 19 dB at the extremes of 30 and 15,000 Hz. The FM frequency response (Continued on page 38)
You don’t get into the Smithsonian Institute on hearsay.

When we invented the stereophone, we never dreamed our invention would be mentioned in the same breath with Thomas Edison’s Phonograph and Alexander Graham Bell’s Telephone.

The Sound of Koss has been music to millions of ears since we invented the Stereophone. But the honor of being accepted by the Smithsonian Institution was music to our ears... and a little mind boggling.

When your Stereophones are placed side by side with the great inventions of Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell, it’s kind of hard not to come away redefined.

Memorable firsts
The dedication of a selection of early and contemporary Koss Stereophones into the Smithsonian’s electrical science collection brought back a lot of memories. The first Stereophone, the Koss SP-3. The first (and now patented) Self-Energizing Electrostatic Stereophones. The first driver designed exclusively for Stereophones.

The world’s finest Stereophones
Koss Stereophones have come a long way since our first Stereophone.

Our PRO-4AA—on display in the “Design is...” exhibit at the Smithsonian’s new Renwick Gallery—offers a response 2-full octaves beyond other dynamics on the market. Our Koss ESP-9 Electrostatic Stereophone provides a distortion-free, wide-range frequency response never before possible in headphones... flat ± 2 db monitoring over the entire audible spectrum of 10 octaves. Our Koss ESP-6 Electrostatic Stereophone is the world’s only patented self-contained, self-energized Stereophone. And our K 2 + 2 Quadrafone was the first and is the only 4-channel headphone on the market.

The extra Sound of Koss
Take your favorite tape or record to your Hi-Fi Dealer and hear what a difference the Sound of Koss can make. You’ll hear everything you’ve heard before, only better. Crystal clear highs. Rich, deep bass. And you’ll hear things that you didn’t even know were in your tapes or records. In fact, listening to your music thru Koss Stereophones is like getting a whole new music library.

Hearing is believing
The Sound of Koss is an institution with audiophiles. But hearsay will never do it justice. You’ve got to hear it to believe it. So take a record or tape to your Hi-Fi Dealer or Department Store, and hear why the Sound of Koss is worth hearing... from $15.95 to $150. Write for our 16-page color catalog, c/o Virginia Lamm, Dept. SR-172. It’s the last word in Stereophones. Or visit us at the Smithsonian.
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"Procol Harum Live in Concert with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra." On A&M Records

It took a 77-man group and Procol Harum to record this album.
Memorex Chromium Dioxide Tape shatters an old theory.

The theory: Because cassette tape has a smaller surface and plays at a slower speed, it can't perform as well as open reel tape.

An old theory just went kaput. Memorex Chromium Dioxide is the first cassette tape that can seriously stand up to open reel tape performance.

That's because Chromium Dioxide is a totally different kind of tape. Not just "energized" iron oxide tape. But a cassette tape uniquely suited for slow speed operation.

It's more sensitive. More responsive.

Try Memorex Chromium Dioxide tape on any CrO₂ equipped recorder. Compare it to open reel.

You'll hear.
GOING ON RECORD
By JAMES GOODFRIEND
Music Editor

SONGS AND WALTZES

It was certainly more than twenty years ago—how much more, I really can't remember—that the late Olin Downes, then chief music critic of the New York Times, urged composers and all those interested in a serious American music to make a deep and thorough study of the American popular song. How many composers followed that advice I am not prepared to say. But so far as published musicological and analytical material is concerned, nothing, until now, has come to my attention. With all the doctoral theses on musical subjects assigned and written in this country, one would think that someone, somewhere, would have done work in this field, and that a knowledgeable publisher would have sensed the importance of such a study and made it available to a broad public. But, except for compilations of titles and dates, leading ladies and record numbers, no such thing happened; and it has fallen to the lot of a professional composer and songwriter to take the time from his creative work to give us an investigation of the work of his colleagues.

There is something both sad and ironic in the fact that this book comes at a time when the American popular song, as it has been known for forty or fifty years, is practically a dead art form. There are new songs today, and some fine ones among them, but they are of a different sort entirely. White Rabbit and You've Got a Friend are really no closer to Time on My Hands than they are to Purcell's Bess of Bedlam.

Alec Wilder's American Popular Song, The Great Innovators 1900-1950, edited and with an introduction by James T. Maher (Oxford University Press, 1972, $15.00), is the first book I have seen that actually gets into the meat of popular song. It is a technical book in the sense that it talks about melody, harmony, and rhythm instead of offering anecdotes and biography, and Wilder is certainly not above discussing such matters in specific instances and in specifically musical terms.

But the fact that the book is technical should not faze even the general reader. For the difference between reading an analytic criticism of Stardust and one of Mozart's "Praha" Symphony is not only that one knows the former cold and may not have that sort of familiarity with the latter, but that one can hold the whole of the first easily in one's head, understand references to specific melodic and harmonic points through reference to the words, and, in short, can follow the analysis easily without ever having to go to the piano.

Furthermore, the reader should not get the idea that what Wilder has accomplished here is an objective academic exercise of the sort that tabulates intervals and counts commas. It is, rather, a personal, informal affair, with the author's biases out in the open and his enthusiasms sparkingly visible. It is also delightfully written. It is, in fact, much like spending a few hours in Wilder's company talking about popular songs, and I can think of few pleasanter ways to spend a few hours.

The book is full of intriguing observations, such as this one on Gershwin: "The constant, and characteristic, repeated note found throughout Gershwin's songs is a basic attestation of this aggressiveness. I believe that his most popular melodies contain this drive, while those I consider to be more moving, and more interesting musically, are, for the most part, his less commercially successful, more graceful, delicate melodies." And this one on Rodgers' Blue Room: "In it is the first instance of a Rodgers stylistic device which he continued to use throughout his career, that of returning to a series of notes, usually two, while building a design with other notes. . . . Here he keeps returning to B and A while ascending from D to E to F-sharp, to G and A."

(Continued on page 42)
Sony's new chromium dioxide cassette tape is hungrier for high frequencies.

Sony chromium dioxide CRO-60 tape will record up to 50% more volume before you encounter distortion on playback. CRO-60 is hungrier than other tapes for high frequencies. This means more recorded sound than standard cassette tapes before distortion sets in.

What you hear.
Far less distortion, a smoother frequency response, and a greater dynamic range than standard tape. Every aspect of the sound, especially the higher ranges, comes through with sparkling fidelity.

Sony CRO-60 gets it all together from bottom bass lows to high howlin' highs. And everything in between.

A Sony tape for every purpose.
The new Sony CRO-60 cassette tape becomes a member of a highly advanced line of tapes for every recording requirement.

In addition to standard open reel, cassette, and 8-track cartridge tapes, Sony also offers the finest in high performance tape: SLH-180 Low-Noise High Output tape on 7" and 10½" reels, plus Ultra-High Fidelity Cassettes.

These high-performance tape configurations take advantage of the added performance of today’s highly sophisticated recorders by providing wider dynamic range, greatly improved signal-to-noise ratio, extended frequency response, and reduced tape hiss.

How's your appetite?
Now if your appetite has been whetted and you’re hungry for more information or a demonstration of CRO-60 or any other Sony tapes, get on down to your nearest Sony/Superscope dealer (he’s listed in the yellow pages) and get an earful.
Playing records with some cartridges is like listening to Isaac Stern play half a violin.

In the important upper audio frequencies, some cartridges suffer as much as a 50% loss in music power.

So, there's a lack of definition in the reproduction of violins, oboes, pianos, and other instruments which depend on the overtones and harmonics in the upper frequencies for a complete tonal picture.

The Pickering XV-15 cartridge delivers 100% Music Power 100% of the time. Which is why we call it "The 100% Music Power Cartridge." At 100% Music Power, all the instruments are distinct and clear, because Pickering XV-15's have no music-robbing output drop anywhere in the audio spectrum.

Pickering XV-15 stereo cartridges are priced from $29.95 to $65.00, and there's one to fit anything you play records with. For more information write: Pickering & Co., Inc., Dept. W, 101 Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, L.I., N.Y. 11803.

All Pickering cartridges are designed for use with all 2 and 4-channel matrix derived compatible systems.

Both of these comments are indicative of one of the things Mr. Wilder is trying to accomplish in this book: the defining of the *stylistic* elements that characterize the songs of the major writers. It isn't an easy task, but he has made an extraordinarily successful pioneering effort, and in so doing he has thrown new light on the *craft* of song writing, the construction of a melody through patterned repetition, as opposed to the "it came to me in a flash" description of the birth of a tune. Another of his objectives has been to set up some standards of quality in evaluating popular music. This is an even harder thing to do than the first. But again, he has given us an excellent start on it. "There are three levels of sophistication in the music of American popular songs: theater songs, film songs, and Tin Pan Alley songs, reading downward in that order." That is a good way to begin, and it is how Mr. Wilder begins. Sometimes the evaluative comments come out in colorful terms. In referring to notes in the second and third measures of Rodgers' *You Are Too Beautiful*, he writes, "In fact, though they're the hallmark of the song, those two notes are the only ones I find bearing the smell of cigar smoke." And he is completely aware of one of the peculiar pitfalls of popular music criticism. "I sometimes had to steel myself," he writes, "to maintain detachment, mistaking memories evoked by certain songs for their intrinsic quality." Wise man.

Without further belaboring the matter, let me simply say that I consider this to be a significant and delightful book, a joy to agree with and to disagree with, and above all, to learn from.

**Hans Fantel**'s *The Waltz* (Kings: Johann Strauss, Father and Son, and Their Romantic (William Morrow, $6.95), is also about popular music—but of another world. And it is not so much Fantel's object to describe that music as it is to describe that world. To say that the book is entertaining—even though it is—would be to put the wrong light on things. Rather, it is fascinating, a brooding study of two really far from happy men and their intrinsically far from joyous milieu, one that gives us, instead of the *joie de vivre* of the waltz, its Weltenschmerz and its psychology. "It is music that is always 'in love' but never erotic," Fantel writes. "It is tender but shy, and in tune with that Catholic fear of women that, in its happier manifestations, changes lust to adoration. In the embrace of the waltz which is not an embrace, the Victorian dualism of body and spirit is both affirmed and resolved."

Fantel's book is as personal as Wilder's, and unlike in every other respect save that of the richness of its many flavors. It is another book to be devoured. *Bon appétit!*
and take to your Primus™ audio tape dealer

Your Primus Audio Tape Dealer is authorized to honor this Special Get Acquainted Coupon for a limited time only. It is his way of providing you with an opportunity to evaluate a premium quality tape at unusually low prices.

Just fill out the coupon and take it (one to a customer) to your local audio tape dealer. If your local dealer does not yet stock Primus, complete the coupon and mail directly to us. This way you can still partake in this Get Acquainted Offer.

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Quality you can see. Check its surface for flaking and straight fall-off against your present tape...you'll quickly see the quality difference. You'll also get snap-lid plastic box, index calendars, library labels and in cassettes, extra shipping labels.

Quality you can feel. The soft feel of Primus tape means fine head-to-tape compliance. Will not twist, cup or cinch. Little or no oxide shed on your recorder head.

Quality you can hear. High signal-to-noise ratio... Primus favors an extended frequency range (20 hz to beyond 22,000 hz). Outstanding performance of Primus Tape is backed by a money-back guarantee.
The Dual 1219.

Still the favorite of the purist who insists upon a full-size professional turntable.

Ever since its introduction two years ago, the 1219 has been widely acclaimed and accepted as the "no-compromise" automatic turntable. Today, it is still the favorite of the more serious music lovers, those purists who are never quite satisfied unless every component in their system is "state-of-the-art."

From years of listening, these record lovers know that on a Dual, any Dual, records are preserved indefinitely and continue to sound as good as new no matter how often played. Yet over the years, they have purchased more "high-end" Duals than any other model. Readers of this magazine, for example, have purchased more 1219's than any other turntable at any price. That is quite a tribute for a turntable that sells for $185.00.

The reasons for the 1219's continued popularity vary from purist to purist. To many, it's the tonearm, centered and balanced within the two concentric rings of a gyroscopic gimbal. With horizontal bearing friction less than fifteen thousandths of a gram. When a cartridge actually arrives that can track at a quarter of a gram, this tonearm will do it full justice.

To others, the 1219's platter is important. It's a full-size 12 inches in diameter, cast in one piece non-magnetic zinc alloy, and individually dynamically balanced. To drive this massive seven pound platter, there is a powerful continuous-pole motor that brings it up to full speed in less than half a revolution. Then the motor's synchronous element takes over to hold speed at absolute constancy.

We find that most people interested in a turntable of the 1219's caliber use it primarily in its single-play mode. So the tonearm was specifically engineered to perform precisely as a manual tonearm: parallel to the record instead of tilting down. This is accomplished by the Mode Selector which lowers the entire tonearm base for the single-play mode. And raises it for the multiple-play mode.

To the purist, all of the 1219's many precision features are important. But in the end he buys this Dual for the same reason a non-purist buys it, for its uncompromised performance and absolute reliability.

If you'd like to know what the independent test labs say about the 1219, we'll send you complete reprints of their reports. Plus a reprint of an article from this magazine that tells you what to look for in record playing equipment.

Better yet, just pay a visit to your franchised United Audio dealer and ask him for a demonstration.
ALEXANDER S C R I A B I N ’ s friend and fellow musician Leonid Sabaniev has reported that Scriabin once remarked to him: “To be regarded merely as a musician would be the worst fate that could befall me. . . . It would be terrible to remain nothing more than a composer of sonatas and symphonies.” To Scriabin, the music he composed represented merely the outward artistic expression of the paramount truths of his existence: his religious and philosophic beliefs.

But this personal credo was, to a considerable extent, confused and confusing. From Nietzsche he took such aspects of the Übermensch (Superman) concept as glorification of the ego; from Karl Marx he learned about the theory of socialism and embraced certain of its principles, though in his own life he expected complete leisure for his dreaming, made possible by constant financial patronage; and from the mystical religions of the Orient he developed his fanciful notion of building a temple in India to be dedicated to ultimate beauty, in which the arts would be united on an exalted plane of unbridled sensuous expression. His highly chromatic harmonies were meant to this end, and his Poem of Ecstasy, Divine Poem, and Prometheus are musical mosaics that call for "corresponding" colors and perfumes to be utilized in their performance if the audience is to receive the full sensuous impact of their message.

In 1903, when Scriabin was thirty-one, he resigned from the faculty of the Moscow Conservatory in order to devote himself to creative work. In the dozen remaining years of his life he managed to combine composition and performance, and to live the life of a man of unusual creative talents. In 1906 he toured America, giving recitals in New York, Chicago, and Detroit; in the summers of 1910 and 1911 he traveled up and down the Volga River as soloist with an orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky; and in the spring of 1914 he paid a visit to England.

The Poem of Ecstasy, according to the British Scriabin expert Eaglefield Hull, was begun in 1905 at a villa near Genoa, Italy, where the composer had secluded himself with Tatiana Schlozer, the companion for whom he had recently left his wife. He completed the score in Switzerland in 1907. The two themes of the prologue have been labeled "Striving after the Ideal" and "Awakening of the Soul." The first subject of the sonata-form middle section has been seen as symbolic of the soaring flight of the spirit; the next one apparently typifies "Human Love," and the following one summons the Will to rise. The other themes return at the end, and the work ends in a blaze of orchestral color.

Hull has written:

The basic idea of this, the fourth chief orchestral work of Scriabin, is the Ecstasy of unhampered action, the Joy in Creative Activity. . . . We have then in this imposing symphonic creation a picture of wonderful beauty, full of rich themes, well developed and combined, with masterly counterpoint and modern harmony of a hue of which the like has not been heard before. It is musically logical, full of contrast, design and color. At times the texture is quite simple; at other moments of great complexity. Altogether it is a work of great originality and high poesy.

WITH the extraordinary revival of interest in the music of Scriabin in recent years, the Poem of Ecstasy has come in for its share of new recorded performances: four of the half-dozen currently available recordings are products of the recent past—those conducted by Claudio Abbado (DGG 2530 137), Donald Johanos (Candide 31039), Zubin Mehta (London 6552), and Eugene Ormandy (RCA LSC 3214). A fifth version, Yevgeny Svetlanov’s (Melodiya/Angel S 40019), is not much older. But it is the earliest of all the recordings currently listed that finds the greatest favor with me—Leopold Stokowski’s (Everest 3032). Like none of his competitors, Stokowski is able to delineate the languorous passion of the music at the same time that he successfully conceals the seams of its structure. In other hands, the score tends to sound unbearably episodic, but Stokowski unifies it in a thoroughly convincing manner. The recording, a product of the late 1950’s, is not the last word in sonics, but it is full and well-balanced, and the Houston Symphony plays very well. Those for whom nothing less than the ultimate in reproduction will suffice are directed to the Abbado recording—a good performance in its own right, but lacking Stokowski’s conviction.

Reel-to-reel tape fanciers have only one version available: Mehta’s (London L 80202). This, too, is a well-realized account of the score, but without the special Stokowski magic.
Once upon a time there was a certain hack conductor of Broadway musicals of whom it was said, "He hates all music—even Jerome Kern's." What a condemnation! For how can anyone with the least interest in the American musical theater hate the music of Jerome Kern? Some may prefer the vitality, the humor, the harmonic and rhythmic surprises of Gershwin. Some may lean toward the elegance, wit, and sophistication of Porter. And some may argue for the merits of the Rodgers that went with Hart or with Hammerstein. But Kern was where it all began, the first master songwriter of the American musical theater. If you find it hard to believe that They Didn't Believe Me was written in 1914, so do I, so did George Gershwin, so does everybody. In its purely American quality, its total divorce from both operetta and music hall traditions, its informality, its sophistication, its style, it could have been written up to thirty years later. But it had to have been written by Jerome Kern, for it bears his personal stamp.

Just what is it that makes a Kern song so endearing, so very special and personal? A question like that seems almost impossible to answer, yet the composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim handled it, I think, quite well:

A Kern song is almost always recognizable, even to the untrained ear. It has a "feel," a "sound" that is distinct and unique. The melody has an enduring freshness. The harmony is usually simple and not very inventive or eventful, yet graceful and clear and full of air. The melodic rhythm is perhaps the strongest point—a direct and simple motif developed through tiny variations into a long and never boring line. There are few syncopations in a Kern melody, and when they occur, they are of the most elemental sort. And yet a Kern line is seldom dull. Each phrase grows out of the preceding one. Kern knew the technique of small-form composition so well that, like any trained composer, he was able to utilize it unconsciously. All of his best songs have that economy indigenous to the best art: the maximum development of the minimum of material.

Jerome David Kern was born on January 27 (Mozart's birthday, incidentally), 1885, in New York on East 56th Street, between First Avenue and what is now Sutton Place. Perhaps unlike most of his peers, Kern was raised in a family atmosphere in which music played an important part. His mother, a proficient pianist, gave Jerome and his two brothers their first lessons, and we can guess that many happy evenings were spent in the parlor of their private house, with four Kerns at two pianos, playing music for eight hands.

We can also guess that virtually all the music they played was European in origin. Mrs. Kern, who was of Bohemian descent, introduced the younger members of the family to some of the folk songs of the old country, which her composer son later used to delightful advantage. One example is Pick Yourself Up, first heard in the Astaire-Rogers film Swing Time. It is derived from the same folk air that Smetana used in a piece called The Merry Chicken Yard, and it also served Jaromir Weinberger handsomely for his Polka in Schwanda. Another Bohemian melody was adapted by Kern for Cap'n Andy's entrance march in Show Boat.

Kern began musical studies of a more formal nature only after graduation from high school. His teachers, some associated with the New York College of Music (and all, at that time, quite distinguished musicians), included Alexander Lambert, Paolo Gallico, and Albert von Doenhoff. But at this point a small crisis developed in Kern's musical career. His father, like so many middle-class parents in those days distrustful of music as a profession, insisted that his son go into Papa's merchandising business, and gave him a job in the family furniture store. Jerome, like so many middle-class sons in those days, obeyed. One of his first assignments was to arrange for the purchase of two pianos for the store, but the younger Kern, through some slight misunderstanding, ended up buying two hundred pianos instead. And that was the end of Jerome's whirl at business life. Mr. Kern allowed his son to enroll at the New York College of Music (where he studied piano and harmony for about a year) and even somehow managed to dispose of the two hundred pianos at a profit.

Kern's first real—that is to say, musical—job was that of general assistant at the T. B. Harms Com-
company, the leading publisher of theater music, which later became the life-long publisher of all Kern's music. During his apprentice period, Kern served for a time as pianist in R. H. Macy's sheet-music department, where he demonstrated the latest hits. It was good, practical experience, certainly. But the most valuable and important work he had in those days was assisting as rehearsal pianist for new musicals whose songs were to be published by T. B. Harms. The then budding composer saw to it that his own tunes were heard by theatrical producers and music directors at opportune times during the rehearsal breaks.

Many of the Broadway shows in the early years of the century were middle-European operettas in which additional music, with a bit more American flavor, could be and was interpolated. And not only was Kern, as rehearsal pianist, in the right place at the right time, he was, because of his musical background and enthusiasm, the ideal talent for such assignments. Consequently, such Viennese delights as Leo Fall's *The Dollar Princess* and Oscar Straus' *A Waltz Dream* and such British imports as *Mr. Wix of Wickham, Fascinating Flora*, and *Fluffy Ruffles* included Kern songs here and there when they reached Broadway. Generally, these songs had no particular distinction, being mainly comedy and production numbers to speed up the action. Nevertheless, one of them, *How'd You Like to Spoon with Me*, added to *The Earl and the Girl* (1905), became more popular than any of the Ivan Caryll songs in the original score. Kern himself had a special fondness for this lifting number for many years.

While Kern had been gradually developing his own style before 1914, it was not until that year that the first of his truly distinctive and outstanding songs appeared. This was *They Didn't Believe Me*, composed for *The Girl from Utah*, an English musical despite its title. Among those who were particularly impressed by this tenderly beautiful and yet oddly original song was the then fifteen-year-old George Gershwine. Many years later he recalled: "Kern was the first composer who made me conscious that most popular music was of inferior quality, and that musical-comedy music was made of better material. I followed Kern's work and studied each song that he composed. I paid him the tribute of frank imitation, and many things I wrote at this period sounded as though Kern had written them himself." And, indeed, there is no doubting that influence in several early Gershwine songs, notably *I Was So Young, You Were So Beautiful*.

By the middle of the 1910-1920 decade, the vogue for European musicals was beginning to dwindle, thus perceptibly broadening Kern's opportunities. Among the shows that replaced the imports in the public's affections was a series of intimate musicals known as the "Princess Theatre Shows." Many of these had much more distinction and charm than what Broadway had been accus-

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**HOW KERN DOES IT**

A close look at *They Didn't Believe Me* might give the reader some idea of Kern's composing style, some of the touches that are, if not uniquely his, still typical of his work. There are a few harmonic novelties in the song, but what is more interesting is the way the overall melodic line is constructed. The chorus begins with four rising notes ("And when I told . . . "), but when that musical and lyrical idea returns, in the middle of the song, the sequence of four notes begins an octave higher and descends instead of ascending ("And when I tell . . ."). Following that, where one expects a reprise of the line, "They didn't believe me . . . ", the music takes another course entirely ("That I'm the man whose . . ."). and then, four measures after one had expected it, when one now expects something different, Kern brings back the line ("They'll never believe me . . ."). and adds to it, to finish, a slight modification of the melody that originally set "Your lips, your eyes . . ." ("That from this great big world . . ."). What has been accomplished is an exquisite blending of the new and the familiar, the latter always presented in an unexpected but still perfectly natural way.

Another good example is *The Last Time I Saw Paris*, whose poignant quality depends very much on the harmonic dissonance on the word "last," a dissonance which is resolved when the melody moves down a note to the word "time" over the same harmony. In typical Kern fashion, however, that same little one-note movement is used again later, the dissonance being resolved this time by the melody's moving up rather than down (from "dodged" to "the").—James Goodfriend
tomed to seeing—perhaps because Kern wrote the music for most of them. His ability to come up with one delightfully fresh score after another, moreover, was almost staggering. Take the year 1917, for example. January 11 marked the Broadway opening of his Have a Heart, and just four nights later, on January 15, another complete Kern score, Love o’ Mike, had its premiere. There followed a period of inactivity—five whole weeks without a single Kern opening!—but then, on February 20, came the greatest of his hits, Oh, Boy!, which ran for well over a year, quite remarkable in that era. (Till the Clouds Roll By was the favorite song from Oh, Boy!, and remained so much a standard over the years that it became the title of the film biography of Kern made about thirty years later.)

Next on the composer’s 1917 agenda was Leave It to Jane, which had a comparatively modest run then, but an off-Broadway revival in 1959 made it the longest-running Kern show in New York history. The melodious score was something of a revelation to modern audiences not lucky enough to have been around “way back when the lazily swaying Sirens’ Song” was just one of many Kern numbers regularly sung and hummed around parlor pianos across the country. Later in 1917 came a very lavish revue called Miss 1917, with music by both Kern and Victor Herbert. The cast was so top-heavy with expensive “names” that the producers decided to economize, and they did so by paying the rehearsal pianist, a young man named George Gershwin, only $35 a week.

Kern’s composing pace slackened a bit during the last years of the decade, but somehow it made little difference in the number of distinctive songs he turned out. For instance, buried in the score of the 1918 hit Oh, Lady! Lady!! (and dropped from the show before opening night) was a song called Bill which, slightly revised, turned up nine years later as a highlight of Show Boat. In fact, however, most of the more durable of Kern’s songs were written from about 1920 onward. For instance, in Sally (1920) Marilyn Miller introduced Look for the Silver Lining, Whip-Poor-Will, and Wild Rose. The first of these is quite generally known, and the other two, though perhaps familiar mostly to show-tune fan-
ciers, remain hardy tunes nonetheless.

The following year, Kern, responding easily and flexibly to the early-Twenties craze for Hawaiian melodies, wrote Ka-lu-a. And though he was not as adept at writing rhythm numbers as ballads in the romantic vein, he was once again in step with the faster-paced fashion with a song from Stepping Stones called Raggedy Ann which, like Ka-lu-a, found great popular acceptance with the fox-trot crowd. The true gem of Stepping Stones, however, is the ballad Once in a Blue Moon which, in its simple purity, could easily have been one more adaptation from a Bohemian theme—except that its opening strain closely resembles an old American folk song, Go Tell Aunt Rhody. Even though these songs enjoyed temporary popularity, it wasn’t until 1925 that another lasting hit by Kern appeared. This was Who?, from the 1925 hit Sunny, one of his few livelier up-tempo songs to become a standard.

By the mid-Twenties, Kern was becoming increasingly impatient with the conventional musicals and their predictable formulas. Years before, he had said: “It is my opinion that the musical numbers should carry the action of the play, and should be representative of the personalities of the characters who sing them. Songs must be suited to the action and mood of the play.” Sometimes, especially in the Princess Theatre shows, he had worked with dramatic material that lived up to his hopes; more often, he was saddled with mediocre books. But it was not until 1926 that the perfect opportunity for the implementation of his ideas came along. That op-
KANDER ON KERN

The creator of Cabaret pays tribute to an illustrious predecessor

The first tune I can remember ever plunking out (with one finger) on my shiny, black Mason and Hamlin is Ol’ Man River. I was about five years old, I think, and ever since then I’ve been a Jerome Kern addict. Of all my heroes rising out of our musical theater, Kern is by far the most appealing. It’s hard to explain why one is attracted by a particular composer’s style, but with Kern it’s simple. Melody. Incredible, elegant melody that seemed to pour out of him endlessly and effortlessly. And how profligate he was with those melodies, and how abundantly they populate his scores! In Show Boat the underscoring by itself is rich enough and inventive enough for the whole of another musical.

A Kern melody, like a Schubert melody, has an adventurousness and, at the same time, inevitability that make it stick in the memory at first hearing. But Yesterdays, from Roberta, so simple to remember and to sing, is really quite complicated harmonically. And any pianist knows how easy it is to get lost following the twisted chromatic path of All the Things You Are, while it all seems so natural for the listener. Part of this “naturalness,” I think, comes from the fact that Kern is very much a “first line” composer. “You are the promised kiss of springtime,” “Don’t ever leave me,” “Fish gotta swim, birds gotta fly”—the settings of all those first lines (and you can play this game for hours) strongly outline the musical direction of the song, tell us where we’re going, make us comfortable, and set up our expectations. And then how totally Kern fulfills those expectations!

But it’s silly for me to try to explain why his melodies work so satisfactorily. No one is really able to do that. Kern was simply endowed with a wonderfully rich creative gift that communicated beauty to many, many people. He’s my favorite. And when I grow up I want to be just like him. —John Kander

portunity was, of course, Show Boat. Edna Ferber’s richly drawn novel of life on the Mississippi, at the Chicago World’s Fair, and other colorful locales in the late nineteenth century was almost made for Kern’s music. And with the sensitive and gifted Oscar Hammerstein II as his ideal collaborator for the book and lyrics, the result was by far the most artistically successful creation of the American musical theater up to that time.

The score includes at least five of Kern’s best-loved songs (Ol’ Man River, Make Believe, Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man, Why Do I Love You?, and the previously mentioned Bill), plus comedy and production numbers, choral music, and a wealth of fine incidental music—by turns lyrical, joyous, and brooding—to underscore the dramatic action. Initially skeptical at the prospect of turning Show Boat into a musical, Edna Ferber was completely won over when she heard how Kern and Hammerstein had caught the spirit of her novel. In 1939 she wrote:

As the writing of the play proceeded . . . I heard bits and pieces of the score . . . I had heard Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man with its love-bemused lyric. I had melted under the bewitching strains of Make Believe and Why Do I Love You? and Gaylord Ravenal’s insolent and careless gambler’s song [Till Good Luck Comes My Way]. And then Jerome Kern appeared at my apartment late one afternoon with a strange look of exaltation in his eyes. He sat down at the piano. He doesn’t play the piano particularly well and his singing voice, though true, is negligible. He played and sang Ol’ Man River. The music mounted, mounted, and I give you my word, my hair stood on end, the tears came into my eyes, and I breathed like a heroine in a melodrama. This was great music. This was music that would outlive Jerome Kern’s day and mine. I have never heard it since without that emotional surge.

Encouraged by the enormous success of Show Boat, Kern and Hammerstein wrote another period piece, Sweet Adeline, whose locales included (among others) Hoboken and Cuba at the turn of the century. The show, far more leisurely in character than Show Boat, was nevertheless a charming vehicle for Helen Morgan, who had already made such a sensational splash with Show Boat. The score contained many songs to suit her typically wistful singing style, including Why Was I Born?, Don’t Ever Leave Me, and Here Am I. (Miss Morgan can be heard singing two songs from Show Boat and one from Sweet Adeline on RCA’s Vintage Series album LPV-561.) Sweet Adeline was warmly received by the critics, but it wasn’t able to withstand the chilling effect of the 1929 Wall Street crash, which occurred less than two months after the opening. It deserved a better fate, but it lasted only six months.
Two years later, in 1931, came The Cat and the Fiddle. The Otto Harbach libretto, set in Brussels, had to do with the conflict between a young Romanian composer of serious music and an American girl who wrote popular songs. Once again, Kern made the most of an original dramatic situation. Not as immediately endearing as Show Boat or Sweet Adeline, the score did have such attractive numbers as The Night Was Made for Love, She Didn't Say Yes, Try to Forget, and the particularly lovely Poor Pierrot, which is closer to an art song than it is to a typical show tune. In addition, there was much inventive and atmospheric background music which went several steps beyond Show Boat in sophistication. A highlight, for example, was an amusing two-piano fugue in which the hero and heroine battled musically. Altogether, The Cat and the Fiddle was one of the most arresting scores ever written for the Broadway theater—a fact that is heavily underlined by the Robert Russell Bennett orchestrations.

The following year, Kern returned to Broadway with his (and Oscar Hammerstein's) Music in the Air. A lovely, mellow show with a superbly melodic score to match, it combined, in a way, the nostalgic appeal of Sweet Adeline with the more urban feeling of The Cat and the Fiddle. The story of a pair of naïve youngsters who travel from their Bavarian village to sell a song to a music publisher in Munich, it provided ample material for both Kern and Hammerstein to develop the contrast between bucolic serenity and metropolitan bustle. Those too

Edna Ferber on Show Boat: "...music that would outlive Jerome Kern's day and mine."
young to remember the show may immediately wonder what the tender little song was that the youngsters were trying to peddle. It was, of course, I've Told Every Little Star, another of Kern's typically folk-style melodies. The finest number in the score, however, and perhaps the finest Kern had composed up to this point, was The Song Is You. This song would lend itself to the most intricate and lengthy kind of exposition, but suffice it to say here that the transition from the middle strain back to the original theme is one of the most deftly constructed, harmonically adventurous, and musically exciting effects ever heard in a theater song.

Kern reverted to a much more conventional formula for his next show, Roberta, in 1933. There was little in the story line to challenge his inventiveness, but he still came across with a bouquet of melodies, several of which are still around today. Among them were the melancholy Yesterdays (not to be confused, of course, with the Beatles' singular Yesterday), Let's Begin, The Touch of Your Hand, and one other that has a particularly interesting history. Otto Harbach, the lyricist for Roberta, was going through some Kern manuscripts and came across a jaunty little theme which had once been intended to accompany a tap dance in Show Boat. He suggested to the composer that he slow down the tempo and expand the theme into a full-length ballad. Kern did, and produced one of the greatest—if not the greatest—standards in his whole list of works: Smoke Gets in Your Eyes.

The last Broadway show for which Kern wrote a score was a failure: Very Warm for May lasted less than two months on Broadway in 1939. Its one significance is that it was the source of one of the crowning glories of all American theater music, the ballad All the Things You Are. This song is a classic example of what Stephen Sondheim had to say about Kern's melodies, the whole song being artfully constructed from a single rising interval, a few repeated notes, and an exquisite modulating sequence for the release. Both Kern and Hammerstein, who wrote the lyrics, were surprised at the success of the song because of its frequent changes of key—though they are what keep things fresh and moving. But I was happy to learn from Hammerstein himself that, of all the many songs he and Kern wrote together, All the Things You Are was their favorite.

Like most of his colleagues in the musical theater during the early Thirties, Kern joined the big parade to Hollywood. Whatever misgivings his admirers might have had about such a move were soon dispelled, for not only did Kern retain his innate musical taste in his work for the movies, but he added a new and subtle dimension of sophistication. His first important assignment was to compose two additional songs for the Astaire-Rogers film version of Roberta (1935). To this already bountiful score, then, were added Lovely to Look At and I Won't Dance (the latter had been used previously in a London show called Three Sisters). More important than the assignment itself, however, was the fact that it marked the beginning of his collaboration with one of the great lyricists of the American theater, Dorothy Fields.
The first complete score by Kern and Fields was for the Lily Pons film *I Dream Too Much*, in which the diminutive opera star introduced the sparkling *Jockey on the Carousel* and the rapturous waltz for which the picture was named. After that auspicious beginning, the new team turned out a real classic among film scores. This was *Swing Time*, one of the better Astaire-Rogers pictures, which contained *The Way You Look Tonight* (one of the few Academy Award winners to deserve that honor), *A Fine Romance*, *Bojangles of Harlem*, *Pick Yourself Up*, *Never Gonna Dance*, and the swirling *Waltz in Swingtime*. Three other Kern-Fields songs deserve mention: *Just Let Me Look at You* (a beauty that deserves to be better known), *You Couldn't Be Cuter*, and *Remind Me*. The last is an odd case because it is one of the rare instances in which Kern, starting with a lovely theme, rather overdeveloped the song and then seemed to have trouble finding his way back musically. But the Dorothy Field lyrics are characteristically graceful, and the song is a winning and original one, if difficult to sing.

It is not surprising that in Hollywood Kern was able to team up with practically all the best lyricists. There was Oscar Hammerstein, for one, with whom he wrote two extra songs for the 1936 version of *Show Boat* (as though that score were not already rich enough!). The following year they collaborated on the score for a period piece called *High, Wide and Handsome*. Although Kern had been composing mostly in a lighter vein, this film proved that neither he nor Hammerstein had lost any of their ability to write in a softer, more gracious style: *Can I Forget You* and *The Folks Who Live on the Hill* have such nostalgic appeal that they could well have been written for *Show Boat* or *Sweet Adeline*.

Other top lyricists with whom Kern worked were Ira Gershwin, Johnny Mercer, E. Y. Harburg, and Leo Robin. When he wrote *Dearly Beloved* with Mercer, Kern expressed the hope that one day it might replace *Oh, Promise Me* as a wedding song (to some slight extent it did, as did, for a time, Vincent Youmans' *Through the Years*). Another Kern-Mercer song, *I'm Old-Fashioned*, reflects some of the gentleness and innocence of the early Kern years, and this same feeling is beautifully expressed in the lyrics.

One of Kern's greatest hits was *Long Ago and Far Away*, written for the Gene Kelly-Rita Hayworth film *Cover Girl*, but it didn't have a very promising beginning. It seems that Ira Gershwin had written more than a dozen lyrics for this ingratiating melody, but none of them really suited him. Finally, composer Arthur Schwartz (turned producer for this film) telephoned Gershwin and told him that he needed the song as soon as possible—it was going to be recorded in a day or so. The lyricist, reasonably satisfied with his latest attempt but not exactly proud of it, reluctantly submitted it to the studio. When the picture was released, Gershwin was astounded: "It turned out that this number was the biggest hit I'd had in any one year, with sheet-music sales of over six hundred thousand."

Kern's last film was *Centennial Summer*, which was completed and released in 1946, a few months after his death. Its nineteenth-century setting was ideally suited for a number of Kern's earlier unpublished songs, and whoever finally assembled the
posthumous score deserves enormous credit. Of all the charmingly nostalgic songs that graced the picture, perhaps the wistful *In Love in Vain* (lyrics by Leo Robin) was the best, though *All Through the Day* (lyrics by Hammerstein) cannot be far behind.

This account has so far been concerned only with Kern's stage and film music, which, of course, constituted the greater part of the composer's enormous output. Now and again, however, he wrote songs independent of a production, though usually without much success. The great exception came about when Oscar Hammerstein, deeply upset by the German invasion of Paris in World War II, wrote a lyric expressing his feelings and asked Kern to set it to music. *The Last Time I Saw Paris* may be minor Kern melodically, but it perfectly captured the spirit of Hammerstein's lyrics, and the song became a hit because it was a timely expression of a shared sentiment. But it is, in fact, a rather unusual song for Kern, mostly because of its extreme simplicity and dependence on harmony, though it has Kern's economy in the use of materials. Unfortunately, many singers have a way of overdramatizing this simple little song. It is always more effective when sung as the sheet music directs: "simply—with rhythm preserved—not badly."

During the early Forties, Kern was commissioned by Andre Kostelanetz to compose one of three orchestral portraits of famous Americans (the other two commissions went to Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson). Kern's choice of subject was Mark Twain, and the piece he wrote, an attractive suite in four sections, had its premiere in Cincinnati in May, 1942. Critics, and some lovers of Kern's music as well, have called the work second-rate, but I don't agree. Granted that it falls into the category of "light concert music," which is somewhat out of fashion today, it is nonetheless full of charming themes throughout, including an engaging little polka (still another Bohemian tune?), a soaring, lyrical melody that cries for a lyric, a rousing march, and a pensive, haunting air that has the quality of an American folk tune. Perhaps not the greatest Kern, but undeniably pleasant listening.

In 1945 Kern returned to New York to work on two projects. The first was a revival of *Show Boat* at the Ziegfeld Theatre, which had housed the original 1927 production. For this revival, Kern and Hammerstein, who were to be the producers, wrote still another new song (they had already written two additions for the 1936 film version). This one, called *Nobody Else But Me*, turned out to be the very last song Kern composed. The second project was what eventually turned out to be Irving Berlin's *Annie*

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**JEROME KERN ON RECORDS**

Considering Kern's importance in the American musical theater, and the length of his career, he has received very skimpy representation on records—aside, that is, from individual songs in personality collections. Of those I hesitate to say very much, because the particular renditions any of us prefer are so personal a matter. Your taste may run to Mel Tormé's performance of *The Folks Who Live on the Hill*, Bob Short's *Bojangles of Harlem*, Frank Sinatra's *Ol' Man River*, Mabel Mercer's *Poor Pierrot*, or (getting far out) Lennie Tristano's *Yesterdays*—or, then again, it may not. There are hundreds of such individual recordings, performed in dozens of styles, certainly an adequate selection.

But complete (or incomplete) show recordings are another matter. Fortunately (and coincidentally) we now have, at long last, an almost completely complete version of *Show Boat*—Stanyan's just-released twodisc recording of the current London production (see review on page 96). The most satisfactory version of "highlights" now available is the one recorded for RCA by the cast of the 1966 Lincoln Center production (RCA LSO 1126). Among the other highlights recordings are *Robertta*, featuring Jack Cassidy, Joan Roberts, and Stephen Douglass (Columbia Special Products COS 2530), and the recently released *Sunny* (Stanyan SR 10035), with Jack Buchanan and Binnie Hale, recorded by the London cast in 1926 and originally released on 78's. That does not make a very big list, and we certainly could use a recording of *The Cat and the Fiddle*, at the very least.

Happily, however, there are two other records containing large quantities of Kern songs, for the most part the less familiar ones. One of them is in Ben Bagley's "Revisited" series (Columbia Special Products COS 2840), a disc that features Bobby Short, Barbara Cook, Harold Lang, Nancy Andrews, and Cy Young, and includes such songs as *Put Me to the Test*, *Never Gonna Dance*, *I Have the Room Above*, and *Some Sort of Somebody*. The other is a set that confines itself, interestingly, to Kern's last seven years, and it concentrates mostly on the composer's Hollywood career, including also six songs from *Very Warm for May*, Kern's last Broadway score (Monmouth-Evergreen MES 6808). So far as instrumental renditions go, there is Robert Russell Bennett's beautifully orchestrated *Symphonic Story of Jerome Kern*, a chronological survey of ten songs well played by the Pittsburgh Symphony under the direction of William Steinberg (Everest 3063). That, of course, puts the music in a rather classical light, and it brings me to a rather obscure recording that is a particular favorite of mine.

Possibly the best tribute ever accorded Kern on records was a set of six twelve-inch Decca 78's (later transferred to a ten-inch LP and long since deleted) on which the Gordon String Quartet plays a number of the composer's best-known songs interspersed with some of his less familiar incidental music. The music lends itself remarkably to such chamber treatment, and the quartet performs these beautiful Charles Miller arrangements with love and understanding. In fact, it is both fascinating and revealing to note the kinship to the lyricism of Schubert in these melodies when played this way, and it is a more than subtle reminder of what the "old country" contributed to the making of American music.
Get Your Gun, the original plans for which would have reunited the team of Kern and Fields, with Dorothy's brother Herbert also working on the book.

It was not to be. Tragically, Kern was stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage while walking on Park Avenue one November afternoon in 1945. He was removed to the hospital on Welfare Island situated, oddly enough, just across the river from where he had been born sixty years before. In the Jerome Kern Song Book, his friend Oscar Hammerstein wrote this moving account:

He lay unconscious in the same institution in which Stephen Foster had died. The critical nature of Jerry's condition did not permit his removal to a private hospital. He was in a ward with some fifty or sixty other patients—mental cases, drunks and derelicts for the most part. The doctors had gathered this heterogeneous group together and explained to them slowly and clearly who the new patient was, and asked them to be very quiet and not create the usual disturbances that characterized this room. Not one man disobeyed. The nurse in charge did not go home that night. She extended her duty for that day to twenty-four hours. When Mrs. Kern expressed her gratitude, the nurse answered simply that he had given so much pleasure to her and to the world that she thought she would like to give up something for him.

On November 11, Kern died without regaining consciousness. Among the many tributes paid to him then and subsequently, this one by Richard Rodgers in the New York Times perhaps best sums up the man and the music:

Kern was typical of what was and still is good in our general maturity in this country in that he had his musical roots in the fertile middle European and English school of operetta writing, and amalgamated it with everything that was fresh in the American scene to give us something wonderfully new and clear in music writing in the world. Actually, he was a giant with one foot in Europe and the other in America. Before he died he picked up the European foot and planted it squarely alongside the American one.

If we were to look for one example of each extreme of his geographical range, we might find Look for the Silver Lining, with its almost beer-hall simplicity, at one end, and discover Ol' Man River, with its deep turmoil and strong native inflection, at the other. Both are fine music, and both are Kern.

Composers, being human like the rest of us, have been known to betray a competitive jealousy from time to time, but not about Kern. He has been called—not, I think, extravagantly—the Franz Schubert of the American musical theater. If he ever wrote a bad note, I have not heard it.

Alfred Simon was Director of Light Music for radio station WQXR for twenty-five years and is co-author of two forthcoming books: The Gershwins and Songs of the American Theater.
JORGE BOLET
"Every human being has a Romantic content within himself"

By GREGOR BENKO

During the craze for Baroque music that occupied performers, record companies, collectors, and (perhaps to a lesser extent) concert audiences during the 1950's and 1960's, there were always people in the music world who prophesied that the Baroque revival would be followed by a Romantic revival. Those of us who have been eagerly awaiting such a change in trends see an encouraging sign in the attention that is currently being given to the Cuban-born pianist Jorge Bolet. In the season just past, Bolet was the soloist at the opening-night concert of the New York Philharmonic at which he played Liszt's Totentanz, with Pierre Boulez conducting. In reviewing the concert, Harold Schonberg, music critic for the New York Times, pronounced Bolet "one of the great Liszt pianists of the century."

Bolet's engagements last season included other appearances with the Philharmonic, playing works by Liszt and Chopin, the first performance in this century of the piano concerto by Giovanni Sgambati (a friend and pupil of Liszt) at Frank Cooper's fourth annual Romantic Music Festival at Butler University, and a solo recital at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in New York. The critics praised his enormous, beautiful singing tone and his understanding of the Romantic style of playing. I, for one, believe the Romantic revival is gaining momentum, that Bolet is the great Romantic pianist who has been waiting for it to happen, and that he is the pianist many of us have been waiting for. RCA apparently shares this opinion, for they have arranged to release a number of recordings of works by Liszt which Bolet made in Europe, and they have signed him to an exclusive contract to make additional recordings of Romantic repertoire in this country.

When I interviewed Bolet just before a concert in Indianapolis, I asked him to comment on the Romantic revival. He said, "When I was a child, the Romantic performers were really in the driver's seat—the pianists, the violinists, the cellists, most of the great conductors. They were all 'Romantics.' Then the pendulum swung over to the other side. 'Musicology' became the rage, and we had a whole bunch of purists who sort of, well, not necessarily misunderstood Romantic music, but had no affinity for it. They snubbed it as being not really worthwhile, not really great. There was nothing but Bach and Beethoven and Mozart and perhaps Schubert. Musicians like George Szell, Rudolf Serkin, Artur Schnabel, and even Wilhelm Backhaus swung to that side. They had a great deal of influence in musical circles and exercised that influence over their students and the young pianists they trained.

"But I think we have now come full circle again, and people are awfully tired of Bach's 'Mighty 48,' as mighty as they are, tired of the thirty-two Beethoven sonatas, the Diabelli Variations, the Goldberg Variations, and so on. I think audiences never repudiated the Romantic repertoire itself. They are still enthralled whenever they hear Romantic music because it appeals to the heart and soul. But perhaps audiences have repudiated performances of this music that are musically correct but non-Romantic and therefore stylistically wrong.

"I think it was audiences, not performers, who made the Baroque revival happen. But whether the Romantic revival will have the same impact on musical life will depend on the performers. The greatness of Bach will shine through in almost any competent performance, but Romantic music—works like the Sgambati and Liapounoff concertos—needs a performer who plays in the right style. Played in the right style, much of the Romantic repertoire becomes great music, but played in the wrong style it becomes cheap, banal, and everything else the purists say it is."

Jorge (he pronounces it "George") Bolet (the "t" is not silent) dates the beginning of his career from an evening in 1923 when he heard a recital in his native city, Havana, Cuba, by the pianist Rudolph Ganz. He decided that night, at the age of ten, that he could be nothing but a pianist who gave public concerts. When he was thirteen, he was sent to Philadelphia to study with David Saperton at the Curtis Institute of Music. After Bolet graduated, he studied abroad for a year with Moriz Rosenthal. Worldwide fame and a big career seemed imminent. In 1936 he..."
won a Naumburg award, and in 1937 he was the first winner of the Josef Hoffmann award, which stated that he was a "pianist and musician; scrupulous in detail; deep in insight; broad in sense of style and proportion; modest in manners; forceful in utterance; touched with poetry, and deeply devoted to music."

He returned to Curtis for studies in conducting, first with Boris Goldovsky and then with Fritz Reiner. "The conductor's experience came in handy when I was in Japan with the army of occupation," he said. "After VJ Day I conducted the Japanese premiere of The Mikado." But the big career never seemed to arrive. Ten years ago Bolet was selected to supply the piano playing for the soundtrack of a movie based vaguely on the life of Franz Liszt (Song Without End, starring Dirk Bogarde and Capucine).

"The film brought me fame in a way," he said. "But in a way it also hurt me. In the minds of a lot of people it meant that I had 'gone Hollywood,' that I had somehow sold out. Many people felt that I must have made a fortune from the movie and had quietly gone away to live the good life, giving up public performance. Nothing could be further from the truth. I played and played in America, but never got anywhere, so I went to Europe and built a career there. Three years ago I returned to the United States and made Blossomington, Indiana, my home. Now I teach at Indiana University with my old Curtis classmates and friends Sidney Foster and Abbey Simon.

Bolet has built an impressive career in Europe, and in this country he has made numerous records, has appeared with almost every major American orchestra, and has played dozens of solo recitals in New York and elsewhere. Why, at age fifty-seven, has he not yet had a bigger American career? "Well, maybe because my repertoire, which seems to be fashionable today, wasn't always so fashionable," he answered. "Maybe my playing has changed or matured recently. The movie was a mixed blessing, and maybe my records weren't all so good. For instance, the disc of several Liszt Transcendental Etudes was recorded in the modern manner, with takes and re-takes and re-re-takes. By the time we were done, the notes were there, but little of the music. I've now recorded all the Transcendental Etudes and the Consolations, plus some song and aria transcriptions of Liszt to be released here by RCA. They were recorded in Spain in a much more old-fashioned way—I just played the way I would in a concert hall—and if I say so myself, they're not so bad." (The first of them, "Franz Liszt's Greatest Hits of the 1850's," has been released and is reviewed on page 76 of this issue.)

Bolet is an unusual pianist not only in repertoire but as a "natural" who needn't concern himself much about the mechanical aspects of practicing. "I practice mentally almost constantly but at the keyboard very little. My mechanism isn't perfect, but I've always had an easy time at anything purely mechanical. Anything that requires a close hand position is a problem for me; I thrive on any kind of open hand position." Commenting on the enormous eruptions of sound that he can produce, he said, "Well, I don't exactly have an anemic build, I have a good, heavy forearm and upper arm, and I play the piano with weight. The idea is to produce the sound from the bottom of the key, to push the key all the way down and to keep pushing on, to get the full sound."

He is a giant figure—six feet three and a half inches tall with a broad build—and his dark good looks and suave manner make him seem very much the Romantic hero. "I've been called a Romantic specialist many times, but that's not really true. Being a specialist in one area of music implies that one plays the other parts of the repertoire less well. But the bulk of the piano repertoire is Romantic music and should be studied and played with the precepts of Romanticism in mind.

"Romanticism was not just a period in music and letters and art that passed like any other fad, but a basic part of human nature. Every human being has a Romantic content within himself, and most people would rather hear music that has a personal message. In Romantic music the artist has a greater chance of being individualistic, of expressing a personal point of view. The purists would not have you play Bolet-Beethoven or Beethoven-Bolet. But audiences come to a concert not to hear the music play itself, not to hear Beethoven's Fifth Symphony alone, but to hear what Bernstein does with it. And when they come to hear me they come to hear what my viewpoint is, to hear what I do with the music.

"The performance of Romantic music is stylistically very difficult. The performer has tremendous leeway, but this does not mean that anything goes. Romantic music must be played with great freedom. The only way to achieve freedom and flexibility in playing any piece of music is by imposing on yourself the greatest rhythmic discipline possible. The youth of today must learn that there is no real freedom without discipline. In three years at Indiana University I have heard some absolutely marvelous playing from students, absolutely great performances of the classical, modern, or impressionistic repertoire, but I have not heard one performance of a Romantic work there that I thought was really good."

Asking to name the pianists of the past who had most impressed him, Bolet said: "The two pianists who, in my mind, tower above all the others I have heard, and I've heard practically all the great ones, are Hofmann and Rachmaninoff. There is nothing like them today. Hofmann always gave the impression that he was improvising whatever piece he was playing. But he played like the god he was only under special circumstances, such as his Carnegie Hall recitals. Rachmaninoff was a more even performer. Unlike Hofmann, he did not constantly look for something fresh and new in the music he played. Nevertheless Rachmaninoff was not only a great, great pianist, but also a great, great Romanticist. He was perhaps the last great composer-performer and the last of the great transcribers."

Bolet plays many transcriptions in his recitals, and he commented that this was not part of current musical fashion. "For years the very idea of piano transcriptions made the purists cringe. They seem to reject anything in music that gives pleasure or fun. They say, 'When you play music you must suffer.' Well, there is no suffering in playing an operatic transcription of Liszt. You play it purely for enjoyment, to tell the audience. 'Now, you all know this tune, listen to what Liszt made of it.' Is there really anything morally wrong with transcribing something for the piano and making it into a great piano piece? And some transcriptions are both great piano pieces and great music. Bach, Liszt, Mozart—they all made transcriptions of their own and others' music, and as Arthur Loesser pointed out, we really should feel no shame at all if, when hearing these transcriptions, we also experience enjoyment."
Hirsch-Houck Laboratories
Tests
Thirty-Three Stereo Headphones

By Julian Hirsch

The excessive "togetherness" that sometimes results from urban living has created a few special problems for audio enthusiasts. Apartment dwellers, separated from their neighbors by walls that are all too often virtually acoustically transparent, must limit their listening volume, especially during the evening hours. On the other side of the coin (or should I say wall?), a neighbor's audio system, TV set, or radio can at times interfere with your listening enjoyment. Stereo headphones are often the best response to such unwelcome sonic visitors. Headphones can provide considerable isolation against external sound, and the music enjoyed by a headphone wearer need not be heard even by others in the same room.

Like loudspeakers, headphones come in a wide variety of sizes, shapes, sound characteristics, and prices. At their worst they can be as execrable as a $4.98 speaker system, but the best of them can match or surpass the performance of a pair of fine speaker systems at a fraction of their cost.

Most headphones contain miniature dynamic speakers, from 1 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches in diameter, mounted in enclosures (ear cups) and coupled to the ear drum through a (usually) well-sealed air cavity. The tightness of the seal around the ear affects the low-frequency response (for those phones designed to be sealed) as well as the acoustic isolation. This last point is particularly important if you are going to be monitoring live tape recordings with head-

**KEY TO THE CHART**

- The **RELATIVE RESPONSE** column is a condensed but subjectively valid indication of the measured low- and high-end response of each phone relative to its mid-range (approximately 300 to 2,000 Hz). Many of the phones had elevated or depressed low- and high-end responses, and these general trends have been identified as "up" or "dn" (down). When the averaged low-frequency or high-frequency output level was similar to that of the mid-range, we gave it a "flat" rating.

- **OVERALL RESPONSE SMOOTHNESS** was rated on a scale of A to D in order of increasing irregularity of the measured curve. Although this classification was based on our somewhat arbitrary judgment, we tried to avoid a "nit-picking" attitude. In both the overall response smoothness and TONE-BURST columns, A means outstanding, B is better than average, C is average, D is below average, and F is poor.

- **TONE BURST** response can be degraded by severe frequency response dips or peaks, whether originating in the phone or in the coupler setup. When the toneburst degradation occurred at a frequency where there was a clearly identifiable peak or hole in the response curve, we tended to minimize its importance since it could have been a characteristic of our test set-up. On the other hand, some phones had a ragged frequency response over a wide range and lacked reasonably good tone-burst response above 2,000 or 3,000 Hz. We felt that this provided grounds for a low rating.

- The **OUTPUT AT 1.0 PER CENT HARMONIC DISTORTION** uses a scale of 1 to 3 as a guide to the maximum level attainable. All the phones were easily able to deliver at least a 100 dB SPL without severe distortion—in fact, the distortion was usually well under 1% at this rather loud level. The headphones whose output rating is given as an asterisk (*) had slightly above 1% per cent distortion at all measured levels. Even the lowest rating of 3 corresponds to a low-distortion output of 100 to 110 dB, which is more than comfortably loud. On the other hand, the phones rated at 1 could deliver over 120 dB (the highest was almost 130 dB), a literally ear-splitting level, without exceeding 1% per cent distortion. A 2 rating indicated 110 to 120 dB. Your own listening tastes should determine the importance of this factor in your selection of headphones.

- **SENSITIVITY** ratings are included as a matter of general interest, since any of the phones can be driven by the least powerful amplifier (and some—the higher-impedance ones—can be driven directly from a preamplifier or tuner output). The ratings are given in the amount of input power in milliwatts (1 milliwatt, or mW, equals 0.001 watt) required to achieve a 100 dB output. A rating of 1 means less than 5 mW, 2 means 5 to 20 mW, 3 means 20 to 50, and 4 means 50 to 100. It's possible that a phone with a 3 or 4 rating may not deliver all the volume desired with a receiver that has too large a dropping resistor at its headphone jack. Any service technician can solve the problem by shunting each dropping resistor at the jack with another resistor with the same or slightly lower value.

- **ISOLATION** ratings are based largely on our subjective judgment. The lower the number, the better the isolation. Except for the non-isolating phones and the AKG-150, Kenwood KH-71, and Superex ST-F, which have partial isolation, most headphones do a satisfactory job of confining their sound to the wearer's ears and keeping external sounds out.

- The **IMPEDANCE** of dynamic phones ranges from about 5 ohms to over 2,000 ohms. Because of their high sensitivities (only milliwatts are required for a high listening volume), any phone, of high or low impedance, can be driven from the headphone jack of an amplifier or receiver. These jacks are internally connected to the speaker outputs through a pair of isolating resistances, typically about 200 ohms. However, a few tape recorders (and preamplifiers) have headphone jacks designed to drive high-impedance phones, and should be used with phones rated at several hundred ohms or higher; otherwise, the headphone impedance is not an important consideration.

- The **WEIGHT** of a phone has some relationship to its comfort, but is not the sole determinant. Headphones weigh from 5 ounces to 25 ounces, with the average being about 15 ounces. There is considerable variety in headband shape and padding, as well as in the softness and shape of the ear seals. Few of us would buy a hat without trying it on, and the precaution is advisable when shopping for phones. Although the lightest phones are most likely to be comfortable, a well-designed heavy phone can fit so well that its weight will hardly be felt. On the other hand, regardless of weight, there were some that just never felt "right" on us; your reaction to the same phones might be quite different.

- The connecting CORDS are usually about 9 or 10 feet long, either straight or coiled (marked C in the chart). Both types have their advantages and disadvantages. Longer cords are provided on some phones (you can walk from room to room while wearing the Telex Studio 1 or the E-V/Game phones without running out of "stretch"). The electrostatic phones have two cord lengths specified, the second of which is the length from power-supply/transformer to the amplifier's speaker terminals.
# HEADPHONE TEST RESULTS

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<th>Sensitivity</th>
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Note: The following models have little or no acoustic isolation.

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<th>Overall Response Smoothness</th>
<th>Tone Burst</th>
<th>Output @ 1% Harmonic Distortion</th>
<th>Sensitivity</th>
<th>Isolation</th>
<th>Impedance in Ohms</th>
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Note: The following are electrostatic headphones; sensitivity is listed in watts required for a sound level of 100 dB.

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phones, because you'll want to eliminate the direct sound from the performers. Most phones use rubber or plastic foam, or liquid-filled plastic rings, to provide a tight, yet comfortable seal.

Some dynamic headphones are designed to be totally non-isolating, with plastic-foam pads that rest lightly on the ears with no sealing action. Most of these phones provide respectable bass response, and at reasonable listening levels they can effectively override room noise, but some sound from them can also be heard quite clearly by others nearby.

A third type of headphone uses the electrostatic principle. Each earpiece contains a miniature electrostatic speaker—a thin plastic-film diaphragm suspended between two metal conductor grids. Electrostatic loudspeakers are widely respected for their superior smoothness, wide frequency range, and excellent transient response, and most electrostatic headphones share these characteristics. Since they require both high signal voltages and d.c. "polarizing" voltages (typically several hundred volts) for their operation, most electrostatic phones are used with combined power-supply/step-up transformer control units. However, they can usually be operated independently of the a.c. power line, since they can convert part of the audio signal to d.c. to provide the polarizing voltage.

The power-supply/transformer control boxes of electrostatic phones must be driven from and connected directly to the amplifier's speaker terminals. They cannot be connected to the normal headphone jack of an amplifier. All of the control boxes have terminals to which the regular front-channel speaker leads are connected, and have a switch to activate either the speakers or the phones. Alternatively, they can be connected to the second set of speaker terminals provided on most amplifiers and receivers.

Our stereo-headphone test procedures are described in this month's Technical Talk. As we expected, our measured frequency-response curves for most of the phones were alarmingly irregular. Yet we found that almost all the phones in our test sounded at least inoffensive, and usually acceptable or better. Some were excellent by any standard. To avoid possible reader problems with curve interpretation, we have reduced our data to tabular form, with the explanations and notes immediately adjacent to the table.

In order to provide a wide range of choice for the headphone shopper, we asked the major headphone manufacturers to send in both their top-of-the-line and their "best buy" models. Not every manufacturer responded, and it is conceivable that a manufacturer's choice did not in fact represent his "best buy." Although we did not test every model of every manufacturer (an impossible task, considering the profusion of phones available), we feel that the data presented will enable any interested reader to make a good choice at his chosen price level.

Although it is a minor point, there is an annoying
lack of standardization in the identification of the left and right channels on headphones. To confuse the situation further, we have no assurance that amplifier manufacturers adhere to any standard in wiring their headphone jacks. Fortunately, the right-left localization can usually be corrected by simply turning the phones around on one's head.

The tested acoustical and electrical characteristics of the headphones included in our survey are given in the accompanying table. Brief comments on the external physical characteristics of the headphones, grouped alphabetically and by type, follow.

Conventional Dynamic Phones

- **AKG K-150.** The unusually small, light earpieces are mounted on a slim, plastic-covered spring headband. The ear cushions, which are solid rubber (not foam), rest on the ears rather than around them and provide a small amount of isolation.

- **BEYER DT 100 AND DT 480.** These two phones are very similar in performance, appearance, and construction, with a light headband and rectangular ear cups that fit comfortably over the entire ear. They are fully modular in construction—the cord unplugs, and with a small screwdriver each earpiece can be detached and removed for repair or replacement. The DT-480 is slightly heavier and more sensitive than the DT-100. Both types are available in a wide range of impedances, from 5 to 2,000 ohms for the DT-100 and from 5 to 200 ohms for the DT-480.

- **CLARK 200 AND 100A.** These phones are similar in external appearance, with rather compact earpieces. The 200 has fairly firm padded ear seals; the 100A uses soft foam rubber cushions.

- **E-V/GAME HP-20.** These are fairly bulky but light phones, with relatively firm foam-filled ear seals. The cord is detachable, and includes a control box that can rest in the wearer's lap. The box has separate level controls for the two earpieces and a stereo/mono switch. Except for the 2½-foot straight section that contains the control box, the 25-foot cord is of the coiled type.

- **E-V/GAME HP-30X.** These are bulkier and heavier than the HP-20, with venting holes on the side of each earpiece. The ear seals are very soft, comfortable rings of plastic-covered foam.

- **KENWOOD KH-71.** This unusual headset has shallow earpieces, fitted with soft pads and ported on their rear surfaces. Over the back of each earpiece is a "clamshell"-shaped reflector, providing a small amount of isolation from ambient sounds. The vinyl-covered headband is well padded with plastic foam.

- **KOSS KRD-711.** The earpieces and headband of the KRD-711 (also known as the "Red Devil") are molded from bright red plastic. This phone is also available in black as the K-711. The ear cups of soft foam rubber are pressed rather firmly, but comfortably, against the ears by the springy plastic headband.

- **KOSS PRO-4AA.** These are professional-grade headphones, very ruggedly and heavily constructed. The liquid-filled pads seal the ears with great effectiveness, which may be the reason for the exceptional bass response. The left earpiece has mounting hardware for a communication microphone.

- **LAFAYETTE SP-55.** These are the least expensive phones of the group. The light molded-plastic earpieces are well made, with oval foam-rubber ear seals. The headband and earpiece yokes are lightly constructed, with a simple, snap-on air-filled vinyl jacket over the two wires of the headband. The earpieces dangle loosely from their yokes, with no tendency to face each other unless worn. The cord is rather short.

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JULY 1972
**LAFAYETTE F-990.** These are conventionally styled, with rather bulky earpieces and softly padded ear cushions and headband.

**MARTHEL MBK-68.** The oval earpieces are molded in black plastic, and black vinyl covers the single-piece spring-steel headband. The ear seals fit comfortably over the ears. These are among the lightest dynamic head-phones of the isolating type included in our tests.

**PIONEER SE-20A.** The rather bulky earpieces have vinyl-covered foam seals. The earpiece positioning range favors large heads (or hairdo’s) since we had to move them up as far as possible to use the phones.

**REALISTIC NOVA PRO.** Each earpiece has its own level control. The vinyl-covered foam seals are rectangular in shape, covering the ears effectively and without undue pressure.

**REALISTIC PRO-1.** This is indeed a “pro” phone, made for Radio Shack by Koss and closely resembling the Koss PRO-4AA in appearance, construction, and performance. Unlike the Koss version, the PRO-1 has a thumbwheel-operated volume control in each earpiece, and it has no microphone fitting. Its electrical impedance is also considerably higher than that of the PRO-4AA.

**SANSUI SS-2.** These light, inexpensive phones provide somewhat less isolation than most, but have very high efficiency and output, together with a sound quality comparable to some far more expensive phones.

**SHARPE 10B AND 770.** The oval ear seals are liquid filled and isolate with better-than-average effectiveness. The 10B headband fits rather tightly on the head, but can be bent out if necessary. The 770 headband was less tight and very comfortable to wear. The sound isolation afforded by the Sharpe ear seals is far greater than that of any other phones (the “deadness” one experiences when wearing them is not unlike that “heard” inside an anechoic chamber). Each earpiece of the 770 is individually fused and has its own volume control.

**SUPEREX ST-F.** These are the lightest of the conventional phones, perhaps because their construction in many respects resembles that of the group of non-isolating phones. The first 3½ feet of the cord leaving the phones is isolated, with a sliding clip that can fasten to the wearer’s clothing to isolate him from the drag of the remainder of the cord, which is coiled.

**SUPEREX ST-PRO-B VI.** These are relatively bulky phones, with the same coiled and straight cord system, with clip, used on the ST-F. Each earpiece contains a dynamic woofer and a ceramic tweeter.

**SYLVANIA SP-20.** This is physically a very “flat” headset, with earpieces of minimal depth. The headband is rather tight but is not uncomfortable with the liquid-filled cushions.

**TELEX STUDIO 1.** These are unusually bulky phones and are also among the heaviest tested. Ruggedly built, they have oval foam-rubber ear seals that make the earpieces look much larger than they really are. The mas- sive headband is also well padded. Each earpiece has its own slider-type volume control and a slider-type tone control able to boost bass and cut highs (or vice versa) at its extremes, while providing flat response in its center position.

### Non-Isolating Dynamic Phones

**AKG K-100.** The earpieces are simple plastic hemispheres, pivoting on the “ball joint” ends of a one-piece plastic headband. A padded insert band provides three positions of adjustment for different head sizes. Instead of the usual sealing cups, the flat surfaces of the earpieces are covered with thin plastic foam (about 1/8 inch thick), open in the center.

**FISHER HP-100.** Each earpiece is covered by a rounded rectangular slab of plastic foam, about 1/8 inch thick. Slightly larger than the ear, they fit comfortably
with firm pressure from the plastic-covered headband.

**OLSON PH-192.** Externally these phones look quite conventional, with bulky earpieces and soft ear cushions. However, the back of each earpiece is open (perforated grilles are used), eliminating any isolation provided by the cushions. Each earpiece has a slider-type volume control.

**PIONEER SE-L20 AND SE-L40.** These are also "open" phones, but the round foam earpads are smaller than the ear (about 2 inches in diameter) and give a somewhat different sensation to the wearer. Except for their colors, cord lengths, and prices, the SE-L20 and SE-L40 appear to be identical. They use detented stops for setting the earpiece position—an arrangement that we found very convenient.

**SENNHEISER HD-414.** In basic design and construction, these phones resemble some of the other units, except that the round foam earpads are softer, about ¾ inch thick, and approximately the size of the ear. The headband is of one-piece plastic construction. These are, by a wide margin, the lightest headphones we have worn.

### Electrostatic Phones

**KOSS ESP-9.** The headset is similar in external construction to the Koss PRO-4AA, even to the inclusion of a communication-mike mounting stud. The 5-foot cable plugs into an energizer control unit, approximately 4 x 5 x 7 inches. From this unit, a 6-foot cable goes to the amplifier's speaker terminals. Terminals are provided on the energizer box for connecting the displaced speaker leads, and a switch feeds the amplifier outputs either to the speakers or to the phones. Another switch on the energizer can be set for AC or SE (self-energized) operation. In the latter mode it is necessary to drive the phones momentarily to a high volume to develop polarizing voltage, after which the level can be reduced. This procedure is not required when AC operation is employed, in which case the energizer unit is plugged into a wall outlet by means of the detachable line cord provided.

**LAFAYETTE F-2001.** This phone is used with a totally self-energized (no a.c. line cord) control unit, measuring about 3 ¾ x 2 ¼ x 6 inches. Sockets are provided for the simultaneous use of two Lafayette electrostatic headsets. Nine-foot leads go to the amplifier outputs, and a switch in the rear of the energizer drops the volume by 3 dB when required. Like the other electrostatic energizer/control boxes, this one has a switch to reconnect the speakers. The oval-shaped earpieces are light in weight, rather shallow, and large in diameter. Although they have soft foam-filled cushions, they are much larger than the ear and for this reason provide little acoustical isolation.

**STANTON ISOFAHSE MK III.** These headsets present an unusual appearance. The large earpieces, with rectangular pads, are freely pivoted at the ends of a large springy headband. A padded plastic cover at the top of the band has a knob that extends or contracts the two ends of the band for a proper fit. These are extremely light phones, and the band exerts little pressure on the head. Nevertheless, the isolation is moderately good, and the phones can be worn for extended periods without fatigue. The energizer/control box, which measures about 3 x 5 ¼ x 8 inches, is a.c.-powered, with a switch to reconnect the speakers. The speaker leads go to spring-loaded connectors mounted on the cable from the energizer about a foot or two from the amplifier. The energizer contains protective circuits to prevent damage to the phones by excessive playing levels. An extreme overload will trip one or both of the control box's circuit breakers, and pushing one of the red buttons resets the breaker to re-activate the phones.

**SUPEREX PEP-77C.** The headset is conventional

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**Images:**
- Sharpe 770
- Superex ST-F
- Superex ST-Pro-B VI
- Sylvania SP20
- Pioneer SE-L20
- Pioneer SE-L40
- Sennheiser HD-414
- Koss ESP-9
in appearance, with fairly bulky but light earpieces and comfortable seals. The energizer/control box can be operated from the a.c. line or self-energized. It has two sockets for simultaneous operation of two headsets, and individual level controls for the two channels with a range of about 20 dB. There is also a switch to reconnect the speakers. The energizer has an attractive walnut cabinet and measures 3¼ x 6½ x 11 inches.

How They Sounded

When surveying such a large group of phones, it is difficult, if not impossible, to comment on the sound of each one in any meaningful manner. As with speakers, when several good but imperfect devices are compared, how does one decide "objectively" which combination of imperfections produces the most satisfactory performance?

Our task was simplified somewhat by one indisputable (to us, at least) fact: among the phones we tested, the Koss ESP-9's were outstanding enough in both sound and measurements to serve as a comparison standard for the others. (It may be argued that designating one out of a group of units such as this—even the "best" one—as a standard is to risk invidious comparison. In most cases, this would be true, but in the case of headphones, the real comparison, inevitably, is the one that all of us—consciously or unconsciously—make, not with another set of headphones, but with our experience of loudspeakers. However, since headphones do furnish another kind of aural experience, one that is in many ways unique, we concede the injustice of a loudspeaker comparison and present our alternative: the admittedly rather arbitrary choice of the ESP-9 phones as "standard.") Except for a minor dip at about 8,500 Hz, our measured response curve agreed, within very close limits, with the Koss machine-run curve supplied with each ESP-9. Since we were using a nonstandard coupler (see Technical Talk, page 29) an overall response of ±3 dB from 24 to 15,500 Hz is nothing less than remarkable.

The Superex and Stanton electrostatic phones, though not quite as smooth as the ESP-9, had a similar frequency range and a sound quality we judged to be superior to any of the dynamic phones. These three headphones, very different in appearance and feel, are certainly the cream of the crop. Of course, they exact a price, both in dollars and in a certain degree of inconvenience and clumsiness in use. The Stanton phones were also somewhat limited in the maximum volume they could handle without distorting or tripping their circuit breakers. But unless you like to listen to rock music at live-concert levels, this will not present any problems. The Lafayette F-2001, much cheaper than the others in this group, was not in their class, sonically speaking. The highs were muted and there was noticeable mid-range coloration. A number of dynamic phones, both lower and higher in price, sounded better.

The non-isolating dynamic phones had, for the most part, an open, natural quality that we found highly pleasing. The AKG K-100, with a slightly thin bass, delivered a higher level of sound without distortion (at middle and high frequencies) than any other phone in the group, though it was given close competition by the AKG K-150. Fisher and Sennheiser had a very similar sound character, but the Fisher could be driven to distortion by heavy bass that did not faze the Sennheiser. Pioneer's two models had the same low-frequency limitation as the Fisher, with slightly less high-frequency response. Olson's PH-192 had poor high-frequency response, and was heavily unbalanced toward the bass. We felt that Sennheiser and Fisher, in that order, gave the best sound in this group, although some of the others came very close to matching them. (Remember that these phones can be heard plainly by other people near the listener even at moderate playing levels.)

As you may have gathered, headphones, like loudspeakers, tend to overload and distort most readily at the lowest frequencies, where the dia-
Phragm excursion is greatest. If you listen to organ, rock, or electronic music at very high volume levels this could present a problem with many phones. We made a rough, purely subjective evaluation of the relative low-frequency overload properties of the phones by listening to rock music with them, using bass boost in the amplifier and increasing the volume until distortion could be clearly heard.

The non-isolating phones, as a group, did not fare well in this type of operation. Although very well suited to more moderate levels, or when bass content is not predominant, it seems that this design does not lend itself to very heavy bass reproduction. The conventional headphones could all be driven to distortion with ease, but some proved more resistant than others. The best, somewhat to our surprise, was the moderately priced Lafayette F-990, followed closely by the Koss PRO-4AA and Realistic PRO-1. Any of these phones could develop ear-popping bass levels without distress, and the Lafayette's high-frequency response limitations should not impair its effectiveness for this type of program material.

In respect to loud, heavy bass performance, the Lafayette SP-55, Pioneer SE-20A, Realistic Nova Pro, all the Sharpe models, and the Telex phones were somewhat poorer than average; all the others were roughly comparable. The electrostatic phones are really not at their best in this type of service, but the Koss and Lafayette were nearly as good as the average dynamic phone, the SupereX slightly better, and the Stanton considerably below average (which could be inferred from its middle- and high-frequency overload limits). Let me repeat: if very loud low-bass reproduction is not your bag, then the other criteria should be given precedence.

With the conventional (isolating) phones, there were many whose sound left little to be desired. At the top of the performance scale, we were favorably impressed with the two Beyer phones, the two Koss dynamic phones, Martel, Realistic PRO-1, Sharpe 770, and the two SupereX phones. In view of their modest prices, the Sylvania SP-20 and Sansui SS-2 represent "best buys." The SupereX ST-F, a relatively low-price phone, shared with the Sennheiser HD-414 the distinction of having the smoothest overall frequency response and best tone-burst response among the dynamic phones. The ST-F had very little acoustic isolation, but enough to distinguish it from the totally non-isolating types. The Telex Studio 1, although it had a somewhat ragged high-end response, could be made to sound almost any way one wished with its versatile tone-control system. The others fell below the above-named units, and we will not attempt to comment on them individually.

It is apparent that price bears no more necessary relation to sound quality with headphones than it does with speakers. One can get remarkably good sound from some moderately priced phones. On the other hand, one can pay several times as much and get sound which, if not actually worse, is certainly not proportionately better. When the other factors—sound isolation, comfort, appearance, bulk and weight, and personal preferences in sound—are considered, it is evident that dogmatic statements about headphone choices are risky. We will limit our foolishness to what has already been said—and urge anyone contemplating buying a pair of headphones to compare them, if possible, with the Koss ESP-9. To be sure, not everyone will wish to invest $150 or wear a somewhat heavy and bulky headset. Even so, it is nice to know just how good a headphone can sound!
A WALTUN-PANELED, Mediterranean-style cabinet containing a variety of lighting fixtures enhances the equipment of Greg Bostrom of Burlingame, California. Behind a yellow glass panel in the top of the cabinet there are three dimmer lights which shine down on the components below. A decorative touch is added by two flicker-flame lights, one above an Ampex 1150 tape deck (right), the other above a four-channel Teac TCA-42 tape deck (left). Both tape machines are on shelves with a forward tilt for ease of operation. Below each recorder is a psychedelic light; one is connected to pulsate with the left stereo channel, and the other with the right. The switches that control all these lights are in two hidden compartments, one just below the electronics for the Teac tape machine on the left of the installation, the other immediately beneath the Realistic STA-65B receiver on the right.

Above the STA-65B there is another receiver—a Kenwood TK-66—to complete the four-channel facilities. An Ampex Micro 85 cassette recorder is on the shelf above a Dual 1009 SK turntable (using both the Pickering V-15/ACE-3 and V-15/AT-3 cartridges), which slides out for easy access. The section below the components is for record storage; tapes are stored in a matching cabinet.

The installation, which is on casters so that it can be swung out for servicing, can also be used as a room divider. In the living room where the installation is located there are four speaker systems: a pair of Bose 901 speakers, plus the speakers that came with the Micro 85 recorder. These serve as the two rear channels for four-channel listening.

Mr. Bostrom, a twenty-three-year-old jeweler, built the installation himself. In addition to classical music, he listens mostly to Broadway musical albums and movie soundtracks. — Paulette Weiss
Pianist Stephen Bishop and conductor Colin Davis, who collaborated a year or so back on a sublime account of Beethoven’s Fifth Piano Concerto for Philips, have now followed up that success with an equally resplendent version of the First. The virtues of the earlier disc—a majestic ease of pacing in the conception of the piano part, an unfailing perceptiveness in the realization of orchestral possibilities, and a spacious, naturally balanced recording quality—are all in evidence again in the new release. But though the performers approach their tasks this time with the same air of sane sensitivity they displayed before, they are fully aware of the difference between the Beethoven of this relatively early concerto and the Beethoven of the last one.

There is, indeed, a superficial resemblance between the first movements in these two concertos, in that both take up a quasi-military four-square pulse and a rather formal expressive tone. But Bishop, who made the first movement of No. 5 an experience of awe-inspiring architectural solidity, appropriately finds a quality of springiness—almost skittishness—in No. 1, and the feeling is conveyed not by any fanciful ideas about the phrasing, but through the extreme lightness and clarity of his execution in the many stretches of sixteenth-note passagework.

This air of sharp—though never heartless—definition is matched by an orchestral contribution that brilliantly captures the fresh, breezy tang of the young Beethoven’s wind writing and the unprecedented dynamic vigor of his orchestral style at this period. Particularly characteristic and telling is Davis’ observant differentiation between fortissimo and sforzando on the frequent occasions when the one marking is closely followed by the other—it is the difference between massive strength and tigerish pounce, and both are beautifully projected.

Bishop and Sviatoslav Richter are artists one might not think of as particularly similar in interpretive approach. Yet this Bishop performance seems to me broadly reminiscent of the likewise unfussy interpretation Richter attempted in his Victrola version of the concerto. But whereas Richter was hampered by a conductor (Charles Munch) with a view of the music quite unrelated to his, Bishop and Davis seem perfectly at one in their conception of it.

The unforced lyricism of the slow movement and the exuberance of the finale complete the design admirably, and the recording is excellent both tonally and in its placing of the piano within the orchestral context.

Curiously, the recording of the early C Minor Sonata that follows is slightly less satisfactory, for here the piano tone is a little lacking in body at times. But that is a small flaw. Bishop’s performance is again conceived with marvelous overall cogency (although I wish he
had observed the repeat in the finale!, and he achieves some breathtakingly feathery pianissimos in the central Adagio molto.

Altogether, this is a distinguished addition to what I hope will soon be an integral series of the five concertos.

Bernard Jacobson


MONTSERRAT CABALLÉ: A HEROINE IN VERDI

Her new recital for Angel is another opportunity to hear a voice that is a wonder of the world.

NORMALLY, it is hard for a record critic to justify one more predictable round of familiar and much-recorded scenes from Verdi operas, whoever the artist may be, except . . . well, except when the artist is Montserrat Caballé. Her new program of Verdi arias for Angel offers the most luxuriant vocalizing any lover of singing nowadays can acquire or ask for. Her creamy tones tumble forth in all their seductive splendor, and the evenness of her scale from the ripe, well-supported mid-range to the effortless highest reaches is a wonder of the world. And those stunning pianissimos!

It is perhaps footless to point out “high spots” in a recording that is made up of nothing else, but I would like to call your attention to the ethereal B-flat on the phrase “Invan la pace” in the aria from La forza del destino, as well as the absolutely ideal “thread of a voice” Verdi prescribed for the ending of the Sleepwalking Scene. (Verdi also wanted an “unattractive” timbre for the interpreter of Lady Macbeth, but this, fortunately, is one requirement that is beyond Caballé’s reach.) She also takes the high C in “O patria mia” on a diminuendo. This is contrary to the wish of the composer, who asked for a swell at this point—but, however inappropriate, the effect is undeniably beautiful.

Caballé sculpts her phrases aristocratically and responds to the texts sensitively. Her dramatic involvement in the music she sings, though not ideal, is certainly more than acceptable—to sing so divinely and be a Callas interpretively as well is to ask of Providence more than it is right to. The orchestral backgrounds are effective, though with an occasional leisurely indulgence.

George Jellinek

VERDI: La forza del destino: Pace, pace, mio dio; La Vergine degli angeli. Aida: O patria mia; Ritorna vincitore! Macbeth: Una macchia è qui tutt’ora (Sleepwalking Scene). Otello: Willow Song; Ave Maria. Montserrat Caballé (soprano); Elizabeth Bainbridge (mezzo-soprano, in Macbeth and Willow Song); Thomas Allen (baritone, in Macbeth). Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Anton Guadagno cond. ANGEL S 36830 $5.98.

ENTERTAINMENT

J. F. MURPHY SINGS LIKE AN ANGEL

Elektra introduces a jaunty new group whose musical recipe is a blend of rock and Irish

Mr. J. F. Murphy, an energetic young Irishman who looks a little like Arlo Guthrie and sings a lot like an angel, has been scoring a big success with his lively group Salt on college campuses around the country, offering songs that combine the charms of Gaelic music with an up-to-the-minute modern beat. His vocalists — Ron Allard, Joe Pari no, and Russell Warnolts — not only join their talented leader in song but also accompany him expertly on flutes, saxophones, tambourines, harmonicas, maracas, chimes, and bagpipes while Bob Pavia manages to work up plenty of excitement on a set of drums.

Now they can all be heard on a new Elektra release, singing, among other stirring ballads, If Wishes Were Horses, their song of hate for hatred. It is
already a hit, and its quality makes that fact understandable, but there is also much to be said for The Example, a ballad about the Easter uprising in Dublin in 1916, Silver Horn, based on an Irish myth about a youth who manages to pass himself off as a leprechaun, and Waiting Hymn of the Republic, a dirge for a young man “dressed in tan” who dies in battle.

In addition to exhibiting the virtues of vitality, variety, and verve, Murphy and his friends also supply the quality, so rare in contemporary music, of high-spirited humor. What it all adds up to is the musical equivalent of a new shade of green, the sprouting of a hardy plant rooted in the auld sod of Eire but as fresh as a sprig of clover. Some of the best songs are socially conscious enough, but a more personal side of Murphy’s art is revealed in such lyrics as the nostalgic Soft September, with its mood of longing for a sunny autumn afternoon on a hill where the “flowers of May linger . . . while the North wind is pining.” He sings that one in a voice as full of ardor and intensity as Bob Dylan’s, but with a simplicity and lack of anger that can celebrate the wonder of a leaf without having to question its politics.

The entire program is unflaggingly delightful, and song texts are supplied to let you share all the words as well as the jaunty music. A really special album; as for the “salt” in the title, sure, and there’s enough of that.

J. F. MURPHY & SALT. J. F. Murphy and Salt (vocals and instrumentals). The Example; First Born; Waiting Hymn of the Republic; Silver Horn; If Wishes Were Horses; Soft September; Country Jam; Kansas City. Elektra 75024 $5.98, 85024 $6.98, 63 55024 $6.98.

J. F. MURPHY & SALT
Exhibiting vitality, variety, and verve

ERIC CLAPTON, ALL-AROUND STAR
A new double-disc release from Atco is a neat retrospective of an eventful career

Contrariness is a trait quite often associated with critics, and it is usually thought to be at least a weakness in their judgment if not a real flaw in their character. Personally and contrarily, I find contrariness adds zest to most viewpoints, and can even lead to fascinating new experiences. For example, I don’t much like the music of Cream, Blind Faith, Derek and the Dominos, and, ‘way on back, the Yardbirds. But I dig Eric Clapton. This is a particularly acute example of my contrariness, for I know full well that, in each group I have just named, Eric has been lead guitarist, vocalist, and general all-around star. And that is why I like Atco’s new album called “The History of Eric Clapton,” a random sampling of his hero’s participation in various musical groups—because it captures and preserves in neat summation his versatility and growth as an artist in a musical genre (confused rock) with which I otherwise have little patience.

In the beginning, there were the Yardbirds, manufacturers of a raw, gutsy, vomitous clatter sustained as music only by Clapton’s capacity for being heard above the din. Musical sophistication doesn’t enter this picture until we get to the point on side one where Clapton appears with the super-creeps, Cream, doing the super-hit Sunshine of Your Love. That’s not much, as sophistication goes, but it's
something—one can feel some of the excitement of Clapton’s conceptions forming in his music.

In general, I find that the first two sides of this four-side collection are rather coarse, only occasionally providing clues to the development and refinement as a musician that Clapton reveals on the other two sides. All but one of the items presented in this album will be familiar to (having already been celebrated by) Clapton fans. Detailed criticism would therefore be redundant. It is enough to say that the lyricism that begins with side three’s Sea of Joy and runs right on through Layla (the final band in this generous and inexpensive collection) is boundless. I’m thankful such an album exists to help me follow and finally catch up to Clapton. The alternative is wading through all that garbage he had to endure while finding himself. The wonder of it all is that, with a past like this, Eric Clapton has probably only just begun. It wouldn’t surprise me at all if he also has quite a future.

Rex Reed

ERIC CLAPTON: The History of Eric Clapton. Eric Clapton (guitar and vocals); various accompanists. I Ain’t Got You; Hideaway: Tribute to Elmore; I Want to Know: Sunshine of Your Love; Crossroads; Spoonful; Badge; Sea of Joy; and seven others. ATCO SD 2/803 two discs $6.98, © J 803 $6.95, © M 8803 $6.95, © M 5803 $6.95.

THE SUBLIME CLARINET OF PEE WEE RUSSELL

His contributions to the Eddie Condon mid-Forties concerts are documented by Chiaroscuro Records

SOMEbody named Chiaroscuro (as in black and white?) Records (see address below) has just released a fine disc documentation of Pee Wee Russell’s contribution to the series of jazz concerts mounted by Eddie Condon at New York’s Town Hall in 1944-1945. The shows featured the best musicians then in New York, and their audiences, both in the hall and on radio, were understandably both large and happy. But that was when jazz wasn’t too proud to play for people, and people didn’t have to worry about whether they had the proper politico-socio-racio-psycho credentials just to listen, much less worship. Happy days.

Chiaroscuro’s new release, part of a projected series to be drawn from radio transcriptions, reminds us of all that by focusing on that sublime clarinetist Pee Wee Russell, an artist who had Frank Teschemacher’s rough tone plus his own wonderful-ly serene imagination. Many of the items included have been scraped off wartime Armed Forces Radio Service transcription discs, so there are some epic scratches and pops. We have our own troubles today, but they are as nothing compared with those posed by recording quality then: balances are often so cockeyed that the rhythm section is completely inaudible, and the effect is as if the whole band has lost its way in the middle of the tune and is about to come crashing down making little balloon noises.

I must say too that it’s slightly irritating that there aren’t any separation grooves between the selections, but that’s all right, for there is some marvelous music. Condon was from the Chicago gang, that small commando squad of a dozen or so musicians who played the first independent white jazz. Some died or just faded away, but most of them wound up in New York along with Condon, who became as important an entrepreneur as he was a fine musician. Neo-Chicago jazz (we might as well call it “Condon jazz”) always kept its youthful aggressiveness and confidence. The music here shows it—it is I-can-lick-anybody-with-one-hand-tied-behind-my-back jazz, whether ballad or blast-off stomp. It is also sheer pleasure and thumping adventure, masterful music played by the masters. Would they all please come back?

 Joel Vance

THE EDDIE CONDON CONCERTS FEATURING PEE WEE RUSSELL: Town Hall 1944-1945. Eddie Condon (guitar); Pee Wee Russell, Ernie Caceres, and Joe Marsala (clarinets); Bobby Hackett, Max Kaminsky, and Muggsy Spanier (trumpets); Lou McGarity, Miff Mole, and Benny Morton (trombones); Ernie Caceres (bass sax); Gene Schroeder and Jess Stacy (piano); Bob Casey, Bob Haggart, Jack Lesberg, and Sid Weiss (bass); Gene Krupa and Joe Grauso (drums). China Boy; Clarinet Chase; Pennies from Heaven; Improper Ensemble Nos. 1 and 2; Rosetta; Memphis Blues; Pee Wee Blues; I’d Climb the Highest Mountain; and five others. CHIAROSCURO 108 $5.98 (available by mail from Chiaroscuro, 15 Charles St., New York, N.Y. 10014).
How to read a hi-fi ad

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On Columbia Records.
BACH, J. S.: Orgelbüchlein (BWV 599-644).
Helmut Walcha (Silbermann Organ of the Church of Saint-Pierre-le-Jeune, Strasbourg),
DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIVE 2533
083/4 two discs $13.96.

Performance: Walcha's stereo remake
Recording: Very good

Helmut Walcha first recorded the brief forty-five chorale-preludes that make up Bach's Orgelbüchlein ("Little Organ Book") between 1950 and 1952. That was the period when the blind German organist was recording all of Bach's organ works, a project he has been resuming in more recent years for stereo. Among the many magnificent interpretations from those earlier times, none were more impressive than Walcha's sensitive handling of the chorale settings, the eighteen great chorale-preludes, the Schübler set, those of the third part of the Clavierübung (the organ Mass), and, of course, the Orgelbüchlein. Somehow Walcha caught the very essence of the chorales—the meaning behind the text, the strength and firmness of each individual setting. That earlier recording of the Orgelbüchlein has for a number of years been out of print, but in spite of its somewhat faded (though still respectable) sonics, it's worth hunting for if you can find it.

The new recording, made on a different instrument in a slightly too reverberant church in Strasbourg, shows Walcha's usual command over his instrument, but the results, at least in part, seem a little disappointing in comparison with his previous achievement. For one thing, whether through the church acoustics or the microphone placement, some lines do not emerge clearly. "In dulci jubilo," with a muddy inner texture and a somewhat reticent bass line, is a case in point. Secondly, Walcha, whose rhythmic solidity is one of his strongest attributes, sounded stolid and inflexible on occasion even in some of his older recordings. In the new Orgelbüchlein a great deal of the playing (for example, most of side one) seems rhythmically hidebound—the glow that makes his earlier recording such a transcendent experience is only partially felt here. One place it does occur is in the Passion chorale, "O Mensch, bewein! dein! Sünde gross," and here Walcha even manages to better his previous performance of this, one of Bach's most moving and extraordinary chorale settings. Walcha's relaxed and poetic playing and conducts, avoids the material excesses of vast, continuous-less orchestrations on the nineteenth-century pattern. But reducing your forces to reasonably Bachian proportions is only the first part of the battle for authentic performance. Alice Harmoncourt, in a superb Telefunken recording with her husband Niko-
laus: Concentus Musicus, has shown us how this music should really sound, and our ears—or at least mine—can never again respond as they formerly did to the surging phrases, romantic vibrato, and smoothed-out dynamics of a Zukerman playing a modern instrument, however appropriately modest the orchestral setting.

On the other hand, if you like your Bach this way, then this is the way you will like it. Zukerman, even at twenty-five, is probably the greatest master of his instrument now before the public, and his performances offer a perfectly valid alternative to those of Os-
strakh, Stern, Milstein, and Szeryng in roughly similar styles. The recording, like the performance, is just a bit too big, which probably reflects its intention accurately enough.

B. J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT


Performance: Excellent
Recording: A bit squishy

I didn't much care for the squishy piano sound on this recording, but I liked almost everything else about it. Curzon's "Eroica" Variations are not pushed in the (often mock) epic direction that most pianists, inspired more by the associations than the music itself, love to take this work. This is by any account a beautiful, measured, and poetic performance, as varied in its character as the music itself.

Curzon's rather intimate, expressive, and articulated way of playing is even more effective in the Schubert Moments musicaux (the liner notes correct Schubert's quaint French to "musicaux"). The simple, fresh, exquisite poetry of these first blooms of early Romanticism are perfectly realized in shape and color by Curzon.

The piano sound gives the impression of its having been recorded in a small but over-reverberant room: often it has the unpleasant effect of sounding as if the damper pedal is being used throughout. Tape and surface noise are low enough, however, so that it is possible to brighten up the sound a bit with the treble control, or else. I suppose, to get used to the

CLIFFORD CURZON
Measured and poetic piano playing

This is Bach of what might be called the "inter-
mediate" school. Zukerman, who both

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS:
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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

JULY 1972
sound and become absorbed entirely in the music and its masterfully interpretation. E. S.

BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 1; Piano Sonata No. 5 (see Best of the Month, page 67)

BERG: Piano Sonata, Op. 1 (see SCRIABIN)

BRAHMS: Part-Songs for Female Voices (see CHARPENTIER)


Performance: Collector's Items

Records: Dim but listenable

Examples of the late Arthur Loesser's remarkable piano performances have been limited mainly to recordings of "live" concerts from the last few years of his life. Here's a fascinating sample of the pianist at a much earlier stage of his career. The piano sonata recording was originally made for the small firm Friends of Recorded Music in 1937. For years, even well into the LP era, this was the only recorded performance of Brahms' sprawling Op. 2 Sonata to be had. Later versions (including Katchen's) are understandably superior in sound, but no one has caught the essence of this early Brahms as Loesser did. The reproduction is thin, the piano tone shallow, and the dynamics flat, yet it is possible to look beyond sonic deficiencies and enjoy the strength and lyricism of Loesser's stylish interpretation.

The same applies to the violin sonata, in which Loesser is partner to the Russian violinist Tosca Seidel (1899-1964), a pupil of Leopold Auer. Seidel, whose tone reminiscences one of the aristocratic elegance of Heifetz (another Auer pupil), had an extremely fine reputation during the Twenties and Thirties, though he virtually retired from public performance during the last decades of his life. He made relatively few discs, certainly almost none of large-scale works, but he did record the present sonata for Columbia in 1931 (and the Brahms Op. 100 with Loesser at another label). The style, of course, involves considerably more use of portamento (sliding from one note to another) than we are used to, but the interpretation as such is not oversentimental. Rather, it is a well-controlled performance, expressive without being indulgent, and quite flowing. In many ways it reminded me of the legendary Op. 108 Sonata recording by Paul Kochanski and Artur Rubinstein, though that roughly contemporary interpretation is warmer.

The transfers from '78's have been done quite carefully, though too much treble has been rolled off for my taste. But if you enjoy Brahms closer to the source, do try this disc.

T.K.


Performance: Perfunctory

Recording: Nothing special

The Bruckner Sixth is probably that composer's most intense and high-strung work, and this is a performance of it with scarcely enough energy for a Pfitzner Adagio. Everything is correct and in good taste; nothing takes off. In short, a bad case of the Bruckner blues. E. S.

MARC-ANTOINE CHARPENTIER: La Peste de Milan. SCHUBERT: Nachthelle, Op. 134; Ständchen, Op. 135. BRAHMS: Part-songs for Female Voices, Two Horns, and Harp, Op. 17. Kate Hurney (soprano); Joy Buckett (mezzo); Leo Goecke and Sidney Johnson (tenors); Chester Watson (bass); Frederick Renz (organ); Alexander Kougueli (cello); Charles Wadsorth (piano); Ruth Neger (harp); Anthony Miranda and Albert Richmond (horns); Musica Aeterna Chamber Orchestra and Chorus, Frederic Waldman cond. DECCA DL 79437 $5.98.

Performance: Bad

Recording: Poor

On a bargain label, this attractive though oddly mixed program might have earned an easy recommendation from me. The full price poor to get into print. The last of these four pieces, the Gesang aus Fingal on an Ossian text, has some evocative passages in which we can perceive the seeds of the Deutsches Requiem style. The performances on this side are not ungrammatical like that of the Charpentier, but they are not particularly idiomatic or sensitive either. Curiosity value only.

B.J.


Performance: By and large believable

Recording: Fair piano sound

This is a recent recording of Cortot piano rolls on a Duo-Art Steinway. It opens with a horrendous performance of the E Major Étude—all fits and starts, angles and bumbles; Cord to the piano roll? The reproducing mechanism? Extraordinarily enough, the rest of these performances are attractive and very convincing. The arpeggiated rolls in the "Raindrop" Prelude amount to a transcription of the piece (too? Chopin didn't think so), and there are other questionable points. But these performances are certainly authentic, and there is a delicacy and a poetic charm that must reflect Cortot's piano style.

The piano sound is variable: the rather muffling tone may be the result of the recording as much as the instrument. The presentation is long on enthusiasm and short on information—for example, we are not given any idea when the original rolls were made. The record is one of a series of Duo-Art and Am- pico restorations produced by Hal Powell, a Los Angeles audio engineer and piano-roll buff. Certainly the project has merit. E. S.

DONIZETTI: Roberto Devereux: Ed ancor a te... Morell ser dilieri: Una furtive lagrima, La Favorita: Spiro gentil; Lucia di Lamermoor: Tomb Scene and Finale; Don Pasquale: Povero Ernesto. Barry Morell (tenor); Vienna Volksoper Orchestra, Argeo Quadri cond. RCA LSC 3221 $5.98.

Performance: Well sung

Recording: Good, but not outstanding

Except for "Una furtive lagrima," these excerpts are seldom heard out of context, and Barry Morell, a well-schooled, versatile, and generally unadorned artist, carries them off in an impressive manner. His tone is bright and attractive, his intonation pure: his enunciation exceptionally fine. At times he pushes the voice a bit too hard, but it is not unpleasantly so, and he can comfortably embrace the high tessitura. Without being in absolutely sovereign command of Donizetti's demanding writing, Morell acquires himself more creditably in this repertoire than some of his more highly thought-of colleagues would.

The total picture, however, is somewhat dimmed by its surrounding frame: Quadri is a metronomic, often uninspired conductor, particularly in the concluding portion of the Devereux scene, which he takes at a lethargic pace. The orchestra is less than first-class, and the work of the trumpet soloist in the Don Pasquale aria might be characteristically described as nonvirtuoso.

G.J.

(Continued on page 78)
The best speaker system you can buy for under $100 is the new Scott Design 51

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Musical fads are intriguing to the armchair sociologist in the way they rise, hit their peak, and then decline. In recent years, as I am sure most readers have observed, fads associated with Baroque music, Indian classical music, the Moog synthesizer, and certain composers (Nielsen, Satie, and Scriabin are prime examples) have come and perhaps gone. And now we seem to be through one associated with the piano virtuosos of the middle and late nineteenth century.

Describing the flury of interest in these things as a “fad” may sound like denigration; if you want to be nice about it, all means call it a musical trend. But for me, “trend” somehow has a more permanent sound than “fad.” And, at least from the standpoint of merchandising records, these fads, for the record companies are often able to induce or heighten interest in a particular area and saturate the market; then, when the record buyer no longer responds, they seek the next likely commercial bet.

But, beyond commercial considerations, there is the matter of changing tastes. Take the “Romantic revival:” for instance. There was a period not many years ago when Liszt operatic transcriptions were anathema. They were considered poor, empty music whose virtuoso dash was a thing of the musy Romantic past. They belonged to the works of Schumann’s Songs Without Words and Sinding’s Rustles of Spring, evocations of sentimentalism and overblown emotion. Naturally, those Lissitzian chandeleir shakers, like their counterparts by Scharwenka, Balakirev, Alkan, and Henkel, were not considered pieces to be thought of as the old parlor grand. They required the Fingerfertigkeit of a highly skilled virtuoso. And even more, they required a performer of Romantic sensibilities, not necessarily a lover, but a personality of the keyboard, one who was not afraid to let himself go, to dazzle, even to seduce the audience with his showmanship.

Well, the middle years of this century, especially after the Second World War, took care of that, from then on, with remarkable growing tendency to forget showmanship and concentrate on more cerebral musical matters. Along with it came a more dutilful attitude toward the composer and his written score. As a result, we have built a large cadre of technically superb and interpretively faceless prodigies, efficient products of the scientific age, all of them about as colorful and exciting as a bowl of cornflakes.

So something seems to be missing. Is there just enough of a surfeit of cool intellectuality now as years earlier, there was a surfeit of Romantic extravagance? Perhaps we are seeing yet another change in taste, another part of the “trend” that made Love Story such a cinematic success. Historically, does not repeat itself; and it is an oversimplification to say that we are moving into another Romantic Age. However, feelings may once again be expressed without shame, whether in print, on the screen, or in musical performance. And with the new emotional climate a new breed of pianistic heroes is rising, a phalanx of digital virtuosos unabashedly romantic in their approach, who have begun to resurrect composers and pieces we would have looked down our noses at not too many years ago. Raymond Lewenthal, Earl Wild, Michael Ponti, and Frank Cooper come immediately to mind, but there are others as well, including a few who never really abandoned the old school. Horowitz and Rubinstein, regardless of their widely differing styles, still represent the old grand manner of the keyboard performer. With them, even when they might not have wished it to be so, it was the performer who was in the spotlight, less so the music itself—Horowitz’s Liszt, say, rather than Liszt played by Horowitz.

Jorge Bolet and some thoughts on the Romantic Revival

By Igor Kipnis

But is all of this Romantic-revival music worth resurrecting? Of course not. There are good pieces and there are bad ones—though it must be admitted that even the bad ones can be fun if rendered with appropriate spirit. That spirit is manifest in virtuoso bravura, panache, elegance, refinement, lots of color, a devil-may-care attitude, and good old-fashioned gusto. Merely playing the notes of Liszt’s arrangement of Schumann’s Frühlingsnacht, for example, or the Schulze-Ever piano setting of The Blue Danube, isn’t enough. When you hear such a keyboard giant as Josef Lhevinne play these (and you can on RCA Victor 1544), they are delightful larks, effervescent examples of Romantic pianism. And his use of color, tone, and shading! It is precisely because I have heard Lhevinne’s recordings of these pieces that I can’t get too enthusiastic about some of today’s neo-Romantics: the equipment is there, but there is not too great a generation gap. Few among the pianists of today manage to bridge it; far too many of them stumble and miss the beat, twentieth-century men merely reading the music through cracked nineteenth-century glasses.

One example of the astigmatism that results can be heard on an album of Liszt transcriptions fashionably (though not very accurately) titled “Franz Liszt’s Greatest Hits of the 1850’s.” Jorge Bolet, an admirable performer, is the pianist, and let me say right out front that there is not one piece on the disc that is poorly played or ill-conceived. Bolet has made some excellent Liszt recordings in the past. Unlike several of his contemporaries, he has not yet committed to discs works by lesser nineteenth-century composers, and his reputation is in fact very much based on his playing of Liszt. Tonally he is not a�n artist—at least on records the hard, electric-typewriter touch. And he is not a speed demon: temps are graceful and leisurely, perhaps at times even too much so, for I often itched for a little more daredevilry, less temperature and complacency. But this is not a serious objection. What, then, is wrong?

Liszt’s setting of the Spinning Chorus from The Flying Dutchman is as good an example as any. Bolet plays it very well indeed—far better, for example, than Louis Bohnen on his Turnabout album. Try comparing Bolet’s version, however, with Padreewski’s acoustic recording of the same piece, once available as part of RCA’s collection “Keyboard Giants of the Past, Volume 2” (LM 2824). Even 1924 sound cannot dull Padreewski’s sprightliness and humor. And the filigree! Bolet’s playing, in contrast, is heavy, sober, and utterly serious. He bats out the filigree—the scamporous succession of scales and decorations—with great glibness of finger, but no substance of palate. Invariably it is as loud as the main material, and the effect is all wrong. Compare, too, Padreewski’s and Bolet’s emphasis of the little off-the-beat grace-note figure near the beginning. Bolet is perfectly matter-of-fact; Padreewski set the fashion for the piece with appreciation. I own a one-sided acoustic disc of the Rigoletto paraphrase played by Alfred Cortot (neither he nor Padreewski was as limited technically as their later reputations intimate). The same is true here. Bolet handles the notes with uncommon dexterity. So, too, did Cortot, but he has the requisite elegance as well, and he separates the important melodic passages from the decorative figurations.

But the first of a series of recordings by Bolet, who has just signed a three-year contract with RCA. The series will presumably be taking advantage of the new interest in the Romantic repertoire and should be worth waiting for because, with all my strictures, Jorge Bolet is a formidable pianist, one more closely attuned to the nineteenth-century style than a good many of his younger contemporaries. The present recital, however, which was recorded in Spain, does not, for me, represent the ultimate in Liszt playing, and whether the fault is the instrument’s or the recording itself, bass heaviness and treble glassiness do obtrude. Let us hope that these problems will disappear when Bolet picks up the series in RCA’s own recording studios.

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JULY 1972

CIRCLE NO. 7 ON READER SERVICE CARD
DREYSCHOCK: Concert-Piece in C Minor, for Piano and Orchestra (see RAFF)

DUFAY: Missa Ave Regina Caesrorum; Motet, "Ave Regina Caesrorum" III; Lamentatio Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae; Rondeau, "Puisque vous estez campieur"; Ballade, "Se la face ay pale." Capella Cordina, Alejandro Planchart dir. LYRICHORD LLST 7233 $5.98

Performance: Commendable
Recording: Excellent

As with Planchart’s previous Du Fay recording on Lyrichord, his New Haven-based ensemble provides well-sung and well-played additions to the recorded repertoire of this most important fifteenth-century Franco-Flemish composer. A premiere here seems to be the Missa Ave Regina, composed about 1472 when Du Fay was at Cambrai and probably written for the consecration of that city’s cathedral. Based on a Gregorian antiphon (Dufay’s motet setting is also included here), the Mass is unusual for a number of technical details, including the manner in which the cantus firmus is varied for each section. More important than this, though, it is a magnifi-
cent, highly melismatic work. The next long-
est work is Dufay’s Lamentatio, an equally impressive piece that probably dates from 1453, and (though the program notes do not mention it) might have been written just after the Turks captured Constantinople, then the capital of the Eastern empire, and turned the Santa Sophia into a mosque. The disc is rounded off with an amusing rondeau, "Puisque vous estez campieur," which de-
picts a drinking contest, and Du Fay’s popular and often recorded ballade, "Se la face ay pale."

The performances, as indicated, are all per-
fectly satisfactory though not terribly refined vocally. One wonders, however, whether Du Fay might not profit from more concentra-
tion on expression: the lamentation sounds always cheerier as a drinking tournament rondeau. The acoustics of Yale’s Marquand Chapel provide excellent atmosphere for this program, which has been very effectively re-
corded, although a few moments of pre-echo are to be heard. English translations are pro-
vided for all items except the Mass.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT


Performance: Superb
Recording: Superb

It may be that this London disc is the first of a complete cycle of Dvořák’s five symphonic poems with István Kertész conducting—this to complement his earlier traversal of the nine Dvořák symphonies. If so, this record gets the project off to a fine start. The story line of The Golden Spinning Wheel couldn’t interest me less—Dvořák was no Richard Strauss in the art of narrative depiction and characteri-
ization—but ever since hearing the recordings of Beecham and Vaclav Talich, I have had a partiality for this piece, with its delightful tunes and gorgeous instrumentation.

As for the Symphonic Variations, skillfully fashioned as the score is, it can be a bore in anything less than a truly brilliant and inspired performance, such as Colin Davis’ for Philip-
ips. Fortunately the Kertész reading is in the same class, and I find The Golden Spinning Wheel a more interesting companion for it than the String Serenade on the Davis disc.

The London Symphony’s playing is abso-
lutely top-drawer, and the recorded sound is up to London’s very high standard.

D.H.

GLIÈRE: Symphony No. 3, in B Minor, Op. 42, "Ilia Mourometz." Philadelphia Orches-
tra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA LSC 3246 $5.98

Performance: Sleek and brilliant
Recording: Lacks body

Reinhold Glière’s cinematic narrative sym-
phony on the exploits of the legendary Rus-
ian hero Ilia Mourometz is a pre-Soviet product, skillfully crafted but thoroughly sec-
dond-hand in substance, a kind of Russian Wagnerism in the end movements mixed with Scriabin in the second movement. Even with cuts—as in all recorded performances except Hermann Scherchen’s 1953 Westminster is-
 sue—Ilia becomes pretty much an overblown before the final pages of petrifica-
tion. The second movement is the most ingen-
ious and original, and comes across as the most convincing in this. Ormandy’s second re-
cording of the work.

If the conductor had tried for a little more ruggedness and a little less polish in the end movements, the result might have been more exciting as a whole. Regrettably the sonics are no great help to him in the big moments of the score. The lack of genuine body and presence in the tutti seems to these ears to result from

(Continued on page 80)
There are many reasons why the Quadraflex Q-55 is the best $99.95 loudspeaker system you can buy. Not the least of these is the way in which it is built.

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poor sonic focus, whether from faulty microphone placement or an unsatisfactory hall. Even so, I can too easily imagine how this performance would have sounded if it had been recorded in Boston's Symphony Hall under ideal conditions.

D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT


Performance: Splendid

Recording: Splendid

Composers Recordings Inc. has produced here a very fetching record, which finally turns to the catalog the original recording of Gail Kubik's Pulitzer Prize-winning Symphony Concertante (from the RCA Victor tape, here electronically rechannelled for stereo). It is about time, for this piece, with all its ingenuity and drama, turns to the catalog. It is as if a new wave of invigorating energy and depth has washed over the music. Kubik's music should not be lost to the record-buying public.

Werner Josten's *Jungle* is an attractive, coloristic piece, complete with "lion's roar," which dates from the 1920s. Frankly, a tone poem, it deals in puritanic sounds which have been out of fashion for a long time, even in dramatic, open-air films. It's not my cup of tea, but the piece is very well made and lots of folks will love it. Stokowski's performance is superb. The *Canzona Seria* of 1940, whose performance by members of the American Symphony Orchestra was supervised by the conductor, is an equally attractive, and very well worked. L.T.


Performance: Frustrating

Recording: Very good

Subject at hand: Casting of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci.* Item No. 1: Take a celebrated diva who ventured into world prominence as the libretto heroine and has since established herself as a mistress of bel canto and, indeed, of all music in which lovely tone and exquisite technique are paramount. She is noted for her aristocratic bearing and placid stage temperament, and for her portentous voice. It is a heartening fact that one of the earliest, most famous of the Leoncavallo *Canzona Seria* excerpts and one of the most sensitive and well-timed is the role of Silvio in the *Canzona Seria* of 1940. Leoncavallo's version and its later version in the opera, *Zazà,* is opposed in the *Canzona Seria* by the scene from the *Chatterton* musical play, which was transposed by Leoncavallo into the orchestral range so that Titta Ruffo might record it in 1908.

Technically, the recording is fine. But the best navigators cannot save a vessel that is earmarked for shipwreck by its designers.

G.J.


Performance: Very good

Recording: Very good

A while back I invented a game called "Catch that Kitzch." The idea is to come up with tunes that everybody recognizes instantly but nobody can actually identify. Well, two of the highest guns in this game, without doubt, are Anton Rubinstein and Joachim Raff. And here, hard on the heels of the Rubinstein E-flat Concerto from Genesis, comes a Raff C Minor with a Dreyfuschock for good measure. Raff makes the Kitzch game mainly on the
strength of his immortal Cenerentola. Yet his reputation was not that of a salon composer, but rather that of a major symphonist. Nevertheless, all would still be dust and ashes if not for the enterprise of Frank Cooper, founder of Butler University’s Romantic Music Festival and no mean pianist himself. In spite of Raff’s supposed association with Wagnerism, there is nothing in this Concerto, dating from as late as 1873, which is not squarely in the grand tradition of Mendelssohn, Hummel, Spohr, et al. Next to this, Brahms was a raving futurist. This is not to deny the music its virtues of grace, fluent expression, and skill. The charms, faded as they are, are still considerable.

Actually, the real attention-getter on this album is the encore on the outside. Alexander Dreyschock was the very prototype of the keyboard athlete, and his reputation as an automaton has pursued him even to our own day. But his Konzertstück—one of many works he wrote primarily for his own use—is a really effective piece of Romantic Sturm und Drang. Written much earlier than the Rubinstein and the Raff—in the early 1840’s, when Dreyschock was first setting sights on it—the fresher sound and greater immediacy of an earlier period. It steals shamelessly from Spohr and Chopin (or did they steal from Dreyschock?), and even—dare I mention the name again?—adumbrates Brahms, at least in its earnestness and intensity. It does wear a bit thin toward the end, but then all of these second-rate performer-composers tended to fall back on endless note blizzards for their final effect.

The Nuremberg Symphony, complete with old-fashioned German oboes, is an excellent choice for this provincial Central-European music. Cooper is a vigorous and expressive exponent of this forgotten music, and the recording is first-rate.

E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

Performance: Berganza brilliant
Recording: Very good

Recorded at the Edinburgh Festival of 1971, this new Cenerentola threatens the supremacy of London’s stereo version of some eight years ago, which boasted Giulietta Simionato’s classic interpretation of the title role as its main attraction. From the technical point of view, DGG’s solid, up-to-date achievement scores decisively over its predecessor, by no means a typical example of London’s best audio efforts. I also prefer Claudio Abbado’s conducting to that of his London counterpart. Olivero de Fabriciis. Abbado is energetic but never hectic and manages to give prominence to his singers without neglecting the witty lightness of Rossini’s orchestration. The ensembles are well oiled, the crescendos gather momentum like so many jovial tornados—all is well in the pit.

And on stage, so to speak, we are offered the sparkling Teresa Berganza, surely the current Cenerentola of our time. Without suggesting any diminution of my esteem for the Sim-
The many talents of ANDRÉ PREVIN

At 16, he joined MGM as a composer-arranger. Before he was 30, he had won 4 Academy Awards.

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By 1968, he had appeared with most of the world’s major orchestras in performances that merited his appointment as Principal Conductor of the great London Symphony Orchestra. A post he solidly holds today.

His recordings for Angel with that orchestra call upon all his talents. His newest reflects his mastery of dramatic music. It is Alexander Nevsky, the cantata recasting which grew out of Prokofiev’s monumental film score. Interpretively and sonically, it is spectacular.

Previn Plays Gershwin tells why his reputation as a jazz pianist remains secure. Containing three Gershwin favorites, it is a much needed new issue.

And in the premiere recording of Shankar’s Concerto for Sitar and Orchestra, Previn skillfully conducts his LSO through the complex 4 movement score.

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RUBINSTEIN: Piano Concerto No. 5, in E-flat Major, Op. 94. Adrian Ruiz (piano); Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra, Zsolt Dékány cond. GENESIS GS 1012 $5.98.

Performance: Good
Recording: Good

Let me begin this review by pointing out that there really is an Anton Rubinstein Piano Concerto No. 5, in E-flat Major, Op. 94, and that has indeed been recorded by the very gifted Los Angeles pianist Adrian Ruiz with the Nuremberg Symphony under the Hungarian conductor Zsolt Dékány for Genesis Records, a small Los Angeles label specializing in unusual repertoires. It takes a lot of chutzpah to write a Fifth Concerto in E-flat Major, but then Rubinstein had chutzpah. He even managed to look like Beethoven, as well as sound like him, and he was undoubtedly a better pianist. Unfortunately, he was not a better composer—he was not even in the same class. This concerto was given its debut in 1874 and stayed in the repertoire about three decades; Josef Lhevinne made his American debut with the piece in 1906, but by that time even the Americans, impressed as they were by Lhevinne, were barely willing to accept the music. It seems to have disappeared shortly thereafter.

Given the origins of this recording and its star pianist, it seems almost too pat to describe this as the Hollywood idea of what a grand Romantic concerto should sound like, but that is just about what it is: grandioso, pompous, fustian, content with large rhetoric and saber-rattling, only very occasionally illuminated by inspiration, idea, or authentic expression.

Nevertheless, music like this deserves better than its fate. As the cliché has it, the piece has every right to be heard and judged on its merits. Ben Hur and The Last Days of Pompeii can still be had in libraries, and those who wish can still find The Decadence of the Romains and the paintings of Bouguereau in the museums. In the broad genre of the late-Romantic epic, Rubinstein probably produced better art than any of the above, and has at least as much claim to our latter-day attention.

In spite of the unlikely auspices, this seems to me an eminently respectable representation of this bit of massive late-Romantic machinery. Ruiz makes a powerful impression, and the orchestra—though apparently aided by a splice or two—is really quite up to the mark. The recording, although on the dark, resonant side, gives the general idea well enough.

SCHUBERT: Moments musicaux (see BEETHOVEN: Fifteen Variations)

SCHUBERT: Nachthöllen; Ständchen (see CHARPENTIER)


Performance: Very good
Recording: Very good

This is not the interpretation of Schubert’s “Great” C Major Symphony that I would have anticipated from Leonard Bernstein. Straightforward, clear in details, well-knit, it takes much less advantage of the work’s dramatic and heroic potentialities than do many other interpretations. I would have expected...
Bernstein to emphasize these very qualities. Instead, he allows the work simply to move forward with, seemingly, an easy hand on the helm. The result is a satisfying performance, but one which disconcerts a bit by gently upsetting expectations, and which does not impress quite enough to make one forget those expectations.

L.T.


Performance: Fine, but not the best
Recording: Excellent

Wilhelm Kempff's playing is never less than distinguished. His clean pedaling and crisp fingering often enhance the clarity of Schumann's piano writing, particularly in strenuous stretches of sixteenth notes. But these two performances are simply not imaginative enough to displace recommended versions already in the catalog.

Sviatoslav Richter, on Angel, probes the mysteries of the Fantasy far more deeply, in a performance unsurpassed in my experience. Kempff is disappointing here in the central march movement, where both his tempo and his phrasing seem curiously listless for music marked, admittedly, "Mässig," but qualified as "Durchschnittenergisch." And in the slow finale, he injects a cross-rhythm into the last left-hand eighth-note of measure five and similar later passages which is musically quite attractive, but which didn't happen to be thought of by Schumann.

I found Kempff's Carnaval more personal and more enjoyable than his Fantasy, but here again there are eccentricities. At the return of the Valse allemande, for instance, where Schumann's direction reads "Tempo primo ma più vivo," Kempff elects, for some reason, to play distinctly more slowly.

Arrau, on Philips, offers probably the most decidedly recommendable of the current Carnaval recordings — and his disc also happens to include an excellent version of the Fantasy, though not one to challenge Richter's.

B.J.


Performance: Splendid
Recording: Excellent, but with groove flaws

Scriabin fans should be extremely pleased with this new Monitor disc. Anton Kuerti, though occasionally staying on the understated side of things in his performances of the larger works (and I'm not sure one shouldn't thank him for that), gives positively dazzling interpretations of some of the more clear-cut and shorter pieces in which Scriabin kept his vapors under tighter control. The three Etudes, Op. 65, in particular, are worth the price of the record in themselves, and I doubt there are or will be any more stunning performances available at any time. Kuerti's performance of the Berg Sonata is also first-rate, entirely on a level with the other playing. My only complaint about this recording is that the first side (at least on my review copy) was seriously marred by bad spots in the grooves.

L.T.


Performance: Extremely interesting
Recording: Excellent

This is a reissue of a record that, judging by the critical "blurs" on the jacket, had an extremely warm welcome at its first appearance. I can see why, for Klemperer and the Philharmonia Orchestra produce beautifully colored and interpretively imaginative performances of both these Stravinsky works. As my late colleague William Flanagan is saying, in the Puleinella Suite the music is reproduced with "sparkling clarity and lovely texture." Much the same is true of the Symphony in Three Movements, though the textures in this work are more muscular and tensile by nature. In the latter, Klemperer does a great many interpretive things I doubt the composer would have approved of, but they cast some fascinating light on the music. He also changes a few tempos (towards the slower side) and broadens some passages once they have gotten started at a proper metronome speed. The result is often a feeling that the music is moving more slowly than it is, and more slowly than it should. The first movement here is the most convincing because there is less manipulation of tempo. But anyone who admires this Stravinsky Symphony will find the contrast between Klemperer's interpretation and more conventional ones fascinating.

L.T.

TAUSIG: Concert Études Nos. 1 in F-sharp Major, and 2 in A-flat Major, Op. 1; The Ghost Ship (Ballade in A Minor), Op. 1 (arr.; Fantasy

TAUSIG:

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CIRCLE NO. 23 ON READER SERVICE CARD

JULY 1972

Performance: Virtuosic but somewhat monochromatic

Recording: A bit dull

Karl Tausig, a wild and woolly Liszt pupil, was born in 1841 and died quite prematurely from typhoid fever in 1871. Today he is remembered, if at all, for some Bach and Scarlatti transcriptions, but in his own day he was considered one of the most imaginative of the young virtuoso-composers. The selection here includes some of Tausig’s most important pieces. We are apt to think of them more in terms of refined technical salon pieces than of significant creations of the 1860’s. Yet, with all their surface brilliance—and that undoubtedly accounts for much of their charm—there are occasionally some remarkable effects, in the Flying Dutchman-like Ghost Ship for example.

Charm, unfortunately, is what most of these performances lack to a greater or lesser degree. Ponti, the thirty-three-year-old American “marathon” pianist (the hus, among other things, recorded the complete piano music of Tchaikovsky and Scriabin) has marvelous technical equipment, but his ability to color is apparently limited. There are, to be sure, some effective dynamic refinements here, and fewer hard-toned attacks than on some of his other recordings; yet I find little in the way of either gracefulness or personality. The notes are there, the motions are gone through; compare, however, the Fantasia on Hungarian Gypsy Songs, the final section of which is almost identical to the Hungarian Gypsy Airs here, played on a piano roll by Joseph Lhévinne (Argo DA 41). That is true panache. The Tausig piano sound is somewhat lacking in body and brilliance, but is otherwise very clean. I.K.

VERDI: Arias from La Forza del destino, Aida, Macbeth, and Otello (see Best of the Month, page 68)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

VERDI: I Lombardi alla prima Crociata. Cristina Deutkom (soprano), Giselda: Placido Domingo (tenor), Oronte: Ruggero Raimondi (bass), Pugino: Jerome Lo Monaco (tenor), Arvino: Desdemona Malvisi (soprano), Vi- clinda: Stafford Dean (bass), Pirro: Clifford Grant (bass), Acciuno: others; Ambrosian Singers, and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Lamberto Gardelli cond. PHILIPS 6703 032 three discs $17.94. Performance: Good

Recording: Very good

This is the second time that Verdi’s fourth opera, I Lombardi (1843), has been recorded complete, and the new version thoroughly outclasses its venerable predecessor, produced some twenty years ago by Cetra and still available as Everest S-454/3.

I Lombardi is formative Verdi, immersed in the patriotic-revolutionary spirit pervading the operas which preceded and followed it. Nabucco and Attila. For all of these, the librettist was Temistocle Solera, a writer of imagination, dramatic flair, and a propensity for eloquence and catchy lines, but an undisciplined and often clumsy craftsman. The undeniable flaws in both libretto and music are candidly discussed in Andrew Porter’s excellent annotations, but Verdi cannot help being fascinating even at his crudest: to those willing to search through the semi-precious and the synthetic, he never fails to yield authentic gems that make the lot worth hearing and owning.

The story takes place at the time of the First Crusade. Solera’s libretto is a series of far-fetched happenings, remarkable coincidences, and puzzling motivations. Whereas the plight of captive Hebrews in Nabucco provided an acceptable analogy with that of oppressed nineteenth-century Italy, the ambivalent feelings of contemporary men toward the Crusades make it difficult to separate the heroes from the villains in I Lombardi.

This recording is extravagantly cast. It offers Placido Domingo, the all-purpose tenor, performing with his customary musicality and sensitive artistry. At times there is evident strain in his fine lyric sound, and the engineering frequently keeps him in a distant perspective. The smooth bass of Ruggero Raimondi is a trifle light for the assignment; but it is artistically used and never less than credible to hear. Cristina Deutkom’s voice has become more tremulous since I last heard her. Her performance is uneven overall, but her high register is strong and limpid, her aria “Non fui sogno” is quite impressive, and she executes a lovely diminuendo on the high B-flat that

A TALE OF THREE CITIES

We couldn’t think of a better way to prove the capability of the Sony STR-6065 than to test it in three cities with heavily trafficked FM bands. The engineering staffs of the FM station listing guides located in New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. conducted the tests. (Who should know more about FM performance than magazines catering to the heaviest FM users?)

In New York, where there are 57 stations within 65 miles of Manhattan, tests were made in the suburban 48 miles from Manhattan and in Manhattan. From Westchester, using an outdoor antenna, the Sony 6065 received 36 stations full quieting—all major New York City, Long Island, Westchester and New Jersey stations. In Manhattan, using only a 300 ohm ribbon antenna, 30 stations were received; 22 full quieting. Excellent, under the most difficult of conditions.

In Washington, D.C., using a Yagi with rotator, 46 stations were received with full quieting. In Los Angeles, where some of the 73 stations are more than 100 miles from the test site, the 6065 logged 44 stations.

While the specifications of the Sony 6065 are most impressive, how it delivers in heavy FM traffic is the true test of its performance. The Sony 6065, 220 watts IHF* 70 + 70W RMS at 8 ohms. $429.50*
concludes the third act duet with Oronte. Fortunately, all three principals reach their best form in the unique trio in Act Four, Scene 1, in which the circuitry part is superbly played by Neville Tuville. The part of Gioseffo Arvino calls for a heavier, more "paternal" sound than Jerome Lo Monaco offers; nonetheless, this is an auspicious recording debut for this gifted New Yorker. The other singers are all capable. The important choral passages are done with spirit and good intonation, though the brisk tempos make clear articulation rather difficult. But I don't mean to find fault with Lambert Gardelli's direction. He catches the spirit of this Romantic potboiler and imparts to it a true Italian beat without compromising orchestral tone and precision. Enthusiasm and affectionate regard for its spirit count for more in I Lombardi than doing full justice to its mediocrec poetry.

G. J.


Performance: Good
Recording: Lo-fi — good for its age

The performance history of Rienzi (1839), Wagner's third opera, has been negligible outside of Germany. The fact that it was last given at the Metropolitan on February 26, 1890, more or less speaks for the opera's American "career," though it was revived by the touring German Opera Company in 1923, and given in concert form in New York under Thomas Scherman's direction as recently as December 1963.

A significant revival was staged by the Berlin State Opera in October 1941. The source of this recording is a radio broadcast which took place shortly thereafter, involving the Berlin protagonists, all front-liners at the time. The set offers a generous representation of the rarely heard score: the familiar Overture, Rienzi's "Erstelle, hiele Ronna" and the final scene of the first act, some important episodes from Act Two, Adriano's lengthy scene "Gerechter Gerecht," the battle hymn and the finale of the third act, and Rienzi's Prayer and the concluding scene.

Rienzi is a turbulent and eclectic score in which the Weber-derived elements are combined with French grand-opera influences. The latter, stemming from the grandiose Meyerbeer and Spontini models, sharpened Wagner's growing theatrical skills, lent emphasis to his employment of the chorus, and directed his attention toward crowd effects, configurations, and other devices of spectacular stagecraft. The opera is overlong and Wagner's text has little literary distinction, but the music clearly shows genius. It not only anticipates the powerful writing of The Flying Dutchman (which Wagner began before Rienzi was completed), but also points ahead to Tannhäuser and Lohengrin. The third act, in particular, packs a great deal of dramatic wallop, compensating for some overwritten choral scenes and some bogged-down ensembles.

Max Lorenz, in his prime in 1942, was a true Heldentenor probably the next best thing to Melchior at the time. His tone is not the steadiest imaginable, but it is ringing, manly, and unstintingly in the face of the title role's Tristanesque demands. Hilde Scheppan is heard most impressively in the finale as Irene. Rienzi's sister (a faintly incestuous touch, this), and Margarete Klose is powerful as Rienzi's rival Adriano. (This is probably the opera's crucial weakness: had this role a male part, not been assigned to a contralto, the opera surely would have survived.) The little Prohaska and Von der Linde do in these excerpts they do very well, and the musical direction has strength and conviction. Until a modern version comes along — with, one hopes, singers of comparable quality — vocal collectors should not bypass a release of such historical significance. Save for some clicks on the first side of my review copy, I found the recorded sound a good bit better than listenable.

G. J.

COLLECTIONS


Performance: Very good
Recording: Fair

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CIRCLE NO. 27 ON READER SERVICE CARD

that runs chronologically from Luigi Rossi (c. 1598-1653) through Antonio Cesti (1623-1669) and Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725). All have moments of poignant expression of unrequited love, and contain a minimum of vocal acrobatics. The earliest are quite free and recitative-like in form, whereas in the later pieces, most especially in the boldly harmonic Scarlatti, the standard formal aria preceded by recitative is already well established. All four, incidentally, seem to be first recordings. The performances are also stylistically very fine. Sylvia Stahlman has a most pleasant voice and manner, though in the two earlier cantatas I feel she does not sufficiently bring out the "affect" of the text. Her most expressive moments come in the Scarlatti. Albert Fuller's harpsichord accompaniments (unfortunately minus a supporting low string instrument) are excellent and highly imaginative. The one big disappointment is the quality of recorded sound, that and a ticklish cradle-infested pressing. The sonics are simply dull, and not even a treble boost gets rid of the veiled and colorless sound of both voice and harpsichord. In addition to excellent program annotations by Owen Jander, there are complete texts and translations.


Performance: Good

Recording: Good, but flawed

Robert Levy, the trumpeter who recorded this group of works for trumpet and piano, is one of the growing number of young performers who seek to enlarge the repertoire of music for their instrument by specializing in the performance of contemporary music and by commissioning new works. His aim here was to present a cross-section of idioms, and if his cross-section is not terribly wide, it is nevertheless a cross-section. Beginning with the most rugged work, Stefan Wolpe's Solo Piece for Trumpet, it continues with works of a predominantly melodic nature as well as the Persichetti's sweeping moody The Hollow Men (originally scored for trumpet and string quartet), Mayer's neo-classic Concert Piece for Trumpet, 1957, an attractively tuneful work for student trumpeters by Newell Brown. Warren Benson's warm, almost lyrical, Meyer Kupferman's Three Ideas, and some pop-type pieces by Alec Wilder. The interest level of the music varies, naturally, the first side carrying more weight than the second. Predictably, the Persichetti and Wolpe works stand firmly in the foreground. So does the piece by William Mayer, a considerably younger composer just now coming into prominent view.

Robert Levy shows himself to be an excellent musician, as does the pianist Amy Lou Levy, presumably his wife.

The recording, billed as a compatible four-channel job (playable in monophonic, stereo, or quadraphonic sound) is unfortunately afflicted, on my stereo playback equipment, with much pre-echo.

L.T.
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The new version gave Stereo Review the opportunity to test the Rectilinear III again after a lapse of almost five years. And, lo and behold, the test report said that “the system did an essentially perfect job of duplicating our “live music” and that both the original and the lowboy version “are among the best-sounding and most ‘natural’ speakers we have heard.” (Reprints on request.)

So, what we would like you to figure out is this:

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The experts talk about a new

"...The tuner which may well prove to be the 'classic' of the 1970's is Heath's new AJ-1510 Digital FM Stereo Tuner."
— Leonard Feldman, AUDIO MAGAZINE

"...When it comes to using the AJ-1510, we find ourselves almost at a loss for words. It is probably as near to the ideal FM tuner as we have ever encountered."
— Julian Hirsch, STEREO REVIEW

Mr. Feldman goes on to say: "The 'ultimate' tuner? Well, if it isn't it'll do until someone comes up with something better!...There is NO tuning knob and there is NO tuning dial or pointer, since all frequency indications are read from digital read-out tubes...At the left are ten keyboard buttons, numbered '1' through '0', as well as a re-set button (punched when you wish to 'punch up' a new station frequency) and a button labeled BY-PASS (used to initiate the 'auto-sweep' action which causes the tuner to sweep downward in frequency, automatically locking in on every available signal in your area)...three more buttons, labeled A, B and C...are to select three predetermined favorite stations...and there are additional buttons for SQUELCH DEFEAT and STEREO ONLY reception...

"...a tiny test switch button when depressed, lights up all the elements of the digital readout tubes to insure that they are operative. There is also a rotary control which determines the speed at which the AUTO-TUNE action takes place, a noise squelch adjustment control, and an AGC squelch control. A slide switch changes the meter function from signal strength indication to multi-path indication and a second, three-position slide switch selects automatic stereo, partial stereo blend (for reduced noise in weak-signal stereo reception situations with some sacrifice in overall stereo separation), and mono-mix. The right section behind the trap door contains three horizontal slots, labeled A, B and C. These slots correspond to the three PREPROGRAM selection buttons described earlier and, upon inserting three plastic cards no larger than a standard credit card, the buttons can be used to tune in your favorite station which you easily program onto the cards yourself...

"...The rear panel of the AJ-1510...contains antenna terminals for 300 ohm or 75 ohm transmission lines, a dual pair of output jacks as well as horizontal and vertical output jacks for connection to an oscilloscope for observing the nature and extent of any local multipath problems beyond what you can read on the dual purpose self-contained signal meter...

"...we were able to appreciate the amount of thoughtful engineering that went into this unit, both in terms of its performance as well as its kit feasibility. Recent Heathkits have increasingly stressed the modular approach and the AJ-1510 has carried this concept to its ultimate. There is a 'master' or 'mother' board into which are plugged seven circuit boards. Connectors are used throughout, which means that boards can be removed without having to unsolder or unwind a single connection.

"...The heart of the non-mechanical tuning aspect of this unit lies in the voltage-tuned FM front-end, which is of the varactor-tuned type and contains no moving variable capacitor. Instead, a suitable d.c. voltage applied to the varactor diodes determines their effective capacitance. The keyboard, pre-programmed cards, or automatic sweep tuning methods all program a divider circuit. The divider circuit divides the tuner's local oscillator frequency and compares it to a crystal controlled reference frequency and the result of this comparison is the tuning voltage. Changing the divider ratio of the divider circuit changes the d.c. voltage applied to the tuner and a different station is tuned in. Simultaneously, a visual display of the station frequency is provided by the readout circuitry. Because of the crystal controlled reference frequency and the phase-lock-loop circuitry, however, the accuracy of the frequency tuned in is no longer dependent upon the drift-free characteristics of the FM front-end but will be as accurate as the reference crystal frequency and, in the case of the AJ-1510, that means at least 0.005% accuracy!...

"...Do not confuse this 'digital readout' tuner with some units which have recently appeared on the market and simply replace the tuning dial with numeric readout devices. The latter variety guarantee no more tuning accuracy than their 'dial pointer' counterparts. The Heath AJ-1510 is tuned exactly to 101.5 MHz when those readout tubes READ 101.5 — and not to 101.54 or 101.47!...

"...There is no doubt that the elaborate 'computer' type circuitry incorporated in the Heath AJ-1510 must represent a fair percentage of its selling price, but even if you ignored it completely (or considered it as a welcome bonus), the tuner's performance as a tuner would justify its total price and then some.

"...Almost as if to reprimand us, when we punched up 87.9 MHz on the keyboard, a light lit up on the front panel and read RE-PROGRAM. (It could have said 'please...') Realizing that we weren't about to fool this unit, we settled for 88.3, 98.9 and 106.1. These
Heathkit 'classic'

chosen frequencies, together with our not-too-perfect 'screen room' enabled us to read a sensitivity of 1.6 uV. Impressed, we decided that we weren't going to let this one get off so easily, so we tried to measure alternate channel selectivity and, as near as we could figure, it was just about 100 dB! [With the total quieting curve, you can interpolate the THD (mono) down to an incredible 0.18% for 100% modulation (as opposed to 0.3% claimed). Ultimate S/N is a very respectable 65 dB...quieting reaches a very usable 56 dB with a mere 5 uV of signal input. In the stereo mode, we remeasured the THD and found that it was only 0.25% for 100% modulation (as against 0.35% claimed) and that, to us, represents a real breakthrough; since stereo THD is usually much higher than mono THD on most tuners and receivers we have measured in the past...

"...Here's a tuner that maintains at least 30 dB of separation from 50 Hz to 14 KHz and hits a mid-band separation figure of 46 dB! Both SCA and 19 and 38 KHz suppression were in excess of 60 dB, which means that SCA interference was absolutely inaudible. Capture ratio measured 1.35 dB as against 1.5 dB claimed...

In short, every space was met or exceeded and if you compare published specs with the best of the 'ready makes' you're not likely to come up with a finer set of readings anywhere...

"...After spending several hours playing with the keyboard, the automatic sweep, and the dozen or so cards which I prepared with the aid of a small pair of scissors, I got down to the serious business of logging stations...Would you believe 63, without having to rotate my antenna?...

"...We enjoyed the crystal-clear, distortion-free reception we obtained in using the Heath AJ-1510...[It] has got to be the way all tuners of the future will be made. It's very nice to know that Heath has just brought that future into the present..."

Mr. Hirsch comments further: "...the Heath AJ-1510 digital Stereo FM tuner kit is new, with a fresh and imaginative design approach... and we know of nothing else on the market with comparable features...

"...It is quite impossible, in the available space, to give an adequate description of this remarkable tuner. Anyone familiar with the inside of a typical FM tuner will not recognize this as belonging to the same family. It looks more closely resembles a small digital computer. There are no moving parts (the tuning is entirely electronic), and almost nothing resembling r.f. circuit components... The i.f. selectivity is provided by sealed multipole inductance-capacitance filters. Not only do they give outstanding alternate-channel selectivity (the kind most of us are concerned with), but it is also easy to separate adjacent-channel signals only 200 kHz apart...

"...our measured performance data on the AJ-1510 met or exceeded Heath's published specifications...The IF sensitivity was 1.6 microvolts...The 89-dB image-rejection figure was very good, and we confirmed Heath's alternate-channel selectivity rating of 95 dB...The FM frequency response was well within ±1 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. Stereo channel separation was exceptionally good — 40 dB at middle frequencies...suppression of 19 and 38 KHz components of stereo FM signals was the best we have yet encountered...

"...tuning the AJ-1510, in any of its modes, is a unique experience. No matter how you go about it, the output is always a clean signal or nothing — not a hint of a thumb, hiss, or squawk at any time...for anyone who wants a tuner that is most certainly representative of the present state of the art, and which is not likely to be surpassed in any important respect for the foreseeable future, his search can stop at the AJ-1510."

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CIRCLE NO. 54 ON READER SERVICE CARD
DAVID BROMBERG. David Bromberg (vocals, guitar); Norman Blake (guitar); William Scarlett (harmonica); various other musicians. *Lonesome Dave's Lovesick Blues #3; Mississippi Blues; and three others.* COLUMBIA CS1104 $4.98.

Performance: Penetrating
Recording: Excellent

David Bromberg, who is not exactly famous but is well respected as a guitarist for big stars (Bob Dylan and Jerry Jeff Walker, among others), is a potentially explosive paradox of vulnerability and confidence. This album or the next—or the next after that—should kick up a lot of excitement. Bromberg is a rapsinger, like Arlo Guthrie, but he's something else, too—-a folk-blues interpreter who somehow manages to stand outside the song the way Dylan used to and the old bluesmen did, and shows signs of seasoning out of all proportion to his age and presumed experience. I fear for him; it seems likely he will become a so-called “superstar,” and we are not kind to superstars. We prowl the pubs and listen to debut recordings in search of high promise, and when we find the LATEST Thing before everyone else does, we play with it a while and then, as the hordes close in, begin the process of throwing it away. Tolkien, James Taylor, Bob Dylan, and J. D. Salinger all bear the tooth marks of faddists. Usually one of the first fangs sunk is the sort of thing I’m trying to avoid here: a rave review that says this performer is marked for greatness.

The truth is that this album is full of promise but it is not a great album. Bromberg's self-conscious combination of a certain vulnerable humor and a mastery of all sorts of guitar work convey the promise, and so does the caliber of the songs he has written. But the songs also indicate he hasn’t fully realized himself yet, and may not if he has to work in a circus of idolaters. I hope we can enjoy this album, or parts of it, without wagging it around as an icon. *Lonesome Dave's Lovesick Blues #3* might encourage such idolatry. It is a rollicking Bluegrass tune, to which has been added Richard Grandio's tenor sax—and it doesn't sound incongruous. Grandio does some bunting with veteran (and fantastic) fiddler Vussar Clements to create one of the most congenial moods I've recently been put in by pop music. And I hope we can listen to Bromberg's poignant *Samson's Song*, about a boy's weird, shattering loss of virginity, without pronouncing Bromberg the next disposable god. The banality of *Suffer to Sing the Blues*, the inclusion of *Pine Tree Woman* (apparently to prove he can play bottleneck guitar), and his vocal uncertainties in some situations suggest he still has room to grow. If we don't swarm all over him.

**Julie Budd.** Julie Budd (vocals); orchestra, Tony Hutch arr. and cond. *Teardrops Will Fall*; *Halfway There: West Side Apartment*, and six others. RCA LSP 4622 $5.98, @ PBS 1852 $6.98.

Performance: Technically very good
Recording: Excellent

Julie Budd is all dressed up with no place to go. She has a fine, musical voice, with an expansive, true range, and she now seems to consciously try to avoid overt Streisandisms (although there are still too many). Her newest album is an expertly lush commercial item with well-chosen material and one possible mini-hit, *Don’t Take Your Love Away.* The reason Miss Budd doesn’t seem to be going anywhere in particular is that she’s moving against a trend toward less showy vocalizing and more acting ability. The record public now asks for a lot more than nice sounds coming through the speakers. Unfortunately, what she is doing now is what many successful young singers were doing ten years ago. In clubs Miss Budd has proved to be great and expectable, successful. There is nothing that the middle-agers who can afford the tab like better than young people singing their kind of music. But since the club business seems to be going the way of the Great Bustard, and since Miss Budd seems anxious for a record career, it’s time for her to stop worrying about technique and start concentrating on communicating meaning. At the moment—and this album is an example—the focus seems to be on the fact that she can sing well. Streisand, whom Miss Budd superficially resembles in voice, made the instrument of her voice serve her personal feelings about the song from the very beginning, and out of that came her unique style. It wasn’t just a gimmicky device on her part to slow down *Happy Days Or Dramatize Cry Me a River*, but an actress’ interpretation of character in words and music.

It is the absence of a search for emotional roots that seems most damaging here. P.R.

**Eric Clapton.** *The History of Eric Clapton* (see Best of the Month, page 69)

**Ry Cooder.** *Into the Purple Valley.* Ry Cooder (vocals, guitar, mandolin); various accompanists. *How Can You Keep On Moving: Billy the Kid; Money Honey*; *PDR* in Trinidad; *Teardrops Will Fall; On a Monday;* and five others. REprise 2052 $5.98, @ M 82052 $6.98, @ M 52052 $6.98.

Performance: Relaxed
Recording: Very good

Pickers want to sing, singers want to pick, actors and professors want to polictic. So let them, I say—I’m an anarchist, anyway. Ry Cooder is a fine young guitarist, one of the finest bottleneck guitarists, but this marks his second effort as a quite ordinary vocalist. If you listen to this one for picking, you'll hear a lot more of what sounds like a mandolin than you'll hear of bottleneck. Only on Woody Guthrie’s *Vigilante Man* does he really get into sliding the glass on the strings. As a singer, he’s passable. But I wonder who picked out this strange assortment of tunes. Could it be someone knows something about the range...
of Cooer’s voice that we don’t? Could it be—three of these ditties are listed as “traditional,” and the copyright has doubtless expired on two others—that someone doesn’t like paying royalties to songwriters? Anyway, Billy the Kid is nicely done and there’s that good slide work on Vigilante. And, oh yes, the jacket is extremely neat—keeno, featuring a highly polished, very yellow 1944 Buick convertible. Could this somehow be connected to Dylan’s reference in one of his song titles to a Buick Six? N.C.

EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER: Pictures at an Exhibition. Emerson, Lake & Palmer (vocals and instruments). Promenade; The Galilee; Promenade; The Sage; The Old Castle; Blues Variation; Promenade; The Hut of Baba Yaga; and five others. COTILLION EL P 6666 $4.98. © M 86666 $6.98. © M 56666 $6.98.

Performance: Rocking Moussorgsky

Recording: Good

How one reacts to this sort of things depends, I suppose, on whether you like Stokowski transcriptions of Bach, or—perhaps more to the point—the Swing Singers’ jazzed-up versions of the classical repertoire. I don’t have any particular preconceptions about trying new interpretations of old music, so long is the result is either an improvement (rare, rare) or, more likely, a different perspective.

Since Ravel had a go at Pictures, there’s no particular reason why Emerson, Lake & Palmer shouldn’t try their hands at it. But the results are hardly an improvement. Keith Emerson is a spectacularly talented keyboard player, but his sense of musical coloration is too dominated by primary hues to understand fully the infinite gradations of light and shade that Moussorgsky surely intended.

A different perspective? Yes. Indeed. But not in the music itself so much as in the way it has been decorated. Adding rock rhythms, occasional lyrics, and improvised interjections doesn’t really show us a different side of Moussorgsky’s Pictures; it simply puts them in Seventies chrome and plastic frames. Don H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FAIRPORT CONVENTION: "Babacombe" Lee. Simon Nicol (guitar, dulcimer); Dave Mattacks (drums, electric piano); Dave Swarbrick (fiddle, mandolin); Dave Pegg (bass, mandolin). A&M SP 4333 $5.98. © 4333 $6.98. © 4333 $6.98.

Performance: Monumental

Recording: Excellent

This is, in my opinion, the first successful rock opera.” It works well phonographically, and it could be staged as an orthodox theatrical production (with somebody contributing a minimal “book”) or as a ballet. The music has grace, discipline, and power, and the lyrics are tight and effective. The work (and it is a single work) does not have the energy or the raw slamming power of Tommy, but it has a greater overall effect because of its careful construction. Tommy is an influence here: the last song fades out on the repeated refrain. "Shake the holy water/Summon up the guard/Dying’s very easy/Writing’s very hard.” a prayer much like the famous "See me, feel me” of Pete Townshend’s creation.

There are other similarities. Both operas deal with a human being deformed by forces over which he has no control. Both leading characters survive the forces to the extent that, by the end of the respective works, both are alive but without the capacity to live; the world has taken their lives without killing them. Townshend made up his plot from scratch. Fairport Convention (who compose collectively) took their plot from history: John Lee was convicted for the murder of his employer, Miss Keyse, in the English village of Babacombe. In 1885, sentenced to hang. Lee was taken onto the scaffold three times. Three times it failed to operate. English law, like baseball, permits only three strikes, so the authorities were out. Lee’s sentence was commuted by Queen Victoria to life. His confinement, however, threw him together with two warders who mercilessly hounded him. Lee always protested his innocence, and claimed that the night before his first scheduled execution he had dreamed that Divine Providence would spare him.

As a historical figure, especially one in a murder case, Lee, his "crime," and his fate become a subject of speculative opinion; the Fairport Convention provide a different view. They explore his background, his relationships, and his many disappointments. To them, he is a man who starts out with the same supposedly even chance that everyone has to make a good life. But the world and fate constantly deny him, punish him, and revile him. Lee the historical figure becomes less important than the statement Fairport Convention chooses to make about him: the gods, earthly or heavenly, are not always kind—and the gods own the joint.

Twelve cheers (three apiece) for Messrs. Nicol, Mattucks, Swarbrick, and Pegg. They have made a work of art and advanced the art of rock music.

J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ARETHA FRANKLIN: Young, Gifted and Black. Aretha Franklin (piano and vocals). Vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Oh Me Oh My (I'm a fool for You, Baby): First Snow in Kokomo; Day Dreaming; Rock Steady; Young, Gifted and Black; April Fools; Border Song (Holy Moses); The Long and Windy Road; I've Been Loving You Too Long; and three others. ATLANTIC SD 7213 $5.98. © M 87213 $6.98. © M 57213 $6.98.

Performance: Excellent

Recording: Very good

Aretha Franklin is a great talent and has already made more good records in a few years than most artists make in a lifetime (to mention one other, her version of Respect is—ye gads!—better than Otis Redding's and is one of the classic soul recordings of all time). In addition, she has survived the misdirection of her talents at various periods. She has such enormous zest and strength that it needs to be controlled—like a car's energy, its uses must be carefully directed.

In this album she maintains a discipline over her talent that allows her to exhibit her capabilities and her mastery of styles. Rock Steady, Oh Me Oh My, and Day Dreaming show her in complete control of funk, soul-ballad, and near-jazz-ballad styles. Her version of Border Song is excellent and her reading of April Fool confirms it. She puts her soul background into the title tune. But to this reviewer the killer song is the delicate First Snow in Kokomo—her own tune—combining her soul style with her jazz or jazz-influenced experience into a personal statement that is not earth-shaking but makes it a nice place to live on.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DONNY HATHAWAY: Live. Donny Hathaway (vocals and keyboards); with various musicians. What's Going On: The Ghetto; Hey Gied! You've Got a Friend; and four others. ATCO SD 33 386 $5.98. © M 8386 $6.98. © M 3386 $6.98.

Performance: Soul-stirring rock

Recording: Good

Donny Hathaway seems to be doing everything right lately. He has functioned as a superb sideman with the likes of Lena Horne, he has had a hit recording in a duet with Roberta Flack, and he has shown—always—the ability and the performing presence necessary for potential stardom. I've always preferred his "live" work to his recordings. So, this chronicle of two gigs at Hollywood's Troubadour and New York's Bitter End is particularly welcome. Hathaway runs the gamut, demonstrating the far-ranging versatility that is the very essence of his talent. Carole King's You've Got a Friend, Marvin Gaye's funky outcry against a world going wrong, What's Going On, John Lennon's Jealouys Guy, and Hathaway's own hit The Ghetto are shaped and molded into high-profile, hard-swinging samples of contemporary blues rock at its grooviest. Don H.

JIMI HENDRIX: Hendrix in the West. Jimi Hendrix (vocals and guitar); various orchestras. Lover Man; Red House; Little Wing; Voodoo Chile; Blue Suede Shoes; and three others. REPRISE MS 2049 $5.98. © M 82049 $6.98. © M 2049 $6.98.

Performance: Variable

Recording: Variable

This is a miscellaneous collection of tracks taken from "live" performances on the West Coast by a fine pop artist who, at times,
verged on greatness. No dates are given here, but most of the material seems to be vintage Hendrix, and there is one really sensational performance, Voodoo Chile. I did not find Hendrix’s death as tragic as Jim Morrison’s or, in some ways, Janis Joplin’s, since he was able to realize his potential fully during his lifetime, briefly as it was, and that music brought him great satisfaction. And while I’m digressing, let me add that these deaths seem to have gone for naught, since the pop-music world still abounds with performers going down the chute of self-destructiveness and facets who disregard the signs and envy them for their “freedom.” Anyway, Hendrix was a pop avatar, and you can get a pretty good idea what he was like from this disc.

HUMBLE PIE: Smokin’! Humble Pie (vocals and instruments). Hot ‘n’ Nasty; The Fixer; You’re So Good to Me; C’Mon Everybody; Old Time Feelin’; 30 Days in the Hole; Road Runner; and three others. A & M SP 4342 $5.98.

Recording: Okay

Remember when British rock used to be different and fascinating? Well, now it turns out that “equality”—that politically lip-smackin’ bowl o’ blood—applies as much to rockers whose eastern boundary is the Dover cliffs as to those for whom it is the port of New York. I suppose you can dance to this album. You can also ignore it without fear that its like will never be seen or heard again. It’s like too many other albums, too many other groups. It’s flawless and flat, and its ultimate effect is a terminal dropping of the eyelids, prefaced by a shrug of the shoulders.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DOUG KERSHAW: Swamp Grass. Doug Kershaw (violin and vocals); orchestra. Louisiana Woman; Swamp Grass; Zacharia; Vicki Brown; Cajun Funk; and six others. WARNER BROS. 2581 $5.98. @ M 82581 $6.98, @ M 52581 $6.98.

Performance: Excellent

Recording: Excellent

Cajun fiddling, which I encountered for the first time in Virgil Thomson’s brilliant score for Flaherty’s Louisiana Story several (I) years ago, is a unique American folk art. It bears the same idiomatic distinctiveness as the word Cajun itself, which is Louisiana Patois for the Acadian exiles. To me, it has the eerie loveliness of a fly caught in the musical amber of a long-ago time. Doug Kershaw is the best Cajun fiddler I’ve ever heard, and his playing on this album is superb. His vocals aren’t on the same level, but they do have a natural, relaxed air, and, paradoxically, vibrate with the sure and sustained touch of a performer who is heir to a folk tradition. It is the same brand of sureness that one finds in Oriental dancers, who are taught their gestures by being guided manually from behind. The only the novel, low, reflexive rather than intellectually or visually learned.

All the songs here, except Louisiana Man, are by Kershaw, and though they tart up the Cajun tradition in deference to the pop market, they—and the performances—shine with authenticity. Kershaw’s finest achievement is Cajun Funk, an instrumental, in which he rises to virtuoso level. It is here that the echoes of another time come into focus so sharply.

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the sounds Kershaw produces takes on the ambivalent suggestions of something between a sitar and a voila da gamba, and, eerily, the beckoning ghostliness of distant bagpipes.

Perhaps I was hearing things, but any performer who can get so prismatic an effect out of any instrument is, in my mind, a master. This is a really fine album worth everyone’s attention.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**LEO KOTTFKE: Greenhouse.** Leo Kottke (guitars and vocals), Steve Gommell (guitar). Bean Time; Owls; Tiny Island; Louise: You Don’t Have to Need Me; and six others. Capitol ST 11000 $5.98, © XTX 11000 $6.98, © 4XT 11000 $6.98.

Performance: First-rate

Recording: Very good

Yes, indeed, here’s a pleasant surprise. First of all, Leo Kottke is some kind of mother guitarist: listen to the way he rips through Bean Time and hear how much technique and invention can be generated out on the high-speed fringes of the folk style. But I knew about Kottke’s guitar playing, always respected it, and wondered what he was going to do with it. I was less intrigued, in the past, with Kottke’s singing, but his voice now seems to have found its sound, and his point of view has clarified. Such songs as Tiny Island, Louise, From the Cradle to the Grave, and You Don’t Have to Need Me have been well chosen as vehicles for his full, dark voice.

Kottke is good enough, in fact, to remind me of one of my favorite singer-songwriters, Fred Neil. The similarity of vocal timbre is the most noticeable element, of course, but Kottke’s phrasing and the cool resignation of his emotions provide a more subtle but equally valid point of comparison.

If you haven’t heard Kottke yet—and those who haven’t are legion—here’s the place to begin. It just might start him on the path toward a goal I suspect he is very leery of: pop stardom.

Don H.

**MANFRED MANN: Earth Band.** Manfred Mann’s Earth Band (vocals and instrumentals). California Coastline; Captain Bobby Stout; Slath; Living Without You; Tribute; Playing Games; Henry; and four others. Polydor PD 5015 $4.98, © RF 5015 $6.98, © CF 5015 $6.98.

Performance: A-one tune outing

Recording: Very good

You’ve got to give Manfred Mann credit for trying. In the years since he’s led one of England’s major rock groups, he has tried formula after formula in what has been a generally vain effort to revive his flagging success. This time it’s a topical blend of rock and folk and soul—never going too far in one direction, always sticking close to what Mann must view as the current rock mainstream. The result is predictably bland, with one notable exception—Randy Newman’s delightful song Living Without You. In the totally unexpected way big hits sometimes happen, Mann has come up with particularly the right interpretation—slightly humorous, just a touch of Newmanesque whimsy—for the song. By the time you read this, it will very likely be a hit single (I should say it will be a hit single, and—who knows—Manfred Mann may finally have gotten back on the rainbow trail. Don H.

**MCKENDREE SPRING: McKendree Spring 3.** McKendree Spring (vocals and instrumentals). Down by the River; Fading Lady; Flying Dutchman; Heart Is Like a Wheel; Hobo Lady, and three others. Decca DL 75332 $4.98.

Performance: Competent

Recording: Good

Give McKendree Spring credit; they try hard. The group is obviously well-rehearsed, they show the enthusiastic interaction of musicians who know and enjoy playing with each other, and they are all fine individual performers.

But the constant focus placed on Michael Dreyfuss’ electric violin ultimately brings one’s listening reaction down to the question of whether or not violin-rock is one cup of tea. And I’m sorry, folks, but—except in very special circumstances, like the Mahavishnu Orchestra, for example—it isn’t mine.

No, this is not a bad record, but it’s not a particularly distinguished one, either, and

**NANCY SINATRA AND LEE HAZLEWOOD: Nancy and Lee Again.** Nancy Sinatra (vocals): Lee Hazlewood (vocals, guitar); orchestra, Clark Gassman and Larry Muohler. pubs. Arkansas Coal (Suite); Big Red Balloon; Friendship Train; Paris Summer; Congratulations; Did You Ever; and four others. RCA I SP 4646 $5.98, © PSS 1879 $6.98, © PK 1879 $6.98.

Performance: Pleasant

Recording: Good

It’s easy enough to put down an album like this. Hazlewood and Nancy Sinatra are formula performers, sticking tenaciously to what has worked for them before. Hazlewood’s songs are often mauldin and mushy—and there’s always the question of how Nancy would draw as a singer if her name were Nancy Glutz. But the two have found a formula that is their own; they don’t copy anyone. In addition, I always come away from hearing one of their recordings feeling they must be nice, likable people. There aren’t any songs here I can heartily recommend; Hazlewood’s Arkansas Coal (Suite) has some kind of quality that keeps me listening in spite of myself, for a more contrived bit of mush you’ll seldom hear. Nancy makes fun of the dramatics of Dolly Parton’s Down From Dover, which is the only thing she manages of them. The album, a lightweight, is nevertheless folksy, cozy, toasty-warm, and disarming.

N.C.

(Continued on page 98)
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SHOW BOAT PULLS IN FROM LONDON

Reviewed by ROBERT CONNOLLY

The gods must have been smiling on the night of December 27, 1927, when Florenz Ziegfeld presented Jerome Kern's Show Boat at the Ziegfeld Theater in New York. An almost perfect combination of story, music, staging, and stars, Show Boat was immediately hailed as a landmark in musical theater. The story, adapted from Edna Ferber's novel, was an unusually strong one for a musical, evoking a colorful era of the American past, and the songs were woven into its fabric rather than being presented as isolated production numbers. As for the score, it must surely be the finest one ever written for an American musical comedy. There isn't a weak number in it, and most of its songs can be ranked among the great ones in American musical history.

In his new book, *American Popular Song* (Oxford University Press, 1972—see "Going on Record" column in this issue), Alec Wilder, while paying tribute to Kern, whom he describes as "the first great master of modern theater music," refers to Kern's "inner urge to impose art songs on Broadway," which to Wilder means losing touch with the true world of popular music. Perhaps Wilder is right. But what's wrong with that? Broadway can stand a few art songs, and that is perhaps the reason Kern's songs appeal as greatly to those who love opera and lieder as they do to enthusiasts of musical comedy—they have staying power. And who in the world since Kern has written more grateful melodies for the voice?

At any rate, Show Boat enjoyed a deservedly long run on Broadway, and touring companies criss-crossed the country for years. There was a successful New York revival in 1946, the New York City Opera company presented it in 1954, and Lincoln Center did an all-star production in 1966. And of course it has never ceased to be a summer-theater staple. There have been three film versions of Show Boat, the first a 1929 silent picture starring Laura La Plante and Joseph Schildkraut. By the time it was released, however, the public was clamoring for sound, and so a few scenes of dialogue and three songs were added.

The second was the 1936 Universal picture directed by James Whale and starring a classic cast: Irene Dunne, Allyn Jones, Helen Morgan, Paul Robeson, Hattie McDaniel, Charles Winninger, and Helen Westley, most of whom had played their roles for years on the stage. Not seen for decades, this version acquired a legendary reputation and was thought of as a lost treasure of our cultural patrimony. When a print was discovered and shown last year at The Movie Musical, a tiny theater in Greenwich Village, the film surpassed everyone's expectations, and there are those who consider it the finest of all screen musicals. The 1951 MGM color version (with Kathryn Grayson, Howard Keel, Ava Gardner, William Warfield, Joe E. Brown, and the Champions) was not a bad film, but was not in the same league as its predecessor.

There have been countless recordings of Show Boat selections. Operatic, light-opera, and popular singers have all found them irresistible (jazz singers less so, for some reason). All these recordings have been at least good—the best, perhaps, those of Broadway productions, having more real theatrical flavor—but none were really outstanding, and none were complete. The definitive rendition is probably that of the 1936 film, but because of legal complications I doubt that the soundtrack can ever be released on commercial discs.

Two new versions of the Show Boat score have just come to us by way of Britain, part of a series of British-made musical-comedy discs which the Stanyan label has admirably seen fit to distribute in this country. (They are available in shops or by mail from Stanyan Records, 8721 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, Cal., 90028.) The first (and lesser of the two), recorded several years back, stars Shirley Bassey as Julie, along with a cast of performers well known to British theater audiences. Miss Bassey, of West Indian origin, is perhaps England's most famous girl singer and has a reputation throughout the Continent as a top-flight interpreter of pops, blues, and jazz. She sings *Bill* and *Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man* in contemporary pop fashion—she is a kind of female Tom Jones, with a good, strong voice. Lots of Las Vegas mannerisms, and no great involvement with her material. The result is more Shirley Bassey, song stylist, than Jerome Kern's Julie. Far better are the lovers Gaylord and Magnolia, sung by two young Americans, Don McKay and Marilyn Watters. Their voices are clean and bright, they sing the duets most affectingly, and they know the style to perfection. (They are also perfect examples of the sort of hybrid vocal delivery that Broadway currently demands—legit, but not too legit; get those words out, but don't alienate anyone with a real lyric sound.) The New Zealand operatic bass Ini Te Wiata offers an excellent *On the River* and an even better *I Still Hits Me*.

Comedienne Dora Bryan sings the comedy numbers with a pronounced British accent and lots of music-hall style. This is not the definitive recording of Show Boat (it has little of the aura of the film production), but that is not its intention. It is frankly a studio job, with smooth, up-to-theminute arrangements. It is not for the purist or the student of musical theater, but will doubtless satisfy those who want only an easy-to-take contemporary-sounding account of the score.

Purists will be delighted, however, by Stanyan's second release, a two-record original-cast album from the current, enormously successful London revival and contains all the music from that production. So many songs have been written for, and interpolated into, various versions of Show Boat that no single production can include every one. The London revival comes close, however, and that album includes such seldom-heard numbers as Where's the Mule for Me?, How'd You Like to Spoon with Me? (Kern's first hit, written in 1905), *Dance Away the Night*, *Queenie's Ballyhoo*, *Tell Good Luck Comes My Way*, *Nobody Else But Me* (Kern's last song, written for the 1946 Broadway revival), and I *Have the Room Above Her* (written for the 1936 film version). The only thing the British producers didn't squeeze in seems to be Gullivantin' Around, a comedy song written for Irene Dunne in the 1936 film.

This revival, which opened in London in July 1971, was called "the best musical, old or new, that London has seen for a very long time" by John Higgins, critic for the London Times. My own impression is that the production is good rather than superlative. Director Wendy Toye is to be congratulated for tampering with the original as little as possible, for it is the work itself which thrills and for me made the evening memorable. Director André Jobin (son of the former Met tenor Raoul Jobin) brings to the role a fine light baritone. charm, virility, and real stature. Lorna Dallas, a young American who sang with the Metropolitan
Opera National Company, sings Magnolia's music with a lovely lyric soprano (whether they like it or not, it is in this music, and not in Verdi, that most American sopranos are really at home). "Of Man River" is almost foolproof, and the American buss Thomas Carey does it well, although he is outclassed by Inia Te Wistia on the Bassay disc.

Cleo Laine. Britain's other West Indian jazz singer, is the biggest name in the cast, and the strongest personality. Her singing of Julie's three torch songs, although deeply felt, is pop/jazz singing and, in the context of a traditional musical comedy, it jars somewhat, rather like finding Billie Holiday in the midst of Carousel. But then, how do you sing Julie these days? Helen Morgan, the first torch singer, was actually a high soprano with a sob in her voice. Her imitators went into the basso profundo range trying to achieve the same effect. The average soprano is wrong for it and so is the average blues singer. Perhaps an American Negro soprano, or mezzo, is the answer.

One can only speculate as to what the original Show Boat orchestrations sounded like, but Keith Amos' arrangements for the London production are beautiful and evocative and sound authentic to me. Indeed, the primary virtue of the whole production is that it is unampered with. The producers have not attempted to "modernize" the show for contemporary tastes. It is presented without apologies pretty much as it was written—dated gags, sentimental dialogue, and obvious song cues intact—and it works. British audiences will accept this, would audiences in America?

The album captures the aura and excitement of the real stage performance, and the recording quality is excellent. In short, a well-sung, stylistically authentic and virtually complete recording of a great score. Now, what do we lovers of American musical comedy want next?

Show Boat (Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein II), Shirley Bassey, Don McKay, Inia Te Wiata, Marilyn Waters, Isabelle Lucas, Geoffrey Webb, and the Williams Singers: orchestra, Michael Collins cond. Overture: Make Believe, Of Man River; Can't Help Lavin' Dat Man: Life upon the Wicked Stage; You Are Love; I Might Fall Back on You: Why Do I Love You'; I Still Suits Me; Bill; Finale. STAN'YAN SR 10036 $5.98.

Show Boat (Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein II), Original London revival cast: André Jobin, Lorna Dallas, Cleo Laine, Thomas Carey, Kenneth Nelson, Derek Royle, and others: chorus, John McCarthy dir.; orchestra, Ray Cook cond. Cotton Blossom: Where's the Mate for Me?; Make Believe Can't Help Lavin' Dat Man: I Might Fall Back on You: Of Man River; How'd You Like to Spoon with Me?; You Are Love; I Still Suits Me; Queenie's Boondocks: The Wedding Nobody Else but Me; Till Good Luck Comes My Way; Can't Help Lavin' Dat Man (reprise): Life upon the Wicked Stage; I Have the Room Above Her; At the Fair: Bill; After the Ball; You Are Love (reprise); Dance Away the Night; Why Do I Love You'; Finale. STAN'YAN 2 SR 10048 two discs $9.95.

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JAZZ

GARY BARTZ NTU TROOP: Harlem Bush Music/Uhuru. Gary Bartz (soprano alto sax, vocals, piano); Andy Bey (vocals); Ron Carter (bass); Juni Booth (bass); Nat Bettis (percussion); Harold White (drums). Blue (a Folk Tale): Uhuru Sasa; Vietcong; Celestial Blues: The Planets. MILESTONE MSP 9032 $5.98.

Performance: Jazz and vocal mix

Recording: Good very

This is a generally disappointing outing from alto saxophonist/composer Gary Bartz. Much of the space is devoted to long musical conversations between Bartz's alto saxophone and Andy Bey's voice. Both musicians can be superb improvisers, at their best, but what happens here is too chaotic and disjointed to showcase either performer properly.

On the positive side, Bartz's compositional activities have now expanded into lyric writing (he even sings on one track). I suspect this disc may be a kind of training exercise for Bartz—one that should lead him into a fuller, and more fulfilling, expansion of his considerable talents.

EDDIE CONDON/PEE WEE RUSSELL: Town Hall Concerts 1944-45 (see Best of the Month, page 70)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE JPI QUARTET: Montreux '71. Budd Johnson (tenor and soprano saxophones); Oliver Jackson (drums); Bill Pemberton (bass); Dill Jones (piano). Montreux '71: I'll Be Seeing You, Contrast, The Best Things in Life Are Free, and four others. MASTER JAZZ RECORDINGS MJR 8111 $5.98.

Performance: Solid mainstream jazz

Recording: Very good

It's almost mind-boggling, in these days of high-priced and high-powered pop-rock eclecticism, to realize that good old straight-ahead, mainstream jazz is still with us. Yet here it is, in a fine traditional concert performance by a group of, if not superstar jazz players, then very good ones. Johnson, in fact, has to be granted a very special niche in jazz history because of his dogged devotion to a style (the Lester Young lay-back, Kansas City improvisation) that is nearly forty years old.

I do not mean to suggest, however, that either Johnson or his associates sound like antiquites. Far from it. They demonstrate, instead, that vitality in jazz has virtually nothing to do with style. Like Erroll Garner and Bill Evans and Gene Ammons—to name only a few of the many players still active—the JPI Quartet has not been noticeably affected by the changing winds of fashion, yet the soil from which they reap their musical crops is far from fallow. Is there anything that a jazzman can uncover, after all these years, in songs like I'll Be Seeing You, The Best Things in Life Are Free, and Down by the Riverside? Happily, the answer is yes, and you can hear it here.

YUSEF LATEEF: The Gentle Giant. Yusef Lateef (flutes, oboe, tenor sax); various other musicians. Nuhin Lady; Lowland Lullaby; Hey Jude: Jungle Plum; The Poor Fishermen; African Song; and two others. ATLANTIC SD 1602 $5.98, @ M 81602 $6.98, © M 51602 $6.98.

Performance: Mainstream

Recording: Very good

Yusef Lateef's music has many rare attributes, but its most special quality is the solid craftsmanship that permeates everything he produces. I have special Lateef favorites, but I can't recall a single recording of his that hasn't piqued my interest in an unexpected fashion.

This one is no exception. Lateef works on most of the tracks with solid back-up rhythm sections, playing his battery of exotic flutes, his gutty tenor saxophone, and his nasally blues-tinged oboe. The only disconcerting moment shows up on a peculiar version of Hey Jude, which begins in the far, far distance (you can just barely hear the opening melody without turning up your set's volume control) and gradually moves up front. It doesn't work, and reflects an unusual error of judgment on Lateef's part. Fortunately, his usual impeccable work on the balance of the album more than compensates for it.

ABBEY LINCOLN: Straight Ahead. Abbey Lincoln (vocals), Coleman Hawkins (tenor sax), Walter Benton (tenor sax), Eric Dolphy (reeds), Booker Little (trumpet), Julian Priester (trombone), Mal Waldron (piano), Art Davis (bass), Max Roach (drums), Robert Whitley and Roger Sanders (congas). Straight Ahead: When Malindy Sings, In the Red; Blue Monk, Left Alone, African Lady; Retribution. BARNABY KJ 31037 $4.98.

Performance: Classic early-Sixties jazz

Recording: Good

Columbia's decision to reissue its material from the early Sixties under the aegis of critic Nat Hentoff, the Candid material ranged from the then avant-garde work of Charles Mingus and Cecil Taylor to the more primal music of Otis Spann and Lightnin' Hopkins.

At the time, Abbey Lincoln and her husband, Max Roach, were working out one of the earliest attempts at a consciousness-raising approach to black jazz. Miss Lincoln adopted a hard-edged sound that occasionally softened into Billie Holiday turns and Sarah Vaughan swoops; the arrangements, presumably by Roach, were uncompromisingly dissonant and personal.

Heard in retrospect, one is more impressed with some of the solo work, especially the bravura tenor saxophone of Coleman Hawkins, than either Miss Lincoln's singing or Roach's scoring. Even with its flaws, however, this is jazz of a sort that is rarely heard today—jazz that is responsible only to its creators, rather than to the demands of mass pop media. Sometimes the achieving of goals is less important than the intensity of the effort. And on that count, Miss Lincoln and Mr. Roach can hardly be faulted.

Don H.
THEATER • FILMS

LENNY (Julian Barry-Tom O'Horgan). Original cast recording. Cliff Gorman, Joe Silver, Erica Yohn, Jane House, and Robert Weil (performers); Tom O'Horgan, director. Blue Thumb BTS 9001 two discs $11.98, © DPJ 89001 $9.98.

Performance: Brilliant Recording: "Live" but good

When Lenny Bruce, born Leonard A. Schneider in Mineola, Long Island, in 1926, died in Los Angeles on August 3, 1966, it was a sad day for American humor. Comedy, in fact, has not since been the same. It was Lenny who gave it its freedom. The frank language of stage and screen today is taken for granted, but it was Lenny Bruce who got there first.

Lenny is a play that attempts to telescope the highlights of the preacher-comedian's rise and fall in the course of several remarkable hours. As staged by Tom O'Horgan (Hair, Jesus Christ Superstar) the hero in Julian Barry's play, portrayed with uncanny insight by Cliff Gorman, is shown surrounded by the symbols of the world he never made.

The first act is high-spirited, as Gorman recreates abridged versions of Lenny's routines—working in a small town, the prison movie, a run-in with the phone company, a hilarious unmasking of the Lone Ranger, the famous encounter between bigot and black man at a party. All these mini-dramas are available on records as performed uncut in night clubs by the master himself, but Gorman is remarkably good with them, and in the play they are woven expertly into Bruce's story. The scenes are tightly written and fleetly acted out by the expert cast. Joe Silver as Jule and conventional gag-happy comedian in the old-fashioned mold: Erica Yohn as Sally Marr, Lenny's ex-stripper mother ("a cross between the Virgin Mary and a $500-a-night hooker"); Jane House as Rasty, the sassy burlesque dancer whom he marries and who helps to ruin him; and Robert Weil, running the gamut from an impersonation of Eisenhower to Lenny's father.

In Act Two, the action turns grim and nightmarish. We find the hero to his ruin as he's taken in for narcotics possession and obscenity, becomes completely obsessed with the law, gets sick, goes broke and is finally found dead. All of this may sound depressing, but it is acted so brilliantly that it isn't at all; the play runs its course with the inevitability of a Greek drama, and with hypnotic urgency. The recording, made "live" during a performance at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre by a company with the spooky name "Blue Thumb Records" (actually a subsidiary of Famous Music Corp.), is a fine job in every respect. It comes with a booklet containing photographs of the production, excerpts of the dialogue, and an article by Kenneth Tynan, as well as a huge poster of its protagonist.

JULY 1972

SAIL AWAY (Noel Coward). Original London cast recording. Elaine Stritch, David Holliday, Grover Dale, Sheila Forbes, others (vocals): Gareth Davies cond. SAIL AWAY: Come to Me; Later than Spring; Go Slow, Johnny; Why Do the Wrong People Travel?, and others. STANWAY RECORDS 10027 $5.98.

Performance: Shiny Recording: Excellent

When the tangles are in, Elaine Stritch will go up on the scoreboard as having had her share of show-stopping moments in musical comedy. But, oddly enough, neither of the two shows written expressly for her (Goldilocks and SAIL AWAY) came anywhere near doing justice to her unusual gifts. This fact is confirmed by the mysterious and rather unexplained appearance now, in 1972, of the English-cast album of SAIL AWAY, a Noel Coward opus that sank on Broadway in 1961 and was salvaged for a brief run in London shortly thereafter. The album comes to us with a sketch of Coward on the jacket, reminding us not only that Coward's sad days are over; but also that the days of cruise directors and luxury liners are gone forever. It's as nostalgic as a Normandie liner preserver and just about as pertinent.

Also, many great talents begin to parody themselves if they stick around too long. Talullah did it. And so does Coward, with fearful forced lyrics like "dawn-to-moonrise/blue lagoon-wise" and worse, "We'll get a Man Tan/Gargantuau-tan." The music is predictable English musical-hall big—saxophones and scraping violins, big hoffo endings, romantic whimperings—of a genre Coward helped perfect on the already romantic foundations of Ivor Novello. But in SAIL AWAY Coward has fed on himself too long, and the cannibalization has become a leg to stand on.

However—and it's a big however—this album is worthwhile for six reasons: the six cuts by Elaine Stritch. Explosively or sweetly peaking, purring, wailing, lowing, and opening and closing the catch in her throat as if it were a bright brass hinge, Stritch gulps, laughs, subs, cracks, recovers, hicups, and probably drinks a snifter of brandy in between, while sailing her own way through this essentially trivial and passe score. She puts a bright blitz on every line that loses an edge of lyric—swallows, she never sings an unprintable word. She is just terrific with her exploding "p's, her hockey Italian-opera cries, and her calculatedly sloppy ending on Why Do the Wrong People Travel?—listen to the way she turns the word 'why' into a muted-trumpet 'wha-oh-what' in a pure George M. Cohan finale. In the two love songs, she is touchingly vulnerable, bringing Judy Garland to mind. Even the cracks in her voice have style. From foolish lines such as "Hail, pioneers!" Stritch squeezes Eva Tanguay's wildness; from syrupy ballads, she gets more tenderness than they deserve. This is sheer star quality, unique and valuable. It's no wonder Noel Coward begged on his knees for her to steer this tub to London; without her, it wouldn't have lasted long enough to have a show album recorded. She is the only reason to buy this album, but that is reason enough. So for precious little of her is available on records (On Your Toes, Goldilocks, and Company come to mind as the show albums). Too bad some enterprising record producer doesn't hand the talented lady some "now" songs to sing with a big band backing up her special brand of vocalism.
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RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BACH: Cantata No. 1, "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern"; Cantata No. 4, "Christ lag in Todesbanden." Edith Mathis (soprano), No. 1; Ernst Haefliger (tenor, No. 1) and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Munich Bach Choir and Orchestra, Karl Richter. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIVE Recordings 924025 $6.98.

Performance: Especially good No. 1
Recording: Good
Time: 45' 6"

Except for Richter's tendency to overromanticize "Christ lag in Todesbanden," through some excessively fast tempos and minor eccentricities, these cantatas are very well performed. Particularly enjoyable is the Cantata for the Feast of the Annunciation, Number 1, in which the conductor's tempos and Christmas mood are particularly well judged. The solo vocalists are all excellent, and the recording, if not as transparent as the original disc version, is thoroughly satisfactory. Notes are supplied, but no texts. I.K.

BIZET: Carmen (Highlights). Marilyn Horne (mezzo-soprano), Carmen; Michele Molese (tenor), Don José; others; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus, Henry Lewis cond. LONDON (MS) 94055 $6.95, L 75055 $7.95.

Performance: Mistake
Recording: Fair
Time: 35' 58"

It's difficult to recommend this set of Carmen highlights: the performance is so Italianately self-indulgent, unsophisticated, and heavy-handed, the title role is sung so unidiomatically and the remaining soloists (unidentified by Amex) are no more distinguished. Also, the cassette sound reproduces forward and not very transparent voices against a muddy and distant orchestral backdrop. So I won't—in fact, I urge you not to buy it. I.K.

GABRIELI: The Glory of Venice, Intonations for Organ on the 11th Tone; Jubilate Deo (8-flats—two choirs, 8 parts); Magnificat, for Countertenor and Baritone (arr. Denis Stevens); Surrexit Christus, for Alto, Tenor, and Bass (arr. Denis Stevens); Nunc dimittis (three choirs, 14 parts); Intonation for Orchestral Variations on the Theme of the Second Tone: Angelus ad Pastores (two parts, 12 parts); Intonation for Organ on the 3rd and 4th Tones; Regina Coeli (two choirs, 12 parts); Jubilate Deo (1013—10 parts); Gregg Smith Singers; Texas Boys Choir; Edward Tarr Brass Ensemble; E. Power Biggs (organ). COLUMBIA Special Edition Recording 30937 $6.98.

Performance: Superb
Recording: Thrilling
Playing Time: 33'

This cassette of Giovanni Gabrieli's glorious polychoral music, recorded in Venice's San Marco Basilica where Gabrieli himself worked more than 350 years ago, would deserve a "Special Merit" rating but for the complete absence of program notes and texts. One can perhaps excuse such an omission with thrice-familiar standard repertoire, but in the instance of unfamiliar liturgical texts and music as fascinating but as relatively obscure to the non-specialist listener as Gabrieli's, it is unforgivable, especially with the $6.98 price tag on the cassette.

Musically and sonically, this is one of the most exciting cassettes it has yet been my pleasure to hear. On one level it is, to use the phrase applied by the late Sir Thomas Beecham to Handel's music, "a glorious noise!" On quite another level, there are dozens of things in this intermingled festivity for solo organ (the intonations), soloists, strings, woodwinds, and brass, together with the choirs in opposed galleries, to delight both mind and ear. The alternating meters of the final Jubilate Deo come most immediately to mind; the woodwind coloration in the Surrexit Christus and the cumulative splendor of the Nunc dimittis are two other memorable impressions, not to mention the sense of limitless space yet warm immediacy that comes through in the recording itself. My only reservation here is that it would have the rather hooting quality of the unidentified countertenor in the Surrexit Christus.

Hiss or no hiss, this cassette must be played at full volume to achieve its proper effect. If heard on top-quality playback equipment, this recording cannot be forgotten—a fitting successor to the two previous Gabrieli productions recorded by Columbia in San Marco (MS 7071 and MS 7334, the latter also available on cassette 16 110148). D.H.


Performance: Sympathetic
Recording: Poorly processed
Playing Time: 46' 4"

Van Cliburn's poetic rendition of the Liszt and his sympathetic, well-propelled playing of the Rachmaninoff variations are safely spoiled on this cassette by unacceptable processing. The piano is sorely afflicted by flutter (I tried the cassette on two different playback units to check), so much so that I was tempted not to listen all the way through. Ormandy's excellent orchestral contribution suffers less, but with its lack of depth and transparency is far from outstanding. RCA, incidentally, seems to have gone back to its appalling practice of dividing the music into two sequences with equal playing times. The Liszt, which begins the cassette, is followed by one minute and thirty-seven seconds of the Rachmaninoff before the turnover, and the remainder of the

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS:

- = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- = eight-track stereo cartridge
- = stereo cassette
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- = quadrusalonic cassette

The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.
Rhapsody is on the second sequence. RCA will certainly have to do better by its cassettes than this; in the meantime, there's an excellent recording of the Rachmaninoff by Margrit Weber with Ferenc Fricsay conducting on a DGG cassette. It has far less hiss than the RCA, and there is no flutter apparent at all.

I.K.

COLLECTIONS


Performance: Succulent samplings
Recording: Excellent
Playing Time: 43'

It's getting so you can hear almost as much classical music at the movies these days as in the concert hall. This cassette was not assembled from the movie soundtracks, but from outstanding performances in the Angel catalog, which makes it even more distinguished musically. There may be a mightier opening to Also sprach Zarathustra than the one supplied here by the Philharmonia under Lorin Maazel, but if so, I have not yet heard it (although Böhm's version, actually heard in the movie of 2001, is strong competition).

But who wants to stop there? That's the trouble with these movie excerpts. You're just getting into the mood of Strauss when along comes the Mahler Fifth Symphony Adagietto from Death in Venice. Then suddenly John Browning is playing Liszt's big, menacing Mephisto Waltz. Side two offers Daniel Barenboim at the piano as well as conducting the Elvira Madigan movement—the second, that is. In its original Piano Concerto No. 21; it's a gorgeous version. And I should like so much to have heard the rest of the concerto!

Then comes the last movement from the Tchaikovsky "Pathétique" the way Carlo Maria Giulini tells it, most poignant, but not a good course to serve after the Mozart. That Chopin prelude that Jack Nicholson (in Five Easy Pieces) claimed he could play without feeling a thing concludes the outing, with Leonard Pennario at the keyboard—feeling. I suspect. a good deal. This leaves us in a twilight mood and a state of musical unfilament. Chalk this one up as a sampler suitable for missionary work among potential converts to serious music. For the rest of us, it's just a tease.

P.K.

ENTERTAINMENT

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UNDERSTANDING THE EXTRAS

Newcomers to tape are sometimes puzzled by such advertised "features" as "sound-with-sound," "sound-on-sound," and "mixing." Often, although the owner's manual mentions these facilities, it does not adequately explain their purpose by discussing the principles involved.

"Mixing" capabilities are essential in professional recording because the individual contributions of a number of microphones (or already recorded sound tracks) must be combined, each one adjusted for a proper balance with the others, and the overall level of the mixed signal controlled for optimum recording level. Few home recordists, however, use a dozen microphones at once to tape a concert, so the mixing facilities provided on audiophile machines are considerably scaled down. Most permit you to combine one microphone with one line oder aux signal (a tuner, second recorder, or the tape out from your receiver or preamp) per channel. This makes it possible for you to record approximate background music behind a voice narration for a slide show or to add your own vocal to an instrumental recording.

"Sound on sound" and "sound with sound" are techniques which, in open-reel recorders, permit you to add new material to existing recordings. Suppose, for instance, that you play the piano (or two musical instruments) and want to record yourself playing both parts of a duet. Here, obviously, one part must be recorded fully, the tape rewound, and the second part added. But how do you keep the two tracks synchronized if you are using a three-head tape deck? Suppose you record the first part on the left channel, rewind, and set that channel for playback. Then you put on your headphones, listen to the first part on the tape (via the monitor head) and record the second track. When you later try to listen to both recorded tracks together the result will be pure cacophony, since the two parts will be out of step. Track one (left channel) will lead track two on the tape by the precise distance separating the record and playback heads.

Three-head recorders use the "sound-on-sound" technique to prevent this. In this approach the played-back signal from the first channel is mixed with the new second signal, and both are recorded simultaneously on the second channel. By repeating the process one could add a third part, mixing the two recorded parts on the second channel with a new one, and recording the whole back onto the first channel (where the original track would be erased). The limiting factors are that each successive re-recording adds noise, distortion, wow and flutter, and frequency losses.

Two-head machines that can be set up so that one channel is playing while the other is recording add the possibility of "sound-with-sound." On such machines the two in-line gaps of the same head are being used, one for record and the other for playback, so that there is no time delay between channels. Thus the two parts can be recorded synchronously to begin with, a "sound-on-sound" technique being used if more than two instruments or performers are to be combined at different times.
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